



THINKING
SCHOOLS
ACADEMY TRUST

Welcome to Governance at the Thinking Schools Academy Trust

February 2021

Child First; Aspire; Challenge; Achieve

Welcome to TSAT from the CEO



TSAT is a high performing Academy Trust at the heart of which is the belief that the work that we do must transform the life chances of students. We believe that the best way to transform life chances is actively to shape the minds, attitudes and habits of young people through a framework of cognitive education that enables them to become the master of their own destiny.

“We are what we habitually do” (Aristotle); to transform life chances we have to transform habits. The ultimate goal is that every individual, child or adult, in the organisation consciously recognises their own habits, strengths and areas for development and actively seeks to improve themselves, thereby creating transformational change in each individual.

We look forward to working with you to achieve this vision for everyone in our organization.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Gardner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart Gardner
CEO

What is TSAT?

TSAT is a school based, cross phase Multi-Academy Trust that currently operates in three hubs: Medway/Kent, Portsmouth & Plymouth. Our fundamental moral purpose as educators is to nurture children and young people to think for themselves and therefore learn skills and develop their knowledge so that they are able to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Mission Statement

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

TSAT Vision

All TSAT academies share a common mission to nurture children to be successful, who are confident and can think and act independently. Our cognitive approach to education defines us but does not create a “one size fits all”.

All TSAT academies, whether converter or sponsored, are equal partners in the Trust and have a Head teacher/Principal and an Academy Advisory Board. Each hub has a Director of Education who gives strategic leadership and supports the hub’s development.

The founding school is The Rochester Grammar School, which is graded outstanding by Ofsted. The RGS is an Advanced Thinking School and a National Teaching School.

For more information about our Trust, please download a copy of our prospectus. We hope that you find the prospectus informative and we would welcome you to visit any of our academies to see our excellent work in practice.

The Structure of TSAT

TSAT currently has a family of seventeen schools in three hubs: Medway/Kent, Portsmouth and the new addition of Plymouth.

Medway schools are: The Rochester Grammar School, Holcombe Grammar School, The Victory Academy, Cedar Children’s Academy, New Horizons Children’s Academy, All Faiths Children’s Academy, Gordon Children’s Academy, Junior and Gordon Children’s Academy, Infant. The Goodwin Academy is in Deal, Kent.

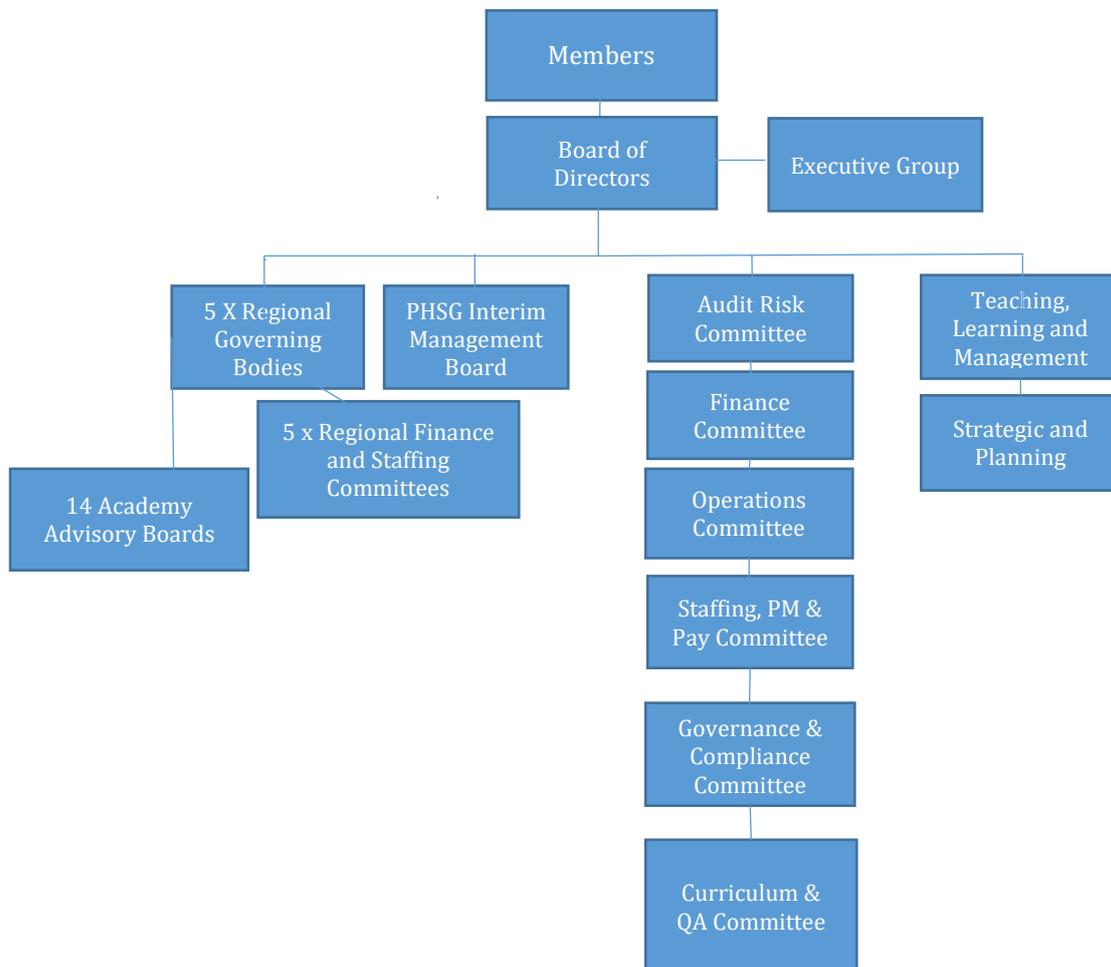
Schools in Portsmouth are: The Portsmouth Academy, Newbridge Junior School, New Horizons Primary School, Meon Junior School, Meon Infant School, Moorings Way Infant School and Penhale Infant School.

