



Terms of Reference

2023-24

Board of Directors
Academy Committees

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Board of Directors

1. Purpose of the Board of Directors

As a charity and company limited by guarantee, Pele Trust is governed by a Board of Directors who are responsible for, and who oversee, the management and administration of the Trust and the academies run by the Trust.

The Board of Directors has three core functions:

- Setting the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Trust
- Holding the Executive Leadership to account for the educational performance and safeguarding of pupils, and the performance management of all staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Trust, ensuring the efficient use of public funds and Trust resources.

The Board is accountable for all of the schools within the Trust but it has delegated some governance functions to sub-boards of directors and local academy committees.

The [Pele Trust Scheme of Delegation](#) provides the detail of which functions have been delegated and who the primary decision-maker is.

2. Membership and Quorum

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, and the chairs of the sub-Boards, will be elected by the Board of Directors for a term of four years. Nominations and elections will usually take place at the first meeting of the relevant Autumn term. The Chair may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the Board will elect a temporary replacement from among the Directors who are present at the meeting.

Membership of the Board will be no fewer than 5 Directors and quorum is three Directors, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Directors holding office at the date of the meeting.

3. Governance Professional

The Board of Directors will appoint a governance professional as Clerk to the Board [Clerk]. The Clerk will be someone other than a Director, Headteacher or employee of the Trust. The Board of Directors may also remove the clerk to the board.

4. Meetings

Directors will hold a full board meeting at least 3 times per academic year.

The Clerk will circulate an agenda for each meeting (with supporting documents if available) no later than seven days before each Board Meeting.

The Clerk will record:

- Attendance at each Board Meeting
- Issues discussed
- Recommendations for decisions
- Table of action points

The written record will be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Board of Directors for review and agreement by the Board.

In the event of a need to make genuinely urgent decisions between meetings of the Board of Directors in terms of matters falling within the remit of the Board, the Chair will take appropriate action on behalf of the Board.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Governance

The Board of Directors are specifically responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Articles of Association and Funding Agreements with the Secretary of State
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory regulations and Acts of Parliament governing the operation of the academies in the Trust
- Establishing the committees of the board and their terms of reference, receiving reports and recommendations from those Boards and make decisions on such matters

- Carrying out an annual review of the Scheme of Delegation, making any amendments where appropriate
- Determining the corporate strategy for the Trust
- The appointment of the Chief Executive Officer
- The appointment of Associate Directors

5.2 Financial

The Board of Directors are specifically responsible for:

- The determination of finance policies, procedures, regulations and internal controls for the Trust
- Ensuring compliance with the Academies Handbook and Academy Accounts Direction
- Oversight of the finances of the Trust and maintenance of educational standards at the Academies
- Receiving and approving the annual report and accounts of the Trust (this function may be delegated by the Board of Directors to the Resources sub-Board)
- Approving the medium-term financial plan (3 year budget) for each financial year (this function may be delegated by the Board of Directors to the Resources sub-Board)
- Determining the scope of centralised services to be delivered to the Trust and to each school and how costs for those services will be allocated
- Receiving monthly management accounts
- Setting an Executive Pay Policy and ensuring that the framework for reviewing Executive Pay is robust and compliant
- The appointment of internal and external auditors
- The appointment of the Trust's Accounting Officer
- Developing an academy buildings and facilities estate long-term strategy or master plan

5.3 Achievements, Standards and Administrative

The Board of Directors are specifically responsible for:

- The appointment of the Headteacher of each Academy supported by the relevant Academy Committee
- Appraisal of Headteachers including to review, where appropriate, pay progression recommendations made by the CEO and Academy Committee
- Determining the Published Admission Number (for each school), the Admissions Policy and admission arrangements for each Academy in accordance with the School Admissions Code

- Monitoring, and where necessary, challenging the performance of the Trust schools in order to ensure the quality of educational provision
- Determining all Human Resources policies and procedures and terms and conditions of service, including (but not limited to) appraisal and pay policies, disciplinary and capability procedures and sick absence and leave of absence policies
- Ensuring that health and safety policy and arrangements are in place
- Overseeing arrangements for risk management at a Trust and individual school level
- Receiving reports from any individual or committee to whom a decision has been delegated and to consider whether any further action by the Board is necessary
- Oversight of and responsibility for the trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy including the review of incidents as reported by the Achievements and Standards sub-Board

Resources sub-Board

1. Frequency of meetings

The resources sub-Board will convene at least 3 times per academic year.

