



**GOVERNOR  
HANDBOOK  
For  
Local Governing Body Members**

**September 2020**

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## Welcome from the Executive Headteacher

Barton Court Academy Trust (BCAT) consist of two existing secondary schools, Barton Court Grammar School, an 11 -18yrs, mixed selective school in the heart of Canterbury, rated "Good with Outstanding features" by Ofsted in February 2020 and The Charles Dickens School, an 11-16yrs mixed non-selective school in Broadstairs Kent, rated "Requires Improvement" by Ofsted in June 2019. The Trust is also opening a secondary "Free" school in Sept 2022, a non-selective, 11 – 18yrs co-educational school in the heart of Canterbury called Barton Manor School on the former Chaucer School site.

Barton Court Grammar School is an Advanced Thinking School and a National Support School (NSS) and its Executive Headteacher a National Leader of Education (NLE). The Charles Dickens School joined our Multi-Academy Trust on 1 March 2017 after being placed in "Special Measures" by Ofsted and is a rapidly improving school.

We are a small Trust at the beginning of a very exciting journey, with a talented team of Governors, Senior Leadership, teachers and support staff all determined to provide the highest quality of educational provision to all children across the Trust.

We believe schools are stronger when they work together and have a common purpose to provide the highest standards in teaching and pupil outcomes. We promote an individual identity for each of our schools so that they continue to respond to the needs of their pupils, their families and the wider community they serve.

We work together to "improve the life chances" of all our children and young people working together through strong partnerships between staff, students, parents and Governors that share our core values of excellence and equity.

Welcome to the Handbook for the BCAT Local Governing Body members. This Handbook brings together in one place the most up to date information, advice and guidance for Local Governing Body Members in all of our Academies and for the future local governors of our Free School.

As a member of a Local Governing Body, you play a significant and highly valued role in the BCAT's shared governance structure. Your local knowledge and understanding of our communities makes your contribution an essential one and you bring a unique insight to each academy, which forms the basis for our drive and ambition to provide the best education for our students. In your role, you will provide both support and challenge to our leadership teams and fulfil the true role of "critical friend" with constructive criticism to achieve our vision.

The roles and responsibilities as described in this handbook form the basis of the relationship between the BCAT Board of Directors and the Local Governing Body (LGB). There will be clear lines of two-way communication between the BCAT Board of the Directors and the Local Governing Bodies. Each LGB will bring with it its own expertise and insight, which will regularly feed, into the BCAT Board on a formal basis.

We are all very conscious that you are volunteers in this process and that you give generously and willingly of your time and expertise. We are immensely grateful for your commitment and I hope that this handbook will help you and your colleagues in the part you play in helping BCAT achieve the aspirations for all the students who attend our academies.

K Cardus  
Executive Headteacher

## Barton Court Academy Trust Governance

### Background

The governance structure of the Trust consists of a Board of Trustees (Directors) who are responsible for the strategic direction, financial management, and performance of the Trust and each school within the Trust. Each School within Barton Court Academy Trust (BCAT) has its own Local Governing Body (LGB).

