

## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS & STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

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### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

#### Constitution

The Academy Trust is an exempt charity that is not therefore required to register with the Charity Commission, however the Academy Trust has registered with HM Revenue and Customs as a charitable entity under the reference number XT35927. The company is incorporated in England and Wales with the company registration number 07768726. The charitable company's memorandum and articles are the primary governing documents. The Trust also operates trading names in the names of its schools and through two trading subsidiaries, Bourne Education Trust Enterprises Limited and Matthew Arnold Enterprises. Details of the trustees who served during the year and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference & Administrative Details below.

#### Method of Recruitment, Appointment, Election, Induction & Training of Trustees and Senior Management

During the year 2019-2020, the board of the Academy Trust comprised the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair and independent trustees. A skills audit carried out in September 2019 had identified skills gaps in the area of business and finance and the Trust has appointed a trustee with this as a specialism during 2019-2020 using Academy Ambassadors. One trustee has resigned with effect 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and has instead become a member. New trustees are given a trustee's induction pack. The chair and vice chair of the board are nominated and reappointed annually.

During 2019-2020, the Academy Trust moved forward with the implementation of its new model of local governance which was developed after consideration of the DfE's advice on the constitution of governing bodies. This was to establish Local Governing Committees (LGCs) in order to recognise the importance of LGCs as committees of the board, the recommendation for smaller but more effective governing bodies outlined in the Governance Handbook and to reflect the increasing centralisation of responsibilities outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook. 2020-2021 will be the final year of transition to this new model.

LGCs or the legacy LGBs of each school comprise the headteacher and governors including parent governors and other appointed governors. Parent governors are normally elected by parents of students registered at the school and the Local Governing Committee makes arrangements to notify parents of a vacancy and oversees a secret ballot where the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies. Other governors are appointed after discussions with local community groups and businesses dependent on the person specification required. Volunteers first visit the school and, where appropriate, a recommendation would be made for a candidate to be presented to the full Governing Committee with a view to appointment. Staff governors remain on LGBs and are similarly elected by staff. LGCs do not have staff governors; engagement with staff will be through staff fora as the Trust has found that LGBs have not resulted in meaningful engagement with staff. All new governors are given an induction pack and, if not familiar with the school, are invited to a tour and to meet key governors and staff. Training is provided by an outside consultancy specialising in governor training. There is a named governor to provide details of relevant courses, encourage attendance and monitor governor-wide training undertaken.

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The Trust has approved policies for the Recruitment & Selection of Governors and Recruitment & Selection of Trustees and will consult on the implementation of these during 2020-2021. This will ensure greater adherence to best practice and improved succession planning.

It is the Academy Trust's policy to advertise nationally all vacancies for Headteachers unless there is a clear business case for following an internal process. Other posts will be advertised externally or internally after a review of the situation facing each school. During 2019-20, Judy Hall, Executive Headteacher of Broadmere Primary Academy & New Monument Primary Academy schools retired and was replaced by Mandy McDowall who transferred from Auriol Junior School. Rebecca Williams has been appointed as Head of School at Auriol Junior School.

### **Organisational Structure**

The management structure of the Bourne Education Trust consists of five levels: the Academy Trust board and its committees including LGCs, the Executive Group (of Headteachers in the Trust, CEO, Chief Operating Officer, Operations Director and Executive Leaders), the senior leadership teams and the middle leadership teams. The aim of the management structure is to devolve responsibility, improve accountability and encourage involvement in decision-making at all levels.

The trustees of the Academy Trust board fulfil a strategic role. They monitor the performance of individual schools in the Academy Trust against key performance indicators and appropriate schemes of delegation. Intervention in individual schools within the Academy Trust is driven by performance against the key performance indicators and on the advice of the Chief Executive Officer. In accordance with the requirements of the AFH 2019-2020, there are five members of whom only one is also a trustee and no members are Trust employees.

The governors on the local Governing Committee's fulfil a largely strategic role in relation to their local schools. They adopt the individual school's strategic and annual development plans and monitor the annual budget once approved by the Trust Board. They monitor the school's performance and, on advice, make decisions about the direction of the school, its capital expenditure and senior staff appointments.

The trustees of the Academy Trust have been supported by the Chief Executive Officer (also a trustee), the Chief Operating Officer and the Clerk to the Board.

The Executive group represents the operational leadership of the schools; contributing to and informing the strategic decisions of the trust and working together to implement those decisions. They ensure that best value is achieved in the resources of the Trust identifying opportunities for collaborative working and supporting the developmental needs of the schools within the trust.

