

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Godmanchester Community Education Trust

Governance Arrangements

GODMANCHESTER COMMUNITY EDUCATION TRUST

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INTRODUCTION

Godmanchester Community Education Trust (GCET) is a multi-academy trust established by the Godmanchester Community Primary School Academy Trust on 1 February 2015. The purpose of this document is to set out clearly the governance arrangements for the Trust, including the roles, responsibilities, membership and structure of the various committees and groups charged with ensuring the Trust's objectives are met.

VISION AND VALUES

Our Vision Statement

GCET will provide high quality, inspiring education, ensuring each child develops to reach their full potential.

Our Shared Values

Aspiration: In all areas of our work we will **aspire** to achieve the best that we possibly can.

Caring: We **care** about all members of our community and ensure everyone's well-being and safety is paramount.

Challenge: We will continually **challenge** ourselves and each other to improve in our work.

Determination: We will succeed in what we do through our **determination** and resilience.

Enjoyment: Our schools will be positive environments where we all **enjoy** what we do.

Honesty: We will always be truthful. If we have done something wrong we accept responsibility. We know when to say sorry.

Respect: We expect all who are involved in our schools to display **respect** to each other at all times.

Sharing: We will always work as a team, **sharing** experiences and working together to excel in everything we do.

OUR AIMS AND HOW WE ACHIEVE THEM

1. To ensure our learners achieve their potential, developing resilience and a love of learning and becoming responsible citizens.

We do this by:

- Ensuring a focus on rapid development of the core skills of literacy and numeracy
- Monitoring the achievement and progress of each pupil individually
- Planning effective targeted interventions to ensure each child reaches his/her potential
- Delivering challenging but achievable learning programmes
- Instilling a culture of perseverance and determination
- Ensuring the curriculum includes education on good citizenship, taking responsibility and also ensuring children are given opportunities to contribute to a better school
- Creating fun, vibrant schools where children are happy and successful

2. To develop and support a motivated and engaged workforce who dedicate themselves to achieving the best outcomes for all learners, work together to develop outstanding practice, understand their roles and responsibilities and are accountable for their impact

We do this by:

- Developing roles and responsibilities to empower, develop and motivate staff and governors
- Encouraging the sharing of expertise and development of specialisms amongst teaching staff

- Providing inspiring leadership and effective management support
- Prioritising the personal development of all staff to maximise their potential
- Having an effective reward system which acknowledges achievement and excellence and facilitates recruitment and retention of the best staff
- Using a robust and effective performance management process to ensure any concerns about performance are identified and addressed promptly and effectively, and that staff receive the support they need

3. To ensure our schools have an inclusive, high quality learning environment, and deliver teaching and learning that is consistently good or outstanding through an inspiring, relevant and engaging curriculum.

We do this by:

- Maximizing the use of specialist teachers and peer support in curriculum delivery
- Making effective use of technology and other resources
- Capitalizing on opportunities to use the local community to support the curriculum and maintain a local focus
- Prioritising the engagement of staff in the curriculum with active participation in its development and continuing review
- Implementing systems which monitor and audit the quality of all the Trust's learning environments
- Having due regard to our equality and diversity commitment and obligations when developing policy or making decisions. The impact of decisions or policy on protected groups in line with current legislation, will be considered at all times and reviewed on a regular basis.

4. To establish and maintain high levels of achievement for all through effective evaluation and prioritising a culture of continuous improvement.