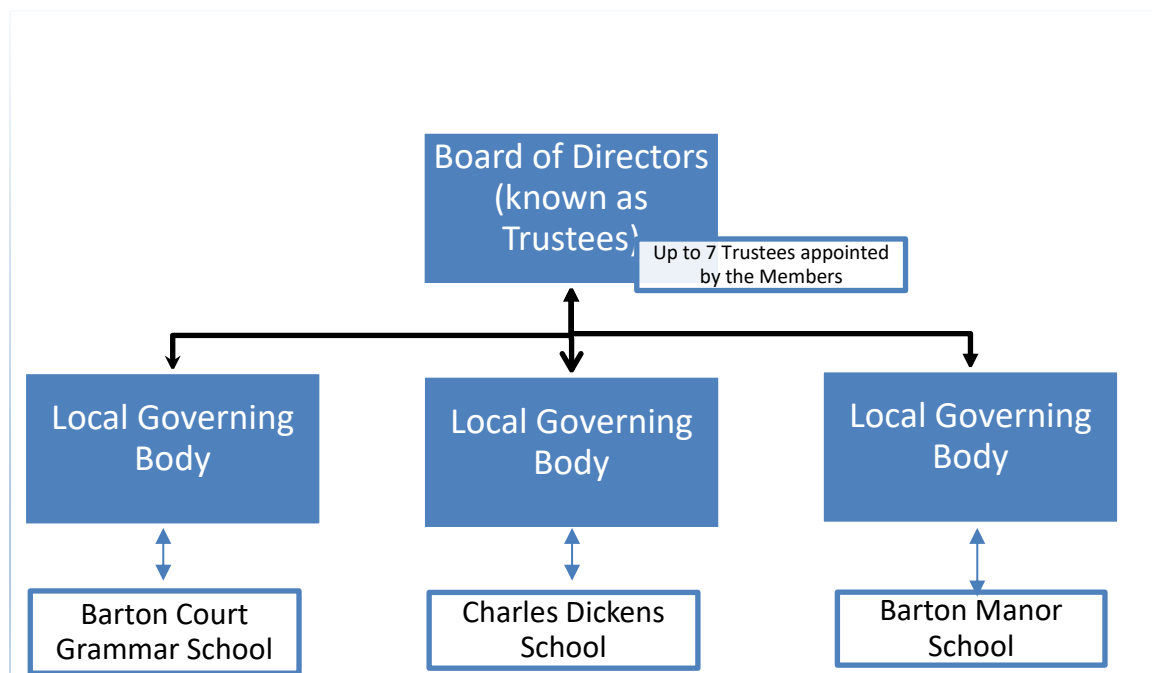
*This section explains what a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is, and how the government and the legal system provide protection for public money held by a MAT.*

The Barton Court Academy Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), which sponsors schools. Its legal entity is a “charitable company limited by guarantee”. Multi-Academy Trusts are “exempt charities”, which means that they are regulated not by the Charity Commission, but by the Secretary of State for Education. MATs use public money and are therefore rightly subject to several levels of controls, including being governed by:

- UK charity law and UK Company law – as is the case for any charity or company
- Their “Articles of Association”, which are standard across MATs and written by DfE. They are designed to ensure that MATs are run properly, and that the interests and views of Academies are reflected in the MAT’s policies and activities.
- A Master Funding Agreement, which is similar to a contract, agreed with the Secretary of State, providing more layers of protection for public money – and a more detailed Supplementary Funding Agreement for each Academy that the MAT sponsors. Again, these are drafted by DfE, not by the MAT.

The diagram below shows the governance relationships within the Trust:

### The Governance Structure of Barton Court Academy Trust



Collectively, the governance of the BCAT must take the form of a coherent partnership so that it is able to provide all of its Academies with strong and effective leadership. BCAT has a shared responsibility to develop a short term and long-term perspective for the Trust as a whole, and for the Academies that make up the Trust.

In order for this model of governance to work efficiently and effectively it is essential that there is good communication between the BCAT Board of Directors, Local Governing Bodies and the BCAT senior executive team. Our communication with Local Governing Body members will come through their Chair.

The Headteacher and the Chair of each Local Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that Local Governing Body members have all of the information they require to be well informed about both the school and the BCAT. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that the views of the Local Governing Body are communicated to the BCAT Board of Directors.

### **BCAT Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)**

Each Academy in the Trust has its own Local Governing Body. The LGB plays an essential role in the overall governance of the BCAT and is in a unique position to support and challenge the Academy as it strives for educational excellence. Its role is to understand, advise, challenge, support and encourage the Academy to be outstanding and it fulfils a key function in providing the Academy with strong and effective leadership. The LGB, however, does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Headteacher.

At its best, the LGB is deeply engaged with the Academy through acting as a critical friend and building a strategic vision in order to further increase the pace of the Academy's development and improvement. As a 'critical friend' the LGB offers support, constructive advice and acts as a sounding board for ideas. But as a critical friend it is also expected to challenge, ask questions, seek information, check on progress of students and leaders' actions.

