



A GUIDE FOR GOVERNORS





ABOUT OUR TRUST

I am pleased, on behalf of the staff, governors, pupils and students of our schools, to write these few words of welcome and an introduction to our Trust. The New Bridge Multi-Academy Trust caters for young people with an EHCP from the age of 4 to 19. We believe that all our young people deserve the very best provision.

New Bridge School converted to a MAT in 2014 to enable the sponsorship of a new build school for children on the autistic continuum, Hollinwood Academy.

Spring Brook School successfully applied to join our Trust and in 2019 we set up the Springboard Project to deliver a more appropriate vocational offer for young people with SEND. We then welcomed Hawthorns School and @EveryoneLearning Teaching School Alliance to our Trust.

We are committed to providing the very best opportunities for our children and young people and our destination focused provision enables them to play a meaningful and fulfilling role within their local and wider community. We have established some of the best employability pathways in the world, with over 11 years of experience in supporting our students into the world of work. We are an Apple 1:1 Trust, the first in the UK, which means that every single one of our children and staff have their own iPad to enhance engagement, achievement and innovation.

Our curriculum and philosophies provide the opportunities for academic and social development that will enhance the life opportunities for our young people as they move into the adult world.



Graham Quinn, CEO



As part of our wider group, we also have two Post-19 organisations, New Bridge Horizons, a social care provision for adults aged 19+ and Future Finders Employability College, that offers a 1-year supported internship course for those students looking to move into paid employment and independent volunteering opportunities.

Our trust is continuously looking for new governors to join our schools. We are looking for hard working and dedicated individuals who can offer value to our schools in supporting us to provide a world class education that offers limitless opportunities for our amazing children and young people. If this is something that interests you after reading this guide, we would love to hear from you.

INTRODUCING STEVE WILLIAMS, CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Steve is chairperson of our trustee board and was previously Chair of Governors at Marland Fold School before it amalgamated with Park Dean and Hilltop School to form New Bridge School.

Steve has a wealth of experience with the Fire Service and is the spokesperson for Oldham on the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Board. Steve is in full time employment working the early shift at YODEL in Shaw, part of the Littlewoods Shop Direct Group in Oldham.

Steve is also an active Labour Party Ward Councillor and very much enjoys his work in the Hollins and Limeside area, making a difference to the lives of local people through supporting community work, training and development and family days out.

Creating Meaningful Futures

‘Being chair of trustees for the New Bridge Multi-Academy Trust is by far the greatest and most fulfilling part of my professional life. At New Bridge, we have a can-do attitude to everything that we do and work at a fast and exciting pace to ensure that our children and young people have the very best opportunities. None of what we do is about egos or a need for recognition. Our passion drives our ambition. Our driving principle of ensuring the very, very best educational offer for every one of our children and young people remains at the heart of what we do. I would highly recommend joining one of our schools as a governor; you will be supported by an incredible team of professionals and the rewards really are endless. Together we can make a real difference. ’



Steve Williams
Chair of Trustees



ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS

NEW BRIDGE SCHOOL is a generic special needs school for pupils and students between the ages of 11 and 19 across two sites, our 11-16 Roman Road campus and our 16-19 St. Martin's Road site. New Bridge School delivers a personalised curriculum that ranges from P1 to GCSE and equivalents. The school houses a swimming pool and specialist theatre, both of which are used daily by the local community.

HOLLINWOOD ACADEMY is a discrete environment catering for those on the autistic spectrum between the ages of 4 and 19. The school is based on our Hollinwood campus and offers qualifications that include GCSE and equivalents.

SPRING BROOK ACADEMY is an all-age school that caters for pupils with a range of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties split across two sites. Spring Brook Lower School, the primary department, is co-located with Lyndhurst Primary School in Hollins. Spring Brook Upper School, the secondary department, is based at our Dean Street site in Failsworth. The school delivers a personalised curriculum and offers qualifications up to GCSE level.

THE SPRINGBOARD PROJECT is a new free school opened in September 2019 on our campus in the centre of Oldham to provide high quality innovative alternative educational experiences for pupils and students with SEMH needs across the 14-19 age range.

HAWTHORNS SCHOOL is the latest organisation to join our family of schools. Hawthorns is located in Audenshaw and supports primary aged children from across Tameside who have an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) and complex learning needs. Hawthorns is also a nationally designated Teaching School and is part of the @EveryoneLearning Teaching School Alliance. Our journey will be stronger with Hawthorns School as partners.