We do this by:

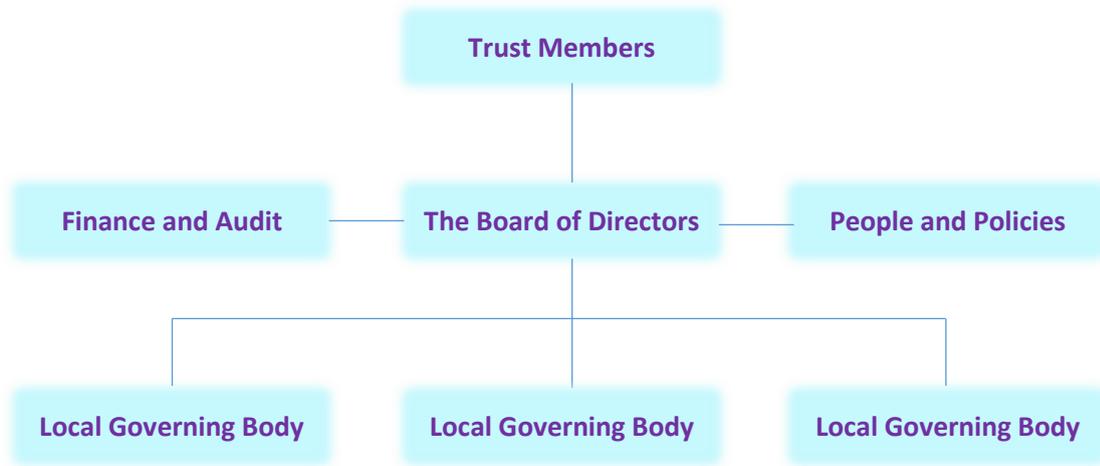
- Ensuring that internal systems are in place for effective self-evaluation of every aspect of our provision
- Seeking external scrutiny of activities and respond and react to feedback
- Seeking opportunities to share best practice with other schools/trusts and organisations

5. To ensure schools are an integral and inclusive part of their local community

We do this by:

- Ensuring a local emphasis in the curriculum
- Ensuring schools play an active role in their local community
- Encouraging active participation in local events
- Inviting local organisations, businesses and community figures to participate in education of local children
- Prioritising local community relationships and integration in decisions about future growth of the Trust

STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The following principles will guide the effective management and accountabilities of the Trust

1. Whilst the Trust is the employer of all staff, the Board of Directors of the Trust has delegated certain powers to the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) to exercise oversight of the staff in respective academies within the Trust. These powers are set out in a separate GCET document: 'Scheme of Delegation' to Local Governing Bodies.
2. The Board of Directors' approval of appointments made by LGBs shall not be unreasonably withheld
3. In troubled or new schools the composition of LGBs and sub-committees will differ and the balance of Board of Directors involvement will be greater.
4. LGBs operate on a basis of earned autonomy. Where performance is consistently good or better, the LGB will agree KPIs, targets, the curriculum and the development plan taking into account the relevant expert data provided by the Schools Improvement Partner and the data dashboard. Where performance causes concern (historic results, Ofsted reports, etc.) the Board of Directors will intervene more.
5. Alongside any formal reporting processes, there is healthy overlap to ensure that communication between the respective groups is informal as well as formal.
6. The Governance structure aims to ensure that the Trust is clearly represented on all LGBs in order that there is a coherent and consistent approach, whilst maintaining a local focus
7. Whilst the Trust's schools will operate with as much autonomy as possible, the Board of Directors will oversee the effective and efficient deployment and management of resources and staffing across all academies. This will significantly reduce the demands on the LGBs with consistent policies and systems; efficiency savings in terms of leadership and management and financial economies of scale; the development of shared expertise in specialist areas and the deployment and monitoring of resources to maximise impact on standards in all schools.
8. A consistent format approach to school improvement planning and a universal self-evaluation model will be used across the academies and will be the responsibility of the LGBs and Senior Leadership Teams. These will be tabled for information and with questions invited via the Board of Directors in advance of the meeting if necessary.
9. All Directors act collectively in the best interests of the Trust despite any connection to a particular school. All decisions will normally be made by consensus decision making. LGBs will be consulted fully on all major decisions being made by the Board of Directors which affect their school particularly.
10. The Trust's Vision, Values and Aims apply universally however within those parameters each school is expected and encouraged to develop its own identity

ADMINISTRATION

Scheduling

All meetings of the various committees and groups will be planned to ensure that routine governance functions can be managed efficiently for the individual schools and across the Trust.

