

# Parallel Learning Trust

Parallel Learning Trust is a growing multi-academy Trust established in 2014, with expertise in primary, special and alternative provision and driven by the moral imperative to educate and develop young minds in preparation for their futures in the world of work.

The Trust seeks two non-executive directors and one member to join its boards. This is an exciting time for the Trust as there are two major building projects underway. Therefore, someone with a background in construction, facilities management or risk management are encouraged to apply.

Board meetings are held in Bromley on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm.

## About the Trust

The Trust consists of seven Special and Alternative Provision academies across diverse areas of Essex County, London and Kent. The Trust originated as a Pupil Referral Unit, has since expanded, and has further growth plans with two 'live' applications for new Special Free Schools currently with the DfE for consideration.

The Trust strongly believes that its people are its greatest asset and invest heavily in their future by training them and ensuring they are given every opportunity to grow into the best practitioners they can be.

Recent Ofsted reports are available on the Trust [website](#).

## Plans for the future

The two key challenges for the board over the next 12-24 months are:

1. Growth management: oversight of the set-up and launch of new provisions and expansion of existing provision.
2. Governance: developing the London, Kent and Essex hubs to be sustainable and ensuring appropriate local level governance.
3. Developing quality: ensuring consistency across the Trust in delivery, balanced by a real understanding of local needs and community.

The Trust also has two bids for new Special Free Schools and has two DfE-funded build programmes valuing over £10m each, planned for delivery over the next 18 months.

## Trust ethos & values

The Trust builds cultures of ambition for pupils from all backgrounds, aiming to provide an education that seeks to develop creative, independent, life-long learners, who will be equipped with a passion for self-development, committed to the community within which they will live and work.

## Role summary

Number of positions advertised:

3

### Person specification

Every Trustee is expected to abide by the Trust's code of conduct and 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf)

### Role 1 – 2 Trustee/Non-Executive Directors

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. In the interests of safeguarding, all Trustee appointments would be subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check.

The strategic expertise required for these roles include:

**Essential** (*candidates may be accepted who possess one or more of the skills below*)

- HR
- Growth Management
- Compliance/Audit
- Construction/ Facilities Management
- Finance

**Desirable**

- PR/Marketing
- Corporate Governance
- Mental Health/ Social Care
- Health & Safety

The appointee will have excellent relationship management skills and will understand how to apply good, consistent practices throughout a growing organisation.

It would be advantageous if applicants had experience in the following sectors; Construction Planning Facilities Management Mental Health/Health Care Social Care. Candidates that have a local connection to school areas are encouraged to apply.

### Time commitment

6 hours /month minimum; 6 meetings per year. Meetings last between 2 and 2.5 hours.

## Role 3 – Member

A member is able to alter the Trust's Articles of Association and appoint (or remove) Trustees/directors where necessary. They provide independent oversight to the work of the board of Trustees in order to ensure suitable accountability for its decision-making and strategy. At Parallel Learning Trust the members are expected to be signatories for the academy Trust, to attend 4 meetings per year, and to add to the already broad skillset within the existing team of members.

### Person specification

The strategic expertise required for this role includes:

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

- Corporate Governance
- Legal/ Compliance
- Qualified Accountant

**Desirable**

- Risk
- Chair

### Time commitment

Approximately 6 hours every 3 months; 4 meetings per year. Meetings last between 2 and 2.5 hours.

## Location of board meetings and Trust website

Board meetings are held at Suite 1, 4 Baker House, Horsley Road, Bromley, BR1 3LB which is 16 minutes on a fast train from Victoria.

Board meetings are always held on a **Wednesday evening at 6:30pm** with the schedule of meetings published one year in advance.

<http://www.plt.org.uk/>

## Governance structure

<http://www.plt.org.uk/governance-and-policy/>

## Background on Academy Trusts

Academy schools, which are charities run independently of local authority control, now account for 74% of secondary schools and 31% of primaries – and their number is growing all the time.

Many of these schools are grouped together as multi-academy Trusts (MATs). There are currently 832 multi academy Trusts of 3+ schools. 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.

“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 (2019)*

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 send your CV and a short expression of interest detailing which role you are applying for to [academyambassadors@newschoolsnetwork.org](mailto:academyambassadors@newschoolsnetwork.org). 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](http://www.academyambassadors.org).

## Key dates

Candidates are welcome to contact Mark Jordan, CEO of PLT, for an informal discussion about any of the roles on 020 8313 0032. 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. Applicants should be aware of the following key dates in the recruitment process –