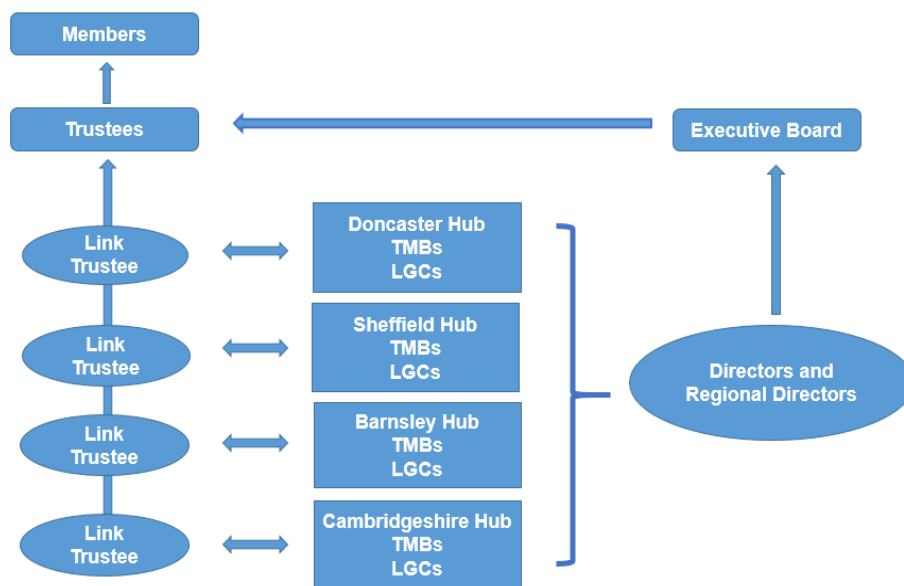


Governance at Astrea – Briefing for LGC/TMB members

As a multi-academy trust (MAT), Astrea has a number of layers of governance as shown in the diagram below. Each plays an important part in the oversight of the Trust’s work and, whilst communication between the layers is essential, their work is complementary and non-duplicative.

To reflect the ‘dual governance’ approach, in which oversight of individual academies is shared between the executive and local committees, arrangements will be made for the Chair of a local committee and a representative of Astrea’s executive team to meet the lead inspector together. The Trust will also arrange for a Trustee to be available for a telephone call with the lead inspector, if requested.



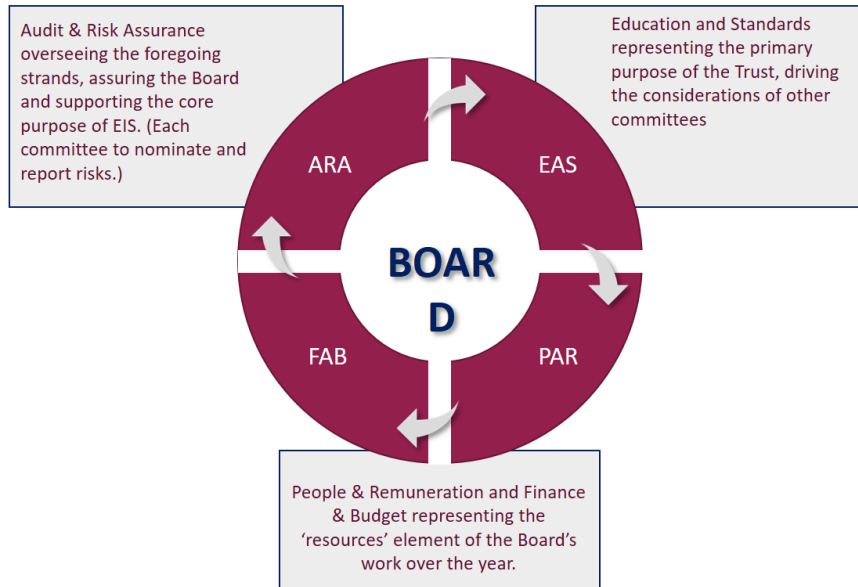
Members

The **Members** are the guardians of Astrea’s constitution, as set out in the Articles of Association. It is their responsibility to ensure that the Trustees are pursuing the Trust’s charitable objectives and to hold the Board to account for its conduct and performance.

