



## Guide to Governance

Approved – 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Next review – October 2025

### Introduction

The Coppice Primary Partnership (“the trust”) was created on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 when Loose Primary School and Coxheath Primary School came together to form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). St Katherine’s School and Nursery joined the MAT on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019. The word “partnership” was chosen deliberately as our vision is for schools to work together, building on their own strengths and uniqueness, to secure the very best for every child.

The trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee and operates within the Companies Act and Charity Law.

The trust must follow procedures and requirements laid out in its Articles of Association and Master Funding Agreement (and any supplementary agreements) which are available to read on the trust website.

[Coppice Primary Partnership - Articles of Association](#)

The trust must also follow requirements laid out in the Education and Skills Funding Agency’s Academies Trust Handbook, which is updated annually.

[Academy Trust Handbook 2024](#)

This document follows the Academy Trust Governance guide published by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2024 and updated October 2024, which replaced the Governance Handbook 2019.

[DfE Governance in Academy Trusts](#)

The Trust’s Guide to Governance explains governance arrangements across the trust for the 2024/25 academic year. It should be read in conjunction with the document referenced above and in particular with the Academy Trust Handbook, the Trust’s Funding Agreement and the Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation details the main responsibilities and tasks identified for those involved in governance and is published on the trust website and on the website of each school. It will evolve over time and is the subject to an annual review.

[Coppice Primary Partnership - Scheme of Delegation](#)

### Overview of Governance

As part of the Academy Trust Governance Guide, the DfE published 5 pillars of academy trust quality:

- High-quality and inclusive education
- School improvement
- Workforce
- Finance and Operations

- Governance and Leadership.

There are three core functions of governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance.

In order to fulfil these roles effectively, the trust has been organised with three layers of governance:

- Members – who operate at a strategic level
- Trustees – who are responsible for management of the trust
- Local Governors – who hold some delegated responsibility for management at school level

The following paragraphs outline the composition and main responsibilities of these layers.

Statutory information on those holding Member and trustee posts is published on the trust website, and information on local governors is published on the relevant school's website.

## Members

Every academy trust must have a minimum of 3 Members and there is no maximum number. CPP has opted to have 5 Members, as recommended by the DfE, all appointed on the basis of the skills and expertise they bring to the role. No one employed by the trust may be appointed as a Member.

Members have a similar role to the shareholders of a company limited by shares. They have a small number of specific responsibilities but their main role is to maintain a high level, strategic overview of the whole trust - the ESFA Handbook recommends an "eyes on and hands off" approach.

Members are required to meet once a year, to receive the annual report on the trust's performance and to sign off the trust's annual audited accounts, but may choose to meet more often. The Trust's Accounting Officer (the Trust Leader) and Chief Financial Officer will normally attend these meetings.

Members are appointed indefinitely but may resign at any time.

## Trustees

Every academy trust must have a minimum of 3 trustees and there is no maximum number. CPP has chosen to have 11 places on the Trust Board. The Trust Leader is a trustee by virtue of office. The remaining trustees have been appointed on the basis of the skills and expertise they bring to the trust.

Trustees are both charity trustees and company directors. Trustees are either appointed by the Members or co-opted by the Trustees themselves. Trustees hold responsibility to conduct the trust's business and to focus on the three core functions of governance listed above.

The Trust Board is the key decision-making level in the MAT. Trustees can delegate some of their responsibilities or functions to committees or individual officers but the Trust Board remains accountable for all decisions throughout the trust. Responsibilities delegated by the trustees at CPP are shown in the Scheme of Delegation.

The Trust Board will meet 6 times per year (termly).

Trustees are appointed for a 4-year term of office.

Trustees have discretion to create committees, which have delegated authority. There is one committee of the Trust Board – Finance & Audit. There is one Group of the Trust Board – Education and Curriculum, which cannot be a

Committee as the number of governors exceeds the number of Trustees.

Education and Curriculum, which meets three times per annum. The Group provides oversight on the Trust's Ethic of Excellence, SEND provision and quality of education identifying best practice and coordinating its dissemination.

Finance and Audit, which meets six times per annum. The committee is responsible for ensuring sound financial management and value for money. The role includes all aspects of financial management including planning and monitoring, compliance and probity.

Further details on the terms of reference and responsibilities for both can be found in the Scheme of Delegation published on the Trust website.

## Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

LGBs are the committees established at each school by the Trustee Board. They have no statutory responsibilities or accountabilities as these remain at trustee level but have some functions delegated to them by the trustees (see the Scheme of Delegation) and play a very important role in:

- Monitoring what is actually happening at school level
- Preserving the unique nature of each school within the trust
- Being the public face of the trust within the school and wider community

LGBs comprise representatives of stakeholders at the school and others appointed on the basis of the skills and experience they bring to their school. In CPP, membership of each LGB comprises 7 governors:

- The Headteacher (by virtue of office)
- 1 staff governor (elected by staff at the school)
- 2 parent governors (elected by parents at the school)
- 3 co-opted governors (appointed by the Trust Board)
- The LGB at Trustees discretion can appoint non-voting Associate members

LGBs will meet 6 times per year (termly) and governors will also make monitoring visits to their school 3 times a year to check progress against priorities in the School Strategic Document.

Local governors (apart from the Headteacher) are appointed for a 4-year term of office.

## Minutes of meetings

Minutes of all governance meetings, together with supporting papers, are public documents except where information is deemed confidential (e.g. an individual may be identified). Non-confidential minutes of Trust Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings are published on the trust website and those for Local Governing Bodies are published on the relevant school website.

All agenda, papers and minutes are available to Trustees and Governors via their Governor Hub account. Access is restricted to the Committees on which people serve as agreed with the Chair of Trustees. If you would like to see other non-confidential papers, please contact the Governance Professional via [governance@coppicepp.org](mailto:governance@coppicepp.org).

## Governance Related documents

The Trust has published several documents on the Coppice Primary Partnership website:

<https://www.coppiceprimarypartnership.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Governance&pid=17>

- Scheme of Delegation
- Privacy Notice for Members, Trustees and Governors
- Governance Calendar

- Governor membership list
- Code of Conduct
- Register of Business Interests for Members and Trustees. Those relating to Governors can be found on the relevant school website

## **Other useful documents and sources of information**

### National Governance Association (NGA)

The trust has purchased membership of the NGA for local governors and trustees and Members may access the public area of the site. This is a valuable source of advice and guidance on a wide range of topics. Governors are provided with access to the NGA.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

### Governor Hub

The trust makes use of Governor Hub as not only provides the electronic means for circulating meeting papers (agenda, papers and minutes) but also offers training and information updates. Governors are provided with access to Governor hub.

[Governorhub.com - login](https://governorhub.com)

DfE – Academy Trust Governance guide (2024)

[DfE Governance in Academy Trusts](#)

Ofsted School Inspection – September 2024

[Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2024](#)

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