



The Inspire Partnership A Guide to Governance

“LCCs are the vital link between our schools and their communities. By gathering feedback and providing constructive challenge, they ensure local voices are heard in school development and trust strategy. Through collaboration and a focus on equity, LCCs drive continuous improvement and champion excellence for all pupils.”

What we're about

Inspire Partnership Academy Trust (IPAT) is passionate about transforming the future for our children through partnership and collaboration. Placing children at the centre of all we do, we aim to create a climate where excellence flourishes as a result of outstanding leadership, engaging teaching and high quality learning. This comes from a desire to create a coalition for change in all of our schools, building a legacy where pupils are able to fulfil their true potential as learners.

What are our core values?

- **Collaboration matters** because this creates shared agency amongst staff, pupils and our wider communities. We are stronger together and can achieve more through working in partnership.
- **Excellence in everything** is a core value because we believe learning is an artform, measured best through the journey and the quality of the outcome. Excellence is inclusive because it creates a shared expectation in everyone to achieve.
- **Community first** connects our mission to transform lives with our vision to ensure pupils have the skills, qualities and attitudes to achieve the very best. Leadership behaviours for everyone are rooted in serving communities, especially those who need us most.
- **Equity for everyone** exists to ensure we are fair, enact ethical leadership and strive to remove barriers to learning wherever they exist.
- **Continuous growth** applies to us as leaders of learning as much as children discovering the joy of learning. We all have the capacity to grow new skills, learn knowledge and gain new experiences. We grow best in a climate of trust, reciprocity and connectedness.

Governance in a Trust

Governance in an academy trust involves the framework of oversight, leadership, and decision-making that guarantees the efficient functioning and strategic direction of the Trust and its associated schools.

A Trust typically consists of a group of schools that share a common vision, leadership structure and resources, and governance that involves setting policies, ensuring accountability and making decisions in the best interest of pupils, staff and the communities they serve.

In short, governance in a Trust is about ensuring the trust operates with transparency, accountability and a clear focus on providing high-quality education across all its schools.

IPAT is a family of schools that foster a sense of mutual responsibility, nurturing strong professional relationships with all our stakeholders.

As an inclusive trust, IPAT values the diversity of the communities we serve. We celebrate the distinctiveness of each individual school and share skills and resources across our hubs.