THE EVERYONELEARNING@ TEACHING SCHOOL ALLIANCE (Hawthorns School) shares recognised areas of expertise that reflect school improvement needs. The key areas of work include Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Continuing Professional Leadership Development (CPLD) and School to School Support (STSS).

Successful partnerships involving good schools working together ensure that they become even better. All our schools bring something to our Trust. We are all equals working together. We know that strong collaboration with shared accountability leads to better progress and

- School leaders and teachers can share thinking and planning to spread expertise and tackle challenges together
- Trustees and Governors work together to share strategic thinking, combine skills and support each other
- Leaders, teachers and other staff are shared across more than one school, enabling schools to find different solutions to recruitment challenges
- We retain the best staff by providing new opportunities within our Trust, allowing us to plan succession more effectively
- Groups of schools find it easier to source and fund specialist expertise such as specialist teachers, health and safety, HR and finance
- We share professional development and research more effectively across our Trust
- Economies of scale and collective purchasing ensure that best value procurement methods are achieved





We are proud to be able to offer all our young people:

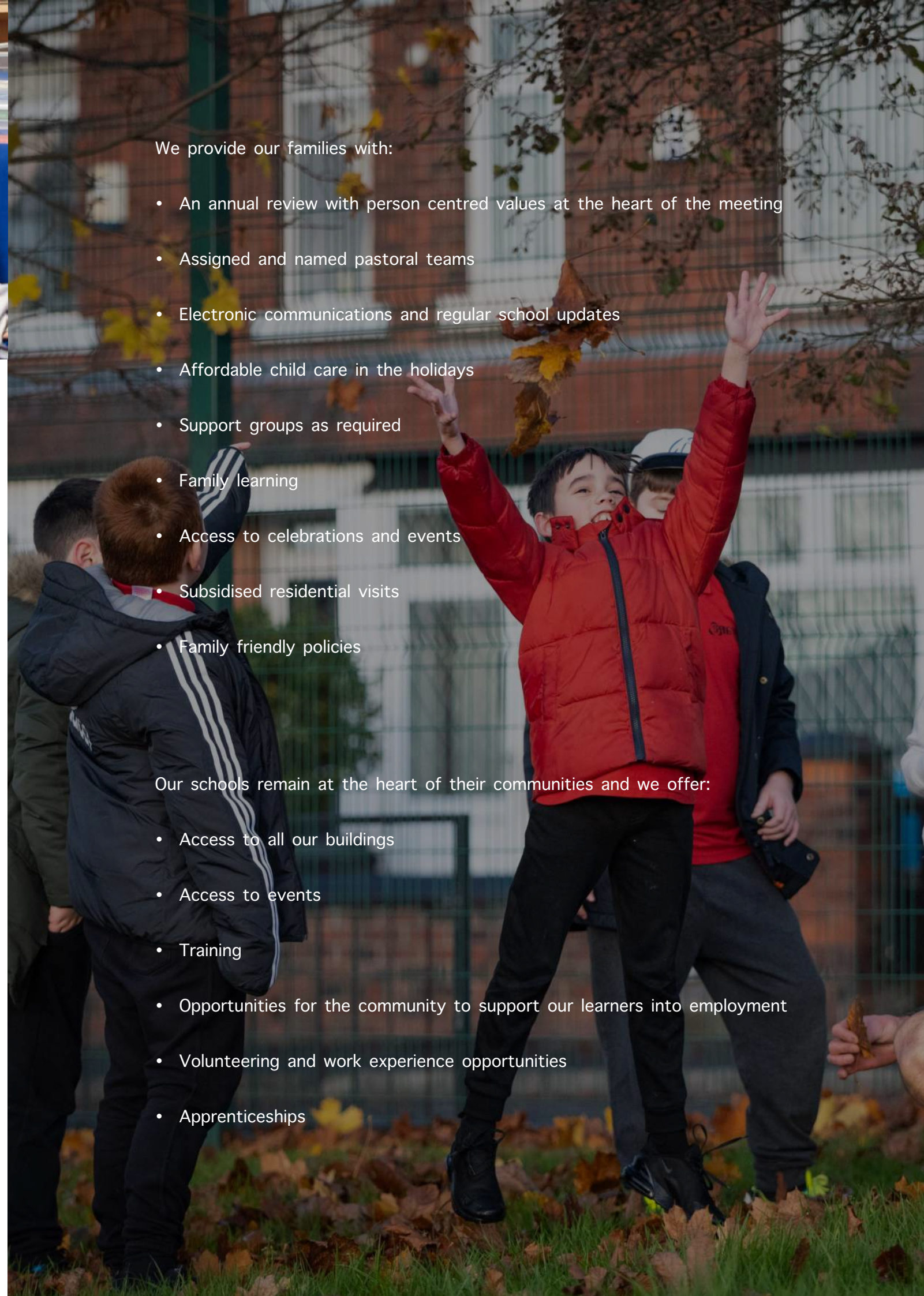
- A fully personalised curriculum offer relevant to each individual
- Bespoke groups to meet the needs of individuals
- Staff who are specially trained to meet the needs of our learners
- Academic and holistic assessment processes that allow the young person to be involved
- A 48 week offer (we run holiday clubs for 9 weeks of the year)
- Access to before school clubs and after school clubs
- A broad and enjoyable extra-curricular provision that includes residential visits, theatre trips, sports and team events (both at national and local level) and educational visits
- Specialised therapeutic approaches if required
- School uniform with a shared identity
- iPads- we are an Apple 1:1 trust, the first trust of special schools in the UK to roll out iPads to every single child and staff member to further enhance learning and engagement.

