

Interested in Becoming a governor



Freedom to grow, Strength you can Trust

A note from the CEO

I would like to thank you for your interest in becoming a Governor in one of our schools at the Mast Academy Trust.

As a trust, we are small, people centred and ethically charged. We came together as four schools who shared a very deep rooted belief that education, at a time of great national change, should never lose sight of its true purpose: to improve the life chances of every child in our care. We believe the most effective and powerful way to do this, is through working together collaboratively for the greater good.

Over time we have evolved and adapted to find the most effective way to harness the potential of our trust. The support and work of our governors is integral to our journey.

Our governors work with our leaders to ensure we achieve our ambitions, through providing support and challenge, and ensuring that children remain at the centre of all decision making.

I hope you find this pack interesting and provide you with information to decide if you wish to apply to be a governor in one of our schools.



Natasha Greenough



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The Mast Academy Trust

We want to support everyone to be the change they wish to see in the world. We understand that this is not about grand gestures, it's about helping individuals.

Through a constant drive to enrich and develop our people, we can create a group of schools capable of achieving this goal. We will remember this in everything we do, everything we say, every action we take, everything we promote. By keeping this focus, we aim to be an influential contributor to the world of education and an example to others.

Our Vision

We celebrate **individuality**

We **collaborate** for the good of our children and staff

We **inspire** our children, and our employees to **achieve** their ambitions

We all **learn** from our experiences

We ensure a **safe** and **caring** environment for everyone

Our Values

Put the children at the heart

Value all our **people** and respect their well-being

Serve the **community** around us

Respect different opinions and then unite together

Be willing to **challenge** and accept challenge

Support all areas within the MAST Academy Trust

Adhere to the Nolan Principles

The Mast Academy Trust was established in December 2016 to build upon strong, existing partnerships around the pupils and families in our locality through Academy status. The Trust currently comprises of four schools across the 4-13 years age range. We are a collaborative Trust, with all leaders supporting the development of Mast within the context of an Executive Leadership Team. Working strategically together, within our Pyramid of schools and with other services, we aim to transform provision and outcomes for pupils and their families.

Alongside its improvement work in its current member schools, the Trust plans to work actively with other schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to grow its family of schools once established. This will facilitate enhanced system-led improvements, opportunities for collaboration between leaders and staff within the organisation and better economies of scale as required in the challenging educational climate.

We encourage schools to join us over time if they wish to:

- ◆ Remain individual in that they thrive in their own context and in line with their own vision and values.
- ◆ Work with us in partnership in order to secure better outcomes for pupils.
- ◆ Join a truly collaborative Trust that has capacity to support school improvement pertinent to school needs.
- ◆ Access services to support financial effectiveness.
- ◆ Access services to support improvements to teaching and learning.
- ◆ Expect a flexible and individual approach so that support is tailored to needs.
- ◆ Access opportunities for close partnership working with the Local authority, RSC and local Teaching Schools, so that academy needs come first.

Our schools



Birdsedge is a small, rural school on the outskirts of Huddersfield. The school is set in a beautiful location, surrounded by the rolling hills and woodland scenery of the Upper Dearne Valley. We are located in the village of Birdsedge and we are an active part of the local community, with strong links with local Church and other Community groups.

Headteacher: Mrs D Waddington

Birdsedge First School
Penistone Road
Birdsedge
Huddersfield
HD8 8XR
Tel: 01484 605441
Email: office@birdsedgefirst.org
Website: www.birdsedgefirst.org



Shelley First School
School Terrace
Far Bank
Shelley
Huddersfield
HD8 8HU
Tel: 01484 604484
Email: office@shelleyfirstschool.co.uk
Website: www.shelleyfirstschool.co.uk

We are fortunate to have a vibrant and happy school, supported by a wonderful school community. Our motto 'together we succeed' truly reflects our philosophy and successes.

We ask all of the community to adhere to our ethical code:

- Care, fairness & respect
- No barriers to learning
- Celebration and joy in all achievements

Headteacher: Mrs D Knowles

Children at Scissett Middle School enjoy a wide range of activities which extends their experience in many parts of the curriculum. Health and Safety is emphasised in all school activities, and always plays a key role in the organisation of field trips and visits. Scissett Middle School provides an outstanding education for all its pupils and prepares them for life in the 21st century.

We will create an inclusive culture of learning where all children will be challenged in their thinking, strive for continuous improvement and be motivated to become lifelong learners. We will empower our children to become respected citizens and enable them to make valuable contributions locally, nationally and globally.

