

LSEAT Community Governance: Terms of Reference:

Context and Summary Statement on Community Governance Arrangements at LSEAT

Whilst the Trustees have overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for the work of the Trust, and the standards achieved by the pupils and students of the Academies, Trust Committees have been constituted to ensure the vision and duties of the Trust are fulfilled and translated locally within each Academy and across the mixed portfolio of provision. Each Academy is accountable to and must serve its community. All children deserve and should expect to receive a high standard of education. (see Appendix C for accountability matrix)

For 2026-27 the Trust has adopted an Inclusive Dynamic Accountability Framework (IDAF) which is a strategic commitment to embed equity, diversity, and shared accountability into every level of educational leadership and decision-making. At its core, it aims to ensure that governance reflects the diverse communities served, making leadership more representative, decision-making more transparent, and outcomes more equitable. By aligning our inclusive principles with robust oversight and strategic growth, this approach fosters a sustainable culture, ethos, and improvements across our Academies and Trust.

The IDAF at LSEAT is designed to support equity in leadership and decision-making, capturing and representing the unique needs of individual academies and the wider community. It aligns with both our Group Strategy and the Trust Growth Strategy, endorsing the government's ongoing drive for inclusion. This framework ensures that governance plays a central role in achieving true inclusion, where everyone feels they belong and is supported to thrive. Our ambition is to create inclusive organisations that people want to support and belong, with a guiding philosophy that it is not just about who sits at the table, but how everyone's voice shapes and transforms lives through the power of education.

Community Governors and each Academy Board are focused on the day-to-day life of the Academy for which it has responsibility, ensuring that Head Teachers are held to account in terms of the quality of education, curriculum development, school improvement, outcomes and safeguarding, and also ensure the staff working in the Academy are supported and challenged, when necessary, and the needs of the pupils are met with a particular focus on the provision type and context of each Academy.

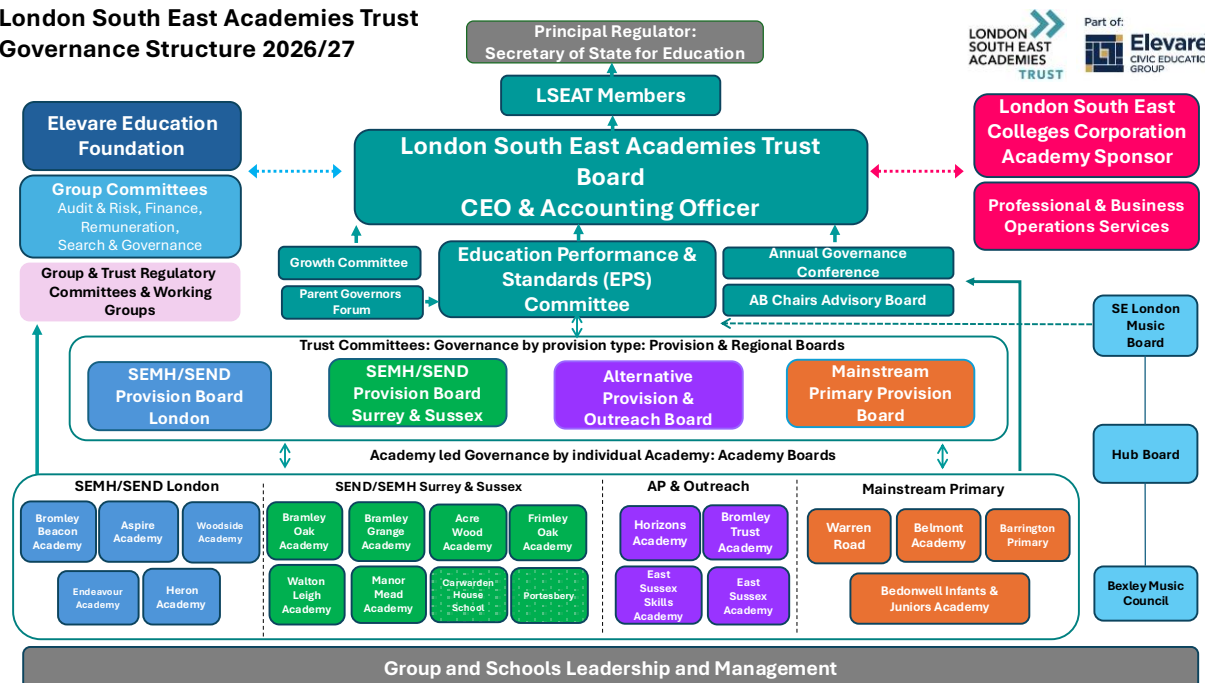
Provision Boards are focused on a group of Academies of similar designation, Specialist, Alternative and Mainstream and responsible for ensuring that Directors are held to account in terms of the quality of education, curriculum development, school improvement, outcomes and safeguarding across the provision type and academies they are responsible.