The LGB has clearly identified and delegated areas of responsibility and these are outlined in the Scheme of Delegation. The extent of its delegated responsibilities will sometimes need to be adjusted in response to the needs of the academy. For example, the LGBs of schools that have demonstrated that they are consistently and securely outstanding may be able to take on additional responsibilities whereas others may need additional support.

Being a member of the LGB carries wide ranging responsibilities and for many members there is a lot to learn about the way in which pupils are educated today, as the pace of educational change has been rapid over recent years. Members will need to keep abreast of these changes so that they are able to provide the best and most relevant challenge to the senior team. We hope that members will work together as part of a team for the benefit of the Academy, respecting each other's points of view but always acting as a corporate body, accepting the decisions reached by the majority. Moreover, for a LGB to be effective, it is essential that its members work in partnership with the Executive Headteacher and the senior team at each Academy.

## Local Governing Body: Membership

The number of people who sit on the LGB is six, appointed by the Trust Board. The membership must include a staff member, two elected parent members and the Headteacher.

LGB members may serve for a period of 4 years.

The Trust Board is responsible for the appointment of LGB members. The LGB Chair and Executive Headteacher will guide the appointment process to ensure an appropriate balance of skills and stability of governance. The process for appointment is down to the LGB bearing in mind the need to be open, transparent and inclusive.

It is a requirement that an election is held for both parent and staff members to the LGB. The LGB should have oversight of the recruitment and election process and as before ensure that it is open, transparent and inclusive.

Further and more detailed information on membership can be found in the Barton Court Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation for Governing Bodies, which is available from the Executive Headteacher, or by emailing [clerk@bartoncourt.org](mailto:clerk@bartoncourt.org)

## Local Governing Body: Meetings

### **LGB for Barton Court Grammar School and The Charles Dickens School**

Composition: 6 local governors appointed by the TB to include one staff local governor appointed or elected as the TB may determine, 2 elected parent local governors and the HT

**Quorum: 5**

**Meetings: at least 3 times a year**

The Chair of the TB (or in the absence of the Chair the Vice-chair) and the EHT/CEO are entitled to attend all meetings of the LGB and any sub-committee.

### **Delegated responsibilities:**

- Reporting to the Trust Board on the overall performance of the academy
- Monitoring the annual spend of that part of the Trust budget delegated to be managed by the HT
- Monitoring of educational outcomes in the academy
- Monitoring all aspects of safeguarding, SEN, equality and student welfare
- Dealing with the regulatory requirements of admissions policy-setting and exclusions through designated committees of the LGB
- Liaising with the Trust Board, CEO and CFO on all aspects of policy setting as they may respectively require
- Arranging election of elected members of the LGB as directed by the TB and in accordance with the Articles of Association

## **Subcommittees**

### **Quality Assurance Sub-Committee**

Composition: at least 4 local governors

**Quorum: 3**

**Meetings: at least 3 times a year**

Delegated responsibilities in relation to the academy:

- All aspects of the curriculum and curriculum delivery
- Quality assuring education provision against Ofsted criteria and monitoring all aspects of readiness of inspection
- Ensuring that formal complaints against the academy are dealt with in accordance with the Trust complaints policy
- Monitoring student issues including behaviour and exclusions
- Monitoring all aspects of SEN
- Monitoring all aspects of safeguarding including British Values and the operation of the Prevent strategy
- Monitoring educational outcomes including RoL
- Monitoring all equality aspects including the Public Sector Equality Duty

### **Admissions Sub-Committee of the LGB**

Composition: Persons as may be appointed by the Trust Board

**Quorum: 3**

**Meetings: As required on seven days' notice**

Outline of responsibilities:

- To advise the Trust Board on any aspects of admissions and the admission arrangements for the academy that may be relevant including reporting on admission patterns and matters of concern
- To respond when required by the Trust Board to any proposal to amend the admission arrangements
- To manage any local consultation required in relation to any proposed amendment to the admission arrangements or otherwise to secure compliance with the Admissions Code

### **Pupil Exclusions Sub-Committee of the LGB**

Composition: All LGB members other than employees of the Trust and such others as may be appointed by the Trust Board

**Quorum: 3**

**Meetings: In accordance with statutory requirements**

Outline of responsibilities:

- To consider all parental representations in relation to any pupil exclusion
- To meet to review all fixed period exclusions individually or in aggregate in excess of five days and all permanent exclusions whether or not parents make representations or exercise the right to attend

**Note: all decisions taken under delegated authority MUST be reported to the next available Trust Board meeting. This should be done by way of a minute of the decision or of the meeting at which the decision was taken.**

Key meeting procedures which LGB members need to be aware of are as follows:

- There must be at least three full LGB meetings in each school year
- The LGB is responsible for setting its own agenda, in liaison with the Headteacher
- Each LGB will have a clerk whose central role is to provide administrative and organisational support and to advise on procedure
- The chair and vice-chair must be elected, usually annually at the first meeting in the Autumn term, but can be elected for any term between 1-4 years
- All decisions must be determined by a majority of votes of those governors present and voting. If there are an equal number of votes, the chair has the casting vote
- Safeguarding is a standing item on all agendas
- All meetings will include a Safeguarding Report
- Declaring an interest: this is a standard item on all agendas and LGB members must always declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting if they have a personal or professional interest in any of the agenda items discussed.

## **Local Governing Body: Responsibilities**

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Reporting to the Trust Board on the overall performance of the School
- Monitoring the annual spend of that part of the Trust budget delegated to be managed by the Headteacher
- Monitoring of educational outcomes of the School
- Monitoring all aspects of safeguarding, SEN, equality and student welfare
- Dealing with the regulatory requirements of admissions policy-setting and exclusions through designated committees of the LGB
- Liaising with the Trust Board and Executive Headteacher on all aspects of policy setting as they may respectively require
- Arranging election of elected members of the LGB as directed by the Trust Board and in accordance with the Articles of Association
- The Chair of BCAT and the Executive Headteacher are entitled to attend all LGB meetings and those of any sub-committees.



The LGB Monitoring Visit provides a consistent reporting framework of visits to the school (Appendix 1)

BCAT retains the right to determine the policy and procedures of the Academy and to respond to strategic issues, though these in practice are driven by the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher.

In summary the responsibilities of the LGB fall into three key areas:

Strategic direction	Monitor and evaluate the impact of the School Development Plan Liaise with the Trust Board on all aspects of policy setting Arranging the election of members, as directed by the Trust Board
Monitoring and support	Budget Annual Spend Ask relevant and probing questions in a supportive, honest and trusting manner
Accountability	Hold the Headteacher and staff to account for the performance of the Academy Effectiveness of Safeguarding High quality provision for SEN Equality Student Welfare Account to BCAT Trust Board and to parents for the work of the LGB

In order to effectively carry out its responsibilities the LGB will carry out the following. This list is not definitive; rather it is designed to guide the activity of the LGB and is indicative of the areas where it will be expected to lead.

Within this context the LGB will:

- Approve the Academy School Development Plan
- Monitor the implementation of the budget including use of the Pupil Premium
- Agree staffing structures and all appointments below the level of HT/DHT
- Take responsibility for Performance Management (BCAT, however, have responsibility for the PM of the Executive Headteacher)
- Personalise BCAT policies as appropriate
- Monitor pupil attainment and progress ensuring a strategic and systematic approach to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- Challenge examination results and assessments
- Ensure the curriculum is in line with BCAT and check its implementation
- Monitor behaviour and safety including establishing a discipline policy and monitoring exclusions
- Challenge SEN policy and practice
- Challenge the quality of teaching
- Maintain buildings and facilities and develop an estate strategy.

## Safeguarding

The Trust Board is responsible for setting overall policies for safeguarding and child protection across the Trust. The LGB must monitor the implementation of these policies and report on safeguarding at each LGB meeting. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all who work in the academies, however, the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher is responsible for reporting on safeguarding and child protection within the Academies. The LGB should ensure that:

- Statutory compliance is met with respect to both safeguarding and child protection
- All LGB members have the appropriate child protection checks and are recorded on the Single Central Record
- All LGB members have the appropriate training and are fully aware of the Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2018
- Summary reports are presented in the Safeguarding Report, including child protection, exclusions, serious disciplinary incidents, attendance and behaviour so that it is fully aware of the school's activity in these areas and can support and challenge appropriately.

