



THE ROBERT CARRE TRUST

GOVERNANCE

Approved by the Board for the Academic Year 2020-21

28 September 2020

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Section A: Introduction

The Robert Carre Trust (RCT) is a company limited by guarantee and is constituted as a non-profit charitable trust. The sole object of the Trust is to advance education for the public benefit. The purpose of this document is to detail the Governance organisation for the Trust. The Trust acknowledges that the purpose of its governance structures and processes is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to provide robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

The RCT currently has an ambition to grow and the governance structure and processes detailed in this document will be reviewed to accommodate additional schools into the Trust.

This document will be reviewed annually in September with the relevant sections which are academic year specific updated.

Section B: Strategic Leadership

- The Trust has a clear statement of Vision, Mission and Values which has been developed in collaboration with the executive leaders – to follow.
- The Trust has a set of Strategic Priorities linked to the achievement of the Vision and Mission. Annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed linked to the Strategic Priorities – to follow.
- The KPIs are used to devise the School Development Plans for each of the schools in the Trust and to shape the Executive Headteacher's performance objectives
- Progress in relation to the KPIs is monitored by the Trust Board three times a year.
- The Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities are reviewed annually at the start of each academic year and at other times as appropriate.
- The Board has established a number of mechanisms to enable it to listen, understand and respond to stakeholder voices. These include the commissioning of surveys of students, staff and parents together with a clear reporting line from the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) to each Board meeting.
- Risk management is embedded at all levels of governance. The Board has a Risk Register which is aligned to its strategic priorities and facilitates discussion regarding risk appetite and tolerance plus assurance regarding risk management processes.

Section C: Accountability, oversight and assurance

- Each LGB undertakes a rigorous analysis of pupil progress and attainment with comparisons against local and national benchmarks and over time. The Board oversees and monitors the steps that the Executive Headteacher is taking to address any implications from the pupil progress and attainment analysis.
- The Board and Pay Committee provide effective oversight of the performance, in accordance with the RCT Appraisals Policy, and framework for the pay and conditions, of all staff other than the Executive Headteacher.
- The Board has a clear process for the performance management, by Panel, of the Executive Headteacher which is linked to the Strategic Priorities of the Trust – to follow.
- The Finance, Resources and Audit Committee supports the business and financial planning of the Trust together with ensuring effective controls for managing available resources, regularity, propriety and value for money. (Financial Regulations Policy & Manual)
- **Assurance.** The Board has a detailed Assurances Schedule which describes the assurances linked to compliance and quality. Assurances are sought at Board level through scrutiny of reports from the Executive Headteacher, evidence from Trustee visits to the schools, a RAG rated assurance report from the LGBs (combined with associated scrutiny and challenge through the attendance of a representative from each LGB at Board meetings, as required). Levels of assurance and any consequent actions, for the Executive Headteacher, for the LGB and for the Board, are clearly noted in the minutes of the meetings and tracked. LGBs are expected to establish assurances via scrutiny and challenge of Headteacher/Head of School reports together with information from their own evidence-gathering through school visits. The results of assurance checks are reported to the Board through an assurance dashboard.

Section D: People

- The Board uses the DfE Competency Framework to ensure that it has the necessary skills amongst its members to deliver the governance function effectively and efficiently.
- The Board is looking at how it ensures diversity of perspectives and active succession planning related to non-executive key roles to ensure effective governance.
- The roles of Trustees and Members is set out in Annexes
- **Conduct.** Members, Trustees and Local Governors are expected to act in accordance with the Nolan Principles for Conduct in Public Office. Trustees and LGB Governors are required to sign the RCT Code of Conduct which includes reference to the Nolan Principles on initial issue and if changes are made. Signed documents will be retained by the Clerk to the Trust. The Board may, in accordance with the Articles, suspend or dismiss a Trustee or Local Governor who acts in a way inconsistent with the professional ethos of the Board to bring the RCT into disrepute.
- **Recruitment.** The Board ensures that those involved in governance at all levels are recruited through transparent and robust processes.
- **Administration.** The Board employs a professional Clerk and the Director of Finance, Administration and Resources acts as the Board's Company Secretary.

