

# Parallel Learning Trust

Parallel Learning Trust is a growing multi-academy trust 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 non-executive directors experienced in academy trust governance, one of whom will be a chair successor, to join its board, plus one Member. Board meetings are held in Bromley, BR1 3LB.

## About the trust

The trust's website says "We are a specialist Multi-Academy Trust established in 2014, with expertise in Special and Alternative Provision academies. We embrace our moral imperative to educate and develop young minds in preparation for their futures in the world of work with the aim of ensuring that all pupils that attend our provisions can enjoy and achieve their true potential, irrespective of their starting point thus enabling them to make a positive contribution to their community. We are a truly collaborative organisation and the culture that we promote is one that is driven by our core values. These values have been carefully developed and apply across all of our academies. Most importantly, our approach is driven by passion, commitment and a genuine desire to create and nurture long term relationships that have sustainable outcomes that enable independence.

The trust currently oversees seven academies: Kenning Park Academy, Victory Park Academy, Park Campus Academy, Ramsden Hall Academy, Inspire Academy, Sutton House Academy and Wandle Valley Academy. Overall, the trust board oversees 300 employees, 425 pupils and an annual income of £19m.

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

## Plans for the future

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

1. **Governance:** strengthening the quality and effectiveness of governance, strategic leadership and financial oversight of the trust. Developing the London, Kent and Essex hubs to be sustainable and ensuring effective implementation of the trust board's Scheme of Delegation at all levels in the governance structure.
2. **Improving educational standards and pupil outcomes:** ensuring consistency across the trust in delivery, balanced by a real understanding of local needs and community and oversight of the set-up and launch of new provisions and expansion of existing provision.
3. **Financial management and compliance:** ensuring the trust takes action to achieve a balanced budget and long term financial sustainability, and engages with the Education Skills and Funding Agency to meet regulatory reporting requirements and ensure compliance with its funding agreements and the Academies Financial Handbook.

The trust has aspirations to grow and has submitted 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

### Role 1 – Chair successor

The Chair leads the board of non-executive directors, or trustees, managing its business while providing an element of leadership for the organisation as a whole. The role is to hold to account the executive and senior leadership team, most specifically the CEO. The Chair needs to ensure that the board is able to deal with problems and related proposals professionally, both in terms of the skills of the trustees and the way in which it conducts its business. S/he will have a key role to play in recruiting and inducting new trustees.

The Chair also provides strategic leadership and governance for the trust. They are responsible for the safeguarding and education of pupils, as well as for setting and monitoring performance benchmarks.

### Person specification

The competencies required for this role include:

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

- Chair experience (ideally with MAT governance experience)
- Good negotiation skills
- Non-executive/ Trustee
- Corporate/Charity Governance

**Desirable**

- Change Management
- Growth Management
- Risk
- Succession Planning

The successful applicant will have a track record of successful Chair/CEO experience. They will have strong interpersonal skills and negotiation skills, with an adaptive approach to all stakeholders and strategic mind-set. Additionally, they will be committed to the trust's ethos and values. This means having the willingness to devote time and effort to create positive change for pupils.

As Chair, they will compliantly budget and monitor expenditure, in line with legal obligations. They will strategise for asset management and risk management, and will develop productive and supportive professional relationships with the board and CEO.

### Role 2 - Trustee/Non-Executive Director

The non-executive directors set the strategic direction of PAT, support and challenge the Executive Principals, ensure the trust's financial stability and safeguarding of children, promote the wellbeing of staff and pupils and support the achievement of educational excellence.

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. More information about the roles and responsibilities of multi-academy trustees can be found in:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/924673/Academies\\_governance\\_role\\_descriptors.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924673/Academies_governance_role_descriptors.pdf)

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 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)

The strategic expertise required for these roles includes:

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

- HR (incl. executive appraisal & pay)
- Corporate/Charity governance
- Legal/risk and regulatory compliance
- CEO/General Management

**Desirable**

- PR/Marketing
- Change/growth management
- Estates/facilities management
- Health/social care

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

### Time commitment

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

### Role 3, 4 – Members

More information about the role of Members can be found in the following document on pages 6 and 9-11:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/924673/Academies\\_governance\\_role\\_descriptors.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924673/Academies_governance_role_descriptors.pdf)

### 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.

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

## Governance structure

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

## Background on academy trusts

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

Over 50% of children in England attend an academy, and there are over 900 academy trusts with three or more schools.

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 now button.

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](http://www.academyambassadors.org).

## Key dates

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.