2. Membership and Quorum

The Chair and Vice Chair of the sub-Board will be Directors other than the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the sub-Board will elect a temporary replacement from among the Directors who are present at the meeting.

Membership will be no fewer than 5 Directors and quorum is three Directors, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Directors holding office at the date of the meeting.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Financial

The Resources sub-Board are delegated responsibility for:

- Agreeing the medium-term financial plan/3-year budget for the Trust
- Setting appropriate financial targets for each financial year and determining any additional financial and reporting targets for the Trust and academies
- Approving any financial improvement plans where action is necessary for schools to deliver forecast or agreed budgets
- Reviewing the Trust and school budgets throughout the financial year, making decisions on proposed actions to address adverse variances from planned budgets
- Agreeing any expenditure above the level of authorisation designated to Chief Operating Officer (£30,000)
- Approve any requests for purchases outside of the Trust usual procedures, as documented in the Pele Trust Finance Policy
- Agreeing the write off of debts as per the Finance Policy but not exceeding limits set in the Academies Handbook
- Agreeing the opening of any trust bank account or other credit facility
- Ensuring the Trust's financial procedures are complied with

3.2 Asset Management

The Resources sub-Board are delegated responsibility for:

- Authorising the acquisition, and disposal, of assets over the value defined in the Pele Trust Assets Policy
- The maintenance and review of a fixed asset register
- To consider and approve Capital Expenditure Plans

3.3 Procurement

The Resources sub-Board are delegated responsibility for:

- The appointment of legal, financial, and HR services on behalf of the Trust
- Approving any related third-party transactions
- Ensuring that the Trust achieves best value for money when acquiring goods and services

3.4 Audit and Risk

The Resources sub-Board are delegated responsibility for:

- Recommending to Members the appointment of an external auditor
- Agreeing the scope of the internal assurance programme with auditors
- Monitoring responses to findings by Auditors and agreeing recommendations from internal and external audit and management responses to audit findings
- Evaluating the adequacy of the Trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks and report this to the Trust Board
- Reviewing the risk register to inform contingency and business continuity planning and ensuring that risks and control measures are adequately identified and modified as appropriate
- Providing assurance to the Board that risks are being adequately identified and managed
- Ensuring financial reporting and auditing to the ESFA and other bodies is completed within agreed timescales
- Ensuring that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny and robust management

Achievements and Standards sub-Board

1. Frequency of meetings

The Achievements and Standards sub-Board will convene at least 3 times per academic year.

2. Membership and Quorum

The Chair and Vice Chair will be Directors other than the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Directors.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the sub Board will elect a temporary replacement from among the Directors who are present at the meeting.

Membership will be no fewer than 5 directors and quorum is three Directors, or, where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Directors holding office at the date of the meeting.

3. Responsibilities

The Achievements and Standards sub-Board are delegated responsibility for:

3.1 Curriculum

- Receiving and approving School Commitment Plans for each school following discussion and recommendations from each Academy Committee
- Monitoring the development of curriculum at Pele Trust schools
- Evaluating the implementation of the curriculum and quality of education in Pele Trust schools
- Reviewing the policy and provision for collective worship, including the right to be consulted by the CEO about arrangements for collective worship
- Overseeing the Trust's approach to promoting British values, equality and inclusion thereby preparing pupils for life in modern Britain

3.2 Outcomes

- Reviewing termly updates from Headteacher reports and interim updates from the CEO
- Identify (relevant) risks and concerns for action by Academy Committees and Headteachers
- Upholding and maintaining standards at the school
- Monitoring and comparing the performance of Trust schools against similar schools

- Track and monitor progress and achievements against individual school and Trust targets
- Evaluating the impact and effectiveness of strategies linked to improving the performance of SEND and disadvantaged pupils

3.3 Safeguarding, Behaviour and Attendance

- Agreeing and keeping under review the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Reviewing levels of safeguarding incidents across the Trust on a termly basis
- Monitoring levels of attendance across Pele Trust schools
- Reviewing permanent exclusion decisions concerning Pele Trust pupils
- Monitoring pastoral care to ensure the academic, social, moral, spiritual, cultural and appropriate medical needs of students are being met
- Considering any emerging patterns, trends and risks relating to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding and wellbeing in Pele Trust schools

Executive Pay Committee

1. Purpose of the Committee

The purpose of the Executive Pay Committee is to ensure that Executive Pay, and pay reviews are fair, transparent and undertaken in accordance with the Academies Handbook, the Pele Trust Pay Policy, company and charity law and any other relevant legislation.

