

THE FULSTON MANOR ACADEMIES TRUST GOVERNANCE MODEL



The Fulston Manor Academies Trust (FMAT) Governance Model is different to the way a governing body in a non-Academy/traditional school undertakes governance.

Essentially, there are two elements to the governance of schools within the FMAT– local governance that is delivered via the Local Governing Body (LGB) and strategic governance, delivered via the Strategic Board of Trustees (SB).

The principle of the FMAT governance model is that local and strategic governance work together; each providing an element of governance that the other cannot. The SB cannot have detailed knowledge of operational matters within each school and the LGB cannot be expected to develop policies or make decisions that affect all members of FMAT.

Working together, however, both parties provide a very strong governance model. The notes that follow explain how it works. For more detailed information, reference should be made to the Articles of Association and the Scheme of Delegation, which can be found on the FMAT website.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE – THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

The LGB normally consists of a mix of people – parents, sponsor nominees, school staff and others selected or co-opted by the LGB themselves. A member of the LGB will sit on the SB to provide a link back to the LGB. FMAT operates on a principle of subsidiarity, delegating authority wherever possible to local governing bodies.

THE STRATEGIC BOARD HAS SET UP THE LGBs TO HAVE SEVEN KEY ROLES:

- To serve as “champions” of the Mission Statement in the school and FMAT and to be a “champion” of the local school to FMAT.
- To act as “a critical friend” to the Headteacher and the school at local level.
- To act as “a sounding board” for the Headteacher and their leadership team, and represent the views of different parts of the school community to influence decision making.
- To continually review the overall impact of the school amongst the people it exists to serve, make suggestions for improvement and ensure that the FMAT ethos remains at the heart of the Academy community.
- To review school policies, the school budget and monitor premises issues
- To oversee the school curriculum
- To monitor pupil performance, attainment and progress

The main purpose of these seven roles is to enable LGBs to be able to express and act on local views and issues – views of parents and the community etc. One of the key purposes of an LGB is to ensure that the school is being a good expression of what and who FMAT is in the local community. Therefore,

these seven roles are about ensuring that the FMAT Ethos is “lived” out in the school on a day to day basis; it’s about the personal wellbeing and safety of students, including their progress and achievement, as well as their attendance, behaviour, child protection and other such issues.

STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE – THE STRATEGIC BOARD

FMAT is a multi-academy trust operating as a single legal entity. As such, its SB are ultimately responsible for everything that goes on within the group.

The Board’s financial, employment, educational and legal responsibilities are delegated, through the Scheme of Delegation.

Therefore, the SB and Executive Team oversee educational policy, the standards achieved, the management and deployment of financial matters, ICT, human resources, governance and strategic development for the whole family of FMAT.

As a result of this, the Executive Team are able to make sure that best practice is shared across the whole family and that ‘the wheel is not reinvented’ every time a service is required or delivered to an individual Academy. In other words, that maximum efficiency is achieved across the family of Academies.

The Executive Headteacher acts as the direct line manager for each Headteacher. Through line management of the Headteacher he/she holds each Headteacher to account – a model which provides professional scrutiny in more detail than a traditional governing body is able to achieve. The Executive Headteacher will be responsible for undertaking the performance review of the Headteacher annually and the Chair of the LGB is invited to be part of this. The Chair of FMAT will be responsible for undertaking the performance review of the Executive Headteacher and the Chairs of the LGB are invited to be part of this.

HOW IS THE GOVERNANCE DIFFERENT?

Overall, because local and strategic governance have different responsibilities and are required to work together, specifically, by comparison to a traditional school Governing Body, it means that:

- The LGB’s role is not to “manage” the Academy as such. An Academy Governor should have an understanding of strategic issues that impact on the Academy and be updated on them regularly by the Headteacher. This will enable them to contribute effectively to decisions required if they need to be involved in, for example, a grievance matter, sit on an exclusion panel or hear an admissions appeal. As the SB and the Executive Team take responsibility for ensuring educational standards, legal compliance and financial viability, the LGB then has the time to verify the standards on the ground, to see how they are working, and explore how the FMAT ethos is being understood and expressed in the way the school operates.

HOW THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY WORKS

The Academy Governors will receive a report, at each meeting, of key performance indicators. This report will detail how the Academy is performing and gives an update on matters to do with HR and Finance.

Academy Governors are expected to ask questions that will both challenge and support the progress of the school. To help understand the way the school operates, Academy Governors will also be invited

to become a link Governor, for an area of work e.g., Health and Safety, Safeguarding etc. Academy Governors will be asked to report back to the LGB on that area from time to time.

TERMLY AGENDA

On an annual basis the Executive Team will send out an Annual Planning document to all Chairs. Not all items detailed on the Annual Planning document are considered at each meeting, however, all items will be covered over the academic year. It is expected that Headteachers and Chairs will work together in customising their agenda with items of a local nature and that whilst the Headteacher reports to the LGB on what has been happening in the school, the LGB may also report on how they have carried out their role with linked responsibilities in key areas such as:

- Visits to the school, e.g. Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Core subject areas, e.g. English, Maths and Science
- Links with the local community and feedback from parents

Mrs S Burden
Executive Headteacher

March 2022