Section E: Structures

- **Members:** The Trust will have 5 Members as required by the Articles of Association. The Members meet three times a year and provide objective oversight of **the Board's performance and** decision-making. They ensure the Trust meets the Objects as detailed in the Articles and protect the values and ethos of the RCT. (The decision-making powers of the Members is articulated in the Trust's Scheme of Delegated Authority)
The details of the Members are listed on the Robert Carre Trust website: www.robertcarretrust.uk
- **Trustees:** The Board comprises 9 Trustees, also known as Directors, appointed by the Members in accordance with the Articles. The Executive Headteacher is a Trustee, however no other employee of the Trust can be a Trustee or member of any Board committees with the exception of the Local Governing Body which includes staff members. Trustees are subject to the duties and responsibilities of charitable trustees and company directors in addition to the accountability and responsibility to the Members for all aspects of the Trust operation with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement equally throughout all academies and schools within the RCT. The Board will meet a minimum of 4 times a year with a quorum of 3 Trustees except in special circumstances (Article 119) Trustees' Terms of Office are 4 years but can be re-appointed by the Members. The chair and vice chair are elected annually but the chair cannot hold the position for more than a 6-year stretch.
The details of the Trustees are listed on GIAS as required by the DfE and on the Robert Carre Trust website: www.robertcarretrust.uk
- **Committees.** The Board has one key committee: Finance, Resources and Audit, responsible for the Audit function on behalf of the Board.
- **Governors/Local Governing Bodies:** Each Trust school has a Local Governing Body (LGB). These bodies don't have decision-making powers, except over policies which have been designated as school-specific, for example the School Admission Policies. Their key role within the governance of the Trust is set out on the Scheme of Delegated Authority and the Governance Assurance Schedule.
Members of the LGBs are appointed by the Board with Parent and Staff Governors coming forward by election. The Headteacher/Head of School is a voting member of that school's LGB
The details of the individual governors on the LGBs are listed on GIAS as required by the DfE and on the relevant school websites: www.carres.uk; www.kshs.uk
- The LGBs are consulted in key strategic leadership matters as set out in the Scheme of delegated authority which is facilitated through the Chairs' meetings. The LGBs play a key role in providing assurances to the Board regarding education and other site/school specific matters as set out in the Governance Assurance Schedule. They do this using an Assurances RAG report and through the membership of an LGB representative at FR&A Meetings where the assurances are scrutinised by Trustees.

- **Executive Headteacher.** The Executive Headteacher has full accountability to the Board for all schools within the Trust and has responsibility for an individual school. The Executive Headteacher is a voting member of the Board and of the relevant LGB. The Scheme of Delegated Authority describes the decision-making powers of the Executive Headteacher.
- **Scheme of Delegated Authority:** this sets out clearly where governance and executive functions are exercised. The Scheme is reviewed annually by the Board and the Members
- **Communication:** Communication within the Trust is essential to ensure smooth running, to meet the strategic aims, vision, values and objectives, and that the statutory and legal requirements are continuously met within each school forming part of the Trust. The Board has clear processes in place to ensure communication between all levels and structures of governance. The GVO (www.thegvoffice.com) is a secure electronic database, accessible remotely, containing all the information relevant to the Multi Academy Trust. The GVO will be used to publish all documents and papers for all Trust meetings and as a vehicle for discussions as necessary. Access to the GVO information is dependent upon an individual's appointment within the Trust. All Members, Trustees and Governors are provided with a school or trust email address which should be used for school and trust business, in order to comply with data security regulations.
- **Governance.** The Trust's governance processes, including the relationship between the structural levels of governance are outlined in the **Governance Plans**. (The dates of meetings in the current year are agreed at the start of the year).

Section F: Compliance

- The Chair of the Board, the Company Secretary and the Board's Clerk ensure that the Board is aware of, and adheres to, the legislative requirements linked to education, employment, charity, company law, GDPR and Equalities Act.
- The Clerk and the Company Secretary are responsible for ensuring that the Trust adheres to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook, the Trust's Funding Agreement, Articles of Association and Company Law.
- The Board has a mechanism in place to ensure that the key governance duties and responsibilities linked to safeguarding, inclusion, special educational needs and disability (SEND) and monitoring the impact of pupil premium and other targeted funding are undertaken effectively.
- The Board has a set of policy documents designed to ensure compliance and consistency across the Trust.

Section G: Evaluation

- The Trust Board undertakes regular skills audits of its members and the members of the LGBs. Analysis of the audits and a consideration of the links between the outcomes of the analysis and the Trust's Strategic Plan inform the provision of professional development for all those involved in governance and to the recruitment needs at Board and LGB levels. The Trust uses the NGA skills audit for MATs framework.
- Self-evaluation is undertaken on an on-going basis using the DfE Features of Effective Governance Framework.
- The Trust Members undertake an annual review of governance effectiveness. This may include the commissioning of an external independent review.
- The proceedings of the Governance work of the Trust at all levels is thoroughly documented and available to stakeholders on application to the school offices. Such minutes may be redacted to protect confidential or commercially sensitive information. The documentation is retained in line with legal requirements.