BATH & WELLS
Multi Academy Trust

'That they may have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

Trustee Role Description

Updated March 2023

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Trustee Role Description

Our Trust is a family of over 35 schools covering a wide geography within the South West. We are a proudly inclusive Trust, with a mixture of Church and non-Church schools located in their own unique community settings. All of the children in our Trust family are special and each deserve the best chances in life. Our Trust Board sets the vision, values and strategic direction of our Trust, and becoming a Trustee presents an exciting opportunity to positively impact upon the lives of thousands of young people.

Our Trust Board consists of 12 Trustees, and the CEO who is also a Trustee. We welcome Trustees from all backgrounds and walks of life, and seek a balance between different skill sets, professional and personal experiences. The Board is ably supported by the CEO and their Senior Leadership Team providing expertise in Education and School Improvement, Finance, Operations and Human Resources. The Board is also supported by a Governance Professional.

If you would be interested to learn more about joining our Trust Board, we would be delighted to hear from you. To learn more, please contact our Strategic Lead for Governance, Libby Johnstone on Governance@bwmat.org or 01749 588925. Please note this role is **not** open to parents of children at BWMAT schools, or BWMAT employees.

Person specification:

A Trust Board does not require all Trustees to have experience of education, and a strong Board will have a mix of different experiences and professions. The essential qualities of a Trustee will however include:

- A commitment to act with integrity and follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
- A belief in the vital importance of education;
- A commitment to the vision and values of our Trust, and the upholding of our Christian distinctiveness;
- An understanding that each child only has one chance for a positive start to their education, and a commitment to keep children at the heart of decision making;
- An ability to think strategically and objectively;
- A commitment to fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Analytical skills, asking questions, being professionally curious and triangulating different information and evidence to form a sound understanding of our Trust;
- A desire to offer challenge and support, celebrate successes and model reflective and learning leadership;
- A strong communicator, able to work as a team and listen to others;
- A commitment to the time requirements and expectations of the role;
- Digital literacy to allow full engagement in Trustee responsibilities.

We are committed to equality and diversity, and particularly encourage applications from minority,or under-represented groups as well as applicants with any, or no, religious faith.

Key duties:

Together, the Trustees have responsibility for the following:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction across the Trust;

- Holding the CEO to account for the educational performance of the organisation, its pupils, and the performance management of staff;

- Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance of the Trust and making sure that money is well spent.

The Trustee role is a rewarding and varied role and further detail about specific elements of the role is set out below. It is expected that Trustees work together, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, to collectively deliver these responsibilities:

In practice, this means Trustee work includes:

- Setting the vision, values and ethos of the Trust;

- Setting strategic direction and monitoring progress of operational and strategic plans to deliver this;

- Recruiting the CEO and holding them to account for the operational management of the Trust;

- Monitoring the educational outcomes for children in the Trust;

- Engaging with schools and stakeholders to ensure the 'lived experience' within the Trust and our school communities is understood by the Board;

- Setting a budget for the Trust, linked to Trust priorities, and undertaking regular monitoring of spend against the agreed budget;

- Reviewing the Trust's Risk Register and ensuring mitigations are in place;

- Establishing a Scheme of Delegation and holding the central leadership team, local governing committees and Headteachers to account for their performance against the Scheme;

- Agreeing trust policies on statutory and other strategic matters relating to: Education, HR, Finance, Operations and Governance;

- Acting as the employer and final arbiter for staffing matters across the Trust;

- Ensuring, with professional advice as appropriate, that the BWMAT complies with all constitutional, legal, regulatory and statutory requirements

Legal responsibilities:

Trustees of the BWMAT are both trustees of the charity, and directors of the company limited by guarantee and are therefore responsible for the administration and management of the Trust. Trustees have several legal duties, which are often described as those of compliance, care and prudence.

Duty of compliance – trustees must:

- ensure compliance charity law, and with the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency as regulator; in particular ensure that the Trust prepares reports on what it has achieved and annual returns and accounts;
- ensure that the BWMAT does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document, funding agreement or the Academies Financial Handbook and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objectives;
- comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators which govern the activities of the BWMAT;
- act with integrity, and avoid putting themselves in a position where their duty to the charity conflicts with personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body;

Duty of care – trustees must:

- use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills, knowledge and experience as needed to ensure that the BWMAT is well run and efficient;
- consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the BWMAT, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties;

Duty of prudence – trustees must:

- ensure that the BWMAT is, and will remain, solvent;
- use the BWMAT's funds and assets reasonably and responsibly and only in furtherance of the BWMAT's charitable objects;
- avoid undertaking activities that might place the BWMAT's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk;
- take special care when investing the BWMAT's funds, or borrowing funds for the BWMAT to use;.

Expectations and time commitment:

The time commitment of the Trustee role is set out below. Aside from attending Board meetings, a large proportion of the Trustee role is undertaken remotely, using online meetings, and can be managed flexibly around other commitments.

- Attend approximately 12 Trustee meetings per year (a mix of full Board meetings and smaller committee meetings), typically 3-4 hours in length. Board meetings are in person (with a hybrid option) and committee meetings are online. Each Trustee belongs to at least one of 3 sub committees covering: Education, Resources or Audit & Risk. Trust meetings are generally held during the day, with local school meetings or training in the evenings;

- Take the lead on a particular 'Portfolio' of Trust work linked to a committee. This involves acting as a champion for that area of work across the Trust, keeping up to date with relevant information, training, policies and constructively challenging the leadership team;

- Provide support to schools requiring an extra level of governance support and leadership by joining their Local Governing Committee on a temporary

basis to model best practice, coach governors, lead strategic conversations and build capacity to support school improvement;

- Meet with external partners for discussions of strategic importance, for instance with: the Regional Schools Commissioner, Diocese of Bath and Wells, Department for Education, Ofsted inspectors, auditors and peers from other Trusts;

- Engage in ad hoc events and briefings across the Trust to have exposure across our schools and hear feedback from leaders across our Trust

- Prepare for meetings by reading agenda papers, reports, minutes and preparing questions;

- Check the Trust email account regularly to keep up to date on communications;

- Complete mandatory training upon induction and undertake regular training to support your role and compliance of the Trust Board;

- Participate in ad-hoc meetings such as to review complaints or appeals;

- Openness to work towards chairing a Committee, and a commitment to continued personal development and training.

Trustees are encouraged to be fully engaged in the activities of the BWMAT and there are many other opportunities beyond the formal meetings. The role requires a time commitment equivalent to at least one full day per month to attend meetings and events, with additional time to undertake reading, research and informal meetings.

Training and Induction

All Trustees are provided will a comprehensive training plan and handbook upon induction. Internal training opportunities are numerous and open to all Trustees, likewise the Trust has access to a wealth of training resources from the National Governance Association and Confederation of School Trusts.

Key reading for the role includes:

DfE Governance Handbook
DfE- Academy Trust Handbook

To explore this opportunity further, or for additional information about the role, please contact our Strategic Lead for Governance, Libby Johnstone on Governance@bwmat.org or 01749 588925.