

Short guide to our governance arrangements

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Contents

Summary of our governance model	3
The tiers of governance	3
The executive.....	4
How does the board of trustees obtain assurance that functions are carried out properly?..	4
How do we differ from maintained schools?.....	5
How do our local academy committees differ from traditional local governing boards?.....	5
Get Information About Schools website	5
What does this mean for school inspection?	5
Who attends inspections on behalf of the trust?.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Further information	6

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 framework combines strategic oversight and assurance through a structured cycle of board and committee meetings, risk management systems, and clear reporting flows. The Trust Board meets six times a year and is supported by committees; Audit & Risk, Finance & Resources, Standards & Outcomes, and Local Academy Committees reporting to board through the Governance & Partnership Committee. Each committee has defined remits within our [Governance-strategy-scheme-of-delegation-and-terms-of-reference.pdf](#). Assurance is strengthened through internal audit programmes and reviews, external governance reviews, and escalation routes for risks that exceed agreed tolerance levels. Communication flows include formal minutes and action records, summary reports, trustee visits to academies, trustee and governor link roles, governor conferences and annual self-evaluation and skills audit exercises across all tiers.

Our governance layers work in partnership, sharing insights, escalating risks, and aligning decisions, to ensure strong, effective leadership. For example, Local Academy Committees flag safeguarding or performance concerns to board committees, which guide strategic action for trustees to hold executives to account.

[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 (GIAS) 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 operating guide for inspectors](#) acknowledges that:

Where multi-academy trusts have local governance boards/academy committees, inspectors must:

- *establish who has overall responsibility for governance and make sure that inspection activities and the report card accurately reflect who is responsible for what*
- *establish whether the trust has delegated any specific responsibilities or whether the LGBs are purely advisory bodies*
- *be aware that the powers of an LGB are sometimes delegated from trust leaders; this makes the LGB part of the school's management, not its governance*

If the LGB does not hold responsibility for any areas relevant to inspectors' evidence collection under the evaluation areas of the toolkit, then it is not necessary to speak with them.

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.