

Short guide to our governance arrangements

Date: July 2025

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Summary of our governance model

Diverse Academies Trust is a charitable company that operates multiple academies as one legal entity. Our model of governance allows for strategic board decision making, focused and effective executive leadership, and local engagement and input from stakeholders. Each tier of governance contributes to helping establish each academy's values and ethos, monitoring educational and financial performance and linking them with their communities.

This short guide provides an overview of our governance arrangements but should be read in conjunction with the full documents linked to within the text.

The tiers of governance

- **Members:** The role of members is to hold the trustees to account, assure themselves that the governance of the trust is effective and that trustees are acting in accordance with the trust's charitable object(s). Members are not involved in the day-to-day business of the trust. However, members have key powers, including the appointment and removal of trustees and amending the memorandum and articles of association. Information about our members can be found at [Our people - Diverse Academies Trust](#)
- **Board of trustees:** The board of trustees is the legally responsible and accountable body for every academy. The board holds legal liability for areas that would normally be the responsibility of a local governing body in a maintained school, such as the single central register and policies, with support from the central team. While the board may delegate many of its functions (for example to the executive team or a committee), the board remains accountable for these functions. Information about our trustees can be found at [Our people - Diverse Academies Trust](#)
- **Trustee committees:** Through [Our-governance-structure.pdf](#) and our [Governance-strategy-scheme-of-delegation-and-terms-of-reference.pdf](#), the board delegates authority and responsibility for a range of duties to the following entities to ensure effective leadership and governance of the trust:
 - **Audit and Risk committee:** Responsible for compliance, risk management and internal controls.
 - **Finance and Resources committee:** Responsible for monitoring and reviewing annual budgets, long-term financial strategy and planning, investment and reserves, pensions and financial submissions. This committee also reviews executive salaries and pay policies.
 - **Standards and Outcomes committee:** Responsible for monitoring, scrutinising and advising on educational performance and strategy, safeguarding practice, pupil and staff wellbeing, behaviour and attendance.

- **Governance and Partnership committee:** Responsible for monitoring and reviewing governance arrangements in our academies and reviewing board membership and effectiveness, advising on the composition of governance across the organisation. This committee also monitors the governance arrangements of any external partnerships and service level agreements
- **Local academy committees:** Responsible for localised challenge and support. The committees also provide local assurance for the board on the experiences of pupils, parents, staff and the wider community as part of their remit for academy standards, safeguarding, SEND and stakeholder engagement.

The executive

Our executives report to the various governance groups as described in [Our-governance-structure.pdf](#). Through the [Governance-strategy-scheme-of-delegation-and-terms-of-reference.pdf](#) the board delegates authority and responsibility for a range of duties to the CEO/Accounting Officer who may delegate downwards but who remains responsible for the actions and decisions taken by the:

- **Executive Leadership Team:** Responsibility for the delivery of strategic goals and educational, financial and operational outcomes as agreed with the board.
- **Academy Principals:** Responsibility for delivering all educational and operational outcomes in their individual academy and management of financial and HR matters at academy level, with the support of the trust shared services.

How does the board of trustees obtain assurance that functions are carried out properly?

[Our-governance-structure.pdf](#) records the number of meetings per year and flow of reporting to/from the board. Reports are received from executives and/or executive principals and principals depending upon the meeting. These reports include Education Review Meeting and Academy Improvement Reports as well as any external reports which can be triangulated to what trustees and governors see in their visits to our academies. Our academy committees complete a report at the end of each meeting which is reviewed at the Governance and Partnership Committee. At the end of any meeting any issues to be referred to the board or which have been referred from the board are discussed.

How do we differ from maintained schools?

Academies deliberately operate under a different structure of governance from maintained schools, which are supported by local authorities. Governance structures in maintained schools are

predominantly determined by legislation, whereas trusts have the ability to set their own approach to better reflect their organisation and local circumstances.

How do our local academy committees differ from traditional local governing boards?

Local academy committees exist within the overall governance framework of the trust and have specific delegations, just like other committees of the board.

The committee's main responsibilities can be found on pages 10 – 12 and pages 24 – 27 of our [Governance-strategy-scheme-of-delegation-and-terms-of-reference.pdf](#). They hold the principal and executive principal to account for the academy's performance to ensure that the curriculum intent and quality of education will enable every child to reach their full potential. Their main responsibilities fall into four areas: standards, safeguarding, SEND and stakeholder engagement.

Get Information About Schools website

Trustees and local academy committee members are listed on GIAS and on the trust and each academy's website to ensure that parents and the community have up-to-date information on who is involved in governance.

What does this mean for school inspection?

The Ofsted [School Inspection Handbook](#) (SIH) states: "There are a wide variety of leadership and governance models in the school sector, so it is essential that inspectors establish who is responsible for what." Lead inspectors will therefore need to establish "the different levels of responsibility and oversight within the trust" and "who they need to meet from the trust, for example who (in the trust and in the school) is responsible for key decisions about safeguarding, behaviour and curriculum content". The SIH makes clear:

"When inspecting academies, inspectors will need to bear in mind that governance functions can be quite different from those in a maintained school. Some functions that a governing body in a maintained school would carry out may be done by the trust's leaders or staff. If this is the case, it will be important for inspectors to ascertain the board of trustees' role in that process and how it ensures and assures that these functions are carried out properly."

Who attends inspections on behalf of the trust?

For leadership, the SIH makes clear that leaders "will include the CEO and anyone else agreed between the headteacher, CEO and lead inspector" and inspectors "will, as a minimum, want to meet the CEO if possible but will recognise that (especially in large trusts) CEOs may need other senior trust leaders present to support these meetings."

For governance, the SIH explains that inspectors “will recognise that trusts are a single legal entity and that decisions made by individual academies and those by trust leaders cannot easily be separated.” Inspectors should arrange for at least one meeting with the chair of the board of trustees or their delegate. As with the chief executive it will not always be possible for the chair to attend every inspection.

The trust will work with inspectors to ensure they speak to all those responsible for governance of the academy. In most cases, this will mean a representative of a local academy committee to address their key areas of responsibility as described above and our chair of trustees usually attends the inspection as the representative of trust governance and strategic leadership.

Further information

For further information about our governance model, please visit the governance page on our website [Governance strategy, structure and board minutes - Diverse Academies Trust](#), the governance page on each of our academy websites or contact our head of governance, Alison Elway aelway@diverse-ac.org.uk with your query.