



The Thinking School Academy Trust
Non-Executive Director – Human Resources

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The Thinking Schools Academy Trust seeks a Non-Executive Director with senior HR experience to join the board and become Chair of the Staffing, Pay & Professional Growth Committee. This is a voluntary role.

About the Trust

Thinking Schools Academy Trust (TSAT) is made up of 26 schools across four regions, one in the Devon, Portsmouth, Kent and Essex. It supports over 12,000 pupils, over 1,400 staff and a budget of £80m.

The Trust's founding school was The Rochester Grammar School and has grown with a combination of sponsored and convertor Academies. The Trust now includes Grammar Schools; High Schools; Comprehensive Schools; Primary Schools; Infant Schools and Junior Schools, Nurseries, Special Education Units and an Alternative provision.

Portsmouth, Kent and areas of Devon are deprived areas and many of the schools have cohorts where the proportion of deprived students is well above the national average. The golden thread that runs through the Trust is the use of metacognition in the classroom and it is the leading Trust in the country in the use of cognition with almost all schools accredited as Thinking Schools by Exeter University. Metacognition is an understanding of thought processes, which once understood can be applied to enhance the learning of students. They are also one of the leading Trusts in the use of Curriculum based financial planning and its' Thinking Solutions for Education in house service provider is regularly used by the Education Skills & Funding Agency (ESFA) to support financially failing Trusts.

For more information, please visit our [website](#).

Plans for the future

The key challenges for the board over the next 12 months are:

1. Sustain a high-level of education and deliver the Trust vision through a period of financial turbulence across the country
2. Ensure the Trust is transforming the life chances of all its children whilst adapting its operational model and growing in size.
3. Become an 'Employer of Choice' and embed the newly formed People strategy to support both the trust recruitment, retention and wellbeing strategy as well as the long-term vision to achieve the gold accreditation for Investors in People

Trust ethos & values

All schools share a common mission, to nurture successful children who are confident and can think and act independently. At the heart of the Trust is the belief that the work that school leaders do must transform the life chances of students.

Trust values are **Child First; Aspire; Challenge; Achieve.**

Thinking Schools Academy Trust believes that every young person in our community deserves to have the best opportunities at life regardless of their individual circumstances.

Education is the key to transforming life chances and we support and develop every member of our community to:

Think about their Thinking
Be their Best Self
Shape their Success

In this way we transform life chances.

Background on Academy Trusts

Academy schools, which are charities run independently of local authority control, now account for over 80% of secondary schools and over 40% of primaries – and their number is growing all the time.

Many of these schools are grouped together as multi-academy Trusts (MATs). If the schools are to fulfil their potential, the Trusts need non-executives (known in charity law as trustees) to bring a wide range of skills and experience to help guide strategy, ensure their ambitions can be soundly financed and keep their schools up to the mark delivering for their pupils.

“Academy boards must be ambitious for all children and young people and infused with a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best possible outcomes. Governance must be grounded in reality as defined by both high-quality objective data and a full understanding of the views and needs of pupils/students, staff, parents, carers and local communities. It should be driven by inquisitive, independent minds and through conversations focused on the key strategic issues which are conducted with humility, good judgement, resilience and determination.”

Source: Governance Handbook, Department for Education (2017)

Role summary

Number of positions advertised: 1

Role – Trustee/Non-Executive Director

Trustees – or Non-Executive Directors - are both charity trustees and company directors of the academy Trust; the role is to hold to account the executive and senior leadership team. The board of trustees manages the business of the academy Trust and may exercise all the powers of the Trust. The trustees ensure compliance with the Trust’s charitable objects and with company and charity law.

Trusteeship is a voluntary, unpaid role for people who have the energy and skills to make a real contribution to shaping the future of our schools. You do not need to have any specialist knowledge of education. Full training and support will be given to the successful applicant.

Person specification

The appointed Non-Executive Director will contribute to the work of the Board of Directors in improving the life chances of all of the Trust's children and young people. In particular, they will apply HR knowledge and skills to hold to account the executive team and ensure the Trust People strategy is appropriately challenged and supported by the board. The competencies required for this role include:

Essential

Human Resources knowledge and professional Experience

Desirable

- Previous experience acting as Chair to a Human Resources/Staff committee
- HR Strategy & Leadership experience
- Operating at Board level experience
- Prior knowledge of delivering a People Strategy and/or IIP.

Applicants will have experience in HR at a Director and strategic level. They will have the ability to be pro-active, challenging and have experience of driving improvement.

Time commitment

8 hours /month minimum.

Location of board meetings

Board meetings are held via video call or over our three regions in the South East, South and South West. Board members are required to attend 3 meetings in person per year which will be held in a central location.

Governance structure

A Multi Academy Trust governance model is different to the way a governing body in a non-academy undertakes governance. Essentially there are different governing bodies responsible for varying elements of school and Trust governance.

Local governance is delivered via the Academy Governing Boards (AGB) who are responsible for the performance of one school or a group of schools.

Regional Review and Assurance Boards (RABs) are linked to a (TSAT) Regional Director's area of responsibilities and have oversight of the effectiveness of the AGBs in the region, ensuring strong local governance is in place.

The Board of Directors are responsible for the strategy and vision of the Trust, Trust wide performance and Trust-wide decisions.

A full cycle of governance meetings occurs three times a year starting with School Student Councils which feeds into the Academy Governing Boards, feeding into Regional Review & Assurance Boards, culminating in the Board of Directors meeting.

All governors attend a virtual business meeting at the beginning of each academic year which reviews Trust wide performance and sets strategic direction for the academic year, as well as governors training and support.

Please find more information about our Governance structure on our [website](#).

Applications

If you are interested in applying for this role please contact Kelly Denton, Company Secretary, at governance@tsatrust.org.uk Please note: candidates should live within reasonable travelling distance of a Trust school. A list of our Trust schools is available on our [website](#).

TSAT is committed to safe recruitment procedures and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointments to this post are subject to an enhanced DBS check and Children's Barred List check.

Deadline for applications: 31st August 2024