



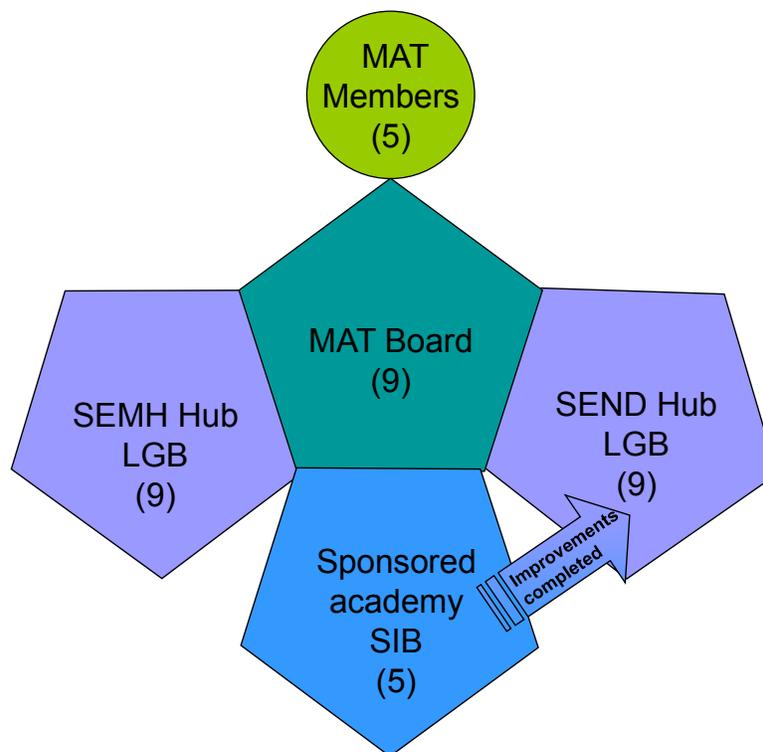
'Engaging learners to enhance their life opportunities and outcomes'



Believe Engage Succeed Trust Governance Structures

Believe Engage Succeed Trust (BEST) is a charitable Trust, which is accountable for the educational outcomes of all of its pupils, as well as its employees, ensuring value for money is delivered in its use of public fund and the stewardship of its premises.

The quality and effectiveness of our governance is crucial in discharging our responsibilities. As a charitable Trust, the law places all of these responsibilities on the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Board and the Chief Executive Officer, who is usually but not necessarily also the Accounting Officer. The MAT Board may delegate whichever of its responsibilities to other bodies within the MAT. Our experience has shown that the most effective governance occurs when decisions are delegated to the closest point of their impact. A second principle is that the membership in each part of the governance structure has been kept to a minimum to ensure effective decision making. These are the guiding principles which we have implemented.



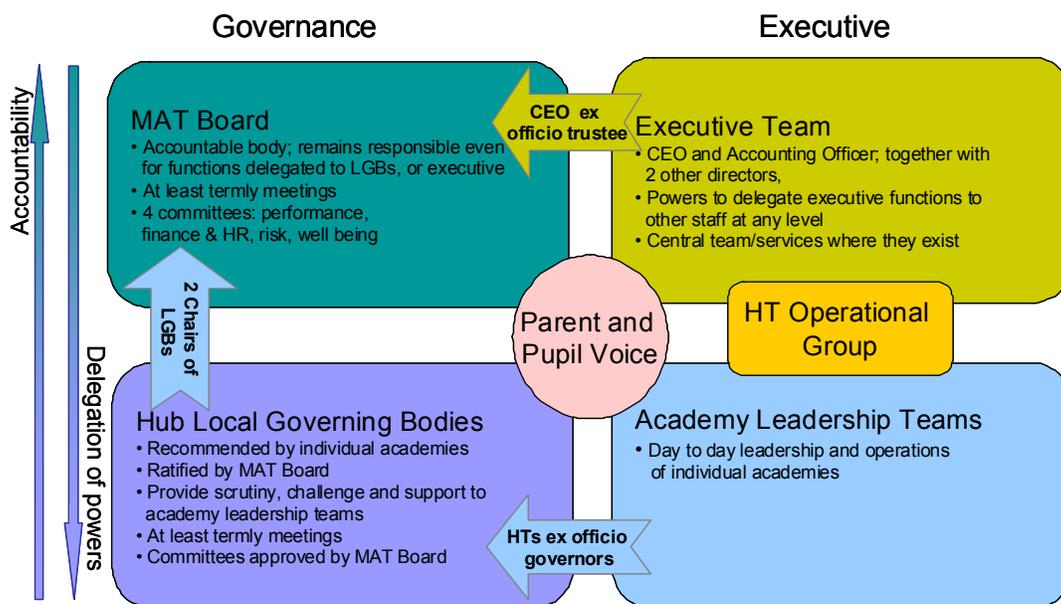
The BEST governance structure schematic above is consistent with the Trust's Articles of Association – December 2018, aligned with the Governance Handbook and complies with the Academies Financial Handbook.