Scissett Middle School
Wakefield Road
Scissett
Huddersfield
HD8 9JX
Tel: 01484 865444
Email: office@scissett.com
Website: www.scissett.com



Headteacher: Mrs A Large



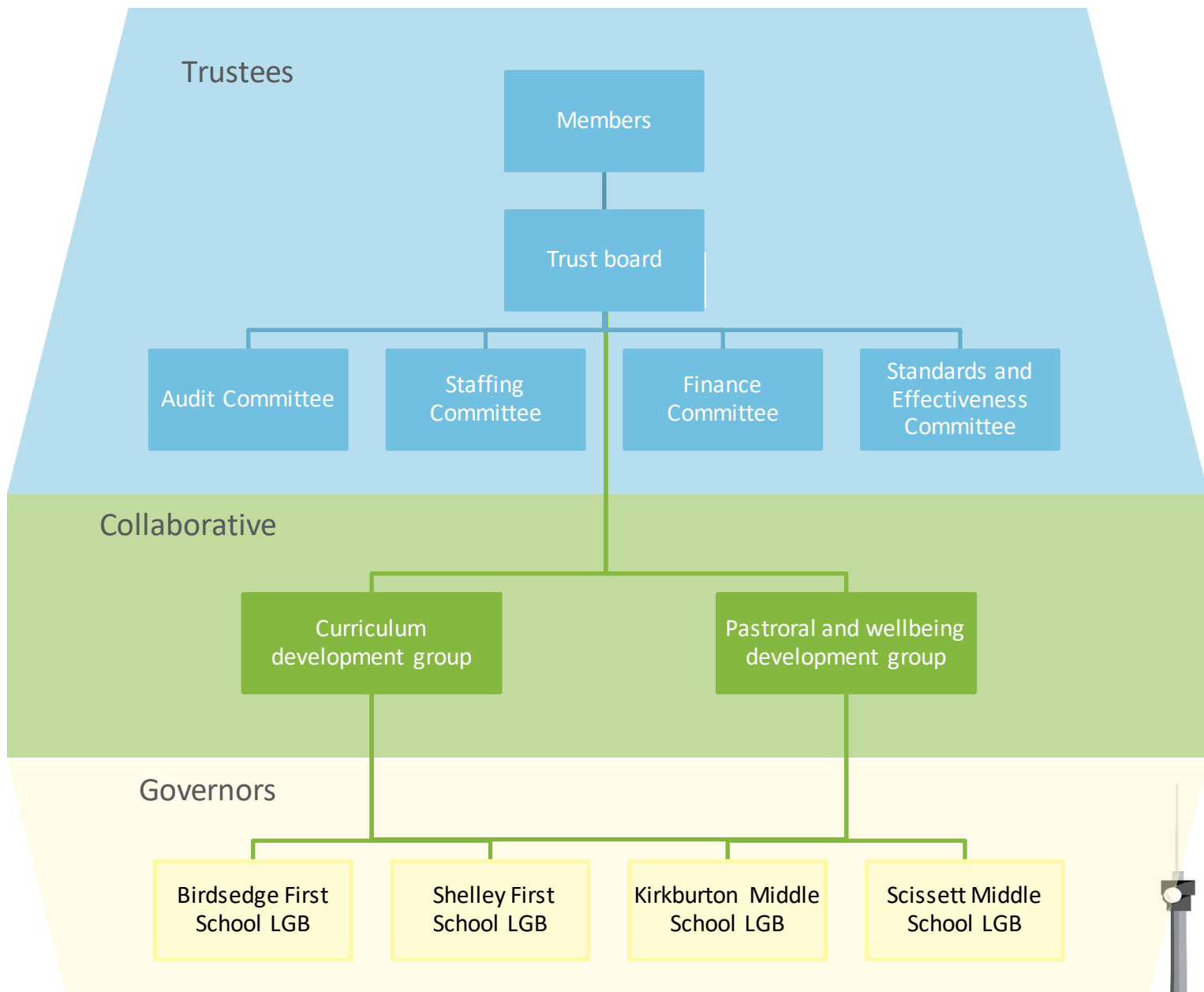
Kirkburton Middle School
Turnshaw Avenue
Kirkburton
Huddersfield
HD8 0TJ
Tel: 01484 222737
Email: office@kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk
Website: www.kirkburtonmiddleschool.co.uk

KMS provide a welcoming and secure environment in which pupils enter as young children and leave as confident young adults, each developing at the rate that is right for them. We specialise in supporting, nurturing and guiding young children through this time in their lives – emotionally, socially and academically – in order that they are able to achieve well and feel safe.

We believe strongly in the importance of the principle of inclusion, the development of the whole child and meeting the needs of the individual. To this end we provide a broad and balanced curriculum together with an extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Headteacher: Mr C Taylor

Governance structure



The function of governance

The Governance Handbook issued by the Department for Education states:

All boards, no matter what type of schools or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

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; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The NGA has identified eight elements that research and practice tell us are essential for good governance:

Eight elements of effective governance

These apply to whatever type of trust or school you govern. These eight elements are needed to transform the team of diverse people with a range of skills, experience and knowledge into a highly effective governing board.

