



St Chad's

Academies Trust

'Children First'

St Chad's Academies Trust

Chair of the Board

Candidate Brief

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ABOUT ST CHAD'S ACADEMIES TRUST

St Chad's Academies Trust thrives from the rich diversity of each other's communities, working together, seeking the common good, raising standards and aspirations, working for equality and hope for all.

St Chad's Academies Trust was established in 2013. As a Diocesan Multi Academy Trust for the Lichfield Diocese our Christian values underpin all that we do to improve outcomes and life chances for the children in our care, adopting the seven principles of public life ('the Nolan principles'). Our focus is, and will always remain, **'Children First'**.

As the largest primary multi academy trust in the West Midlands region we have steadily grown to 19 academies across seven local authorities.

- **Sandwell**
- **Stoke-on-Trent**
- **Staffordshire**
- **Shropshire**
- **Telford and Wrekin**
- **Walsall**
- **Wolverhampton**

Of our 19 academies, 17 are primary, one is a first and one is a middle educational setting. The Trust is responsible for c. 5,300 pupils and employs just over 650 colleagues.

The size of the academies range from a half-form entry to a three-form entry. All academies are equally important to the Trust, demonstrated through our shared belief of, **'Children First in the footsteps of St Chad'**. Everyone working within the Trust; from the central team to our local Academy Committees, Trustees, Principals, and colleagues work together to provide the very best we can for the children in our care whilst retaining their own identity and characteristics, with a shared commitment to the Trust.

Effective and beneficial partnerships have been established with the local authorities and other trusts and professionals, enabling the sharing of good practice across the Trust geographical spread. We celebrate and benefit from rich, diverse communities and work with academies situated in small villages to large inner-city organisations.

The Trust celebrates a strong support system, which enables our academies and leaders to flourish and improve through encouraged continual professional development. Our success is attributed to open and honest relationships, where academy leaders shoulder the responsibilities of all children within the Trust and work for the success of other academies as well as their own, working together for the greater good and actively demonstrating effective system leadership.

We work in an environment where we learn together collectively as a group. Everyone sees the bigger picture and understands how parts of the organisation connect to each other and the whole. Attitudes, behaviour, and the overall culture within the organisation are embedded and have become a successful learning community.

TRUST CONTEXT

St Chads Academies Trust is a well-established MAT consisting of 19 Academies serving 5300 pupils.

Our strength lies in our shared commitment to prioritizing children's needs, following the ethos of 'Children First: in the footsteps of St. Chad'. Every member of the Trust - from the central team to the Local Academies Committees, Trustees, Principals, and staff - collaborates to provide the best possible care and education for our students.

Our values form the foundation of our work, and we expect everyone within the academy trust to embody these values in their actions. We firmly believe that continuous improvement is achievable for all academies, and we actively support each other in this endeavour.

While each academy maintains its unique identity and characteristics, they remain committed to the overarching goals of the Trust. The academies themselves play a crucial role in the Trust's school improvement efforts, leveraging each other's strengths and areas for development through mutual support and collaboration.

Principals are pivotal in driving the development and success of the Trust, and we are witnessing the emergence of robust models of system leadership. At St. Chad's, we embrace the expectation that every academy will provide assistance to others in need upon joining the Trust.

We are confident in our ability to continue thriving and exemplifying the Christian values of service, trust, community, harmony, aspiration, and dedication. Our aim is to ensure that all individuals who learn and work within the St. Chad's community truly flourish.

KEY ISSUES STRATEGIC INTENT

We offer our children the best possible education along with spiritual care and guidance rooted in a strong commitment to Christian values. We aim to demonstrate trust, honesty, integrity, and commitment to all we do. Delivering on the areas below across the family of academies within the Trust will ensure that each individual academy, and the Trust as a whole, is successful and highly regarded, through evolution not revolution.

- Pillar One – High Quality and Inclusive Education
- Pillar Two – School Improvement
- Pillar Three – Workforce -Chief of Operations
- Pillar Four – Finance – Chief Financial Officer
- Pillar Five – Operations
- Pillar Six – Governance and Leadership
- Pillar Seven – Christian Distinctiveness

We are very proud of our academies and how they continue to evolve and grow. Through consolidatory practice and planning, considering all aspects of strategic and operational functions, the Trust works collaboratively with all internal and external partners to manage future growth and succession planning.