Each Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding school is accountable to its respective Hub LGB. Initially, there will be just one school in each Hub. The Hub structure allows for growth as further converter academies or Free schools can join each Hub. On joining BEST, a sponsored school is

accountable to its own specially constituted School Improvement Board (SIB). When the necessary improvements have been completed and the school is rated by Ofsted as Good, the SIB will be dissolved and the school will move to be accountable to its Hub LGB. The Hub LGBs are held to account by the BEST Board.

The Members have responsibility for making changes to the Articles of Association, appointing some Members and also have reserve powers to appoint and remove Trustees. Once the Trust has been established, these powers are rarely used. So to this extent, the BEST is accountable to its Members.

Across BEST, the Trustees and Governors work in close partnership with the Executive Team and Academy Leadership Teams, who are responsible for the day to day operations of the Trust schools.



There are strong links designed in between the governance and executive responsibilities to promote clear understanding and sharing of key information about the strategic and operational aspects of the Trust. The Chief Executive Officer is an ex officio Trustee and all HTs are ex officio Hub governors. The LGB Chairs from each of the Hubs are also ex officio Trustees. The HTs of all of the Trust schools will be members of the Headteachers' Operational Group, which has the responsibility to ensure that there is consistency of approach across the schools and act as a forum to ensure that all schools deliver excellent learning opportunities, progress and outcomes for all pupils.

The roles and responsibilities of the all of the governance elements are define by the Trust's Delegation of Decisions matrix and their terms of reference. These documents are comprehensive and detailed.

Members

- The Trust has 5 members.
- Members come from a diverse range of backgrounds
- The Members are the custodians of the Trust's Articles of Association.

- They also ensure the MAT's charitable object is fulfilled.
- Their role is to approve changes to the Articles of Association, appoint Members and to appoint Trustees/Directors.
- They also have reserved powers to remove Members and Trustees. These powers are rarely used.

Trustees

- The Trust Board comprises 9 Trustees.
- The composition of BEST's Board is:
 - Chief Executive Officer (ex officio)
 - 2 Chairs of Hub LGBs (ex officio)
 - 6 appointees whose skills and experience cover:
 - Risk Management
 - Financial – strategic planning and operational accounting
 - HR
 - SEND educational provision
 - Business development and management
 - Parent voice or charitable organizations
- The Board will be led by a Chair elected annually.
- One Trustee will be appointed to be the Trust's Accounting Officer.
- Trustees will be allocated responsibly for key areas of the Trust's work
- The Board will establish 4 committees with powers delegated to them.

The Trustees, who are company directors registered with Companies House, are personally and collectively responsible for the management of the Trust and all of its schools. Through legislation, the Trustees are accountable to the Members, the Secretary of State for Education and its wider community for the education provided for its students and the effective use to which they put their public funds.

Specific financial responsibilities and accountabilities are set out in the Funding Agreement, Sponsorship Grants and the Academies Financial Handbook. These require that the Trustees put in place arrangements to assure themselves of the safety, quality, probity and sound practice of the activities of the Trust.

In establishing the Trust's governance structures, care has been taken to ensure that they are very clear, unambiguous with no duplication of governance nor gaps in responsibilities and good-two way communications are built in.

