



# A guide for potential governors

ALEXANDRA PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

# Welcome to The Pinnacle Learning

Welcome to The Pinnacle Learning Trust.

We are an organisation committed to developing and promoting the welfare of the young people within our academies. As a governor you will play an important role in ensuring the quality of education we deliver on a daily basis. Through challenge and support to the principal and senior leaders, you will help maintain the high standards we expect.

When we created The Pinnacle Learning Trust we wanted to ensure that each of our academies benefitted from high quality leadership. This included an approach to governance which recognised that each of our local governing bodies (LGBs) had a critical role in delivering the quality of education and the transformational opportunities our children and young people should expect.

We fully appreciate the commitment this entails - to bring your experience, knowledge and time to help the next generation.

We will support you with training and development opportunities and we will want to hear from you about your experience as a governor and any changes we can make to improve the overall quality of our education service.

## **Dominic Wall** Chair of Trustees



A warm welcome to The Pinnacle Learning Trust. We recognise what a commitment it is to consider becoming a governor. Our aim is to ensure the experience of being a governor is both enjoyable and rewarding for all governors, in addition to you providing support and challenge for colleagues working for our trust, and thereby benefitting our staff and students.

We are determined to make a positive difference to the lives and life chances of our children and young people, providing excellent teaching, learning and support for all. We are also committed to being a great place to work, and we strive to ensure our staff team is well-supported and offered a wide range of professional development opportunities which enable them to excel and to progress in their careers. Our governors play a vital role in supporting us and holding us to account in making these things happen. If you feel you could play a role in the invaluable work our local governing bodies do in helping us to achieve these aims, we would love to hear from you.

Strong and effective governance is very important to us. Our trust currently serves schools and colleges in areas facing significant disadvantage. We are determined to ensure that our children and young people have opportunities to achieve great things and progress to positive careers, leading fulfilling lives.

Our governors are held in high regard and their input is significant, requiring a commitment to prepare for and attend meetings, in addition to more informal contact and the opportunity to make a positive difference. I look forward to hearing from you and potentially working with you to help support and improve the lives of the young people we serve.

## **Nick Lowry** Chief Executive Officer



As the principal of Alexandra Park Junior School, I believe that governors play a crucial role in shaping our school's future and ensuring we continue to provide the best possible education for our children.

We are committed to providing a nurturing and inspiring environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential, and to fostering a strong sense of community. We are proud of our achievements to date and believe that our governors are instrumental in helping us to achieve our goals.

It's an incredibly exciting time to join our Local Governing Body (LGB) as we continue to make significant strides in our school improvement journey. By becoming a governor, you will have the opportunity to contribute your unique skills and perspectives to our decision-making processes. You will work closely with the senior leadership team to set strategic direction, monitor performance, and ensure that our school meets the highest standards.

Above all, you will have the opportunity to make a real and lasting difference to the lives of our children.

We hope you will consider joining us as a valued member of our school community.

## **Jennifer Seabright** Principal



As the current Chair of Governors at Alexandra Park Junior School in Oldham, I am proud to lead a committed governing board focused on high standards and strong values.

I worked in education for over forty years in both secondary and primary, including twenty-seven years as a primary headteacher in two Oldham schools, and I have also served as a governor at a number of schools, giving me a broad understanding of governance across different settings.

My role of Chair involves leading the work of the governing board, setting its strategic direction alongside school leaders, ensuring effective support and constructive challenge, and acting as a link between governors and the Headteacher.

I am continually impressed by the dedication and professionalism of our staff, whose commitment creates a nurturing environment in which children feel valued and supported.

As Chair, I am committed to ensuring that our governance continues to help provide the highest quality opportunities and outcomes for all our pupils.

## **Ian Walsh** Chair of Governors

## Our Vision

# "To Learn, Be Happy and Achieve Our Best"

In Partnership with parents, carers and families we aim for children to:

- Be independent learners who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and can motivate themselves to engage in and improve their learning.
- Feel safe and therefore be happy because they are heard and understood and have that understanding acted upon
- Never, never, never give up!



## The Pinnacle Learning Trust Values

Underpinning our daily activities are our key values:

**Belong**



**Inspire**



**Challenge**



**Celebrate**

We aim to:

- **Celebrate children and young peoples' uniqueness** and inspire each one to flourish and become responsible, successful citizens who contribute positively to their communities and wider society.
- **Offer exceptional learning environments** which allow our colleagues, children and young people to thrive.
- **Develop outstanding leadership at all levels.**
- **Promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion** by nurturing a sense of belonging in our academies and our trust.