2. Frequency of Meetings

The committee will meet as often as is required to fulfil its responsibilities, including as outlined in the Pele Trust pay policy

3. Membership and Quorum.

The committee will comprise the Chair of the Board of Directors and a minimum of 3 other Directors, at least 1 of whom should be members of the Resources sub-Board.

Quorate will be a third of attending members (rounded up to the next whole number).

4. Responsibilities

The committee are delegated responsibility for:

- Agreeing the Pele Trust pay policy on an annual basis
- Determining Executive pay scales and relevant terms and conditions of employment including for, but not limited to, that of the CEO, Deputy CEO, COO and Pele Trust Headteachers
- Receiving recommendations in relation to Executive Pay, including from external advisors where appropriate, and considering those as part of a total remuneration package
- Considering the criteria set out in the Pele Trust Pay Policy and agreeing any change or increases
- Maintaining a clear evidence base and records of decisions taken



Academy Committee

Academy Committees

1. Purpose of the Academy Committee

Academy Committees play a critical role to ensure each school delivers high-quality performance and upholds the values our partnership represents. Academy Committee's know their school best and are an integral partner to the Trust's continued improvement.

The Trust Board will establish an Academy Committee at each of its schools. The Directors of Pele Trust delegate the management of the business of the school to the Academy Committee.

The purpose of the Academy Committee is to:

- Maintain an overview and keep the Directors properly informed of the conduct and progress of the school
- Act as a critical friend to the Headteacher and staff of the school;
- Be accountable to the Directors, parents and the wider community for the Academy Committee's actions and the school's overall performance.

2. Frequency of Meetings

The Academy Committee will convene at least 3 times per academic year.

3. Membership and Quorum

3.1 Non-church Schools

Non church school Academy Committees are expected to have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 members including the following categories:

- At least 2 parents recruited to serve on the committee
- At least 1 elected staff member
- The Headteacher
- Up to 8 co-opted members (as necessary) nominated and agreed by the other Academy Committee members

3.2 Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools

Voluntary Aided (VA) School Academy Committees are expected to have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 members including the following categories:

- At least 2 parents recruited to serve on the committee
- At least 1 elected staff member
- The Headteacher

- One ex-officio foundation member (usually the parish priest of the parish the academy is situated within or another individual nominated by the relevant Archdeacon)
- Up to 2 foundation members nominated by the Diocesan Board of Education
- Up to 2 foundation members nominated by a related Educational Trust, e.g. Coates Educational Foundation
- Up to 2 co-opted members nominated and agreed by the other Academy Committee members

3.3 Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools

Voluntary Controlled (VCA) School Academy Committees are expected to have a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 12 members including the following categories:

- At least 2 parents recruited to serve on the committee
- At least 1 elected staff member
- The Headteacher
- One ex-officio foundation member (usually the parish priest of the parish the academy is situated within or another individual nominated by the relevant Archdeacon)
- Up to 3 foundation members nominated by the DBE (ensuring 25% of AC members are foundation which includes the ex-officio member)
- Up to 2 co-opted members nominated and agreed by the other Academy Committee members

3.4 Quorum

Quorum for all committees is any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Academy Committee members in post at the date of the meeting.

3.5 Chairs Term of Office

Each Academy Committee will nominate a Chair and Vice Chair for agreement by the Board of Directors.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed for a term of 3 years. The post may be held by the same person for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms (6 years in total).

4. Responsibilities

The responsibilities delegated to the Academy Committee are:

4.1 Achievements, Standards and Administration

- Developing and agreeing the School Commitment Plan, strategic priorities and key performance indicators against which the school's performance can be measured
- Monitoring school performance, reviewing data, including exam results and pupil progress and working with school leaders to identify and address areas for improvement
- Developing high quality professional learning opportunities for staff development
- Establishing school led policies including but not limited to Collective, Worship, Charging and Remissions, and Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
- Making decisions about admissions applications including appeals against Local Authority directed admissions

4.2 Curriculum and Outcomes

- Ensuring that the school curriculum is fit for purpose and reflects the aims and values of the Trust
- Accountability and oversight for standards of teaching, strong outcomes for pupils and accountability for individual children's education

