

Berwick Academy

Berwick Academy seeks three non-executive directors to join its expanding board. Berwick Academy serves the town and rural area of Berwick-upon-Tweed in Northumberland. It is a small school with approximately 550 pupils aged 13-18. Board meetings are held virtually.

About the trust

Berwick Academy is a secondary-age school for young people of all backgrounds and abilities. The academy serves the town and rural area of Berwick-upon-Tweed in the northern part of Northumberland. With around 550 students on roll, the academy also has a sixth form, which caters to around 100 students.

The school moved into Special Measures after an Ofsted examination rated it as Inadequate in 2018, as well as being under a Financial Notice to Improve (FNtI) and the Trust is working closely with Government agencies to bring about necessary improvements.

The percentage of students receiving Free School Meals (FSM) – an indicator of deprivation, or identified as disadvantaged is 30%, with 20% of students identified as Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). There are also around seven students studying English and an Additional Language (EAL). The academy's staff have a commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of students in order to prepare them for a changing world of new experiences and technologies, further education and careers.

Plans for the future

1. **Finance & Strategy:** The trust is currently under a Financial Notice to Improve (FNtI), which was issued in 2018. Since then, the trust has had several years of clean financial audits and have made stringent cuts, which was noted by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). However, more financial change is required to close the FNtI, and as such, the trust still is looking to improve upon their current plan, and execute the result effectively.
2. **Improving Standards:** The academy aims to move out of its 'Inadequate' status, given by Ofsted during 2018. To this end the trust has already made a number of changes, including the addition of two trustees with expertise in this field.
3. **Reputation and Engagement:** Due to the trust's reputation having deteriorated, the academy has been working closely with the community in order to improve the relationship it has with key stakeholders such as parents, local business and other local, and seeks to further improve this positive change.

Longer-Term Plans: The future intentions of the academy, are to become part of an academy trust that can help build a Berwick solution to education so as to further benefit the children in this deprived area.

Trust ethos & values

*At Berwick Academy the mission statement is **Friendship, Learning and Respect.***

The school vision incorporates the following aims:

- *To provide an outstanding intellectual, social, moral and physical education, upholding the school's core*

values of friendship, learning and respect.

- *To foster an inclusive and supportive school community, which provides individual pastoral care to meet the needs of every child.*
- *To develop a spirit of enquiry and a lifelong love of learning, through inspirational teaching and positive learning experiences.*
- *To engender positive links between the school and the parents of its students, as well as with the local community, in order to support Berwick Academy learners in every way.*
- *To prepare all its students for life in an increasingly global society; equipping them with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make a positive contribution to it.*

Role summary

Number of positions advertised: 3

Roles 1-3 – Trustee/Non-Executive Director

Trustees – or non-executive directors - are both charity trustees and company directors of the academy trust. The core functions of their role are: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of a charitable company funded by the public purse.

The board of trustees manages the business of the academy trust and may exercise all the powers of the trust in compliance with its charitable objects, company and charity law.

Non-executive directors will be responsible for maintaining stability and the management of a dynamic structure. The role also includes contributing to financial planning for sustainability and potential growth, and holding the CEO/CFO to account.

In the interests of safeguarding and in accordance with DfE requirements, all trustee appointments will be subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check.

Person specification

Every trustee is expected to abide by the seven principles of public life set out by Lord Nolan: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Competency Framework for Governance (DfE) 2017 details the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective governance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf

The strategic expertise required for this role includes:

Essential *(due to multiple roles, candidates may be accepted who possess one or more of the skills below)*

- HR
- Business development
- Finance

Desirable

- Entrepreneur/Founder
- Growth Management
- Turnaround
- Non-Executive/Trustee
- Restructuring

- Corporate Governance and
- Finance

HR: The ideal candidate will have a HR background with experience of a strategic HR role, working across multiple sites. Where they have non-educational HR experience, a willingness to understand education settings and transfer their experience effectively is expected. An appropriate level of creativity/flexibility in HR solutions is advantageous.

Business: The trust seeks a candidate with an area of expertise in business development. Ideally an individual with strategic financial experience and fund raising at a board level, they must have a proven track record of sound financial management, especially in relation to a budget at least equivalent to that of the trust (£3.50mn). The trust welcomes candidates who will help support its community links and apprenticeship schemes.

Finance: The trust has a budget of £3.50m. Applicants should be able to demonstrate effective governance of organisations of comparable size/budget, with ideal candidates showing an aptitude at improving the stability and strategic direction within these organisations.

Time commitment

6 hours/month minimum.

Location of board meetings and trust website

Board meetings are held virtually. In person meetings may be held at Berwick Academy, Adams Drive, Spittal, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 2JF when safe to do so.

<http://www.berwickacademy.co.uk/index.php/en/>

Governance structure

<http://www.berwickacademy.co.uk/index.php/en/homepage/governors>

Background on academy trusts

Academy trusts are charitable groups of academy schools, run independent of local authority control.

There are over 900 academy trusts comprising of three or more schools. Over 50% of children in England now attend an academy. 35% of primary schools are now an academy or a free school, which accounts for 37% of the primary school population. 77% of secondary schools are now an academy or a free school, which accounts for 77% of the secondary school population. For these schools to fulfil their potential, academy 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.

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.

Applications

Academy Ambassadors is a non-profit programme which recruits senior business leaders and professionals as volunteer non-executive directors onto the boards of multi-academy trusts.

If you are interested in applying for the role please click on the 'Register interest in this position' button on the Academy Ambassadors website and follow the next steps.

In the interests of safeguarding and in accordance with DfE requirements, all trustee appointments will be subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check.

Please note: candidates should live within reasonable travelling distance of the trust and/or have a link with the region. For more information, please call 0207 952 8556 or visit www.academyambassadors.org.

We strongly recommend applying as early as you can to have the best possible chance of being considered as we may change the closing date if we have received sufficient applications..