The role of Board is covered very succinctly by the *Twenty-one Questions for Multi-academy Trusts - Key questions a MAT board should ask itself* (All Party Parliamentary Group on Education Governance and Leadership) March 2015:

- **Vision, ethos and strategy** - determining a clear, shared vision with strategic priorities for the next three to five years, where the strategic priorities drive the governance structure, activities and agenda setting at all levels of the Trust and building the capacity to support additional schools
- **Governance structures** – to implement clear governance structures from Members down to individual school level, in keeping with its Articles of Association, and conducive to effective working, with check and balances and no duplication at different

levels, delivering good two-way communications where each level understand their roles and responsibilities compared to those of the Trustee Board

- **Scheme of delegation** – construct and publish a clear scheme of delegation of powers from the Board, which define how the key governance functions are implemented:
 - Determining each individual school's vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - Recruiting each school's Headteacher
 - Performance management of each school's Headteacher
 - Establishing the Trust's Human Resources policy and practice
 - Maintaining oversight of each school's budget
 - Assessment of the risks for each school and the Trust as a whole
 - Establish the principle of earned autonomy and how it is applied to individual schools and ensure that it is understood by all levels of governance
- **Trustee Board effectiveness and conduct**
 - Right skills: The Board employs a robust and transparent process for the recruitment both of Trustees and LGB appointees, including role specifications, skills audits and interview panel to ensure those carrying out governance functions have the full range of experience, qualities and skills necessary to discharge all the Board's responsibilities
 - Clerking: The Board has an independent, professional clerk providing information and guidance on regulatory practice and procedures, including governance leadership to the committees and Hub LGBs
 - Chair: The Board ensures their Chair has an appropriate set of skills and experience to provide evidence based strong and effective leadership
 - Trustee performance: An annual review is completed by the Chair of each trustee's contribution to the Board's performance. This is used to highlight any areas for further training to ensure each trustee is investing in their own development
 - Succession planning: Good succession planning is in place so that, in normal circumstances, no trustee serves for longer than two terms of office and the Chair is replaced, at least, every six years
 - Conflicts of interest & conduct: The Trustee Board ensures that conflicts are avoided and that the Nolan principles of public life are adhered to.
 - Learning Best Practice from others: The Trust Board regularly reviews its structures and practice, making use of other Boards' experiences and periodically seeking external expertise where it needs to enhance its approaches.
- **Engagement**
 - The Trustee Board engages with, seeks inputs from, listens to, understands and responds to its key stakeholder: pupils, parents, staff and local communities across all its schools
 - The Trust is committed to engaging in targeted collaborative relationships beyond the Trust to improving the leadership and schools beyond its own schools

- **Effective accountability of the executive leadership**
 - Oversight and scrutiny of its schools' performance data, with the objective of ensuring that pupils in all their schools are making the best progress they can
 - Ensure there is a strong and effective executive leadership structure and personnel in place across the Trust with the right skills, clear line-management and reporting mechanisms
 - Ensure senior leaders within schools are challenged to improve the education of pupils, and intervene if improvement is not progressing according to plan at a school
 - Oversight and scrutiny of the Trust's financial capability and management systems are robust to ensure compliance with the Academies Financial Handbook, and best value for money.
- **Impact on outcomes for pupils**
 - Establish through a rolling annual self-evaluation process how much have the schools improved over the last three years, and how Board has contributed.

The Board focuses on setting the vision, ethos and strategic direction for the whole Trust for the next 3-5 years, managing risk including that associated with growth, agreeing Trust wide KPIs, and putting in place Trust wide policies and procedures to ensure that the Trust and its schools comply with all of their statutory obligations and regulations.

As part of its self-evaluation process, the Board will complete regular skills audits of its Trustees. These will be based on the NGA Skills questionnaire and the DfE Competency Framework for Governance. Where skills gaps are identified, these will be addressed through training, recruitment or contracting in external specialists.

Board Sub-Committees

From its starting point of having no Board Sub-committees, it is the intention of the Board to establish four Board Sub-Committees during the next Financial Year. These will be:

- 1. Educational Performance: standards**
- 2. Finance and HR: including resources i.e. buildings etc.**
- 3. Risk: risk management and Audit**
- 4. Well-being: including safeguarding, pupil behaviour and pupil and staff well-being**

These Sub-Committees will provide the overview and undertake work in key priority areas for the Trust. They will provide Trust wide scrutiny and challenge which is distinct from the role of the LGBs where their focus is solely on their own school. Until the Sub-Committees are approved, these key functions will be held at Board level and delivered by the Trustees themselves.