Our Mission & Our Vision

Our Mission

Children first; in the footsteps of St. Chad

Our Vision

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St. Chad, we seek to be servant leaders who have a desire to see all those, within our Trust family, truly flourish both spiritually and academically.

Our Values

					
Service	Trust	Community	Harmony	Aspiration	Dedication
Serve one another humbly (Galatians 5:13-14)	You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you. (Isaiah 26:3)	You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (Mark 12:31)	Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. (Peter 3:8)	So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Hebrews 10:35)	The children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy. (Ezra 6:16)

School to school support is strength of the Trust, continuing to share best practice across academies within the Trust and outside of the Trust in a systematic and coherent manner.

Our Christian obligation, as one of the Diocesan MATs, provides the platform for our success: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. This will support the development of effective and creative models of system leadership whilst maintaining their individuality.

All academies, from the high performers to the most vulnerable, will access and receive the appropriate support and challenge to improve further. All academies will be high performing and spiritually grounded, and educationally excellent. St Chad's Academies Trust is committed to raising and sustaining high standards of achievement focusing on the aspirations, expectations, and confidence of pupils, working with staff, the Local Academy Committee, parents and the community. In keeping the *Children First* focus of the strategy, high quality educational experiences will be the expectation across all academies.

Professional development is a key strand of the strategy and success. Quality training and support will be provided to ensure teaching is never less than good. Our ambition is to provide and support a professional body of the highest quality.

St Chad's Academies Trust recognises that leaders and staff are key agents of change and will work collaboratively to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils, staff, the Local Academy Committee, parents, and the community.

St Chad's Academies Trust will actively promote and support the development of thriving learning communities and work relentlessly with the Local Academy Committee to enrich and enhance parental engagement, strengthening the role of academy within the community and parish.



THE ROLE

The role of the Chair is to provide leadership and strategic direction to the Board of Trustees of St Chad's Academies Trust. The Chair's aim is to enable the Board to fulfil its responsibilities for setting the strategic direction of the Trust and for its overall governance. The Chair will ensure that the Trust complies with its articles, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and make sure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.

The Chair's role is also to work in partnership with the CEO, to support the executive directors of the Trust, helping them achieve the aims of the organisation; and to optimise the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the staff. In addition to the general responsibilities of a Trustee, the Chair has several specific tasks.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Chairing and facilitating the Board, including meetings
- Providing clear leadership to the Board and aligning its performance with the strategy of the Trust
- Planning the annual cycle of board meetings / AGM and setting the agendas with the CEO
- Giving direction to Board policy making
- Monitoring the implementation of decisions taken at Board meetings
- Representing the Trust at appropriate events
- Acting as a spokesperson for the Trust with key stakeholders including the DfE and ESFA
- Ensuring effective professional relations between the Trust, Diocese and LDBE are further developed, embedded, and maintained to manage efficiencies, transparency, and collaborative practice.
- Keeping an overview of the Trust's affairs
- Reviewing and appraising the performance and development of the CEO and other Board members
- Building an effective and diverse Board in terms of skills and outlook, initiating change and planning succession in Board appointments
- Sitting on appointment panels as required
- Acting as final adjudicator for disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Attending committees or working groups when appropriate in role as Chair.

GOVERNANCE

The Chair is supported by a highly skilled Governance Professional and a comprehensive induction is provided.

The Trust's Board is supported by four main committees – Finance, Risk & Audit, Compliance and Achievement and Remunerations Committee . Trustees (including the Chair) usually serve on one of these committees. In addition, academies have their individual or executive Local Academy Committees ('LAC'). Their relationship with the Board is as a sub-committee, which operates within the direction of the Trust Scheme of Delegation. It is common to all academies and is agreed annually. We would expect the core business of each LAC to be:

- Reviewing and monitoring the Academy Improvement Plan ('AIP') and overall standards

- Reviewing and monitoring the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning and the wellbeing of pupils, students, and staff
- Holding the academy's Exec-/ Principal and leaders to account.