Trustees

The **Board of Trustees** has overall accountability and legal responsibility for the Trust. As non-executive directors, they are responsible for ensuring that Astrea meets its obligations as a company. As governors, they are responsible for the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Trust as a whole; for holding the CEO and wider executive team to account for the Trust’s performance and for overseeing the financial performance and probity of the Trust. In addition, the model allows for Trustees to take on a ‘link’ responsibility for liaising with the local chairs in each hub of school.

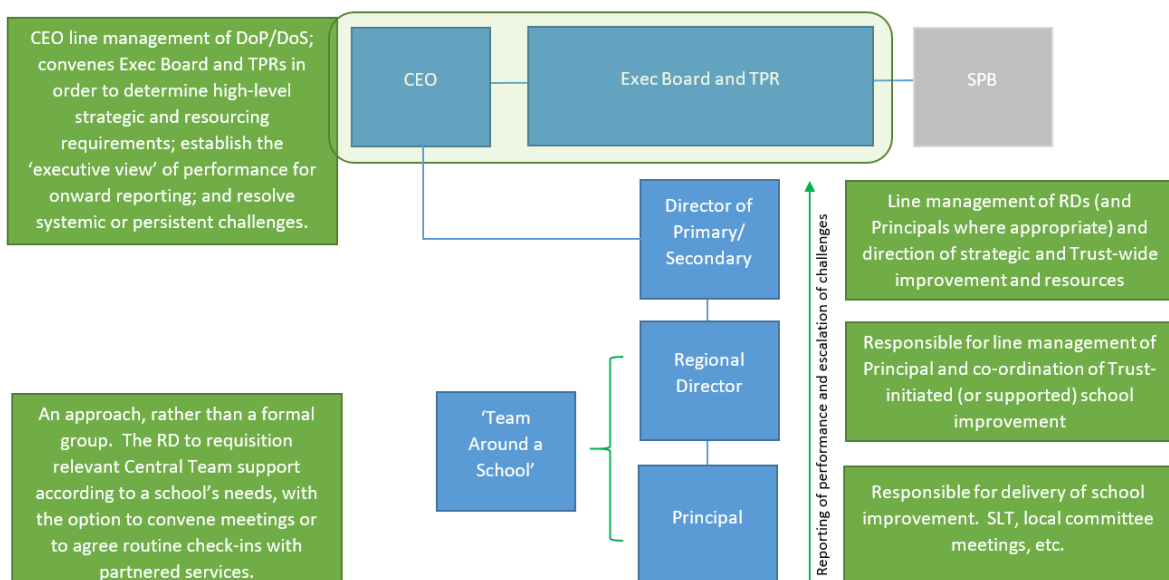
The Board has four main committees (Education & Standards; People & Remuneration; Finance & Budget; and Audit & Risk Assurance) in addition to a Nominations Committee. You can find out more about the Trustees here: <https://astreaacademytrust.org/astrea-trustees/>



The Nominations Committee and the Statutory Review Committee, being occasional rather than ordinary committees of the Board.

Executive Board

The **Executive Board** is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Trust. Each executive director leads a team of professionals who support the schools in important areas such as inclusion and safeguarding. The wider central team's support includes significant oversight of schools' finances and HR as well as the line-management of Principals and estates staff. You can find out more about the executive directors here: <https://astreaacademytrust.org/meet-the-team/>



Local Committees

Local Committee Members are volunteers, chosen for their skills, experience and insights, to whom certain responsibilities are delegated for oversight of individual schools. Local committees are not legally responsible for the schools, so committee members are able to focus on school improvement by supporting and challenging the Principal, holding him or her to account for the school's performance.

Individual academies in the Trust are overseen by a local committee and, in some cases, a committee might oversee more than one school. There are two types of committee:

- **Trust Management Boards (TMBs)** – these boards are established for schools who have more recently joined the Trust and need a high level of involvement from Astrea's central team. In the early stages, most members of the TMB will be representatives of the Trust, but additional members will join in order to ensure the committee's graduation to a Local Governance Committee (LGC). TMBs meet at least half-termly.
- **Local Governance Committees (LGCs)** – these committees have a much lower level of Trust representation and, therefore, enjoy greater autonomy over how they manage their business. LGCs are those committees deemed to be more sustainable and to be in the best position to contribute strategically to the wider governance network within the Trust. LGCs meet at least termly.