## Local Governing Body: Working Groups and Designated Roles

LGBs are encouraged to develop their own methods of working within the framework set out on the BCAT scheme of delegation and this handbook. However, it is advised that the LGB establish working groups, which can focus on more detailed work and report back to the full LGB. Examples of working groups which may be helpful to set up include premises and safety; standards and teaching.

All LGBs are required to nominate one member to have specific responsibility for ensuring that the LGB is fully briefed in relation to:

- Safeguarding (including Child Protection)
- Health and Safety
- Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Detail of these designated roles are included as Appendix 2.

The LGB may also find it helpful to appoint named governors to link with specific subject areas with the following objectives in mind:

- To develop a knowledgeable working relationship between the staff and governors of the Academy
- To become informed about the relevant criteria for evaluating subject provision and local and national initiatives impacting on the subject
- To liaise with the Subject Leads to become informed about standards, staffing arrangements, training, resources, curriculum, special needs provision, assessment and recording, extra curricula opportunities
- To establish and maintain effective lines of communication between the Subject Leads and LGB body and report back as appropriate.

The LGB member in this role is not acting as a teacher or inspector but rather is a source of support and 'critical friend'. The LGB member is not responsible for monitoring and replicating the role of senior leaders and school staff. In this role it is expected that lines of communication are established between the Subject Lead and governor and that all visits take place in line with established protocols.

## **Local Governing Body Members: Expectations**

In order that LGB members are able to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively and offer both support and challenge it is expected that they will develop a deep knowledge of the Academy, its context and educational provision and fulfil the following criteria as part of their commitment to the role:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the ethos and values of BCAT and to ensuring that the students at the Academy receive the highest quality education
- Understand the distinction between governance and management and the key role of the LGB which is to provide support, challenge, guidance and advice
- Ensure there is a distinction between their own personal relationships and their role as a member of the LGB
- Be clear about their role, observing lines of demarcation and comply with the strictest of standards in terms of confidentiality, being loyal to Trust decisions
- Play an active role as a member of the LGB. For example, LGB members are expected to frequently engage in Academy activities such as attendance at performances; contribute to community events; make constructive contributions at meetings; participate in sub-committees; attend all meetings punctually
- Bring to the LGB their skills, experience and community knowledge in order to enrich the work of the LGB, the Academy and the Trust.

## **Local Governing Body: The Role of the Chair**

The LGB is supported by the BCAT Board and it is through the Chair that the LGB is closely linked to both the Trust Board and the senior executive team. Each LGB Chair will attend Board Meetings on a rolling programme. This is to enable clear lines of communication and an alignment of the Trust's vision. The Chair has a special responsibility to ensure that their Academy is well represented on the Trust Board and that he/she is able to report back to members of the LGB accurately and inform discussions at local governing board level, as a result of their attendance at the Trust Board.

The functions of the Chair include to:

- Ensure the business of the LGB is conducted properly
- Ensure that meetings are run efficiently, focusing on priorities and making best use of time available
- Ensure that all members work together as a team
- Liaise with the Executive Headteacher and Headteacher

- Ensure that all members have an equal opportunity to participate fully in discussions and decision making

The LGB Chair also has a responsibility to provide the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher with guidance, support, advice and constructive challenge with the main focus being on that of a 'critical friend'. At the heart of this relationship is trust. It should be possible for each to speak to the other in full confidence no matter how difficult the subject matter.

The Chair must meet the expectations of all LGB members as set out above. As the leader of the LGB, the Chair must always ensure that a good example is set to all other members and that all members are aware of and meet the expectations placed upon them.

The Chair and the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher are responsible for ensuring that all LGB members have access to the information they require in order that they can be well informed about the Academy and BCAT.