As a Trust with a focus on, Specialist, Alternative and Mainstream provision, the Provision Boards have been formed to represent these provision types of education settings.

The Music Service as a standalone delivery unit within the Trust and is also a member of South East London Music Education and is required by the funding agreement with Arts Council England to have local governance.

The **Trust Governance Structure for 2026/27** is outlined below.

London South East Academies Trust Governance Structure 2026/27



1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1 These terms of reference are drafted and maintained by the Trust. The Trustees may make amendments to these terms of reference from time to time, as described in the Trust's Articles of Association.
- 1.2 In the event that amendments are made, changes will be communicated to Community Governors by the Group Chief Governance Officer.

2. London South East Academies Trust

- 2.1 The Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It has entered into a Master Funding Agreement with the Department for Education and so it is the Trust that is ultimately responsible to the Department for Education pursuant to the Funding Agreements.
- 2.2 The Trustees are Charity Trustees (within the terms of section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993) and responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Trust in accordance with the provisions set out in the Articles of Association of the Trust.
- 2.3 As outlined in the structure above, the LSEAT Board delegates some functions to its Committees. Provision Boards and Academy Boards are Committees of the Trust.
- 2.4 A role description for Provision Board Chair has been developed to outline the key accountabilities and responsibilities of this role, in addition to being a Trustee.
- 2.5 A role description for Academy Board Chair has been developed to outline the key accountabilities and responsibilities of this role.

- 2.6 A role description for Community Governors has been developed to outline the key accountabilities and responsibilities including staff and parent Community Governors.
- 2.7 Community Governors will serve on Academy Boards. The Chair of an Academy Board and one other Community Governor will also be invited to serve on a Provision Board as representative of the Academy they serve, subject to skills, experience and conduct.

3. Accountabilities and Responsibilities of Trustees

- 3.1 The role of the Trustees mainly involves strategic oversight across the Trust, its educational character, vision and values, governance, regulatory matters, academic performance and standards, efficient use of resources and demonstrating value for money.
- 3.2 The Trustees are accountable and responsible for:
 - Compliance with all statutory regulations and Acts of Parliament governing the operation of the Trust, including health and safety, safeguarding, equality and diversity and data protection.
 - Compliance with the provisions of the Funding Agreements.
 - Compliance with the Academies Handbook and DfE Governance Code.
 - Setting the risk management strategy, reviewing the strategic risk profile, considering strategic risks in the context of future
 - Trust planning and decision making and reviewing the effectiveness of the risk management arrangements.
- 3.3 The Trustees delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer for:
 - Appointment of the Senior Leaders and Headteacher with support from Trustees who are Provision Board Chairs, as required.
 - The determination of the extent of the services provided to the Academies by the Trust and how the costs should be allocated.
 - Determination of the educational targets of the Academies in consultation with the EPS Committee, Provision Board Chairs and Deputy CEO Academies.
 - Determining any additional financial and reporting targets for the Academies.
 - Determination of any statutory policies and procedures for the Academies and other policies and procedures as the Trustees deem necessary to fulfil their responsibilities.
 - Identifying resources to implement the risk management strategy effectively and efficiently.
 - Reporting regularly to the Trust Board on the performance of the Academies and ensure the appraisal of the Academic Leaders/Headteachers are supported by the relevant Provision Board Chair, Deputy CEO Academies and Directors.

