

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## Role of the Quality of Education Committee

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 Trust Board's three core governance functions are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of its staff.
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The Quality of Education Committee (QEC) is one of the Trust Board's constituted sub-committees. The Trust Board retains overall accountability for the governance functions referenced above, however it delegates authority to the QEC to ensure that number 1 is implemented and embedded across the Trust's primary and secondary school settings; number 2 is a priority focus for the QEC; and number 3 is borne in mind when making any strategic decisions requiring consultation or approval with the Board or its Audit, Finance & Resources Committee, as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation.

The QEC 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.

## Duties

- To hold to account the performance of all the Trust's primary and secondary schools
- To challenge and monitor educational, behavioural and pastoral standards.
- To consider, review and approve all related policies, and to monitor the implementation of these policies.
- To feed into and implement the Trust's strategic plan
- To monitor achievement towards the Trust's KPIs throughout the year
- To ensure effective use of specific targeted resources across the Trust, e.g. Sports funding and Pupil Premium

The QEC will have oversight of schools' statutory responsibilities. It has a remit to develop Ofsted readiness and assessment across the Trust, with a focus on the following areas, as outlined within the Education Inspection Framework, in order to shape policy, practice and evaluation Trust-wide. The QEC will deliver some aspects of its brief via the Curriculum and Performance Scrutiny Panels. Where this is the case, the relevant Scrutiny Panel has been highlighted below. Separate terms of reference exist for the Curriculum and Performance Scrutiny Panels and should be referred to for clarity.

### Intent (delivered via the Curriculum Scrutiny Panel)

- leaders take on or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- the provider's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment
- the provider has the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of SEND – its curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs
- learners study the full curriculum. Providers ensure this by teaching a full range of subjects for as long as possible, 'specialising' only when necessary

### Implementation (delivered via the Curriculum Scrutiny Panel)

- teachers have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise

- teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter they are teaching. They check learners' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches
- over the course of study, teaching is designed to help learners to remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts
- teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners
- teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers select – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the provider's ambitious intentions for the course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment
- a rigorous approach to the teaching of reading develops learners' confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to learners' phonics knowledge

### **Impact (delivered via the Performance Scrutiny Panel)**

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.

### **Behaviour and attitudes**

- the provider has high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviour and conduct
- learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements
- learners have high attendance and are punctual
- relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Leaders, teachers and learners create an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated. If they do occur, staff deal with issues quickly and effectively, and do not allow them to spread.

### **Personal development**

- the curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational. It provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents
- the curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy
- at each stage of education, the provider prepares learners for future success in their next steps
- the provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by:
  - equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society
  - developing their understanding of fundamental British values
  - developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity
  - celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

## Leadership and management

- leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice
- leaders focus on improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time
- leaders aim to ensure that all learners complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible and do not allow gaming or off-rolling
- leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, employers and local services
- leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way that they manage staff, including their workload
- leaders protect their staff from bullying and harassment
- those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training
- those with responsibility for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of learners
- the provider has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to:
  - identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation
  - help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
- manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to learners and vulnerable adults.

## Authority

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

The Committee 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 QEC steers the focus of the Curriculum and Performance Scrutiny Panels, but the Scrutiny Panels have their own Chairs and executive team leads assigned to them. The Scrutiny Panels focus on Curriculum and Performance respectively. The Scrutiny Panels may therefore look objectively at the interplay between Intent, Implementation and Impact in the Trust. They may be steered to look at the matters outlined in relation to behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

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

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

## Membership

Members of the Committee are appointed by the Trust Board.

Membership of Committee shall be capped at thirteen.

Four Trustees shall be appointed to the Committee.

The Committee Chair will be a serving Trustee from the Trust Board and will be nominated from amongst the five Trustees and approved by the Trust Board. The Chair's tenure will be for four years.

The Committee is facilitated by an Executive Head teacher, who will guide and advise the Committee Chair.

The Executive Head teacher will work closely with the Chair and drive the Committee's annual work plan

operationally.

Head teachers and Heads of School across the Trust's primary and secondary schools are non-voting members of the Committee.

The Chairs of the Curriculum and Performance Scrutiny Panels are voting members of the Committee.

The Committee reserves the right to invite Observers to the QEC Committee meeting where their testimony, evidence or perspective is required to add value to a tabled discussion item. Repeat Observers are not encouraged.

## **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 QEC 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 five, of which three must be Trustees.

It is a requirement of all QEC committee members 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 QEC meets once every term. The Trust Board reserves the right to ask the QEC 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 QEC may independently determine whether it needs to convene additional meetings. In these cases, the QEC should be mindful of work-life balance commitments for all its members and try wherever possible to minimise these occasions. When determining the need for an additional meeting, the QEC should inform the Clerk to Board, who in turn will inform the Board.

## **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 member of the Committee and any other person attending, no later than five working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers are sent to committee members 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 QEC 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 Committee 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 committee meetings are circulated promptly to the Chair for agreement and then to all members of the committee. Once the minutes have been agreed, they are available to all members of the Committee. This process should be achieved within ten working days.

A standing item on every agenda will focus on Communications. The Committee 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. The Clerk and the executive team lead will guide the committee in this regard. If matters are sensitive or could have an impact on the reputation and standing of the Trust, the committee 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.

## Annual General Meeting

The Chair of the Committee attends the Annual General Meeting prepared to respond to any stakeholder questions on the Committee's activities. 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 will need to vary in terms of focus, depth, style and direction.

There is a requirement for the executive team lead and the Chair of the QEC to adhere to agenda planning schedules for the Board and the Scrutiny Panels, 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. Committees are kindly asked to do note that without their timely adherence to the schedule the capacity for other governance structures to be effective, is diminished.

The 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 to perform its core functions.

The Board has a responsibility to report on matters down to the QEC.

The QEC has a responsibility to cascade on information to the two Scrutiny Panels and to steer the focus of their work, which will broadly relate to the matters outlined above, and in the Scheme of Delegation.

The QEC should consistently check the Scheme of Delegation to determine what needs to be reported to whom, noting the RASCI within this document.

## Panels

It is the responsibility of the QEC to convene panels from within its membership within the following scope:

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

## Functional relationships

The QEC will need to foster and develop relationships with:

- the Members, via the Annual General Meeting
- the Trust Board
- the governance volunteers who comprise the Scrutiny Panels
- the Clerks assigned to the committee, Board and Scrutiny Panels
- the Company Secretary
- the CEO
- MET's executive team
- members of the Central Team focusing on risk

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

Though not an exhaustive list, Committee members 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)

Trustees who are members of the Committee are additionally expected to abide by:

- The legal duties of charity trustees (Charity Commission)
- The legal duties of company directors, under the Companies Act of 2006 (Companies House)
- The Directors' Code of Conduct (MET)
- Payment to Trustees 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.

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