Plymouth’s school is Plymouth High School for Girls.

2. THE TSAT GOVERNANCE MODEL

The TSAT Governance Model is different to the way a governing body in a non-academy or traditional school undertakes governance.

Essentially, there are two elements to the governance of the TSAT academies – local governance that is delivered via the Academy Advisory Board (AAB) and regional governance, delivered via the Regional Governing Bodies (RGB). Each Regional Governing Body is linked to a Director of Education; this means that there are five Regional Governing Bodies: Portsmouth, Fratton, Strood, Chatham and Kent. The Board of Directors is the final decision making body which sits above the Regional Governing Bodies.



2.1 Local Governance - The Academy Advisory Board

The AAB consists of a group of people who could be parents, community nominees, or academy staff, with a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 9 people. A member of the Regional Governing Body may also sit on the AAB if required.

The TSAT Board has established five key roles for Academy Advisory Boards:

- To advise/act as a critical friend to the Principal;
- To advise the Regional Governing Body about local issues they need to consider that affect the academy;
- Represent the interest of the Academy community in the running of the Academy;
- Represent the Academy in its community;
- Provide support to the Principal in undertaking appropriate day to day procedures that are essential to the life of the Academy.

The five roles translate specifically into the following tasks that the AAB undertakes:

- it acts as a key link between the academy, parents and local community;
- it supports the work of the academy in the community;
 - it supports the Principal and Academy Leadership Team in the development and implementation of the Academy Development Plan and other relevant plans, ensuring that the TSAT ethos remains at the heart of the academy community;
 - it helps on the ground with the implementation of certain academy policies;
 - it offers challenging but positive and proactive support to the Principal;
 - it regularly reviews the academy's performance in relation to the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

2.2 The Regional Governing Bodies

The Regional Governing Bodies consist of a group of eight people who are elected onto the Board for a period of 4 years. This is a skills-based governing body, with people who have skills in Business/Legal, Finance, HR, Estates and Health and Safety, Marketing/ Communications and Education. Each Director of Education will be a member of the relevant RGB and the CEO is an ex-officio member. Each AAB Chair which reports into the RGB is also invited to be a RGB member. The key responsibilities of a Regional Governing Body are:

- The day to day oversight of the running of the regional academies;
- Carrying out the MAT's vision, policies and priorities;
- Holding local academy leadership to account for school academic performance, quality of care and provision;
- Overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of local strategies;
- Seeking value for money and ensuring resources are applied appropriately at regional academy level;
- Supporting the Board in relation to proper use of funds and delivering high quality educational provision;

- Liaising with the Academy Advisory Boards.

The RGB acts as the direct line manager for each Director of Education in their region. Through line management of the Director of Education, each Principal is also held to account – a model which provides professional scrutiny in more detail than some traditional governing bodies are able to achieve. The RGBs will be responsible for undertaking a performance review of the Principal annually and the Director of Education also attends this.

2.3 The Board of Directors

TSAT is a multi-academy trust operating as a single legal entity. Therefore, it entrusts ultimate responsibility for everything that goes on within TSAT to the TSAT Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors oversees educational policy and practice, the standards achieved, the management and deployment of finance, ICT, human resources, governance and strategic development for the whole family of TSAT Academies. The Board of Directors are appointed on a skills basis with people who have skills in Education including SEND & Pupil Premium, Finance, HR, Safeguarding, Facilities, Law, Management, and PR. Chairs of RGBs are invited to attend Board of Directors meetings but do not hold the position of Non-executive director or Trustee. The key responsibilities of the Board of Directors are:

- Strategic oversight, setting vision and policies for the Trust;
- Ensuring appropriate governance and decision making takes place;
- Ensuring compliance with all regulatory requirements;
- Oversight of standards and outcomes of academies;
- Setting appropriate targets and holding the CEO and local leadership to account.
- Reviewing performance across the academies and Multi-Academy Trust;
- Agreeing and monitoring the budgets of all the academies;
- Dealing with contractual relationships with third parties.

2.4 The Members

The Members of the Trust are at the top of the governance pyramid, however they have little strategic or operational responsibility. Their main roles are:

- Appoint the majority of Directors to the TSAT Board of Directors;
- Act as national ambassadors for the Trust;
- Act as a last line of resort in holding the Board to account.

2.5 The difference between TSAT Governance and a traditional Governing Body

By comparison to a traditional school Governing Body:

- The AAB's role is not to “manage” the Academy as such. This is done through the Regional Governing Bodies and Board of Directors. Therefore, the AAB is not

required to take decisions on staff or financial matters affecting the Academy. AAB Members should have an understanding of strategic issues that impact on the Academy, and be updated on them regularly by the Principal, but they are not required to have direct responsibility for them.

- As the Regional Governing Body takes responsibility for educational standards, legal compliance and financial viability, the AAB then has the time to investigate the standards on the ground, to see how they are working, and explore how the TSAT ethos is being understood and expressed in the way the Academy operates.