



TERMS OF REFERENCE

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

Role of the Performance Scrutiny Panel

Authority

The Board of Trustees sets and approves the terms of reference for each of its constituted sub-committees and for any short-term working groups. All terms of reference are reviewed annually by the Board.

The Quality of Education Committee (QEC) has powers which have been delegated by the Trust Board. These are outlined in the Scheme of Delegation.

The QEC reports into the Trust Board formally – the QEC Chair and executive team lead attend Board meetings to report on the strategic matters discussed at the QEC and to provide an update on its annual plan of work.

The Board reserves the right to request that the QEC focuses on specific areas of concern or development when appropriate.

The QEC reserves the right to focus on matters relating to leadership and management.

The QEC steers the focus of the Performance Scrutiny Panel, but the Performance Scrutiny Panel has its own Chair and executive team lead assigned to it.

The Performance Scrutiny Panel may therefore look objectively at the interplay between Intent, Implementation and Impact in the Trust. It may also be steered to look at matters outlined in relation to behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

The Performance Scrutiny Panel will set its own annual plan of work and this will be approved by the QEC.

The Performance Scrutiny Panel will work in tandem with Head teachers and Heads of School whose leadership and operational responsibilities relate to the specific schools under their direction. Functional relationships and other Trust-related bodies which support governance or drive improved school performance are referenced under *Functional Relationships* below.

Purpose

- **To collect, check, and channel**
Scrutinising policies, procedures and appraising work at grass roots in schools, channelling findings through the Quality of Education Committee
- **To challenge and critique**
Act as a critical friend: look at curriculum intent, implementation and embedding, challenge practice and its relationship to outcomes
- **To compare and contrast work across the Trust**
Evaluate consistency and creativity across the Trust, determine if information, curriculum planning and staff skills are shared to maximise benefit to children
- **To collaborate across the Trust**
Affiliate with one school and investigate it; Panellists will work in partnership with their Panel to evaluate and develop trust-wide provision
- **To champion the Trust in the community**
Act as the eyes and ears of the Trust in the local area; act as an ambassador, highlighting strengths and debugging myths

Duties

To understand, critique and evaluate Curriculum Impact, considering the following:

- learners develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. Where relevant, this is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained
- learners are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. Where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and the intention of their course of study. They read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension.

Membership

Members of the Scrutiny Panel are appointed by the Quality of Education Committee.

Membership of the Scrutiny Panel shall be capped at thirteen.

Scrutiny Panellists and the Scrutiny Panel Chair will be appointed through an open recruitment process, based on their knowledge and experience. A role profile and person specification is available to view. The term of office is four years.

The Performance Scrutiny Panel is facilitated by a member of the Trust's School Improvement Team, who will guide and advise the Committee Chair. This will be the Director for Outcomes & CPD. The Director for Outcomes & CPD will be a voting member of the Scrutiny Panel.

The Director for Quality of Education and QA will work closely with the Scrutiny Panel Chair and the Director for Curriculum to drive the Committee's annual work plan operationally.

Head teachers and Heads of School across the Trust's primary and secondary schools may be invited to attend meetings by the Chair on a rotational basis and would attend as Observers without voting rights.

The Chair, executive team leads or CEO may invite visiting speakers to present information, research, data or training to Scrutiny Panels.

Clerk

The Clerk to the Trust Board (or their nominee) acts as the Clerk of the Committee, offering a secretariat service. The Clerk will work with the Chair and the executive team lead to plan the agendas. The Scrutiny Panel will have an annual planner of tabled agenda items. Additions to the agendas will be authorised by the Chair, in conjunction with the executive team lead.

Quorum

The quorum necessary for meetings is 5, of which three must be Scrutiny Panellists.

It is a requirement of all Scrutiny Panellists that they respond to meeting invitations to confirm their attendance or confirm they will be absent, in advance of a meeting.

This enables the Chair and the Clerk to determine whether the meeting can take place because the minimum quoracy level has been reached. On occasions where quoracy levels cannot be reached, an alternative meeting date will be scheduled.

Frequency of meetings

The Performance Scrutiny Panel meets once every term. The Trust Board reserves the right to ask Scrutiny Panels to convene additional meetings if there are substantive matters which are critical or urgent, or where government policy directives will impact on educational provision. The Scrutiny Panel may independently determine whether it needs to convene additional meetings, but the decision to do so must be approved by the Quality of Education Committee and the areas for discussion should meet the priorities outlined in the annual work plan. In these cases, the Scrutiny Panel should be mindful of work-life balance commitments for all its members and try wherever possible to minimise these occasions.

