

Tennyson Learning Community

Tennyson Learning Community is a new primary academy trust based in Luton that is currently in an exciting phase of growth. The trust believes very strongly in the need to form a close partnership between parents, staff, and pupils to ensure children are happy, challenged and able to make an individual contribution to the success of our schools. The trust seeks two non-executive directors with experience in legal and compliance or finance to further strengthen an experienced team. The trust also seeks two members with either a finance or legal background. Board meetings are held in Luton.

About the trust

The trust currently operates as one school from across two sites. With a future possibility to look at de-amalgamation into two separate schools, and taking on a further school in the area the trust has an ambitious growth plan. The office of the Regional School Commissioner has recognised the trust as having good potential to expand to incorporate a blend of primary academies in the Luton area. The local authority expanded Tennyson Road Primary School to 3 form entry following its outstanding Ofsted judgement in 2014. The school, now based on two sites, continues to be judged as outstanding and has sustained outstanding outcomes for pupils, and this provides an impressive base for further growth.

Tennyson Road Primary School has a distinguished reputation as a National Support School for school improvement and collaboration. In local authority control, the school provided outstanding 4-11 provision, leading curriculum development and continuing staff development for Luton primary schools and others in the region, including some academy trusts and chains.

Once the trust consists of three schools, approximately 20% of pupils will be in receipt of free school meals. There is also a high proportion of BAME pupils, including many from Eastern Europe. The schools are in the top 5% of England primary schools with impressive benefit for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Currently, the budget of the trust is approximately £5.5 million and the trust employs 100 staff across its schools in order to provide an education to 630 pupils.

Plans for the future

Three key challenges for your trust over the next 12-24 months are:

1. Financial management – budget constraints need to be well managed and overcome as the central team supports new schools.
2. Educational attainment – as the trust grows, it is important to maintain the 'Outstanding' key stage 2 results across its schools.
3. Site management – the de-amalgamation of the existing split site school requires a business case to be submitted to the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Trust ethos & values

The trust is driven by a mission that ensures every child has the right to outstanding teaching and, every academy, exceptional leadership. It is the trust vision to work with our children, their parents and carers and staff to create and to sustain excellent academies.

The trust will enable local schools, their governors and leaders and the communities that they serve, supported by a common ethos, to come together and take responsibility to provide better education in the local primary community, rather than just in their individual schools.

A trust that promotes and celebrates the individual identity, ethos and traditions of the academies, where

this adds value to educational outcomes, including an earned autonomy for school improvement for those that are providing a good and outstanding education. The trust will continue to support, to draw upon and contribute towards local Teaching School Alliances for teacher training, teaching and leadership programmes and professional development.

URL to full mission statement: <https://tennysonlearningcommunity.com/Welcome-to-the-Trust/>

Role summary

Number of positions advertised:

4

Role 1&2 – 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 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

The strategic expertise required for this role includes:

Essential

- CFO/ Finance or
- Legal or
- Compliance or

Desirable

- Growth Management
- IT/ Technology
- Entrepreneur
- Qualified Accountant

The successful candidate will bring board experience and have experience managing budgets in excess of £5.5 million. Individuals with legal skills and strong backgrounds in finance are encouraged to apply.

Time commitment

Six hours per month (minimum).

Role 3&4 – 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 Tennyson Learning Community the members are expected to be signatories for the academy trust, to attend 2 meetings per year, and to add to the already broad skillset within the existing team of members.

Person specification

The competencies required for this role include:

Essential

- Audit OR
- Legal OR
- Compliance OR
- CFO/ Finance

Desirable

- Growth Management
- IT/ Technology
- Entrepreneur
- Qualified Accountant

Time commitment

2 hours /month minimum. Number of board meetings/year

Location of board meetings and trust website

Tennyson Road Primary School, Tennyson Road, Luton, LU1 3RS.

<https://tennysonlearningcommunity.com/>

Governance structure

<https://tennysonlearningcommunity.com/The-Trust-Board/>

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 900 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.