1. the right people around the table
2. understanding their role and responsibilities
3. good chairing
4. professional clerking
5. good relationships based on trust
6. knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
7. committed to asking challenging questions
8. confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of children and young people

What does a Governor do?

As part of the governing body team, a governor is expected to:

1

Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings which determine:

- the vision and ethos of the school;
- clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
- that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
- the school's staffing structure;
- the principles to be used by school leaders to set school specific policies.

2

Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:

- agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
- considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
- asking challenging questions of school leaders;
- ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
- ensuring senior leaders have developed the required school specific policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
- acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing body on the progress on the relevant school priority; and
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders : pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.



3

Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4

When required, serve on panels of governors to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;
- hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;
- hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

Extract from: NGA - Model governor role description



The role of a Governor

All those involved in governance should demonstrate the following attributes:

| Attribute | What this looks like on a governing board |
|---------------|--|
| Committed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Devoting the required time and energy to the role and aiming to achieve the best outcomes for young people.◆ Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance. |
| Confident | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Having an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations.◆ Understanding the value of meaningful questioning. |
| Curious | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Be willing to express opinions and to play an active role on the board.◆ Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach |
| Challenging | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo and asking questions of leaders.◆ Not taking information or data at face value and always seeking to improve things. |
| Collaborative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others.◆ Understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils, the local community, the local authority and employers. |
| Critical | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables challenge and support.◆ Self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to enable both themselves and the board to become as knowledgeable as possible. |
| Creative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Able to challenge conventional ideas and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving.◆ Recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success. |

Provided by: NGA Right people around the table

As a governor in the Mast Academy Trust you will hold a role within an appointed individual school governing body; you will also work closely with the Trust Board of the Mast Academy Trust.

There are three governor roles currently within our school governing bodies.

Community Governor

Parent Governor

Staff Governor

Governor roles

Parent Governor

Parent governors play a vital role on the school governing body, holding the unique position of having a parental viewpoint of the school.

Through the children, they have a first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum, and how the school is perceived from the 'consumers' point of view. This enables parent governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the school.

It is important for parent governors to establish a rapport with the parental body which elected him/her, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

Although being available to advise parents on appropriate routes of action is a very important aspect of the role, it is vital that parent governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns. Apart from the possibility of this jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no governance representative has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school.

Parent governors are representative parents rather than representatives of parents.

To effectively fulfil the role, parent governors should:

- make themselves known to the parent body
- try to attend in-service training sessions
- listen impartially to concerns raised by parents
- guide parents regarding appropriate lines of action and procedures
- present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the parent community
- set up and operate a system of liaison with the Parent Teacher Association (or similar)

Community Governor

A community governor is a person appointed by the school governing body and who, in the opinion of the school governing body, has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

It is important for community governors to establish a rapport with the local community, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance. It is vital that community governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns, and in relation to the pupils of the school, follow the guidance and processes in place.

To effectively fulfil the role, community governors should:

- make themselves known to the wider community, including the pupil community and geographically local community
- try to attend in-service training sessions
- listen impartially to concerns raised by pupils and the community
- guide the community regarding appropriate lines of action and procedures
- present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the pupil and local community
- Set up and operate a system of liaison with the School Council (or similar)

Staff Governor

Staff governors consist of the headteacher, non-teaching staff and teaching staff – the position of the headteacher being ‘ring-fenced’ (i.e. should the headteacher choose not to be a governor no-one else can fill the vacancy). The role is unique in that, by definition, staff are involved in the day-to-day running of the school and yet are asked as governors to put this to one side and be ‘strategic managers’.

The role of the staff governor offers an opportunity to make a real contribution to the strategic management of the school, providing an interesting and rewarding dimension to work.

It is important for staff governors to establish a rapport with the body which elected him/her, whilst continuing to maintain the strategic approach to school governance. Although being available to advise staff on appropriate routes of action is a very important aspect of the role, it is vital that staff governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns. Apart from the possibility of this jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no governance representative has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school.

To effectively fulfil the role, staff governors:

- have equal rights with all other governors
- should not participate in discussions where they have a personal interest in the outcome
- should not participate in discussions about colleagues’ pay (NB this does not apply to the headteacher who should be involved in discussions about staff pay, but not about his/her own pay)
- follow the agreed procedure for putting items on the agenda
- should feel free to express their own personal views, it being recognised that this is not necessarily the view of the majority of staff
- do not have a mandate to express any views other than their own. However, they should report in good faith any widely held staff views, even if in a vote they decide to vote differently
- try to attend in-service training sessions
- should agree with the rest of the governing body how decisions can be shared with staff (not what was actually said) unless the matter is deemed confidential
- should be aware of the sensitivity of governing body meeting discussions and clarify after such discussions which items can be reported and which items the governing body wish to remain unreported until the minutes of the meeting have been confirmed
- Should set up and operate a system of liaison with the teaching and non-teaching staff



What's in it for you

Anyone aged 18 or over can be a governor (but there are some exceptions) and you do not need to be a parent. There is no requirement for you to have an understanding of the education system, just the necessary skills, character and time to contribute.

