



Governance

Mercia Learning Trust



A guide to school and trust governance

Realising Potential. Transforming Lives.

Welcome

Thank you for expressing an interest in governance within Mercia Learning Trust. We hope this booklet provides key information about the role/s, and inspires you to join our governance team to help make our schools even better for the children we serve. We believe that strong governance is a vital aspect of a successful school and trust.

What is Mercia Learning Trust?

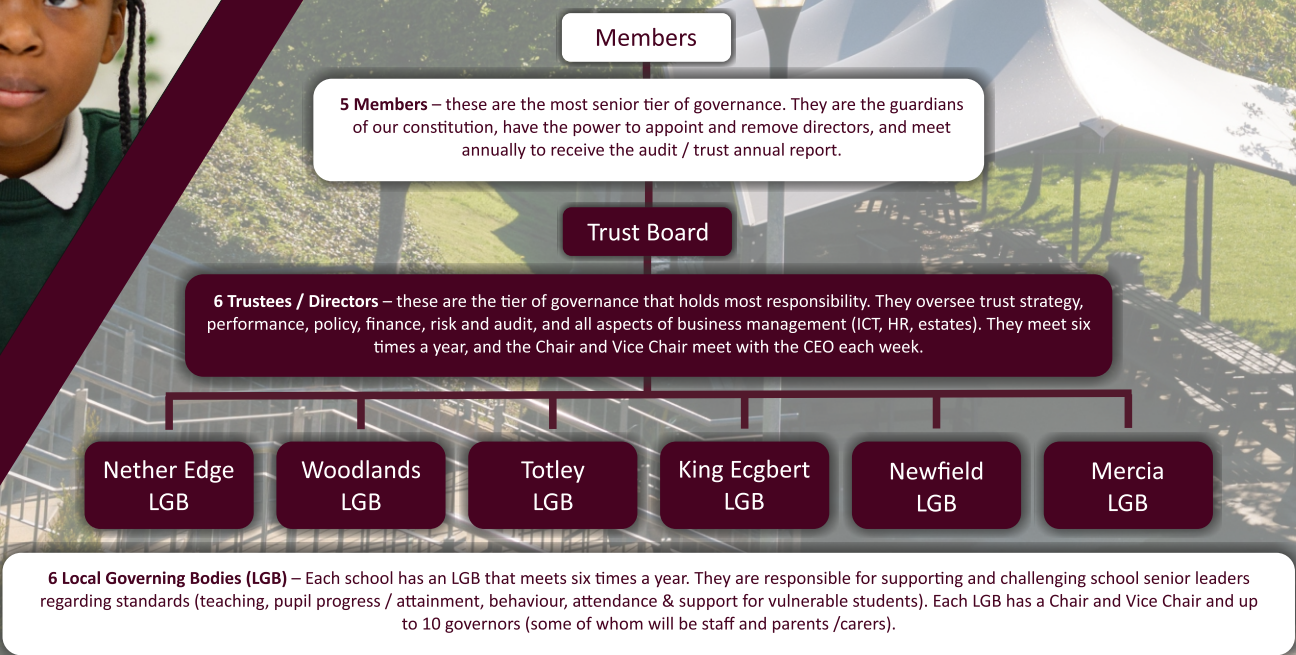
Mercia Learning Trust is a charitable partnership (a multi-academy trust) of six local schools. Unlike maintained schools run by the council, the trust is directly accountable for school standards and financial management to the Secretary of State for Education. Over half of the schools across the country and in Sheffield are organised in this way. Whilst our academy structure and organisation is important, we work together because we think partnership is a good thing. We believe a group of schools, leaders, staff and governors who work together can make their schools even better for every child, and the staff who work in them.

Our shared mission is to:

Work as individual schools, and in partnership, to ensure every pupil, whatever their background, will attend an exceptional school. We believe pupils should enjoy school, feel safe and fully supported, be inspired to learn, develop character and aspiration, and realise their full potential.



The Structure of Governance



What do governors do?

The primary task of school governors is to provide support and challenge, so that each school maintains and improves its effectiveness. This usually involves getting to know the school through visits, reading papers, attending meetings, discussing and agreeing school improvement priorities, scrutinising school performance (curriculum and teaching, behaviour, attendance, personal development and leadership), focusing on key aspects such as safeguarding or the performance of the most vulnerable children; monitoring feedback from children, parents or staff or ratifying policy. Trustees primarily focus on school effectiveness, but are also responsible for overall trust vision and strategy, finance, human resources and resource management (e.g. estates, ICT etc.) Together, governors at every level help schools and the trust to keep on track and focus on what really matters.

Which schools are part of the Trust?

The trust currently has six partner schools in the south and south west of Sheffield for children aged 2 to 18+ years. Each primary school feeds into a trust secondary school. Collectively we educate over 4500 children (this will rise to 5000 by 2024), employ nearly 500 staff and are supported by over 70 governors, all of whom are volunteers, at a variety of schools and different levels. See map on next page.

Why become a governor?



I'm Phil Smith and I currently have the privilege of being the Chair of Mercia Learning Trust. 11 years ago I responded to a letter from King Egbert School (the school my children attend) asking for interested people to apply to become governors. I had no idea what being a school governor involved, all I knew was that I wanted to try and help and support my children's school if I could. Now alongside my fellow Trustees and local school governors, we provide strategic leadership for an organisation serving over 4500 children and young people, and employing around 500 staff. Education couldn't be further from my day job as a financial adviser, and that's what makes it so interesting and rewarding. Helping to make a difference, improving the life chances and future happiness of the young people here at Mercia Learning Trust, is such a special thing, and that's why I feel so privileged to be involved.

