

Terms of Reference for the Full Governing Body of St Thomas Primary School

1. The Full Governing Body

1.1 The Full Governing Body is accountable for carrying out the governance of the school and managing school finance. The Board records minutes of decisions, discussions and actions taken. Details of the governance arrangements will be published on Exeter Learning Academy Trust's website. The administration and oversight of all school finances is in line with the financial procedures and scheme of delegation.

1.2 Membership

The Governing Body will ensure it has sufficient governors to undertake its duties effectively and in accordance with the Guide to the Law for Governing Bodies. The Board will ensure that it creates an environment which enables it to recruit and retain effective governors and which encourages the participation of all groups and sections of the community. Mentors will be allocated to new governors. The skills mix of Governors will be reviewed regularly. The articles of association which detail the governance arrangements and requirements across the Trust can be found on the Trust website at: www.exeterlearningacademytrust.co.uk.

1.3 Election of chair and deputy-chair

The chair and deputy chair will be elected for one year at a time. Candidates may self-nominate at any time in advance of a vote. Candidates will be able to make a personal statement to the meeting before the vote if they wish. Where an election is contested, voting will be by secret ballot with the candidate receiving the largest number of votes being elected. The chair must be a non-employee elected by the Full Governing Body.

1.4 Appointment of Clerk

The Clerk will have a contract of employment that includes specific provisions in relation to their work as Clerk. This will show hours, rate of pay, method of payment, overtime pay and period of notice and accountability. The Clerk will have an annual performance review.

2. Constitution

2.1 The Board meets at least three times per academic year (more frequent meetings are arranged if deemed necessary by the majority of members).

2.2 The Terms of Reference are approved by the Board and will be reviewed annually.

2.3 The clerk will provide the papers at least 7 days prior to meetings and will take minutes and send them out within 7 days of meetings. Minutes from each meeting are to be signed on approval at the following meeting.

2.4 The quorum for meetings is 3 members.

3. The main duties of the Full Governing Body are:

3.1 Monitoring and Review of School Improvement

- to receive reports from Committees to review outcomes and impact against key performance indicators;
- to challenge and support the school's senior officers to achieve best value in terms of impact, outcomes, quality and cost;
- To approve school plans and ensure these are maintained throughout the academic year and reflect the current status of school improvement.
- To oversee arrangements for Governor involvement in formulating and school plans.
- To receive regular verbal and written updates from the Headteacher and senior leaders on pupil achievement and progress, performance data, School Improvement and self-evaluation plans, performance Management and fulfillment of statutory responsibilities
- The Governing Body will be made aware and make use of external inspection reports from Exeter Learning Academy Trust and partners/Ofsted/LA external advisors
- Governors will take responsibility for being active in the school community, visiting the school and assessing evidence for themselves of progress i.e. evidence of targeted intervention, learning walks demonstrating aspects of the curriculum or progress in a particular topic. They will establish and keep under review arrangements for Governors' visits to the school.
- Governors will monitor the progress of work being undertaken by committees and individuals ensuring there is appropriate attendance, engagement and challenge.

3.2 Ensuring strong and robust governance

- to agree constitutional matters, including procedures where the Governing Body has discretion.
- to agree the programme of work and calendar of meetings for the Governing Body and its committees for the school year.
- to approve the Full Governing Body and Committees' terms of reference and review annually;
- to monitor, update and review the policies defined as school policies as by the Trust Board and review and suggest updates to the Trust-wide policies on request from the Trust Board.
- to take timely action to address decisions to meet Trust and legal requirements for provision of information to the Trust Board;
- to ensure Governors receive induction and access to training procured and monitor attendance;
- to review the effectiveness of the Governing Body regularly and agree appropriate actions to improve performance;
- to ensure Governors complete an annual declaration of business interests and the register of interests for the Trust website. Declarations of interest will be a standing item on each agenda.
- to receive accurate and up-to-date documentation and effective communication of Governing Body decisions and the impact on relevant parties e.g. parents, the community, Trust Schools.
- to recruit new Members (as vacancies arise) and to appoint new Governors where appropriate.

- To appoint or remove the Chair, Deputy Chair and Clerk to the Board and its Committees, and to suspend a Governor.
- Matters of urgency may be dealt with by the chair of governors and/or deputy chair of governors and Headteacher and reported to the next meeting of the full governing board.

3.4 Ensuring sound financial practices

- The administration and oversight of all school finances and ensuring compliance, regularity, propriety and value for money;
- To ensure the school achieves the best value for money received;
- To monitor income and expenditure against budgets using the management accounts
- To approve purchase orders, invoices, payments, virements, disposal of assets, writing off bad debts, insurance, contracts and leases in line with the scheme of delegation;
- To review and recommend school budget plans for approval by the Trust Executive Board and consider proposed revisions to the budget in line with delegated authority from the Trust;
- To delegate authorisation of expenditure and financial oversight within the limits of the Trust Financial Procedures;
- The Chair of the Full Governing Body to carry out performance appraisal of the Headteacher.

3.5 Withdrawal

Any person employed to work at the school, other than the Headteacher, must withdraw from the meeting for discussions and decisions concerning the performance (or pay) of anyone employed at the school. The Headteacher must withdraw if his or her performance (or pay) is being discussed. Any governor or associate member must withdraw where there may be a conflict of interests with items declared on the 'Register of Business Interests' form.

3.7 Delegation of responsibilities

To decide which functions of the Governing Board will be delegated to committees, groups and Individuals and review the arrangements annually. The following functions may be delegated to a committee:

- Functions relating to the approval of the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- Functions relating to school discipline policies
- Functions relating to the exclusion of pupils (except in an emergency when the chair has the power to exercise these functions)
- Functions relating to admissions

3.8 Staff Wellbeing

To be available and respond to matters of particular difficulty, sensitivity or emergency and offer advice to the Headteacher and other staff as appropriate.