Our structure

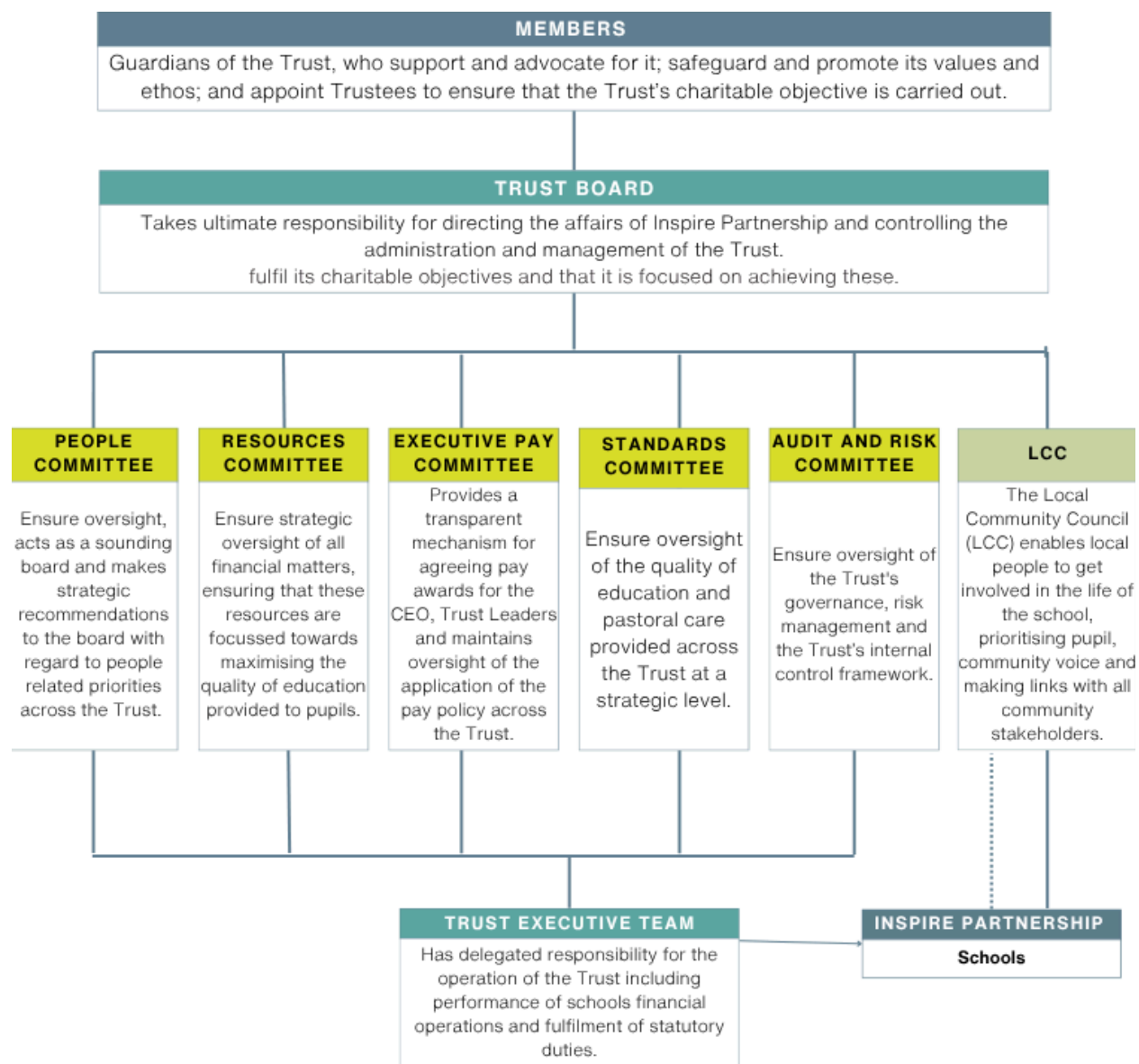
Within our academy trust there are three layers: members, trustees and committees; all have different responsibilities.

The Trust Board, composed of Trustees, oversees six committees: Local Community Councils (LCCs); Resources Committee; People Committee; Standards Committee; Audit and Risk Committee; Executive Pay Committee.

These committees report back to the Trust Board and help ensure effective scrutiny and decision-making. Much of the work of the Trust takes place within these committees.

The roles and responsibilities of these committees are detailed in the Scheme of Delegation June 2025.

Layers of Governance



The roles of trust members, trustees and local community council members are clearly defined in the Scheme of Delegation; all are obliged to comply with this scheme at all times.

Members

Trust members are the 'guardians' of the Trust, who support and advocate for it; safeguard and promote its values and ethos; and appoint (and if necessary, remove) Trustees to ensure that the Trust's charitable object is carried out.

Trustees

Trustees must ensure that IPAT has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction that will enable the Trust to fulfil its charitable objectives and that it is focused on achieving these.

Trustees must work in partnership with the Trust Leader and other senior staff to help the partnership actualise the vision.

The Trust Board is ultimately accountable and responsible for the performance of schools in the Trust and determines what responsibilities are delegated to the Local Community Council.

Local Community Councils (LCC)

Local Community Councils (LCCs) operate as sub-committees of the Trust Board and play an integral role within the Inspire Partnership's governance structure. Their delegated responsibilities reflect and reinforce the Trust's core values.