An annual calendar of meetings will be coordinated by a Clerk appointed by the Board of Directors. The calendar of meetings is proposed by the Chair of Governors for each school and approved by the Board of Directors in the summer term of the preceding year after the work of the Trust the preceding year has been evaluated. The calendar also describes in brief the annual “work flow” of each committee.

Clerking

The Central Administration team will ensure that common practices and routines are used for clerking and administration of meetings. The clerk will be expected to liaise with the respective Chairs of the committees, advise on governance and reporting procedures and produce minutes in a timely manner.

Draft minutes will be circulated to the committee within two weeks of a meeting, and in the absence of comments/amendments/corrections of errors, the Chair of the relevant committee will approve minutes as being final and circulate.

Papers, reports and decision-making

In order to maximise the efficiency of all meetings, attendees are required to ensure they read and review in advance any papers, minutes or other items relevant to the agenda of the upcoming meeting, and, where comments, suggestions or other feedback is requested, to provide those via email in advance of the meeting rather than during the meeting.

Any papers or minutes not available for review one week before a meeting is due to convene will not be discussed at the upcoming meeting other than in exceptional/urgent circumstances.

COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Trust Members

Membership & Meetings

The Trust's membership is set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association (as adopted Feb 2015). The Members are appointed by the other Members and are from a variety of backgrounds and expertise. There must be a minimum of three Members, but there is no upper limit and no fixed term of office.

Membership	Attending
Members of the Trust	Executive Headteacher
	External invited parties for advice or other input as required
	Chair of Board of Directors
	Other director/s as nominated by the BoD

The Trust Members will usually meet twice a year. The agenda will be prepared by the Chair and circulated one week in advance of the meeting. Members will be directed to the shared folder containing minutes and other papers for their review in advance of the meeting.

Responsibilities

- Oversight of the effective management of the Trust by the Board of Directors
- Holding the Board of Directors and leadership across the Trust to account
- Receiving the Annual Report and Audited Accounts approved by the Board of Directors
- Developing, approving and amending the Articles of Association
- Appointment of Directors

Reporting arrangements

Trust Members will have access to minutes of Board of Directors, and will receive an annual report from the Board of Directors. Trust Members will also receive an "academies data dashboard" alongside other strategic documentation.

When putting together the agenda, the Chair can identify/suggest whether anything on the Board of Directors annual report needs to be discussed and added to the agenda for the Trust Members meeting.

There will be a standing agenda item to note that Board minutes and annual report have been received and the contents noted.

The Board of Directors

Membership & Meetings

Staff	LGB representatives	Other Directors
Executive Headteacher	One representative of each LGB, usually the Chair of Governors or a nominated Deputy	Non-executive Directors
Heads of School may attend		
Other staff members as appropriate		

The Board will meet monthly usually during the school day. Meetings will be chaired by the Chair of the Board of Directors who will also, in conjunction with the clerk, prepare and circulate the agenda one week in advance of the meeting, and direct attendees to the shared folder containing minutes and other papers for their review in advance of the meeting.

Responsibilities

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

- Setting the strategy and overall direction of the Trust and determine the business strategies and plans that underpin the Trust's organisational strategy.
- Developing the vision and values
- Ensuring that organisational structure and capability are appropriate for implementing the chosen strategies.
- Evaluating the achievement of the Trust's vision and values of each individual school / LGB
- Monitoring and ensuring achievement of the strategic objectives

EFFICIENCY AND SYSTEMS

- Overseeing the effective and efficient deployment and management of resources and staffing across all academies whilst enabling the Trust's schools to operate with as much autonomy as possible
- Monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership and services across the schools
- Determining and approving consistent policies and systems across the Trust's schools to support and monitor governance
- Determining which authorities shall be delegated to LGBs or committees at any time and reviewing delegated authorities on an annual basis
- Business Continuity Planning
- Reviewing and approving significant IT/premises infrastructure projects
- Approving the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chairs of LGBs following proposal by the relevant LGB