Details of the delegated authority from the Trust Board to the Academy and Provision Boards is published within the Trust Scheme of Delegation.

4 Academy & Provision Boards

The Diagram above outlines the governance structure for the Trust and the in particular details individual Academy Boards lead by a Head Teacher, through to the Trust Board, and **Provision Boards** that bring together community governance under types of provision lead by a Director. Appendix A and B below provide Terms of Reference for Academy and Provision Boards.

Appendix A: LSEAT Academy Boards: Terms of Reference

Effective from: September 2026

1. Purpose

The Academy Boards (ABs) of the London South East Academies Trust provide local insight, strategic oversight, and community voice to ensure that each Academy delivers high-quality education, reflects the Trust's values, and meets the needs of its pupils, staff, and wider community.

Academy Boards operate within the Trust's governance structure and Scheme of Delegation and act in an advisory capacity, making recommendations and reporting through to Provision Boards and ultimately to the Trust Board, ensuring inclusivity and representation at all levels

2. Scope

Each Academy Board supports one LSEAT Academy and:

- Upholds the Trust's vision and values within the specific school context.
- Provides constructive challenge and support to school leadership.
- Serves as the local voice of parents, staff, and the wider community.
- Drives improvement in pupil outcomes, safeguarding, and equality.
- Approves school based policies
- Feeds into risk management processes across funding, finances, resources, capital and reputation.

3. Objectives

- Monitor the implementation of school improvement plans and application of academy policies.
- Review data and information on pupil performance, inclusion, resources and safeguarding.
- Provide feedback on the lived experience of pupils and staff.
- Ensure the Academy serves its local community with equity and inclusivity.
- Support the development and accountability of academy leadership.

4. Membership

- **Chair:** Appointed by the Trust Board from among the Academy Board's Community **Governors, Recommended through Group Governance & Search Committee.**
- **Community Governors:** Appointed based on skills and community knowledge; includes:
 - At least one or two elected Parent Governor (based on size of school)
 - At least one or two elected Staff Governor (based on size of school)
 - Appointed governors with expertise in education, safeguarding, SEND, EDI, community engagement, risk management and estates and resource management. Up to 8 Community Governors (who may also serve on a Provision Board with the Academy Board Chair)
- **Headteacher:** Attends and reports to the Board.
- **Administrator:** Supports the meeting logistics, minutes and documentation.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Strategy and Improvement

- Support the strategic direction of the academy and alignment with the Trust's strategic growth and improvement plans.
- Review progress toward educational targets and KPIs.
- Provide support and advocacy for Ofsted Inspections.
- Engage in Trust wide initiatives to promote a sense of belonging.

5.2 Support and Challenge

- Act as a critical friend to the Headteacher and SLT.
- Scrutinise outcomes for all pupils, including those with SEND, in care, or disadvantaged.

5.3 Safeguarding and Inclusion

- Ensure robust safeguarding procedures are in place and effective.
- Promote a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the academy.

5.4 Stakeholder Voice

- Act as a conduit for staff, pupil, and parent feedback.
- Monitor community engagement and reputation of the academy.

5.5 Governance Oversight

- Review and recommend local policies delegated by the Trust Board.
- Contribute to risk management processes through local insight and assurance.
- Support training and development activities including those for the Academy Board.

6. Meetings

- Academy Boards meet four times per year (once per term) with two in term one.
- Meetings are held on a weekday (typically Tuesday) between 4pm and 6pm.
- Additional working groups or thematic sessions may be convened if necessary.

7. Reporting and Accountability

- ABs report directly to their corresponding Provision Board.
- Minutes and action logs are submitted to the Governance Team 7 days preceding the meeting.
- Any concerns requiring escalation (e.g. safeguarding issues) must be reported to the Provision Board Chair and Group Chief Governance Officer without delay.

8. Inclusive Governance

All Academy Board activity will:

- Uphold the Inclusive Governance Framework.
- Promote equity, diversity, and transparency in governance practice.
- Use inclusive, respectful language and ensure decisions are accessible and inclusive of all voices, fostering a culture where everyone feels valued and heard.