We provide our families with:

- An annual review with person centred values at the heart of the meeting
- Assigned and named pastoral teams
- Electronic communications and regular school updates
- Affordable child care in the holidays
- Support groups as required
- Family learning
- Access to celebrations and events
- Subsidised residential visits
- Family friendly policies

Our schools remain at the heart of their communities and we offer:

- Access to all our buildings
- Access to events
- Training
- Opportunities for the community to support our learners into employment
- Volunteering and work experience opportunities
- Apprenticeships



ABOUT THE NEW BRIDGE GROUP

THE NEW BRIDGE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST, our growing family of schools, is just one part of the New Bridge Group. We are passionate about improving the life opportunities available to our young people once they leave school and we are continually looking for innovative ways to enable our young people to achieve their aspirations and play a meaningful part in their local communities.

NEW BRIDGE HORIZONS is our flexible day provision for young adults aged 19 to 25+ in the centre of Oldham. Some of our young people attend full time, some for a combination of hours that suit their family circumstances, some for 2 days a week alongside studying part-time at local colleges and there are others who attend specialist colleges full-time during term time and access our centre during their holidays. We provide a stimulating, inspirational environment for everyone, whether they require specialised support for complex health needs or are looking to improve their employability skills. Our provision and philosophies create opportunities for social development to enhance life opportunities. We pride ourselves on a busy, vibrant and varied environment where choice, independence and high standards are central to the opportunities available. By providing activities that suit young people's aspirations, needs and preferences we can offer a very individual programme with support from a well-trained, experienced and dedicated staff team. We provide ongoing support to develop life skills, independence and employability skills to young people from across Oldham and its surrounding boroughs.



In 2015 we set up **FUTURE FINDERS**, our innovative one year supported internship programme originally run in partnership with the Manchester College for young adults aged up to 25 who are interested in accessing supported employment, paid employment or volunteering opportunities. In September 2018 we then opened Future Finders Employability College as an independent college, also known as a Specialist Post-16 Provider. We had found significant limitations in possible employment opportunities for young people with a learning disability on transition into adulthood – previous work experience placements had proved time limited, at times tokenistic and generally ineffective in securing pathways into employment.

Future Finders is a unique experience for our young people, giving them the chance to develop valuable employability skills in full-time work placements with local employers, with exceptional and sustained support from our specialist job coaches. In addition to experiencing real working life, our young people are also supported to develop their independent travel skills and gain a nationally recognised employability qualification at the end of the course. Many of our Future Finders students leave us to move into paid



Creating Meaningful Futures





I became a governor in the mid 1990's at Park Dean School. One of the three schools which amalgamated to form the New Bridge School. I continued as vice-chair of New Bridge until becoming a trustee once the multi academy trust was formed. At the present time I chair the Disciplinary Panel, have a remit for Standards in the Trust and act as vice chair.

I am now retired but when I was working I was a social worker with the Local Authority dealing mainly with children and families. At one point I was Area Manager for an area of the town covering the whole range of services provided by the L.A. In my last two years I worked with solicitors presenting cases in court covering the whole range of child care. Since becoming a governor I have learnt much about the Education Service and the specific needs of the young people who are catered for in our various schools, and still continue to learn!