Executive Team

The Executive Team focuses on operational management and educational performance of the Trust's schools. The small Executive Team is led by the Chief Executive Officer, who is an ex officio Trustee. The Chair of the Board, the Trust Development Lead and the Trust Financial Lead will complete the Executive Team. The Executive Team works in close partnership with the Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams of each of the Trust's schools. The Executive Team is supported by the Headteachers' Operational Group.

Headteachers' Operational Group

The advisory Headteachers' Operational Group comprising the Headteachers from all of the Trust's Schools will meet monthly. The purpose of the Headteachers' Operational Group is to:

- Drive ambitious educational performance across the schools
- Promote strong learning relationships between the schools
- Share good practice
- Be forward looking
- Influence policy development

Parent and Pupil Voice

Our parents and pupils are key Trust stakeholders. In keeping with our ethos, we will engage with, seek the views of and work in partnership with our parents and pupils. Regular parent and pupil voice events will be arranged by schools and co-ordinated across the Trust. Feedback from these events will be reported to and considered by the LGBs and Board.

SEMH and SEND Hub LGBs

Each Hub LGB will have 9 governors representing its stakeholders.

These will be:

- Headteacher of each Good or Outstanding Hub school (ex officio)
- Two staff governors who are staff members, nominated and elected by the staff.
- Two parent governors who are parents nominated and elected by the parents.
- Four community governors who are from the school's local community.

Community governors may come from its educational or vocational partners, from agencies with which the school works or local business leaders etc.

It is expected that the number of governors will be equally distributed across the HUB schools in order to provide a spread of stakeholder representatives.

The role of Local Governors in our MAT is very important. In keeping with our principle of ensuring that decision making takes place closest to the point of impact, powers will be delegated from the Board to the Hub LGBs to enable them to take responsibility for the operations and performance of their schools. Hub LGBs are accountable to the Trust Board and thence to the Department of Education.

Local governors will be appointed by the Hub LGB, following consultation with the Board. The Board will reserve its powers to remove any Local Governor. Each Hub LGB will elect a Chair annually. The Chairs will be ex officio Trustees. Headteachers will report and be accountable to their Hub LGB.

The LGBs' remit is to implement, monitor and evaluate, the strategies defined and approved by the Board, as they relate to their schools. They also have the role of implementing, monitoring and evaluating the Trust's policies and procedures. They must ensure that these are understood and complied with. They are responsible for the daily operation of its schools and will be held to account for the performance of their schools.

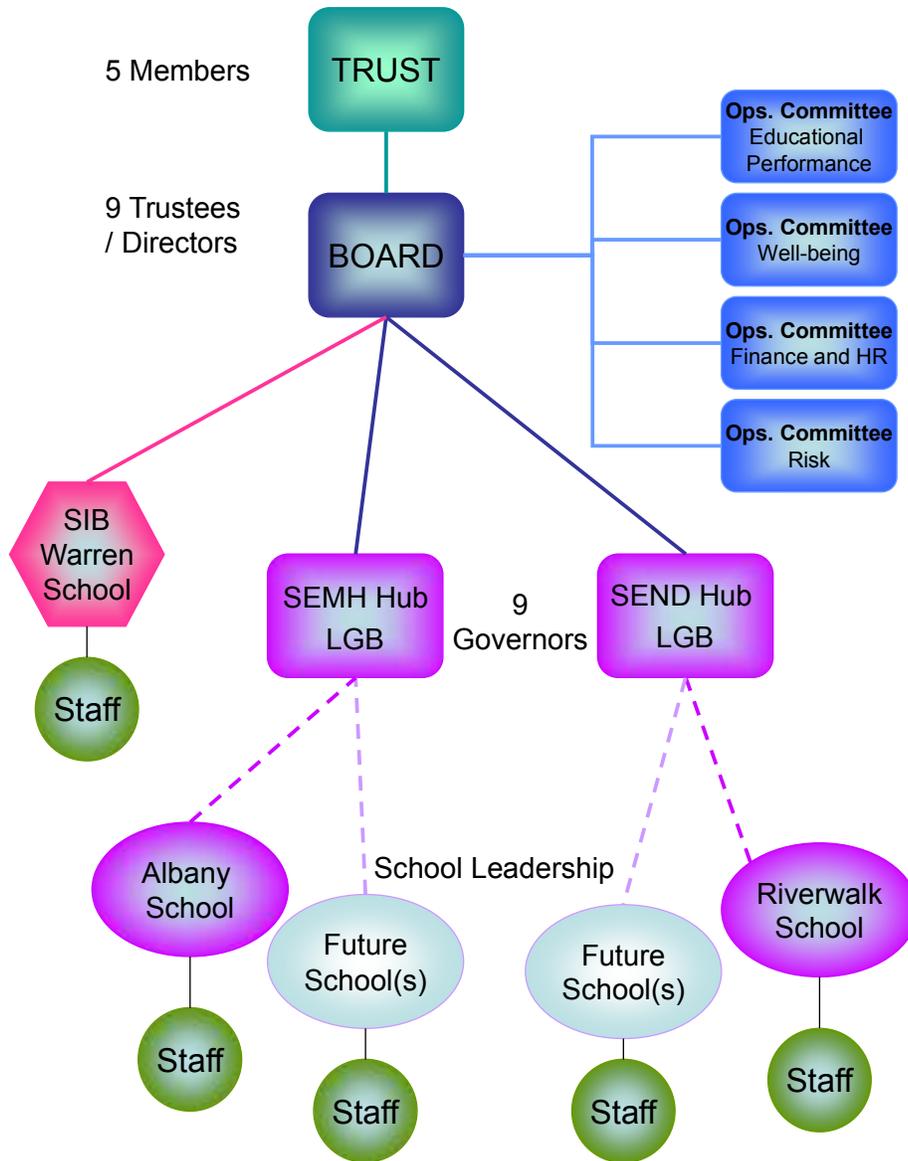
LGBs also provide a clear conduit for reporting on the performance of their schools to the Board. They must provide a KPIs performance report for each school, every term, to the Board. They have the responsibility to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, effectiveness of every school's safeguarding framework and financial value for money. They also hold the responsibility for the first draft annual budget plan and five year strategic plan within the framework provided by the Board. They operate as the first link with parents and the community.