STANDARDS

- Ensuring standards and achievements across the Trust's schools by holding each school to account for the whole school performance through its monitoring of the performance data and monitoring reports
- Development of shared expertise across the Trust
- Ensuring curriculums reflect national statutory requirements
- Appointment and performance management of the Executive Headteacher

FINANCIAL

- Approving annual audited accounts for schools and the Trust as a whole
- Maintaining all adequate and appropriate insurances
- Approving procurement policy
- Approving/authorising significant expenditures, contracts awarded, invitations to tender issued and quotations of over the respective financial levels as specified in the procurement policy from time to time
- Confirming opening or closure of bank accounts
- Hold overall responsibility for the Trust's Risk Register

LEGAL

- Statutory duties
- Ensuring compliance with any and all relevant legislation
- Appointing legal advisers where appropriate
- Setting, maintaining and developing the Trust's position in any legal dispute or potential dispute.
- Ensuring the terms and conditions of funding agreements are adhered to

Reporting arrangements

The Board will receive a Points to Report document from all LGBs.

When putting together the agenda, the Chair can identify/suggest whether anything on the Points to Report needs to be specifically discussed at the meeting. In their 'Points to Report' document the LGB Chair may suggest item/items they wish to be included on the next BOD agenda.

There will be a standing agenda item to note that Points to Report have been received and the contents noted.

A Points to Report document will be sent to the LGBs after the Board meeting, including any decisions made and information to be communicated.

Finance & Audit Committee

Membership & Meetings

Membership	Attending
Executive Headteacher	Accountants/auditors as required
Heads of School	
Finance Manager	
Responsible Officer	
A nominated governor with responsibility for finance from each LGB	
Up to two non-executive directors as nominated by the Board of Directors	

The Finance and Audit committee will meet each term usually during the school day. Meetings will be chaired by a Director who will also in conjunction with the clerk prepare and circulate the agenda one week in advance of the meeting.

Responsibilities

- Providing guidance and assistance to the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School and Local Governing Bodies in any matters relating to the Trust's financial responsibilities
- Overseeing long-term financial planning and resourcing in the context of the Trust and individual School Development Plans and of the policies and objectives of the Trust
- Financial planning and probity, and resource management across the Trust
- Drafting procurement policy for approval by the BoD
- Agree a programme of work to be undertaken by the Responsible Officer on behalf of the Board of Directors
- Receiving reports following audits carried out by the Responsible Officer and agreeing necessary actions.
- Recommending to the Board of Directors an annual budget for each academy that reflects strategic objectives and priorities
- Recommending to the Board of Directors a capital investment budget for each academy and recommend approval of proposed capital spending plans
- Ensuring compliance with procurement policy

- Monitoring spending of funds against budget during and after the close of the financial year and report on any significant issues to the Board of Directors
- Receiving annual audited accounts for all schools and combined accounts for the Trust as prepared by the appointed accountants, and recommend these for approval by the Board of Directors
- Maintaining awareness of financial regulations including the Academies Financial Handbook, notifying the Board of Directors of any relevant changes, and making any recommendations for changes to procedures in accordance with financial regulations.
- Recommending to the Board of Directors appointment or reappointment of the auditors.
- Recommending to the Board of Directors appointment or reappointment of the Responsible Officer
- Oversee the management of the Risk Register and report to the BOD regarding the Risk Register.

Reporting arrangements

A “Points to report” document will be sent to the Board of Directors after the finance meeting including any decisions made and information to be communicated.

People and Policies Committee

Membership & Meetings

Membership	Attending
Executive Headteacher	External HR when required
Heads of School	
Up to two non executive Directors appointed by the Board of Directors	

The People and Policies Committee will meet once per term usually during the school day. Meetings will be chaired by a Director appointed by the Trust who will also in conjunction with the clerk prepare and circulate the agenda one week in advance of the meeting, and direct attendees to the shared folder containing minutes and other papers for their review in advance of the meeting.