# Why volunteer to govern?

Being involved in governance at any level can be both challenging and extremely rewarding and provides an opportunity to develop your own personal skills.

As a governor you are able to:

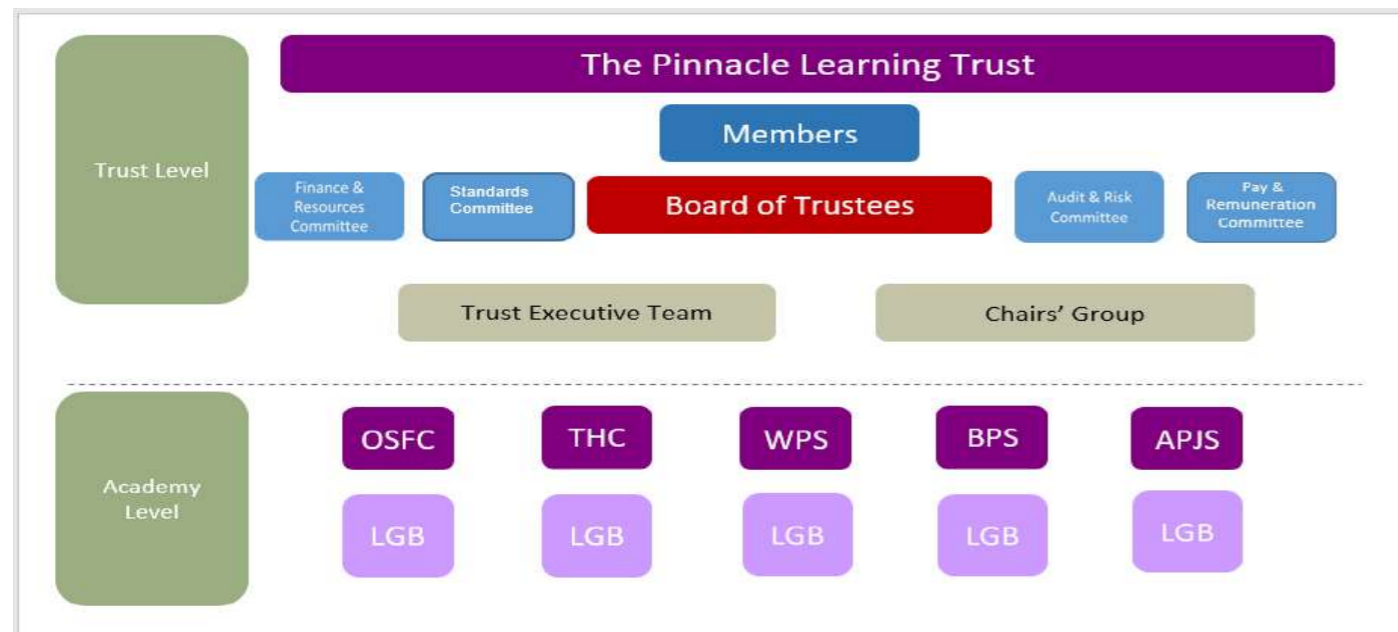
- ensure voices are heard at a strategic level
- use your own unique experience of education, employment and life beyond college to inform conversations
- have the opportunity to contribute to the academy's ongoing improvement journey
- make a difference in your local community
- support your professional development
- build your confidence and skills by working with others as part of a leadership team
- gain increased knowledge and experience of specific areas such as safeguarding, SEND provision and inclusion
- contribute to the strategic direction of the school
- make a huge difference to the life chances of our children by driving improvement and striving to ensure they get the best possible education

Details of the current governors of Alexandra Park Junior School can be accessed on our website here

# Governance Structure

Alexandra Park's LGB operates within the overall governance structure of the trust as demonstrated in the image below.

The different layers of governance all contribute significantly and work together to support the trust board, enabling our trustees to effectively manage multiple academies, all of which are able to maintain a strong sense of identity.



The trust board is the legal entity with collective accountability and responsibility for all academies within the trust.

To support local decision making, each of the academies in our trust has its own LGB which is a committee of the trust board and an integral part of the trust's governance structure.

Our LGBs provide strategic level support to the operational leadership of our principals and their senior leadership teams. The LGB doesn't have statutory responsibilities in the way that the governing body in a standalone local authority establishment has, but it has responsibilities delegated to it by the trust board, which are set out in our trust's [Scheme of Delegation](#).

Our LGBs are responsible for monitoring key performance indicators and acting as a critical friend to the principal. They also play a key role in representing the views of the academy's stakeholders and are responsible for promoting high standards and educational achievement.