Notice of meetings

Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date, together with an agenda of items to be discussed, is forwarded to each Scrutiny Panellist and any other person attending, no later than

five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers are sent to Scrutiny Panellists and to others as appropriate, at the same time or as soon as practicable thereafter, via the medium of the online governance portal, Trust Governor. The Scrutiny Panel will have an annual planner of tabled agenda items. Additions to the agendas will be authorised by the Chair, in conjunction with the executive team lead.

Minutes of meetings

The Clerk minutes the proceedings and resolutions of all meetings of the Scrutiny Panel and records the names of those present.

The Clerk ascertains, at the beginning of each meeting, the existence of any conflicts of interest and minutes them accordingly.

Minutes of Scrutiny Panel meetings are circulated promptly to the Chair for agreement and then to all members of the Panel. This process should be achieved within ten working days.

A standing item on every agenda will focus on Communications. The Scrutiny Panel will be mindful of the RASCI requirements outlined in the Scheme of Delegation (Responsible, Accountable, Supported, Consulted and Informed) and on the basis of the meeting proceedings, they will indicate what needs to be cascaded on, in what format, to whom, and by whom. As a general rule, the Scrutiny Panel will identify the matters to report to the Quality of Education Committee and the Clerk may be required to complete a reporting template for onward cascade to the Committee. If matters are sensitive or could have an impact on the reputation and standing of the Trust, the Scrutiny Panel must refer the communications needs to the Clerk to Trust Board, who also fulfils the role as Company Secretary. The post holder will then advise, support or refer on, as required.

Activity outside of meetings

Scrutiny Panellists should be advocates for a particular school within the Trust because they have acquired knowledge about the school based on completion of a range of activities outside of the Panel meeting cycle.

The commitment is likely to be a visit to the school at least once a term, where the Panellist may engage in one or more activities such as:

- Discussions with Head teachers/Heads of School
- Discussions with subject leaders and classroom teachers
- Discussions with Teaching Assistants and Cover Supervisors
- Learning Walks
- Book Looks
- Discussions with children about their learning
- Reading and analysing formal and informal information from the school including data about pupil outcomes

By visiting their school wherever possible, this will enable Panellists to triangulate the information being received at the Scrutiny Panel and provide useful feedback up to the Quality of Education Committee.

Annual General Meeting

The Chair of the Quality of Education Committee attends the Annual General Meeting, prepared to respond to any stakeholder questions on the Committee's activities. This will include reporting on the activity undertaken by the Scrutiny Panels. This is the annual meeting of the Trust's Members, who have a responsibility for ensuring that the Board of Trustees (and therefore its sub-committees and any other constituted elements of its governance structure) are effectively delivering on the Trust's charitable objects.

Reporting responsibilities

The QEC sits in the centre of the governance structure. It has a responsibility to report up to the Board and down to the Scrutiny Panels. The information the Board and the Scrutiny Panels need will vary in terms of focus, depth, style and direction.

There is a requirement for the executive team lead and the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel to adhere to agenda planning schedules for the Quality of Education Committee and the Board (when necessary), when compiling

reports which will be tabled at these respective meetings. The Clerk to Board will advise on agenda planning and paper submission deadlines, and the clerking team will manage the information flow across the structures. Scrutiny Panels are kindly asked to note that without their timely adherence to the schedule the capacity for other governance structures to be effective, is diminished.

MET's Members may request information from the QEC on an extraordinary basis, via the Clerk to Board, should they need an evidence base on which to determine if the Trust Board is effectively dispensing its duties and performing its core functions. Some of these requests for information could possibly be cascaded to Scrutiny Panels.

Extraordinary Panels

It is the responsibility of the QEC to convene panels from within its membership within the following scope. On occasion an invitation to Scrutiny Panellists to form part of these extraordinary panels, may be made.

- Student Disciplinary Panel
- Exclusions Panel
- Complaints about Schools (access or curriculum-based)

Functional relationships

The Performance Scrutiny Panel will need to foster and develop relationships with:

- the governance volunteers who comprise the Scrutiny Panels
- the Chair of the Quality of Education Committee
- MET's School Improvement Team
- Head teachers and Heads of School
- the CEO
- the Clerks assigned to the committee, Board and Scrutiny Panels
- the Company Secretary

Regulation, legislation and abiding to the Trust's internal policies

Though not an exhaustive list, Scrutiny Panellists are asked to note and abide by:

- The Equalities Act, 2010
- The Education Act, 2002
- The Education Inspection Framework
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, revised annually)
- The Data Protection Act, 2018
- Declaration of Business and Personal/Familial Interests (MET)
- Whistleblowing Policy (MET)
- Complaints Policy (MET)

Best practice governance

MET's Trust Board, and its delegated committees, Scrutiny Panels and working groups aspire to meet the best practice guidance set down in the Governance Handbook, the Governance Competency Framework, the Academies Financial Handbook and the ongoing advisory guidance provided by Leicestershire's Governor Support and Development Service, The National Governance Association, and the Confederation of School Trusts.