Responsibilities

- Identifying a list of policies and procedures needed to ensure the Trust functions efficiently and effectively, taking into account legal obligations and best practice
- Ensuring that policy-writing is delegated to the appropriate person or committee and that policies are reviewed at regular intervals for effectiveness and currency, and updated to take into account legislative or other changes
- Monitoring and reviewing a strategic staffing plan for the Trust
- Developing terms and conditions of employment designed to enable effective recruitment and retention of staff whilst meeting the needs of the Trust
- Recommending a Reward Policy for adoption across the Trust and ensure the policy is implemented in a fair and transparent manner in accordance with staff contracts of employment and employment law and giving regard to the fact that any decisions with a significant financial implication can only be made subject to the approval of the governing body following advice from the Finance Committee.
- Recommending to the Finance Committee the annual budget for pay and possible staff salary adjustments in line with appraisal and staff training developments.
- Reporting to the Board of Directors on all staff matters which relate to conditions of service and on general staffing trends/areas of concern.
- Ensuring relevant information and actions regarding employment law/best practice developments are communicated to the Board of Directors and LGBs as appropriate.

- Determining and monitoring the appointments procedure on behalf of the Board of Directors.
- Setting and monitoring a learning and development strategy each year to ensure that adequate staff training and director /governor training is taking place.
- Delegating to the Heads of School all matters relating to the day to day management and supervision of the staff employed at their school.
- Ensuring that governors who have HR responsibilities are aware of and understand those responsibilities.
- Ensuring that all staff have an effective induction programme and compliance with the induction requirements for newly qualified teachers.
- Ensuring that there is an effective performance management system in place and that staff have appropriate support with implementing this.
- Making decisions regarding the pay and progression for all staff with exception of the Heads of School/Executive Headteacher
- Nominating a Director to take part in the Head of Schools' performance review and making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding pay and progression for Heads of School
- Forming a salary appeals committee when required.
- Implementing policies to ensure best practice with regard to Safeguarding and safer recruitment.
- Having final approval on decisions regarding termination of employment following recommendations by the Executive Headteacher.
- Further to the recommendations of the Executive Headteacher, having final approval on decisions regarding the delegation of HR responsibilities to internal staff and/or external providers in enabling the committee to fulfil its responsibilities as outlined above.
- Forming an EHT committee, such committee to make recommendations to the BOD regarding pay and progression of EHT.

Reporting arrangements

A "Points to report" document will be sent to the Board of Directors after the People and Policies meeting including any decisions made and information to be communicated.

Local Governing Bodies

Membership & Meetings

The committee structure, organisation and meeting schedules are to be decided by the Local Governing Body and subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

It is anticipated that an LGB should be a maximum of 10 in number (including the Head of School) as follows:

Membership	Also attending
Head of School	Invited staff members for presentations or similar as requested
At least 2 Parent Governors	Any Director may attend
Up to 3 Staff Governors	Executive Headteacher may attend
Remainder as Appointed Community Governors	

Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Local Governing Bodies are appointed for a term of up to three years for a maximum of two consecutive terms of office. There will be an annual review/confirmation of each appointment by the Local Governing Body in the summer term for the following year, approved by the Board of Directors.

Responsibilities

LGBs are sub-committees of the Trust. The LGB should support and strengthen their Head of School's leadership and, by working with the Executive Head/Trust, hold them accountable for the performance of pupils and staff.

LGBs are focused upon teaching and learning, individual school contexts, monitoring standards and achievement and how the school meets the local community's needs and aspirations. This includes:

- Developing strategic priorities and plans for the individual academy with the SLT in line with the Trust's Vision and Values
- Ensuring that the levels of progress and achievement the Trust expects are maintained.
- Monitoring and challenging standards within the school
- Ensuring Trust policies are implemented

- Engaging with all stakeholders to improve outcomes for pupils
- Ensuring that quality assurance procedures within the academy are accurate and moderated
- Monitoring the use of Pupil Premium funds and ensure outcomes improve
- Evaluating pupil attendance, admissions, exclusion, well-being, preparation for their futures and views by analysing a range of data; and taking action to ensure the academy fulfils the Trust's objectives.
- Appointment of Governors
- Recommendation of the Chair and Deputy Chair to the Board of Directors
- Local admissions matters including appeals
- Ensuring policies are implemented at a local level to adhere to best practice in respect of Safeguarding
- Maintaining an oversight in respect of SEN
- Participating in the appointment of staff at a local school level, where appropriate
- Agreeing a proposed annual spending plan for capital projects and submit for review and approval by F&A and BoD.