Accountability, Scrutiny and Rapid Intervention

A clear accountability chain below links each school to the Trust Board via their Hub LGBs. Hub LGBs will report on school performance and any issues, on a termly basis. The Trust Board will meet at least termly.

The Hub LGBs will report against the KPIs and targets set by the Board and their trends over the last three terms. These 'litmus test' reports will act as an early warning of underperforming schools or other issues in schools. Where an intervention is required, the Hub LGB will be instructed by the Board to investigate, and formulate a recovery action plan with outcomes, a timeline and resources – internal and external required to remedy the situation. A Board member will be appointed to ensure that the action plan is implemented, as quickly as possible.

In the case of a sponsored school, a School Improvement Board (SIB) will be put in place. The SIB will comprise five members, all of whom will be appointed by the Board. The SIB will have direct accountability to the Board for the school and its improvement. It will meet monthly and report progress and issues against the School's Improvement Plan (approved by the Board) monthly. Matters of immediate urgency will be dealt with by the Executive Team and reported to the Trustees. Once the sponsored school has made the required improvements and achieves an Ofsted rating of Good, the SIB will be dissolved and accountability for the school will pass to its respective Hub LGB.



Key People

BEST Members are:

1. Dr Vivienne Hughes
2. Mrs Carrie Irvine
3. Mrs Joanna Last
4. Mr Mark Merriam
5. Mr Steve Watts

BEST Trustees are:

1. Mrs Jan Hatchell (ex officio) - CEO and Accounting Officer
2. Dr Chris Hodgson (ex officio - SEND HUB LGB Chair)
3. Dr Vivienne Hughes (ex officio - SEMH HUB LGB Chair), CFO
4. Mrs Gulshan Kayembe - expertise in Education / Ofsted and SEND educational provision

5. Mr Andrew Mason - expertise in Financial - strategic planning and operational accounting
6. Vacancy - Business development and management
7. Vacancy - Risk Management specialist
8. Vacancy - Parent voice or charitable organizations specialist
9. Vacancy - HR specialist

There is significant financial expertise and in depth SEMH and SEND educational experience across several Trustees. The Board is currently working to fill all of the Trustee vacancies, as soon as possible.

The Board has engaged an independent, professional Clerk to the Board to support the Board and also provide advice on governance matters. The specification for this role has been adapted from the Clerk's job description and person specification from the NGA. So the role encompasses advice on effective governance, as well as arranging meetings and providing minutes of meetings etc.