In essence the purpose of the LGB is to:

- support and promote active engagement between the school and its wider community
- offer appropriate challenge and support to the principal to ensure that the school meets the needs of the pupils and families it serves
- develop an understanding of the school's progress, performance and outcomes in order to assure the trust board and other stakeholders and the public that it is providing high quality, effective and efficient education.
- retain a local focus on accountability
- provide challenge and support to the trust board and central team

Our trust's academies serve families from the full spectrum of backgrounds. Many are deemed disadvantaged with a high proportion of children and families which speak English as an additional language. Our trust is built upon a shared belief that all young people in Oldham and surrounding areas should have access to excellent educational provision and our governors help us to achieve this.



# Eligibility

LGB members must meet the eligibility criteria for academy governors. Any governor must be at least 18 years old and not be disqualified according to Charity Commission guidelines. These include unspent convictions for specific offences, as well as financial and non-financial legal reasons.

Any appointment will be subject to various recruitment checks, including a criminal records DBS check and a section 128 check to ensure an appointee is not prohibited or restricted from taking part in the management of school.

# What does the role involve?

## Time commitment

The LGB will meet at least four times a year. Governors will need to be available for approximately 6-8 hours per half term depending on the roles taken on. Many employers give time off to conduct governing duties so this may be something to check if you are in employment and considering the role.

## Meetings

Meetings generally last two hours and it would be expected that LGB members would have read papers and be prepared to engage fully in the meetings (about the same length of time as the meeting generally). All meetings are now held in person, unless there is a good reason to move the meeting online. The chair will work with the LGB and leaders to decide whether this is necessary. We feel it is important to have face-to-face meetings to enable LGB members to meet each other and build stronger relationships with key stakeholders.

## Link roles

LGB members may be asked to take on a specialist link role e.g. SEND, safeguarding, or health and safety. Taking on this role brings additional expectations around making link visits to scrutinise practice within the school and working with leaders to consider how to progress. Appropriate training will be provided.



## School visits

LGB members are also expected to be visible ambassadors for the school within the community and time allowing, will periodically be asked to attend school events to get to know staff and leaders.

## Ad-hoc panels

LGB members can from time to time be asked to participate on trust wide ad-hoc panels (conflicts of interest notwithstanding) which include complaints, exclusions and disciplinary panels. These panel sessions can last up to two hours and can be in person or online. No prior experience is required to take part and training will be provided.

## Committing to a code of conduct

LGB members are expected to commit to our code of conduct. This outlines the ethos of governance within the trust including:

- the importance of abiding by the [seven principles of public life](#) as set out by Lord Nolan: selflessness; accountability; integrity; objectivity; openness; honesty; and leadership
- how those governing fulfil their role and responsibilities
- the expected commitment to the role
- the importance of building and maintaining relationships and respecting confidentiality

## Committing to training

LGB members bring significant experience to the table and the local knowledge, insight, commitment and leadership they provide on an on-going basis is hugely valuable. To strengthen the role of LGB members and their ability to lead the school all are asked to participate in mandatory training sessions and other bespoke developmental sessions appropriate to their induction and their individual role.

Mandatory training includes:

- Safeguarding
- Prevent
- GDPR
- Cyber security





**The voluntary nature of the role**

The role is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although reasonable travel expenses may be claimed.

**Term of Office**

Appointed for an initial four year term, the norm is for governors to serve two terms of office but up to three terms in exceptional circumstances.

**Requirements on appointment**

As well as being asked to commit to the code of conduct and work collaboratively as a local governing body, LGB members will be subject to the pre-appointment checks applicable to all members including signing the code of conduct and annual declaration of pecuniary and business interests form and a skills audit form.

**More information and how to apply**

If you would like to apply, please contact Danielle Hunt, Lead Governance Professional/Exec PA in the first instance [danielle.hunt@pinnaclelt.ac.uk](mailto:danielle.hunt@pinnaclelt.ac.uk) 0161 287 8000 x 2519 who will provide further details.

If you have any questions please get in touch, we would be delighted to have a preliminary conversation with you about the role.



**We look forward to hearing from you!**

**“Being a governor of Alexandra Park Junior School for the last twelve years has been a great privilege and pleasure.**

**A privilege - We play an important role in supporting and challenging the school leaders to ensure that the school provides a good level of education and strong safeguarding for all its students. We also play a part in appointing the Principal and Vice-Principal.**

**A pleasure - We share in the school’s special occasions and celebrations as well as visiting school informally any time, not just for official meetings. These times enrich our relationship with the school community.**

**School governorship is a voluntary and very rewarding role for anyone wishing to give something to the community.” (Jenny Harrison, Co-opted Governor)**