4.3 Safeguarding, Behaviour and Attendance

- Monitoring safeguarding practice, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, school procedures and Trust policies
- Developing and monitoring the school Accessibility Plan
- Monitoring pupil attendance including sub-groups; working with leaders to identify and address areas of concern
- Establishing a behaviour policy (including suspensions and exclusions) that is consulted on annually with staff, pupils and parents
- Reviewing the use of suspensions and exclusions, including decisions about permanent exclusions and fixed term suspensions of more than 15 days

4.4 Finance and Resources

- To develop and propose the individual Academy budget for approval by the Board of Directors
- Monitoring monthly academy expenditure and financial reports, and identify actual or potential items of budget overspend/underspend
- To identify additional services to be procured on behalf of the school
- To monitor compliance with approved Financial Procedures and use of Pupil Premium funds

- The appointment of staff other than the Headteacher, and assigning responsibilities such as SENCO, safeguarding/child protection designated person, educational visits coordinator
- Appraisal and pay review of school staff other than the Headteacher
- Oversight of the management of premises, security and physical assets including information security; ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place in line with approved policy and operating effectively

4.5 Stakeholders and Community

- Representing the school's stakeholders
- Developing communication channels to consult stakeholders and work in partnership with the local community
- Ensure stakeholder views are taken into account
- Acting as an ambassador for the school

The detailed responsibilities of the Academy Committee are set out in the [Pele Trust Scheme of Delegation](#).



Academy Committee Link Roles

Safeguarding Link Member

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is a senior member of the school leadership team who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The safeguarding link is the Academy Committee's main point of contact with the DSL and so they should:

1. Build an effective relationship with the DSL that allows for appropriate support and challenge by:

- Arranging termly monitoring visits with the DSL to learn about the school context and how this influences the approach to safeguarding
- Through discussion with the DSL (and other stakeholders within the school community), understanding the school safeguarding strengths and areas for development
- Meeting with the DSL termly to discuss (without specific pupil details) any safeguarding incidents; conversation should be around the suitability of policies and whether any amendments are necessary
- Using meetings and visits with the DSL to monitor progress on any strategic safeguarding priorities
- Ensuring the DSL has received the training they need and is well supported to carry out their role
- Talking to the DSL about staff safeguarding training, seeking assurance that staff are up to date with policy and practice and know what steps to take if they have concerns about a pupil

2. Understand how safeguarding works in practice:

The safeguarding link should be aware of the legal duties that schools, and Academy Committees, must comply with to keep pupils safe. The link should build an understanding of how safeguarding procedures work in practice. This should focus around:

- Reading and understanding the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE), the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance (this is a requirement for all Academy Committee Members and Directors)
- Building a knowledge and understanding of the school and Trust's safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring these are effective, regularly reviewed and updated

- Observing (through arranged visits) how the culture of safeguarding is working within the school
- Understanding how safeguarding is built into the school curriculum and how pupils are taught about staying safe (including online safety)
- Using any safeguarding assessments or audits to help ascertain the robustness of safeguarding procedures and systems
- Using data (often supplied within DSL safeguarding reports) to spot trends, for example, absence rates for looked-after children

3. As the Committee's specialist on safeguarding and child protection, the safeguarding link should:

- Stay up to date on relevant guidance and policy (including local guidance), ensuring the Academy Committee are made aware of any changes to their safeguarding responsibilities
- Report to the Academy Committee following monitoring meetings with the DSL and any visits/interactions with staff and pupils
- Ensure safeguarding is given suitable coverage and prominence within the committee's strategic discussions
- Feed in to Academy Committee discussions, ensuring that decision making is based on a sound understanding of both the legal requirements and the school/trust procedures and culture
- Ensure that the results of safeguarding audits are shared with the Committee and any concerns are addressed
- Support the Committee's oversight of the school/Trust record of pre-appointment checks (the single central record)

SEND Link Member

The SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) is the lead member of staff for SEND within the school, with responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEND policy and co-ordinating provision for children with SEND.

1. Purpose of link role:

- To lead on the Academy Committee's monitoring of SEND arrangements, ensuring that all pupils with SEND receive the support they need and are entitled to
- To act as the Academy Committee's specialist on SEND and champion the needs of pupils with SEND

The appointed member should take the lead on monitoring SEND provision however, the Academy Committee retain collective responsibility.