You don't need any experience, all you need is some time, an inquisitive mind, and to want to make a difference. If you believe every child, whatever their background, deserves the very best chance to fulfil their potential and live a happy and rewarding life, then you will fit right in as a governor at Mercia Learning Trust."

Phil Smith, Chair of the Trust Board

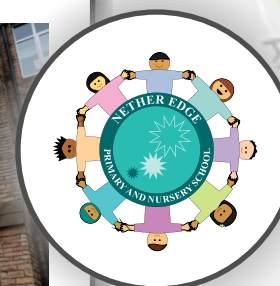


Phil Smith
Chair of Trust Board



	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	Mercia	11-18	1200 (by 2023)	N/A

Mercia School is a new and unique co-educational secondary school opened in 2018 in the southwest of Sheffield.



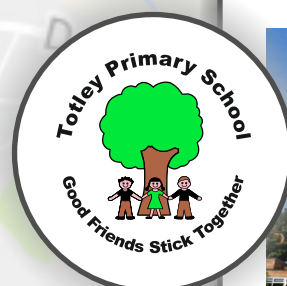
	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	Nether Edge	3-11	450	1

Nether Edge Primary School is situated in southwest Sheffield and serves a diverse catchment area with children from a variety of cultural backgrounds.



	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	King Egbert	11-18	1400*	1

King Egbert School is a co-educational secondary school situated in the village of Dore in the southwest of Sheffield.



	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	Totley	3-11	430	1

Totley Primary is an Ofsted rated outstanding school in the southwest of Sheffield.



	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	Newfield	11-16	1050	2

Newfield Secondary School is a coeducational secondary school situated in the south of Sheffield, specifically in the Norton Lees area.



	Name	Age Range	Number	Ofsted
	Woodlands	2-11	450	2

Woodlands Primary School and Tiny Seeds Nursery is a larger than average primary in the Norton area of Sheffield.

our Schools

* Growing

What our governors say:

"Being a school governor or trustee is a challenging but hugely rewarding role. It will give you the chance to make a real difference to young people, give something back to your local community and use and develop your skills in a board-level environment. You will also be joining the largest volunteer force in the country: there are over a quarter of a million volunteers governing state funded schools in England."

National Governance Association



**Amar Sadiq - Governor
King Ecgbert School**

"The reason I became a governor was to improve and build upon the excellent community relations the school has with our local community. I wanted to make a difference and be a driving force in engaging with parents to ensure their voices are heard and positive changes are made to enable a better education environment for our children. So far I can say it has been very rewarding and would definitely recommend it."



**Karen Milbourn - Chair of Governors
King Ecgbert School**

"Being a governor is so much more than I expected, it isn't just meetings discussing school data and results. There is so much more to be actively involved with. If anyone has a few spare hours a month I can recommend being a school governor as a rewarding and fulfilling way to use them."



**Ashfaq Khan - Governor
Mercia School**

"As a governor, you are a critical friend to the school, aiming to make every child matter, dream and achieve. Working with the Mercia Learning Trust is rewarding and exciting as everyone has their strengths in supporting the trust to be better for the children. If you feel you have the qualities to support the school you should get involved. Learn from the past; invest in the present; to improve the future."



**Dawn Bogunovic - Chair of Governors
Woodlands Primary**

"I wanted to become a governor to play my part in securing a good education for local children. The best bits are meeting the children and staff and seeing how much improvement has been made over recent years at the school. Hearing fantastic feedback from those who have contact with Woodlands staff and children makes me immensely proud."



**Janet Collins - Governor
Woodlands Primary**

"As governors, our role is to support and help the staff team do the very best they can to build on that commitment and deliver excellence for every child. It's also vital that as governors, we make sure the staff and leadership have the resources they need to fulfil their roles without compromising their own wellbeing. I've learned that it doesn't matter what knowledge or experience you have – every voice on the governing body is valuable and brings a new perspective to the team."

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Schools need governing boards that have a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills and experience to enable it to be effective. //

National Governance Association



FAQs

Q: Will I have to complete any formal application?

A: During the process of appointment you will be asked to complete an application form. This will confidentially collect key personal information, your experience, skills and competencies and declarations in order for the trust to complete necessary statutory safeguarding checks.

Q: How long is the term of office?

A: The usual term of office for a school governor and Trustee is 4 years.

Q: Is this a paid role?

A: Governance is an entirely voluntary role. Our Governance Handbook describes this commitment as follows; 'At the heart of governance in a charity like Mercia Learning trust is the governance team, made up entirely of volunteers. These individuals bring their experience and judgement, and accept accountability, not for material benefit, but for the greater public good. In particular, to improve the life chances of the pupils/young people in our schools'. Taking part will develop your experience and skills, as well as giving something back to your local community.

Q: What training will be given?

A: You will be guided through an effective induction, attend school or trust led training, and have access to comprehensive National Governor Association (NGA) or Learn Sheffield training packages.

Q: What time commitment is required?

A: Governors/trustees attend a minimum of 7 meetings a year. These usually take place on a weekday between 6–8pm. Outside of meetings, additional time will be required to read papers and/or attend training or school events as required. Those who hold positions as Chairs can expect to give even more time.

Q: What do I do if I am interested in being a governor or Trustee?

A: Contact Claire Hogg, Governance Officer, chogg@merciatrust.co.uk or call 0114 3494230. She will put you in contact either with the CEO or Headteacher for an informal conversation. They will explain the role more fully and the process by which you should apply. Depending on the role, a governor can be appointed by the local governing body or may have to engage in an election. The appointment of trustees In contract, the appointment of Trustees can only be made by Members. We look forward to hearing from you.



MERCIA LEARNING TRUST

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