Reporting arrangements

LGBs must report to the Board of Directors in relation to the key strategic objectives, including but not limited to:

- Efficiency and effectiveness of leadership and services across the schools, including but not limited to; health and safety, economies of scale, efficiency savings, site management and development.
- The achievement, attainment and progress of pupils attending the school (Data Dashboard), reflecting the cycle of school improvement planning and self-evaluation.
- The financial performance of the school against budget, in the form of a statement of income and expenditure against the approved budget. The Chair or Deputy Chair of each LGB will prepare a written report identifying any significant variances and measure being put in place to rectify such variances.

All minutes of LGB (Full and sub-committee) meetings will be stored in a shared folder containing minutes and other papers and made available to all members of the LGB and the Board of Directors.

There will be a standing agenda item to note that Points to Report from Board of Directors meetings have been received and the contents noted.

A Points to Report document will be sent to the Board of Directors after the LGB meeting in a set format, including any decisions made and information to be communicated.

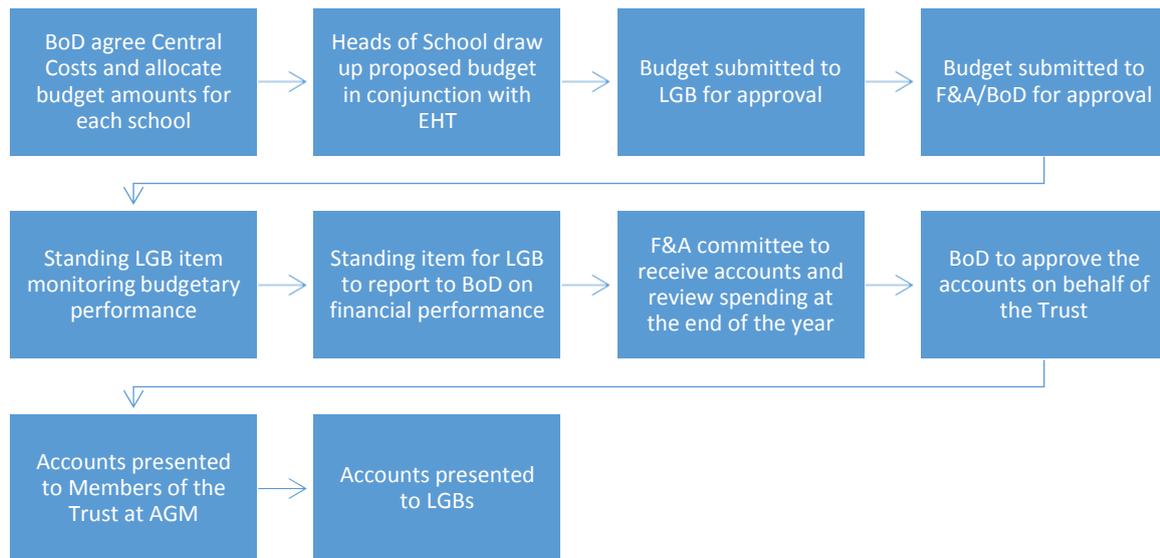
Sub-Committees

Each LGB may decide best how to discharge its responsibilities and whether the employment of sub committees/working groups is necessary.

The Board of Directors may intervene and designate committees or working groups if it feels responsibilities are not being adequately met.

APPENDIX ONE

Budgeting/financial management process



APPENDIX TWO

Evaluation