## **Local Governing Body: Headteacher Expectations**

Headteacher and LGB members work very hard to develop positive working relationships and much of the work done to achieve these relationships is about understanding their expectations of each other. Outlined above is what the Trust expects of LGB members. However, for the relationship to work then LGB members must also have certain expectations of the Headteacher and these include to:

- Trust the LGB and share information, good or bad
- Listen to LGB members, be approachable and communicate in plain language
- Have a clear vision for the school and be able to share it
- Manage the Academy effectively
- Be familiar with legislation and requirements
- Be sensitive about community feelings and needs
- Help LGB members to evaluate their performance and develop in their role
- Ensure LGB members are fully conversant with BCAT policies and perspectives
- Provide the information and data to enable LGB members to fulfil their three key areas of governance: Strategic direction and planning; supporting and monitoring the effectiveness of the Academy and holding the Academy to account for the quality of education provided.

## **Local Governing Body: Ofsted Inspection process**

The quality of governance is inspected as part of the quality of leadership and management section of the Ofsted framework. The grade descriptors for leadership and management are included as Appendix 3.

The inspection team are charged with evaluating the effectiveness of governance and inspectors will meet with selected individual governors as part of the inspection process. It would be true to say that the current Ofsted framework has put more emphasis on the role of governance and inspectors will be scrutinising how effectively governors know and

understand the Academy and how effectively they challenge and hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the Academy's performance. Typically, they will be asked about Safeguarding, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school, attainment and progress of all students and groups of pupils, attendance, curriculum and how the pupil premium is used to raise attainment.

## **Local Governing Body: Training and Development**

The Chair of the LGB is responsible for ensuring that the Headteacher is fully briefed on governance structures. The Chair and the Headteacher are jointly responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided for members of the LGB along with induction for new members. It is suggested that LGBs use the BCAT template to regularly undertake an audit of individual governor skills and use the outcomes of this audit as a basis for the planning of future training. Ofsted will judge the effectiveness of the LGB and a strong LGB will give confidence to its judgement on the overall success of the Academy.

The NGA 20 questions (Appendix 4) provide guidance on effective governance and is a good indicator of the effectiveness of the governing body.

It is expected that much of the training will be provided by the Academy itself. However, events will be organised so that BCAT Academies can work together and establish networks that will continue to work outside the formal meeting structure. Moreover, these events will provide an opportunity to share good practice and update members on BCAT policy and practice.

# APPENDIX 1

## Monitoring Visit



### \*The Charles Dickens School/Barton Court Grammar School - Governor's Monitoring Visit

GOVERNOR	DATE OF VISIT
FOCUS OF VISIT	ACTIVITY/FORMAT
School Attendees	
Key questions to seek answers to:	
Link to School Development Plan	
TIMETABLE: (When? What? With who? How?) ( <i>agreed in advance with staff</i> )	

**Follow Up:**

**Any Other Comments:**

**Comments by the Headteacher/Head of Dept/SLT member**

**Governors:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Headteacher**

**Signed:**

**Date:**



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Designated LGB positions**

#### **Safeguarding**

The LGB member with responsibility for safeguarding will be expected to:

- Undertake safer recruitment training
- Meet on a regular basis with the Academy Child Protection Officer to discuss on a strictly confidential basis any safeguarding and child protection issues
- Review with relevant staff the Academy's Child Protection Policy on an annual basis
- Ensure the LGB is aware of the range and scope of child protection issues (this may be through a report produced by the Headteacher or Child Protection Officer)

#### **Health and Safety**

The LGB member with responsibility for health and safety will be expected to:

- Meet regularly with the Academy Health and Safety Officer to discuss health and safety issues
- Review with relevant staff the Academy's Health and Safety Policy on an annual basis
- Review with the Academy's Health and Safety Officer any professional audits and their recommendations
- Ensure the LGB is aware of the range and scope of health and safety issues (this may be through a report produced by the Headteacher or Health and Safety Officer)

#### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (including looked after children, pupils with English as an additional language and the most able children)**

The LGB member with responsibility for special educational needs and disability will be expected to:

- Review data of the progress and attainment of children with special educational needs and disability
- Review attendance and exclusions data for children with special educational needs and disability
- Meet regularly with the staff member responsible for special educational needs and disability
- Review the Academy's Special Educational Needs Policy on an annual basis
- Ensure the LGB is fully informed about children with special educational needs and disability (this may be through a report produced by the Headteacher or special educational needs co-ordinator).

