

Foundation Director Application Form and Skills Audit.

Catholic Schools Multi Academy Trust Governance Extract from Foundation Director Application Form:

As the name suggests Foundation Directors are directors of the Academy Trust and the role differs from the role of school governor in a maintained school and also from that of a trustee of a church school trust (those trusts continue unchanged to hold the site). The directors of CAT are responsible for the Academy Trust as a whole and are accountable to the Archbishop and the Secretary of State for Education (as the regulator of academy trusts and the funder of the Academies run by the Academy Trust). The directors are required to have systems in place through which the governance and management of the Academies is conducted. The Trust's founding principle of subsidiarity, (delegating as much responsibility to the Local Governing Bodies and the head teachers of the local member schools as possible), remains a driving value; this is exercised within the legislative and inspection regime that holds the Trust accountable through a variety of regulatory frameworks.

The directors must ensure that the Trust thrives independently and continues to provide high quality education with a distinctive Catholic ethos and continues the link with the diocesan family of schools and the parishes. Foundation Directors are always appointed by the Bishop of the diocese in which the school is situated for the strict purpose of ensuring, on his behalf, the Catholic character of the school. As well as their legal duties, Foundation Directors are also under an important legal duty to preserve and develop the religious character of the Trust and the Academies and that the Academies are being conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Catholic Church. In consequence of this, the Strategic Board must always have a majority of Foundation Directors.

Together with the Education Service, the directors of the Trust must ensure that the Strategic Board has directors with an appropriate mix of skills and experience and is as representative of the local interests as possible. In addition to Foundation Directors, Principal Directors (head teachers) and Chair of Governor Directors are appointed annually by the schools within the CAT.

The DfE Governance Handbook Extract:

The essentials of effective governance

All boards, whether in the maintained or academy sector and no matter how many schools they are responsible for, have three core functions:

1. ***Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;***
2. ***Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and***
3. ***Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.***
The core features of effective governance also apply

at any scale and in any context, and are common to good governance practice in the charity and corporate sectors.

They include the importance of the board having:

- The right people with the necessary skills, time and commitment, and sufficient diversity of perspectives to ensure internal challenge, all actively contributing in line with clearly defined roles and responsibilities under an effective chair and an explicit code of conduct, and with active succession planning;
- Clear governance structures with tightly defined remits, particularly in relation to functions delegated to committees or other bodies;
- Clear separation between the strategic and operational in terms of the role of the board and its school leaders;
- A positive relationship between the board and its school leaders enabling robust constructive challenge on the basis of a good understanding of objective data particularly on pupil progress, staff performance and finances;
- The support and advice of an independent and professional clerk and, in the case of academies, company secretary;
- Robust processes for financial and business planning and oversight and effective controls for compliance, propriety and value for money; and
- Processes for regular self-evaluation, review and improvement including; skills audits, training and development plans, and independent external reviews as necessary

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Since the publication of Lord Nolan's report 'Standards in Public Life' in 1997, there has been a renewed emphasis on public servants undertaking their duties with honesty, integrity, and openness. The seven principles which here have been worded to cover the role of the school governor:-

Selflessness: We will take decisions solely in terms of the interest of the Trust and the school and the community it serves. We will not seek to gain financially from our decisions, nor will we take decisions from which our friends or family financially benefit.

Integrity: As individuals we will not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our official duties.

Objectivity: In carrying out our business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, we will make our choices on merit

Accountability: We will be accountable for our decisions and actions to the wider community served by the Trust and its schools and we will submit ourselves to a level of scrutiny appropriate to our office.

Openness: We will be as open as possible about all our decisions and actions. We will give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

Honesty: We will declare any private interests relating to our public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interests of the Trust and its schools.

Leadership: We will promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

The Six Competencies of an Effective Board

1. Contextual Dimension

The board understands and takes into account the values and beliefs of the organisation it governs. The board:

Adapts to the distinctive characteristics and culture of the Trust's environment and its role in overseeing the Catholic Schools within the Trust under Canon Law.

- Relies on the Churches and Trust's mission, values, and tradition as a guide for decisions.
- Acts so as to exemplify and reinforce the organisation's values and traditions as a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

2. Educational Dimension

The board ensures that board members are well informed about the Trust, the schools and the board's role, responsibilities, and performance. The board:

- Consciously creates opportunities for trustee education and development.
- Regularly seeks information and feedback on its own performance.
- Pauses periodically for self-reflection, to diagnose its strengths and limitations, and to examine its mistakes.

3. Interpersonal Dimension

The board nurtures the development of members as a group and fosters a sense of cohesiveness. The board:

- Creates a sense of inclusiveness among trustees.
- Develops group's goals and recognises group achievements.
- Identifies and cultivates leadership with the board.

4. Analytical Dimension

The board recognises complexities and subtleties of issues and accepts ambiguity and uncertainty as healthy preconditions for critical discussion. The board:

- Approaches matters from a broad institutional outlook.
- Dissects and examines all aspects of multifaceted issues.
- Raises doubts, explores trade-offs, and encourages the expression of differences of opinion.

5. Political Dimension

The board accepts as a primary responsibility the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships among major stakeholders. The board:

- Respects the integrity of the governance process and the legitimate roles and responsibilities of other stakeholders.
- Consults often and communicates directly with key stakeholders.
- Attempts to minimise conflict and win/lose situations.

6. Strategic Dimension

The board helps the Trust and its schools envision a direction and shape a strategy. The board:

- Cultivates and concentrates on processes that sharpen the Trusts priorities.
- Organises itself and conducts its business in light of the Trust and diocese's strategic priorities.
- Anticipates potential problems, and acts before issues become crises.

In order for the Board to meet its requirements it is important to have a clear understanding of the key skills of the members of the Strategic Board and to identify any training requirements or skills gaps. Please can you therefore complete the attached skills audit and return it to the Company Secretary.

Board skills audit form

Name:

Work of the Trust:	1	2	3	*
Catholic Nature of your appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Governance in Catholic schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safeguarding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector Early Years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector Primary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector Secondary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector Post 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector F.E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education sector Higher Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legislation applicable to the voluntary sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equal opportunities and diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operating environment:				
Business sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Voluntary sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus on social/political environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governance and regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management:				
Business management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strategic planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operational management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial management and Budget setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funders, Bid or Procurement applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing and PR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ICT strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment law and practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conflict resolution-mediation, arbitration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: Date:

1 qualification/experience at senior level
 2 some knowledge/experience
 3 little or no knowledge
 * Training needed