



Governance



Athena
SCHOOLS TRUST

The Governance of Athena Schools Trust

This pamphlet explains the governance and management of Athena Schools Trust (AST).

The Board of Trustees:

- AST is governed by a board of trustees constituted under a Memorandum of Articles of Association.
- AST believes that the **best people to govern schools are their own governing bodies** – i.e. those who are local to them, know them well, care about the students and have the appropriate professional skills.
- The board of trustees provides a **strategic overview** of the running of the academies and ensures that all schools in the MAT are well-governed.
- AST puts the **education of young people first**, driven by the headteachers' group, and the trust is there to monitor standards across the MAT and to ensure there is optimum collaboration between schools to enhance education and best practice in school management, including procurement and services.
- AST believes that trustees should be appointed for their professional, educational and governance skills, rather than as direct representatives of the various member schools. All trustees have the interests of **every member school** at their heart.
- A **Joint Governors Council (JGC)** ensures the voices of local governors are heard and communicates with the trust and the headteachers' group.
- Trustees will not serve on LGBs, in order to separate governance levels.



Governance Structure



- The Board of Trustees will meet a minimum of three times a year and will hold an AGM.
- Meetings will be rotated around member schools and will be clerked, the minutes being available across the AST.
- All schools will be required to submit a termly monitoring return which will be viewed by the executive team and turned into a concise “dashboard” which is reported to the Board. This includes financial, staffing and academic data as well as self-evaluation against school improvement objectives. Where areas of concern are identified, the executive will recommend its plan of support to the Board.
- The Trustees can also flag up areas of concern that reach them through other means, such as the JGC, local governing body or parental contact.
- An organisational chart of AST's governance structure is provided overleaf.

Members:

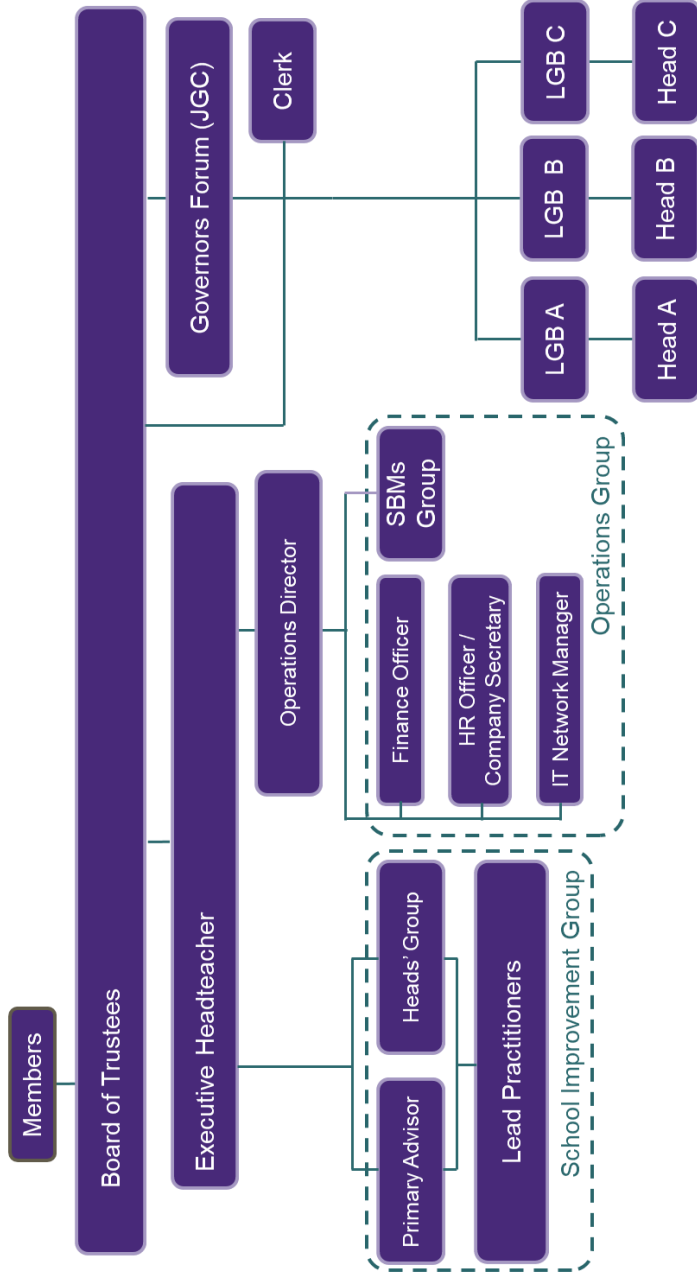
- Members appoint the trustees and have the power to remove the trustees if necessary (please refer to the draft articles of association). Members do not sit on any other committees.

Joint Governors Council (JGC):

- This is made up of two representatives from every member school.
- It is up to the JGC to draw up its terms of reference but its key role is to ensure that the knowledge and requirements of individual schools are fairly represented in the MAT.
- The JGC has the power to challenge the Board and the Heads Group on strategic matters when necessary.
- The JGC is also responsible for improving the standard of governance across the MAT through training and sharing of best practice.