As committees of the Board, both TMBs and LGCs have Terms of Reference, which you can find here: <https://astreaacademytrust.org/about-us/governance/>

Example questions governors may be asked during an inspection

- What are the governance and accountability structures within the Trust?
- What is the value of being part of a multi-academy trust?
- What are the school/Trust values?
- How does the school meet DfE's statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education, for example, in terms of the teaching of the protected characteristics?
- How does the LGC/TMB hold leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff?
- How does the school meet the needs of its SEND pupils?
- Have you had any complaints that have come to you?

Strategy & priorities

- Describe the key priorities for the school/ where you think the school is/ how you're kept abreast of what's happening in school?
- What would you say are the strategic priorities for the school?
- Are you familiar with the Academy Development Plan/Academy Improvement Plan and do you feel it is focusing on the right things? Is the school meeting their targets?

Curriculum

- How do you ensure a high quality of education for the pupils? What is your understanding of what a high-quality curriculum would look like? How do you know that the curriculum is of quality?
- Has that curriculum thinking been a school priority? What have senior leaders done to support middle leaders with this?
- In terms of breadth of the curriculum, are there any areas that have been brought to your attention?

Leadership and staff

- Do you have any issues or concerns around leadership?
- Any issues or concerns around leaders/staff wellbeing? What does your support for their wellbeing look like?
- How do you meet responsibilities of challenging the leadership in the school?

Safeguarding

- What reassurances have you received as a governing body that young people are safe?
- Are there any concerns?
- What about safeguarding training?
- How do you ensure safeguarding is of the highest standard?

Pupil Premium

- What sight do you have of the PP plans and their implementation?
- Are you confident that Grants, such as the pupil premium, are being well spent? How do you know?

Equality/EDI

- Have you looked at the Equalities Objectives? And what are the numbers looking like in terms of sexual harassment, bullying, peer on peer abuse etc.?

Local Committee Accountabilities

Accountability	Expectation	Format/ source of evidence	Notes
To ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of Astrea is maintained within each school.	Chairs will be able to explain the vision, ethos and strategic direction to stakeholders and will be able to demonstrate to Trustees how the local committee is securing these at a school level.	Chair's report Minutes Principal feedback	This accountability is intended to underline the fact that local committees are delegates of the Board, not 'external' representatives of the school to the Trust.
To hold school leaders to account for the educational performance of the schools, the inclusion of all pupils and the offer of a knowledge-rich and broadly-based curriculum.	Chairs will be clear on what is expected of the school and its Principal and will be able to demonstrate to Trustees how accountability is rendered. Chairs will be able to tell Trustees how well the school is doing against these expectations and what factors account for this.	Chair's report Minutes Principal feedback	This accountability is intended to ensure that school performance is at the centre of chairs' thinking and that it can be clearly articulated.
To work with the school's leadership and central team to ensure that high standards of safeguarding are maintained.	Chairs are able to confirm that each committee has a named safeguarding link who develops his or her skills, promotes rigorous discussion of safeguarding during and between meetings and who liaises with the central team lead for safeguarding. The committee should know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective safeguarding is at the school; • What are the main areas of strength; • What are the main areas of concern? 	Chair's report Minutes Principal feedback Safeguarding audit report	This is supported by the safeguarding link member role description.
To promote positive parent, community and stakeholder engagement and to drive school-to-school partnerships for improvement within the Trust.	Chairs ensure that the work of the school takes account of the views of parents and the wider community, including third parties such as the Local Authority. The committee sets a culture in which the school actively encourages this engagement, particularly from under-represented groups.	Minutes Parent/community surveys	
To identify, understand and report to Trustees any strategic risks facing the school.	Chairs ensure that there is discussion of strategic risks facing the school (i.e. those risks that threaten the achievement of strategic objectives) and that a clear minute of this is taken and reported to Trustees via the central governance lead.	Minutes	This is the 'canary in the coalmine' function, allowing the executive and Trustees to be alerted to critical risks at school-level or to aggregated risks across a number of schools.