The schools are supported by senior leadership teams which run the schools at both an executive and operational level. These teams implement the policies and annual development plan laid down by the governors and report back to the governors termly on the progress made towards fulfilling them. At an operational level the senior leadership team provides strong leadership and management for the school community, in particular organising and developing the teaching staff, learning environment and students' learning. As a group, the senior leadership teams are responsible for the authorisation of spending within

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agreed budgets and the appointment of staff, other than specific senior staff appointments for which the Trust or local Governing Committee's and the headteachers are responsible. Some spending control is devolved to members of senior leadership team and appointed budget holders.

The middle leadership teams consist of all curriculum and pastoral leaders. They are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the school development plan, the delivery of the curriculum, exam preparation and performance and ensuring the well-being of students. They, along with teachers and tutors, are also the first point of contact for parents and carers.

### **Scope of Responsibility**

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Bourne Education Trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Bourne Education Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. He is also responsible for reporting any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

### **GOVERNANCE**

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities in the Annual Report 2019-2020.

The Trust Board reviews its vision, ethos and strategy through strategy days in collaboration with executive leaders. The Academy Trust is mindful of the rapidly changing landscape and direction of travel outlined by the DfE in creating sustainable and effective trusts. This has resulted in an overarching long term strategy for the trust based on filling the Trust's gaps with any decision to grow or merge underpinned by robust due diligence. This longer term strategy is supported by the Trust Development plan which defines the short to medium term strategic goals and development and improvement priorities which is shared throughout the organisation.

The Trust Board ensures that its risks are aligned with strategic priorities and improvement plans and that appropriate intervention strategies are in place through its Board Assurance Framework. The next step will be to embed this approach to risk management throughout all levels of the organisation and improve the Trust's oversight of Health & Safety.

During 2018-2019, the Trust board has reviewed the effectiveness of governance structures and consulted on a new model of local governance after consideration of the DfE's advice on the constitution of governing bodies. During 2019-2020, following this review the Trust has moved towards Local Governing Committees (LGCs) in order to recognise the importance of LGCs as committees of the board, the recommendation for smaller but more effective governing bodies outlined in the Governance Handbook and to reflect the increasing centralisation of responsibilities outlined in the Academies Financial Handbook. We will continue the transition during 2020-2021. The Trust also commissioned a review of

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Local Governance as part of its internal audit function to measure progress against this transition and recommend next steps.

The Academy Trust drives up educational standards and financial health through rigorous analysis of pupil progress, attainment and financial information with comparison against local and national benchmarks and over time. There are clear processes in place for overseeing and monitoring school improvement and financial health, providing constructive challenge to executive leaders managed by the Performance & Standards Committee and the Audit & Finance Committee. From 2020 the Academy Trust established an Audit & Risk Committee to comply with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook and a Resources Committee. The next step is to monitor the effectiveness of the Terms of Reference of these committees.

The Trust Board ensures that it has people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity by carrying out regular skills audits. It employs the support of Academy Ambassadors to source candidates for trustees that understand the purpose of governance and the role of non-executive leadership. The Trust Board has continued to work hard during 2019-2020 to ensure a clear separation between strategic non-executive oversight and operational executive leadership supported by positive relationships that encourage a professional culture and ethos across the organisation. It has also focussed on reducing the reliance on the Chair and has produced a policy on the Recruitment & Selection of Trustees to support its succession planning.

The Trust held two annual meetings for governors, trustees, members and senior staff of the Trust to be kept up to date with developments and the strategic direction of the Trust. The first meeting for governors, trustees and members took place on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Significant separation between members and trustees is enabled by clear terms of reference. The Academy Trust has evaluated the quality and impact of its governance during 2019-2020 by commissioning an internal audit on Local Governance.

The board of trustees has met formally seven times during the financial year. Attendance at meetings was as follows:

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Sara Lipscombe-Nott	7	7
Alex Russell	7	7
Charmain Browning	6	7
Peter Deane	7	7
Stephen Dennison	7	7
Susan Gibbin	7	7
Chris Marston (resigned 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2019)	0	0
Chris Munro	6	7
Sarah Pittam	6	7
Catherine Twomey (appointed 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2020):	3	3
Audrey Wade	6	7
Kate Sanders (as COO/ Company Secretary)	7	7
Roger Evans (as Clerk to the Board)	7	7

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The key changes in the composition of the board has been the appointment of an additional Trustee with business and finance skills and experience through Academy Ambassadors.

The Finance & Audit Committee is a sub-committee of the board of trustees, and its purposes and terms of reference covered those of a typical finance & audit committee. The Finance & Audit Committee met twice during the financial year. As part of the Trust's response to Covid the Board met as a whole once Covid began and all matters were considered by the board. Attendance at meetings was as follows:

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>	<b>Out of a possible</b>
Peter Deane	2	2
John Stockley	2	2
Audrey Wade (chair)	2	2
Kate Sanders (in attendance)	2	2
Roger Evans (Clerk to the Committee)	1	2

31<sup>st</sup> December 2020