LCCs embody the principle of *community first* by strengthening the relationship between schools and their local communities. Through regular engagement and acting as a sounding board, they gather feedback from parents, pupils, staff, and the wider community, ensuring that local voices inform school priorities and trust-wide strategy.

In line with the value of collaboration *matters*, LCCs work in partnership with headteachers, executive leaders, and the Trust Board, sharing insights, resources, and best practice to enhance governance and school improvement across the Trust.

By providing constructive and informed challenge, LCCs contribute to *excellence in everything*, supporting schools to uphold high standards and focus on continuous improvement from the perspective of children and families.

LCCs also champion *equity in everything*, prioritising the well-being and inclusion of all pupils, especially those from vulnerable or underrepresented groups. By listening carefully to their communities, they help ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education and meaningful opportunities.

Regular school visits, active participation in school life, and structured feedback processes ensure that LCCs maintain visibility and influence, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ongoing development across both individual schools and the wider Trust.

Structure and role of the Local Community Council

Local Community Councils (LCCs) do not hold decision-making authority, except in relation to their own governance operations and when forming panels to consider pupil disciplinary matters or local complaints. If there is low attendance at an LCC meeting and a decision needs to be made it is for the Chair and the Headteacher to make a final decision and communicate and for this to be recorded in the minutes.

Each hub or group of schools is represented by a single LCC. Membership includes at least one parent from each school, a minimum of one community member, and the headteacher(s).

Where an LCC serves multiple schools, it is essential that governance is inclusive and balanced. Members are expected to develop a working knowledge of all schools within the hub, while also representing the distinct voices and needs of their own school communities. Meeting agendas should include dedicated time for school-specific updates and discussions to ensure no school is overlooked.

Regular visits to each school, combined with ongoing engagement with pupils, staff, and families, further support a clear understanding of each school's context. This inclusive structure ensures that all schools are equally supported, recognised, and held to consistently high standards.

The chair:

- is appointed by the Trust Board for a four-year term.
- holds informal conversations with the Headteacher/s and be involved in their performance leadership as a voice for the local community context.
- chairs any panels required to consider pupil disciplinary matters or parental/community complaints where necessary. Individual LCCs may draw on members from other LCCs to form panels. Briefings, training and conflicts of interest will all be enacted to ensure the process is supportive and independent. Where applicable, the chair of any panel will represent the LCC at any subsequent stage, for example, independent review.

The vice chair:

- is appointed by the LCC for a four-year term.
- The role of the vice chair is to support the chair in their endeavours, deputising for them in their absence

LCC members:

The LCC has community members and parent members. Community members are appointed by the Chair of the LCC in consultation with the Headteacher and parent members are elected by parents and carers of their school following a transparent nomination process. For more information on their roles and responsibilities please view [LCC Parent Member](#) and [LCC Community Member](#)

Resignation and removal of Local Community Council members

LCC members may resign at any time by submitting their resignation in writing to the clerk.

The Trust places high importance on the consistent attendance of members at all scheduled meetings and school visits, the dates of which will be provided at the start of each academic year. Regular attendance is essential to fulfilling the governance role effectively.

If an LCC member is unable to attend a meeting, apologies must be submitted at least seven days in advance. These will be considered by the LCC, and if not accepted, the member may be subject to removal due to non-attendance. The Trust Board and/or the LCC reserve the right to remove a member where persistent absence is not justified.

In such cases, the Chair will raise the matter for discussion and a decision will be taken. The member in question has the right to appeal the decision to the Trust wBoard, which will review the case at a dedicated meeting. The decision of the Trust Board is final.

The Local Community Council meetings

The LCC meets in person once a term. The Trust encourages LCC members to attend meetings in person. However, it recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances that prevent this. In such cases, the Chair and Headteacher may authorise the LCC member to join the meeting virtually.

The minutes from these meetings are submitted at the subsequent Trust Board meeting. Meeting agendas should allow time for school-specific updates and discussion, ensuring that no school is overlooked. Members of the school leadership or staff team can be invited to join LCC meetings as appropriate to support building community links.