Schools need and benefit from a range of professional knowledge on their governing board including education, finance, human resources, legal, marketing and public relations, property and estates management, and organisational change.

As a governor, you will be able to:

- Use your own experience of education and life beyond school to inform conversations
- Develop and utilise your skills in a board-level environment
- Make a valuable contribution to education and your community
- Support and challenge the school so that it improves for pupils and staff
- Bring your unique experiences, perspectives and insights in to decision-making in the interests of the school community

Being part of a governing board will give you experience of working at a strategic level and the opportunity to learn and practice skills that have a direct relevance to employers.

These include:

- strategic leadership
- budget control
- data analysis
- staff recruitment
- building relationships and networks
- effective teamworking
- communication
- problem solving
- influencing/negotiation

Just as importantly, your involvement and commitment to a local school could make a massive difference to the future of young people and your community. Your input will help the school to improve and its children to get the best education possible.



Applying to be a governor

Who can apply?

Anyone over the age of 18 can become a school governor: no specific knowledge or experience is required and there is no requirement to be a parent, although parent governors are being sought in some of our schools.

What is the time commitment?

The average time commitment is 5-8 hours per month, although it will vary depending on the needs of the school and the role. This includes meetings, background reading and school visits. Most governing bodies hold their meetings in the evenings.

Like magistrates or members of a jury, school governors have a right to reasonable time off of work for their public duties, although this may be unpaid. Your company's HR department will be able to tell you about its policy. Each school sets a term of office for its governors, four years, and many serve multiple terms. However, as a volunteer you can resign before your term is finished if your circumstances change.

Will I need training?

You don't need any specific training to be a governor; we have an induction programme and ongoing training and resources to support you.

We also provide access to training and information provided by the National Governance Association.

What does a governor not do?

The role of governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role. A governor does not:

- Write school policies;
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience;
- Spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school;
- Fundraise – the governing body should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks;
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources;
- Do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing body need to consider and rectify this.

Are there any factors that mean you couldn't be a governor?

Bankruptcy can disqualify someone from being a governor. Disqualification applies to anyone who is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, interim bankruptcy restriction order, debt relief restrictions order, or interim debt relief restrictions order; or whose estate has been sequestered and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced

Is there any kind of payment?

Governance is a voluntary role and therefore it is not paid.

It is worth noting that serving as a governor is a great way to gain experience of professional skills such as chairing, strategic planning, budgeting and team work that are valued by employers. Plus, governors can have a huge impact on the education of young people in their communities, and there's no greater feeling than knowing you've made a difference!

What is the difference between a governor and a trustee?

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) have a main board made up of trustees (also known as directors), they are accountable for the Trust as a whole.

Governors within our Trust have the responsibility for one school, and the strategic direction within it. They work closely with the school, within their individual governing body and the Trust development groups. Governors uphold the uniqueness of each school, it's vision, values and

ethos, whilst supporting the overall objectives of the Trust.

Support is also provided to the governing bodies by the Trust's collaborative team; employees of the Trust.

What is a multi-academy trust?

Multi-academy trusts (MATs), are organisations or entities that are responsible for a number of schools. They have a trust board made up of trustees, also called directors.

Trust boards will be overseeing several schools and therefore will be dealing with larger budgets and more complex governing arrangements.

Within the Trust, each school retains its own local governing board. Their responsibilities are defined by the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. Some of their responsibilities may be delegated to the trust board, for instance approving the budget and appointing the head.

Can I apply to be a parent governor?

Parent governors are elected by the parent body; anyone who has a child of school age (under 16) can be a parent governor – we request our parents governors have a child on role at the school at which they govern.

You may express an interest in being a parent governor; if there is a parent vacancy within the school we will follow the required process for electing parent governors.

How do I express an interest becoming a governor?

Please contact Melanie Humphreys, Executive Administrator for the Mast Academy Trust
E: mhumphreys@themast.co.uk

T: 01484 865444

Melanie can discuss the vacancies that are available, and put you in contact with the Chair of Governors.

Some of our governing bodies are looking to fill skills gaps in their board, therefore as part of the discussion it may be useful to indicate any particular skills you may have; these skills do not have to be specific to schools.

To formally apply, please send an expression of interest letter with your current CV.

General FAQs

My employer isn't keen. What can I do?

There are many benefits for you, your employer and the community. You will gain professional experience that will help you at work and in your whole career. Your employer will benefit from you further developing your skills, such as strategic planning, teamwork, influencing, communication, financial management, and more.

Please contact Melanie if you would like to be provided with material that can support the discussion with your employer.