It is a role which is time consuming, demanding of understanding and being willing to learn. You realise what is involved in the running of a school and the hard work and commitment of all of the staff. If you are interested in young people and want to contribute in some small way to improving life and opportunities for them, then the role of a governor is for you.

New Bridge Multi Academy Trust is a good place to achieve this. You are involved in the decision making process at each stage, welcomed into school on visits and staff area happy to discuss ideas with you and answer any questions or give information to explain. The young people will also chat and explain what is happening. I love being a trustee of the New Bridge Multi Academy Trust and can highly recommend it.



Joan Readyhough,
Trustee,
New Bridge
Multi-Academy
Trust



Our mission statement

‘Learning Together, Learning for All, Learning for Life’

is at the heart of our Trust.

Our vision is to remain faithful to the original key strategic intents set out by our Trustees:

- to develop schools at the heart of communities and ensure that the contribution of every individual is valued
- to offer all our children and young people access to the highest quality and trained staff and to ensure our facilities and resources are entirely fit for purpose
- to offer all the young people access to an ‘extended year’ through holiday clubs and before and after school activities
- to ensure all children and young people have access to an appropriate, challenging curriculum pathway with a clear aspirational destination.

OUR MEMBERS

New Bridge Multi Academy Trust was established in 2014 when the Members set out the Trust’s constitution and signed its Memorandum and Articles of Association. Members of the Trust have an overview of the governance arrangements and the power to appoint and remove Trustees and Governors.

OUR TRUSTEES

Our Trustees play a vital role in holding all our schools to account and are responsible for:

- establishing and steering the Trust’s clarity of purpose
- overseeing effective governance and decision-making
- scrutinising plans for growth or consolidation
- ensuring the Trust is financially competent and has a sustainable budget
- ensuring young people are making progress and gaining the best educational experience possible
- putting effective leadership in place and holding the executive leadership to account
- managing risk and ensuring the Trust is meeting all its statutory and legal responsibilities



The Trustees have a number of committees that are empowered to make decisions:

- Pay Committee
- Disciplinary Committee
- Appeals Committee
- CEO Performance Review

The Trustees meet twice every term and all committees and local governing bodies are required to report to them.

OUR INTERNAL MANAGEMENT BOARDS

Each school within the Trust has 2 Internal Management Boards:

- Standards Board
- Safeguarding Board

The relevant Head of Site chairs each board and can be joined by members of each local governing body and the CEO. Every board meets once each term and the appropriate Director(s) report directly to them.

OUR GOVERNORS

Each school within the Trust has its own local governing body which is made up of:

- two staff governors, one being the Head of Site
- two parent governors
- three co-opted governors

The local governing bodies meet at least three times a year with meetings being held every term.

The Trust has a formal risk management policy to assess business, strategic and educational risks and to implement risk management strategies. The process

involves identifying the types of risk the Trust faces, scoring and prioritising each risk in terms of its potential impact, assessing the likelihood of occurrence and identifying means of mitigating the risk. A risk register is maintained and reviewed by the Audit Committee on a regular basis.

GOVERNING BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board has a general responsibility for the way the school is run, promoting the highest standards of achievement for its pupils. As per the Governance handbook, March 2019, the three core functions on which the Governing Board should focus are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

' I work for Oldham Libraries as a Library Assistant. I joined the governing body as a Parent Governor.

I feel proudest when I see young people go on to lead fulfilling lives when they leave school. Seeing the difference that our school can make to children's lives and life chances is very rewarding. For example I always enjoy attending the presentation events for students who have been on work experience programmes. Talking to them and their families and hearing their enthusiastic plans for the future is lovely.

Governors can make a real difference to our schools. We share our experiences and ideas to complement those of the Leadership Team. We support and challenge their plans by seeing things from the outside. Governors can bring their own professional skills and experience to enhance discussion and support the governing body. It is important to have governors with a range of skills and experience.