The meeting agenda of the LCC includes:

- Celebration of successes
- Pupil, parent and staff voice - report back on school visits
- Receive a written report from LCC members on their activities
- Statutory data - Autumn term only
- Attendance update
- Behaviour / suspensions update
- Safeguarding Action Plan update

Local Community Council school visits and community feedback

As part of their delegated responsibilities, LCC members play a key role in fostering continuous growth through ongoing monitoring and feedback. Members are expected to visit their schools at least three times per year for pre-planned activities, as well as attend key events and celebrations to stay closely connected with school life.

Effective governance relies on LCC members being actively engaged—building relationships and listening closely to the experiences of pupils, families, and staff. Insights gathered through visits, informal conversations, surveys, and community engagement are first shared with Headteachers, then disseminated to executive leaders through structured reports and discussions. This process ensures grassroots feedback meaningfully informs school and Trust-level decision-making.

LCC Annual Activity Chart

The Local Community Council activity chart outlining planned school visits, stakeholder engagement, and attendance at school and community events across the academic year. This ensures a balanced and structured approach to LCC involvement.

Term	Activity type	Activity description	Notes
Autumn	LCC business meeting (October)	Set the LCC agenda for the year including: - business schedule (agree focus/dates) - state of the nation from HTs (standards and core priorities) - staff and pupil summer TEP results	
	Stakeholder feedback	Focus to be agreed by LCC	Coordinated with school leadership team
	School/Community Engagement	Attend autumn celebration events and/or engage with wider community stakeholders e.g meet local MP	Engage with families, pupils and staff informally
	LCC meeting	LCC termly meeting - agenda provided by the Trust	
Spring	LCC meeting (February)	LCC termly meeting - agenda provided by the Trust	
	Stakeholder feedback	Focus to be agreed by LCC	Coordinated with school leadership team
	School/Community Engagement	Attend school events determined by school calendar and/or engage in local community groups e.g. local neighbourhood watch group	Engage with families, pupils and staff informally
Summer	LCC meeting (June)	Full LCC termly meeting and annual review	Reflect on impact and plan for the following year
	Stakeholder feedback	Focus to be agreed by LCC End-of-year feedback summary and reflection/	Consolidate key themes from the year

	School/Community Engagement	Attend summer fair, sports day, year-6 transition event and/or engage with local community networks e.g. local community services/businesses	Engage with families, pupils and staff informally
<i>*Also look to frequently engage with external community events to connect with people from the community that can enhance our pupils' and families lives. Eg Local Government and Public Services; Cultural and Arts Organisations; Charities and Voluntary Groups</i>			

Responding to LCC feedback

Schools will respond to Local Community Council feedback through a structured and transparent process that supports continuous improvement. After each visit, LCC members will complete a report using the Trust's standard template. This is shared with the Headteacher, who reviews the contents and responds with any necessary actions or clarifications.

Relevant feedback will be considered as part of the school's ongoing improvement planning and may be discussed at senior leadership meetings where appropriate. Where concerns or recurring themes emerge, these will be referred to executive leaders for further support.

Updates on actions taken will be shared with the LCC—either in writing or at the next meeting—ensuring a clear feedback loop and reinforcing the value of the LCC's role in both supporting and celebrating the school's progress.

The LCC feedback form submitted to the Trust Board and regular one to ones between the LCC Chair and the Chair of Trustees provides an opportunity for monitoring and dialogue.

Induction and training

The Trust is committed to equipping all Local Community Council members with the knowledge and confidence needed to fulfil their role effectively. High-quality training and induction are central to this.

All new LCC members will receive a structured induction, including onboarding training, access to key documentation, and an introduction to their school and colleagues. Each member will also be assigned a mentor for ongoing support.