2. SEND link member/Trustee duties:

The link member for SEND should engage with the SENDCo on a regular basis in order to:

- Develop an effective working relationship that allows for appropriate support and challenge
- Conduct termly monitoring visits to learn about the school or trust's context and the needs of pupils with SEND
- Discuss SEND provision, focusing on how policies are applied and whether any changes are needed
- Understand the school's strengths in relation to SEND provision and areas for development
- Ensure that the SENDCo has received appropriate training and is well supported
- Seek assurance that staff receive effective and up to date SEND training

3. The link member should report to the Academy Committee on their meetings with the SENDCo, develop an understanding and monitoring effective SEND practice and have a good understanding of the legal duties of schools in relation to pupils with SEND. They also need to develop a working knowledge of how SEND provision works in the school setting. This should focus around:

- Investing time in appropriate development and learning: attending regular training on SEND and inclusion, and reading and understanding the SEND Code of Practice
- Understanding the views of all key stakeholders in relation to SEND (pupils, families, staff, and local partners)
- Checking that the school makes good use of financial resources (including the notional budget) to support pupils with SEND
- Ensuring the school publishes the necessary documentation detailing their SEND provision

4. In order to support the Academy Committee to monitor SEND provision the committee's link member should:

- Champion an inclusive culture, reminding the Board to consider the impact of their decisions on pupils with SEND (particularly during budget discussions)
- Use their specialist knowledge to challenge executive leaders about SEND provision
- Ensure all members of the Academy Committee have the knowledge and understanding they need to make informed decisions
- Make sure that the school/Trust and Academy Committee comply with their statutory duties around SEND

Curriculum Link Member

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the school curriculum but is supported by lead in each subject.

1. Purpose of link role:

- To ensure that all pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, that is rich and engaging, and which provides the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed for them to achieve their full potential and live happy and fulfilled lives
- To ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum including the requirement to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and British values
- Monitoring curriculum implementation and the impact on pupil outcomes

2. Curriculum Link Duties

The link member for curriculum should engage with the Headteacher/subject lead on a regular basis in order to:

- Develop an effective working relationship that allows for appropriate support and challenge
- Conduct termly monitoring visits to learn about the school or Trust's context and the aim and intent of the curriculum
- Discuss curriculum delivery, focusing on how schemes are applied and whether any changes are needed
- Understand what pupils are expected to learn in each subject, and by when
- Ensure that subject leads receive appropriate training and are well supported and that appropriate CPD is available for all staff to support them in the planning, sequencing and delivery of the curriculum
- Review the activities that are offered to support and enrich the curriculum
- Build a knowledge and understanding of the curriculum policies, ensuring these are effective, regularly reviewed and updated

3. The link member should report to the Academy Committee on their meetings with the curriculum lead. This should focus around:

- Being informed about the principles that inform or underpin the statement of what the school curriculum aims to achieve
- Checking that the school makes good use of financial resources to support the delivery of the curriculum

- Ensuring the school publishes the necessary documentation on the website detailing the curriculum provision
- Ensuring that British Values are visible and embedded in the curriculum and are well understood by pupils

4. In order to support the Academy Committee to monitor the curriculum the committee's link member should:

- Have a good understanding of internal data that tracks attainment and progress of different pupil groups
- Report on any trends, patterns and issues arising from progress and achievement data
- Report feedback from pupils, parents and staff
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, specifically pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or high needs as well as:
 - the most disadvantaged pupils
 - looked after children
 - pupils from different communities
 - higher ability pupils

Academy Committee Link Member (General)

1. Purpose of the role

There are a number of link roles which may be held by individual Academy Committee Members. These will be defined and agreed by the Academy Committee and will reflect the school strategic priorities.

Roles other than those defined above include but are not limited to:

- Pupil Premium Link
- Attendance Link
- Estates/Health and Safety Link

The Academy Committee retains overall responsibility for any area that falls within its remit however individual links are responsible for assuring the committee that Trust, school and statutory requirements are being met and reporting on the strategies being deployed and to what effect.

2. General Responsibilities

The link member will:

- Build productive working relationships and establish regular contact with staff in school who have responsibility for Pupil Premium
- Ensure necessary policies and procedures are in place and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation
- Arrange focused visits, usually once per term
- Report back to the Academy Committee following monitoring visits or discussions with staff
- Be well informed and prepared ahead of meetings with staff or the Academy Committee by reading relevant information, such as policies and data
- Keep the Academy Committee fully informed about issues and actions in the assigned area
- Participate in personal development to improve skills and knowledge
- Carefully consider how the board will maintain oversight of the area and how the link member will feed back to the Academy Committee

Our Schools

Belsay Primary School

Darras Hall Primary School

Heddon St. Andrew's CE Primary School

Ponteland High School

Ponteland Primary School

Richard Coates CE Primary School