Cathy Williams,
Chair of Governors
New Bridge School

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE IS BASED ON SIX KEY FEATURES:



Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy through:

- a clear and explicit vision for the future set by the board, in collaboration with executive leaders, which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart and is communicated to the whole organisation;
- strong and clear values and ethos which are defined and modelled by the board, embedded across the organisation and adhered to by all that work in it, or on behalf of it;
- strategic planning that defines medium to long-term strategic goals, and development and improvement priorities which are understood by all in the organisation;
- processes to monitor and review progress against agreed strategic goals and to refresh the vision and goals periodically and as necessary including at key growth stages or if performance of the organisation drops;
- mechanisms for enabling the board to listen, understand and respond to the voices of parents/carers, pupils, staff, local communities and employers;
- determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders;
- procedures for the board to set and manage risk appetite and tolerance; ensuring that risks are aligned with strategic priorities and improvement plans and that appropriate intervention strategies are in place and embedding risk management at every level of governance, and an informed decision on whether to form, join or grow a group of schools which is underpinned by robust due diligence and an awareness of the need to review the effectiveness of governance structures and processes if and when the size, scale and complexity of the organisation changes.





Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance through:

- rigorous analysis of pupil progress and attainment information with comparison against local and national benchmarks and over time;
- clear processes for overseeing and monitoring school improvement and providing constructive challenge to executive leaders;
- a transparent system for performance managing executive leaders, which is understood by all in the organisation, linked to defined strategic priorities;
- effective oversight of the performance of all other employees and the framework for their pay and conditions of service;
- a regular cycle of meetings and appropriate processes to support business and financial planning;
- effective controls for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money.

People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity who:

- understand the purpose of governance and the role of non-executive leadership and have all the necessary skills, as outlined in the department's Competency framework for governance, to deliver it well;
- include an effective chair and vice-chair with the ability to provide visionary strategic non-executive leadership;
- provide sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making;
- are recruited through robust and transparent processes against a clear articulation of required skills which are set out in a role specification;
- use active succession planning to ensure the board, and the whole organisation, continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective;
- employ a professional clerk, and as necessary a company secretary, to provide expert advice and guidance and to ensure the efficient and compliant operation of the board.



Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities through:

- appropriate board and committee structures that reflect the scale and structure of the organisation and ensure sufficient and robust oversight of key priorities;
- clear separation between strategic non-executive oversight and operational executive leadership which is supported by positive relationships that encourage a professional culture and ethos across the organisation;
- processes for ensuring appropriate communication between all levels and structures of governance and to pupils/students, parents/carers, staff and communities particularly to ensure transparency of decision-making;
- in academy trusts, significant separation between members and trustees to enable members to exercise their powers objectively;
- published details of governance arrangements including the structure and remit of the board and any committees which is understood at all levels of governance and leadership and is reviewed regularly;
- In Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), complementary and non-duplicative roles for the board, any committees or Local Governing Boards (LGBs), and MAT executives in holding school-level leaders to account.

Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements, through:

- awareness of, and adherence to, responsibilities under education and employment legislation and where applicable, charity and company law and all other legal duties including Canon law where applicable;
- plans to ensure that key duties are undertaken effectively across the organisation such as safeguarding, inclusion, special education needs and disability (SEND), and monitoring and oversight of the impact of pupil premium and other targeted funding streams;
- for academies, adherence to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Academies Financial Handbook (AFH) and the trust's funding agreement and articles of association;
- understanding of, and adherence to, responsibilities under the Equalities Act, promoting equality and diversity throughout the organisation including in relation to its own operation.

Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance, through:

- regular skills audits, aligned to the organisation's strategic plan, to identify skill and knowledge gaps and which both define recruitment needs and inform a planned cycle of continuous professional development (CPD) activity including appropriate induction for those new to governance or to the board;
- processes for regular self-evaluation and review of individuals' contribution to the board as well as the board's overall operation and effectiveness;
- commissioning external reviews of board effectiveness, particularly at key growth or transition points, to gain an independent expert assessment of strengths and areas for development;
- documentation which accurately captures evidence of the board's discussions and decisions as well as the evaluation of its impact and which complies with legal requirements for document retention.



THE PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE;

- The internal organisation, management and control of the school
- The educational performance of the school

The Principal is accountable to the Governing Board for the performance of all his/her responsibilities, and must comply with any reasonable direction of the Governing Board. In practice this includes;

- Formulating aims and objectives, policies and targets for the Governing Board to consider adopting
- Advising on and implementing the Governing Board's strategic framework
- Giving governors the information they need and request to help the school raise its standards.

The detailed guidance relating to governance is contained in the Governance Handbook March 2019.

This can be accessed by following the link below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788234/governance_handbook_2019.pdf

NEW BRIDGE

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



After reading this pack, if you are interested in having a further discussion with us about joining the board of governors of one of our schools, please contact

Daniel Wood, Assistant CEO.

Email: dwood@newbridgegroup.org

Telephone: 0161 883 2401