AST Organisational Chart

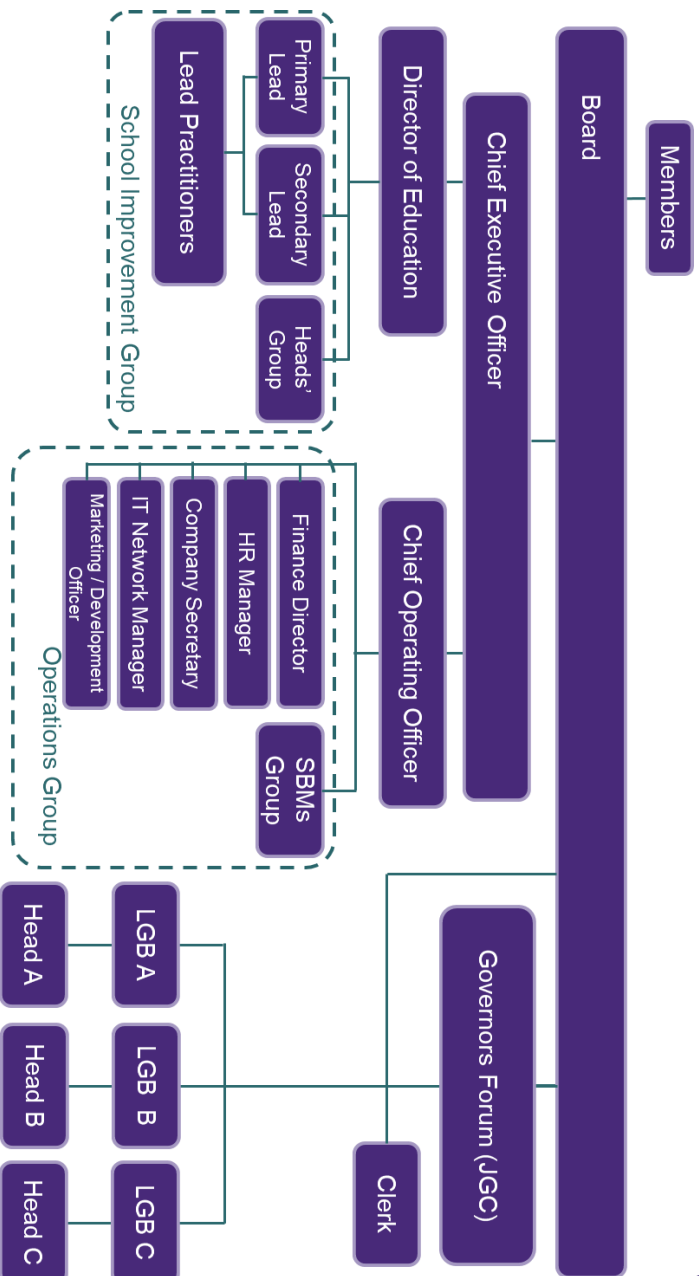
Starting position – Year 1 – Based on 4 schools, 2000 pupils





AST Organisational Chart

Aspirational position – Year 4 – Based on 10 schools, 4500 pupils



Governance Structure - continued

Local Governing Bodies:

- Local Governing Bodies will maintain a high level of strategic responsibility for their school and will continue to recruit members on a skillset basis as well as to represent and reflect their local community, especially parents.
- All LGBs must include staff representatives, other than the head.
- The minutes from the local boards will be circulated to trustees.
- LGBs will find that many of their more 'bureaucratic' duties (eg detail of policy writing) will be carried by the AST, freeing up more of their time to focus on Learning and Teaching.

Headteachers' Group:

- This comprises of the head teachers, or head of school, from every member school in the AST.
- The group will meet monthly, with the main purpose of ensuring that all schools offer the best education possible to every pupil.
- The group drives the school improvement and academic strategies of the MAT and must ensure that the Trust provides the finances and support for it to carry out its school improvement work.
- The group supports the appointment of teaching staff and is responsible for the deployment of staff across the MAT to best benefit the students and staff development.





Operations Group:

Headed by the AST's finance director, this Group comprises of the business managers and bursars of the member schools, plus any appropriate co-opted professionals from in and outside the MAT.

The Operations Group will contribute to the termly monitoring return to the Trust.

Its responsibilities include ensuring that all schools are financially viable, examining and progressing synergies across the MAT, highlighting capital and maintenance projects, and ensuring that MAT services, such as HR and payroll, are effectively run and monitored.

The Operations Group also plays a key role in assessing schools that have requested to join Athena Schools Trust.



The Trust

AST believes that trustees should be appointed for their professional, educational and governance skills, rather than as direct representatives of the various member schools. All trustees have the interests of every member school at their heart.

Trustees are responsible for:

- Strategic planning
- Ensuring sound management of all schools in the MAT
- Ensuring legal compliance
- Overseeing safeguarding across the MAT
- Establishing, with headteachers, a system of internal controls to monitor schools' performance and effectiveness
- Ensuring that all employees working for AST have fair and equitable employment terms with challenging CPD
- Ensuring that the MAT is solvent and that all schools are achieving best value for money
- Performance management of the executive lead
- Appointment of headteachers, with input from the local governing body
- Supporting schools' succession planning and recruitment
- Helping schools to be responsive to the needs of parents and their local communities
- Assessing and managing risk
- Monitoring and evaluating plans for improvement across the MAT
- Using external, independent evaluation to monitor their effectiveness
- Establishing a separate audit committee

Contact: Sarah Mackenzie (company secretary)

Email: info@athenaschools.co.uk

Tel: 01483 447366

**Athena Schools Trust, Guildford County School,
Farnham Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 4LU**

www.athenaschools.co.uk



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