Annual safeguarding training is mandatory for all members and will take place each autumn term. Additional training opportunities will be available throughout the year, and members may select sessions relevant to their needs from the Trust's annual training programme.

The Trust places strong emphasis on professional development and is committed to ensuring that every LCC member is fully prepared and supported in their role.

Induction process

- Welcome letter issued with onboarding documents, allocated Inspire email, and meeting dates.
- Introductory meeting with the Chair and governance administrator to review key documents.
- Orientation and training on GovernorHub.
- Introductory meeting with the Headteacher and school visit.
- Completion of compulsory safeguarding training.
- Assignment of a mentor for ongoing support.
- Half-yearly check-in with the Chair and governance professional.

Appendix A

Local Community Council visit protocol

Purpose of school visits

School visits are a vital part of the Local Community Council's (LCC) role in supporting and leading on community engagement. Visits provide LCC members with valuable insight into the lived experiences of pupils, staff, and families, and help ensure that local governance remains grounded in the specific context of each school.

Visit expectations

- Frequency:
Each LCC member is expected to do a school visit once a term and connect with the local community, as outlined in the LCC annual activity chart.
- Types of visits:
 - Stakeholder engagement (e.g., pupil/staff voice sessions, informal conversations with parents)
 - Attendance at school events (e.g., celebration assemblies, sports days, transition events)
 - Community involvement (e.g., meetings with local groups or attending local events)
- Planning and Coordination:
All visits must be agreed in advance with the Headteacher and should align with the school calendar and LCC priorities. Members should notify the Chair and governance administrator of planned visits. The governance administrator can support LCC members with visit arrangements.

Conduct during visits

LCC members must:

- Act as supportive and objective representatives of the Trust.
- Follow safeguarding protocols, including signing in and wearing ID badges.
- Respect the professional boundaries of staff and avoid making evaluative comments or operational decisions.
- Remain confidential, avoiding the disclosure of sensitive information outside of appropriate governance channels.

Reporting and feedback

- After each visit, members must complete the LCC visit report using the Trust's standard template see appendix B.
- The report should be shared with the Headteacher, Chair and governance administrator within one week of the visit.
- The Headteacher will respond with relevant actions, clarifications, or acknowledgments.
- A summary of visit insights will be shared at the next LCC meeting and contribute to termly and annual impact reviews.

Using feedback effectively

- Feedback gathered from visits should inform:
 - The agenda and discussion at termly LCC meetings
 - Whole-school improvement planning
 - The trust leaders of any key celebrations and successes and/or of any patterns of concern.
- All feedback is part of a continuous improvement process and will be responded to through a structured feedback loop, with updates reported back to the LCC.

Monitoring and oversight

- The Chair of the LCC will maintain oversight of member engagement and visit activity, with support from the governance administrator.
- Visit engagement will be reviewed termly on the LCC agenda.
- The LCC Chair will also feed into regular dialogue with the Chair of Trustees to ensure alignment and impact across the Trust through termly one to ones, LCC meeting feedback from and termly CVC meetings.

Training and support

- All LCC members will be trained in the purpose and protocol of school visits during induction.
- Ongoing mentoring and half-yearly check-ins will support members in developing confidence and effectiveness in this aspect of their role.
- Additional training on key themes will be available through the Trust's LCC training programme to support dialogue and conversations with staff, children and parents

Local Community Council School Visit Form

Confidentiality Reminder - Please avoid including identifiable pupil names or confidential staff details in this form. Any sensitive issues should be raised directly with the Headteacher or Chair.

School	
Date	
Name of LCC member	
Activity undertaken	
Celebrations and successes	What went well? <i>Notable achievements, improvements, or strengths seen during the visit.</i>
Follow-up or questions raised	Areas for follow-up, <i>clarification, or potential improvement. Consider what should be shared with the Headteacher or discussed at the next LCC meeting</i>

Completed forms should be submitted to the Headteacher, LCC Chair and governance administrator within one week of the visit.