THE INDIVIDUAL

THE PERSON

The Trust is interested in individuals with wide-ranging experience (Experience of the education sector would be desirable). However, the Board is looking for an individual who has:

- Demonstrable commitment to education and to the Trust's mission, vision, and values particularly around social justice and ESG
- Proven leadership ability developed in a non-executive capacity Integrity, strategic vision and reliable good judgement.
- A willingness and the capacity to devote the necessary time and effort to the role.
- The ability to take key decisions for the good of the Trust's future.
- Exceptional interpersonal and communication skills and is people focused.
- Tact and diplomacy with the ability to influence up to a departmental level of government.
- A willingness to speak one's mind whilst also listening to the views and opinions of others.
- A natural inclination to collaborate and the ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- Experience of enabling people in organisations to respond, adapt and innovate
- Created an environment that enables people to be the best they can be
- Commitment to learning and development at personal, team and organisational levels
- Understanding of the legal responsibilities and liabilities of a Trustee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR

In addition to the responsibilities already outlined, the Chair as a Trustee has the following general responsibilities:

- De facto member, as per the trust's governing documents
- Ensuring the Trust applies its resources exclusively in pursuing its objects.
- Contributing actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving strategic direction to St Chad's Academy Trust, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the Trust
- Declaring any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a Trustee
- Being collectively responsible for the actions of the Trust and other Trustees
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the Trust
- Ensuring the financial stability of the Trust and the proper investment of its funds
- Protecting and managing the property of the Trust
- Attending meetings and reading papers in advance of meetings
- Attending sub-committee meetings as appropriate
- Participating in other tasks as they arise from time to time, such as interviewing new staff and attending key events

- Keeping informed about the activities of the Trust and wider issues which affect its work.

TIME COMMITMENT

- The full Board meets in person at least five times a year: October, December, May, March, and July.
- The AGM takes place in January and follows the calendared board meeting and a September members update meeting.
- The three committees meet three times a year.
- Visit the Trust's offices and meet with the CEO half termly (a blended approach has been adopted).
- Take an active interest in visiting the Trust's schools (usually two - three per year on a rota with other Trustees)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Prospective candidates are welcome to contact the Chair and/ CEO for an informal conversation prior to applying. Contact details are:

- Harry Azima (current Chair) –harry.azima@stchads.uk
- Mrs Sarah Cockshott – sarah.cockshott@stchads.uk / 07561 708399

Following this conversation, interested candidates should submit a comprehensive CV and short supporting statement (no more than 500 words) which sets out their interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of their experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include the names and addresses of two referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages of the process and not without prior permission from candidates. The preferred method of application is through Chloe Norton, Personal Executive Assistant – chloe.norton@stchads.uk / 07458 110294.

Candidates will have the opportunity to meet the CEO and at least one Trustee prior to submitting their CV and statement if they wish. It is likely that this will be done remotely. This will give candidates the opportunity to really understand the role, the Trust's culture, and its expectations of the successful individual.

We aim to ensure that each stage of the process is as inclusive as possible. All submissions will be reviewed by the Trust's recruitment panel. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a professional conversation for the position

Ideally, the Trust would like to appoint its new Chair in time for its July 2026 board meeting to allow for an effective transition and handover with the existing Chair.

KEY DATES

The position is being advertised via LinkedIn, St Chad's Academies Trust website, all academy Newsletters, Lichfield Diocesan bulletin, and My New Term. All candidates who wish to meet key post-holders in St Chad's Academies Trust should contact our Personal Executive Administrator, Chloe Norton on chloe.norton@stchads.uk in good time prior to the below date(s).

Application close	25 May 2026
Shortlisting	1 June 2026
Professional conversation	9 June 2026

PERSONAL DATA

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your sensitive personal data (protected characteristics, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and / or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your sensitive personal data in your CV/ application documentation will be understood by us as your expressed consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

SAFEGUARDING

St Chad's Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The appointment will be made subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service approval ('DBS') signed by the Secretary of State, as part of our rigorous approach to safeguarding our children, based on a three-year renewal. A Prohibition from Management check ('Section 128') will also be carried out.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St Chad's Academies Trust is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all suitably qualified candidates.

As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and pupils, and all our staff are equally valued and respected. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for our pupils and staff.

St Chad's Academies Trust

c/o Birchills CE Community Academy, Farringdon Street, Walsall, WS2 8NF

www.stchadsacademiestrust.co.uk