9. Training and Development

Academy Board members are required to:

- Complete mandatory training in safeguarding, governance, and EDI.
- Participate in Trust-wide conferences, networking, and development sessions.
- Undertake role-specific training if appointed as a link governor (e.g. safeguarding, SEND, H&S).

10. Evaluation and Review

- The effectiveness of each Academy Board will be reviewed annually by the Trust Governance Team.
- Terms of Reference will be reviewed and updated annually by the Group Search & Governance Committee and/or the Trust Board.

Appendix B: LSEAT Provision Boards: Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Provision Boards (PBs) of the London South East Academies Trust exist to provide strategic insight, advice, and robust oversight of academy performance within each educational provision type. PBs support school improvement, accountability, and community engagement while ensuring alignment with the Trust's inclusive governance framework and growth strategy.

2. Scope

Provision Boards are established by the Trust Board and grouped according to provision types:

- SEND/SEMH London
- SEND/SEMH Surrey & East Sussex
- Alternative Provision & Outreach
- Mainstream Primary

Each PB oversees 2–5 schools based on provision type and geography.

3. Objectives

- Monitor and evaluate the performance, improvement, safeguarding, and compliance of provision-specific academies.
- Provide a strategic layer of challenge and support to Trust leadership.
- Strengthen links with local communities and ensure voices of pupils, parents, staff, and stakeholders are heard.
- Promote and embed inclusive governance values across all academies served.
- Report to the EPS Committee on risk, performance, safeguarding, and quality of education.

4. Membership

- **Chair:** Appointed by the Trust Board; usually a Trustee with relevant expertise in the provision type.
- **Community Governors:** Nominated by the Trust Board based on skills, experience, and representation. Usually Chair of AB and one other Community Governor.
- **Directors:** Trust Executive Leaders who have accountability for clusters of academies usually by provision type or geographical clusters.
- **Governance Administrator;** ensuring accurate minutes and documentation.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Strategic Oversight

- Review school improvement plans and monitor progress against agreed KPIs.
- Ensure alignment with the Trust's vision, values, and inclusive governance principles.
- Identify risks and escalate key concerns to the EPS Committee.

5.2 Support & Challenge

- Hold Trust Directors to account for quality of education, safeguarding, wellbeing, outcomes, and pupil progress.
- Engage in structured thematic reviews (e.g., SEND, EDI, safeguarding, curriculum).
- Identify trends and compare and contrast performance of similar schools of same provision type.

5.3 Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Capture and represent the views of parents, pupils, and staff through structured feedback mechanisms.
- Promote collaboration across schools and foster shared initiatives and best practice.

5.4 Governance Compliance

- Ensure governance practices reflect the Nolan Principles and our Inclusive Governance Framework and statutory requirements.
- Participate in self-assessment and skills audits to ensure effective board composition.

6. Meetings

- Provision Boards meet termly (minimum four times a year), approximately 2–3 weeks after Academy Board meetings.
- Meetings are scheduled in advance and supported by the Governance Team.
- Additional thematic or working group meetings may be convened as needed.

7. Reporting & Accountability

- PBs report through the governance structure to the EPS Committee via summaries, risk registers, and performance reports.
- The PB Chair is responsible with support from the Governance Team in providing a PB update to the EPS Committee
- Matters requiring escalation (e.g., safeguarding, finance, regulatory breaches) must be flagged immediately to the Trust CEO or Group Chief Governance Officer.

8. Inclusivity and Representation

All PBs will:

- Operate in line with the Inclusive Governance Framework.
- Ensure fair and diverse representation across geography, provision, age, ethnicity, gender, and lived experience.
- Foster an inclusive culture that values all contributions and supports equitable outcomes for all pupils.

9. Training and Development

All PB members must:

- Undertake initial and ongoing mandatory training (safeguarding, EDI, governance).
- Engage in skills development linked to their role and contribution.
- Participate in governance conferences, thematic workshops, and working groups as appropriate.

10. Review and Evaluation

- This Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Trust's Search & Governance Committee.
- Effectiveness of each PB will be evaluated through self-assessment, member feedback, and Trust-led audits.