

# Diversity indicators

September 2023

## **Background and context**

We recognise the importance of diversity and we want our trustees and governors to be increasingly reflective of the communities they serve, and this is reflective of the Department for Education's (DfE) position. The DfE now encourages schools and trusts to collect and publish diversity data about the board and any local academy committees.

Achieving diversity is important as it brings different perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the decision-making process, leading to more well-rounded and inclusive outcomes.

We acknowledge the need for diversity and that it encompasses a range of [characteristics](#) including race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, disabilities, and other aspects of identity. We need to understand how we can overcome any barriers that may present themselves to anyone who would like to hold a governance role with us.

## **Aims**

We are aware that diversity in all areas brings many advantages including on our academy governance boards where the academy is at the heart of our local communities, and we want to ensure that any decisions made are representative of the people living and working in the area.

Our mission is to nurture curiosity, develop wellbeing and empower children and young people to go beyond their aspirations. Together, we make a difference in our diverse communities and in the lives of those who learn with us and work with us.

We are aware that it is essential to foster an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere within committees. This includes providing opportunities for all members to contribute, actively listening to diverse perspectives, and ensuring that decisions are made collectively, considering different viewpoints.

Increasing awareness and understanding of the benefits of diversity is important to us. We have provided education and training on equity, diversity and inclusion and can help committee members appreciate the value of diverse perspectives and recognise and discuss openly any biases or prejudices they may have to ensure we eliminate discrimination, and there is equity between people who share a protected characteristic and those that don't.

We are continually trying to address any barriers that may prevent inclusivity on the board and its committees. This includes reviewing selection processes, addressing unconscious biases, and ensuring equitable access to opportunities.

For all governors, we provide mentorship and support programmes to help individuals feel empowered within meetings. Mentors can provide guidance, support, and encouragement.

## **Steps taken to identify diversity on our board and committees**

To encourage inclusivity, we have contacted diverse organisations, communities, and networks to try to appoint individuals from underrepresented groups within the area.

In June 2023, we asked our Trust board and governors to complete a diversity questionnaire to ascertain the diverseness of governance across the Trust. The completion of this was widely publicised but was made clear it was a completely voluntary exercise.

In order to ensure that we do not identify individuals we have collated the information and our results below represent answers from all governance areas.

As of June 2023, we had eight trustees on the Trust board and 74 local governors on 11 local academy committees. We had 55 responses to the questionnaire given to them. Responders were asked to answer a range of 12 questions with a free form question to enable any comments to be made where appropriate.

## **Findings**

Trust board and governor responders were nearly evenly split with 29 women and 26 men responding, in an 18 to 61+ age range with over half being in the 41-60 age bracket. All responders live within a 16-40 mile radius (up to a one-hour drive) to the board or academy committee on which they are appointed.

The results also show that governance across the trust is not as diverse as we would like. A quarter of responders said they had a disability but did not require any support and/or adjustments to fully participate as part of the board or committee. Those from the LGBTQ+ community are underrepresented as are those from minoritised backgrounds. Just under half of respondents are Christian and the remainder have no religion or preferred not to say.

From responses received, 40% currently have children of school age, 35% have children who are no longer at school and 25% have not got any children. 87% attended a state run or state funded school. 38% continued in further education (sixth form etc.), with 51% going onto higher education at university, two followed an apprentice route, three didn't continue their education and one preferred not to say. The vast majority of responders did not have experience of the care system and were not eligible for free school meals while they were at school.

One quote received was 'all contributions are valued and recognise the important differences that people bring to each meeting and visit (to the academy). Each visit (to the academy) is evaluated against the Trust vision, mission and values as is each meeting. We constantly review the diversity of the governing body whenever a vacancy arises'.

**Next steps**

We will continue to work with community groups to help with recruitment to the governance of our organisation.

We will establish mechanisms to monitor the progress of diversity initiatives and we evaluate our committee composition as and when we have a vacancy.

We will continue to advertise any vacancies to a wide group of people to try and appoint a diverse board of people.

By actively promoting and embracing diversity in our committees, we will endeavour to create more inclusive decision-making processes that reflect the needs and perspectives of a broader range of individuals.