## Appendix 3

### Grade descriptors – Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school, September 2019

#### **Outstanding (1)**

- The school meets **all** the criteria for good in leadership and management **securely** and **consistently**.
- Leadership and management are **exceptional**.

In addition, the following apply:

- Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge consistently build and develop over time. This consistently translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that highly effective and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels and that issues are identified. When issues are identified, in particular about workload, they are consistently dealt with appropriately and quickly.
- Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues.

#### **Good (2)**

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality education to all pupils. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
- Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff, including newly qualified teachers, build and improve over time.
- Leaders aim to ensure that all pupils successfully complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible. They create an inclusive culture and do not allow gaming or off-rolling.
- Leaders engage effectively with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers and local services. Engagement opportunities are focused and have purpose.
- Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff, including their workload.
- Leaders protect staff from bullying and harassment.
- Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. Governors/trustees ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategy, that resources are managed well and that leaders are held to account for the quality of education.
- Those with responsibility for governance ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and safeguarding.
- The school has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to: **identify** pupils who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation; **help** pupils reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring them in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help; and **manage** safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to pupils.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Leadership and management are not good.
- Safeguarding is effective, or there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm.

### **Inadequate (4)**

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies.

- The capacity for improving the quality of education provided by the school, or for improving the personal development and behaviour and attitudes of pupils, is poor or leaders are overly dependent on external support.
- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle weaknesses in the school.
- The improvements that leaders and those responsible for governance have made are unsustainable or have been implemented too slowly.
- The school is systematically gaming its results, entering pupils for courses that are not in their educational best interest.
- There is evidence that pupils have been removed from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by the school encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, and leaders have taken insufficient action to address this.
- Leaders are not aware of, or are not taking effective action to stem, the decline in the attainment or progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- There is a clear breach of one or more of the legal responsibilities of those responsible for governance, and that breach is serious because of the extent of its actual or potential negative impact on pupils. The proprietor/governing body either is unaware of the breach, or has taken insufficient action to correct it and/or to remedy the negative or potential negative impact on pupils and/or to ensure that a suitable system is in place to prevent a similar breach in the future.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements, or they give serious cause for concern, or the school has taken insufficient action to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **Key questions every governing board should ask itself**

#### **Governing board effectiveness**

##### Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the governing board?

1. Have we completed a skills audit which informs the governor specification we use as the basis of governor appointment and interview?

##### Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?

2. How well do we understand our roles and responsibilities, including what it means to be strategic?
3. Do we have a professional clerk who provides legal advice and oversees the governing board's induction and development needs?
4. Is the size, composition and committee structure of our governing board conducive to effective working?
5. How do we make use of good practice from across the country?

##### Role of the chair: Does our chair show strong and effective leadership?

6. Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the chair's performance and elect the chair each year?
7. Do we engage in good succession planning so that no governor serves for longer than two terms of office and the chair is replaced at least every six years?
8. Does the chair carry out an annual review of each governor's contribution to the board's performance?

#### **Vision, ethos and strategy**

##### Strategy: Does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?

9. Does our vision look forward three to five years, and does it include what the children who have left the school will have achieved?
10. Have we agreed a strategy with priorities for achieving our vision with key performance indicators against which we can regularly monitor and review the strategy?
11. How effectively does our strategic planning cycle drive the governing board's activities and agenda setting?

##### Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?

12. How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils, parents and staff?

13. How do we make regular reports on the work of the governing board to our parents and local community?
14. What benefit does the school draw from collaboration with other schools and other <sup>ISEP</sup> sectors, locally and nationally?

### **Effective accountability**

#### Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?

15. How well do we understand the school's performance data (including in-year progress tracking data so we can properly hold school leaders to account?
16. Do governors regularly visit the school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?
17. How well does our policy review schedule work and how do we ensure compliance?
18. Do we know how effective performance management of all staff is within the school?
19. Are our financial management systems robust so we can ensure best value for money?

#### Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?

20. How much has the school improved over the last three years, and what has the governing board's contribution been to this?