

Good governance: the value of trustees and non- executives from business

Why recruit new board members?

Scott Walker
Regional Director (EM&H, L&WY, N)

Academy Ambassadors...



- ...recruits outstanding individuals from business and the professions to join academy trust boards
- ...has a large and growing England-wide talent pool of business leaders who want to join trust boards to 'give back' to education
- ...can introduce you to exceptional professionals who can help multi-academy trusts grow in a sustainable way, improve performance, grow in reputation
- ...has placed almost 100 senior business leaders as non-executive directors in a range of academy trusts (including very large, very small and faith based trusts)
- ...is free.

Ensuring strong and effective governance

The Academies Financial Handbook requires that Governance MUST....

- have the **skills, knowledge and experience** to run the academy trust
- fully understand their duties as **company directors** and **charity trustees**
- take full control of the **academy trust's financial affairs**, apply the letter and the spirit of the AFH, and **ensure appropriate oversight of financial transactions**
- **prevent losses or misuse** of the trusts assets and property
- ensure **value for money, regularity and propriety** in relation to the management of its funds
- Report on their **review of governance** in their first set of audited accounts and should assess effectiveness annually
- complete, and return to EFA, a financial management and **governance self-assessment** for new academy trusts, or constituent academies joining a multi-academy trust
- **recognise and manage present and future risks** including business continuity planning

Trusts and Employers already involved

Academy
Ambassadors



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E-ACT



1 Why recruit?

Good trustees do 3 things to support and grow good academy trusts

1

Strategy

- ✓ Supporting clarity of purpose
- ✓ Overseeing governance and decision-making
- ✓ Scrutinising plans



2

Financial Stewardship

- ✓ Building financial capacity and expertise
- ✓ Fostering an audit culture



3

Performance

- ✓ Ensuring consistently high standards
- ✓ Providing independent challenge of performance data
- ✓ Recruiting great leaders and holding them to account
- ✓ Managing risk



Good trustees do 3 things to support and grow good academy trusts

“From working with Nikki King I firmly believe that there is a lot that the business world can bring to education. Through Nikki’s involvement we have successfully built the central services that will allow our trust to grow. I feel that we would have struggled to do this in such a short period without Nikki’s help.”

Andrew Reese, CEO, Greenacre Academy Trust



Six trends are driving demand for business people to join academy trust boards...

1 Growth of successful schools 'converting' to become Academies:

The schools bring outstanding educational expertise but need different board experience to lead and grow the organisation.

2 Growth of 'multi-academy trust chains':

When the number of schools reaches 'critical mass' it changes the nature of the organisation and the trust may need additional skills.

3 The challenge of turning round underperforming schools:

Making a success of sponsorship may require different skills on the board including legal, HR, organisational turnaround skills.



Six trends are driving demand for business people to join academy trust boards...

4

New buildings and estate development:

Population growth is driving new buildings, refurbishment works and trusts need oversight to ensure value-for-money.

5

Financial pressures:

After a prolonged time where schools budgets were protected more trusts will feel financial pressures and need fresh insight into driving efficiencies.

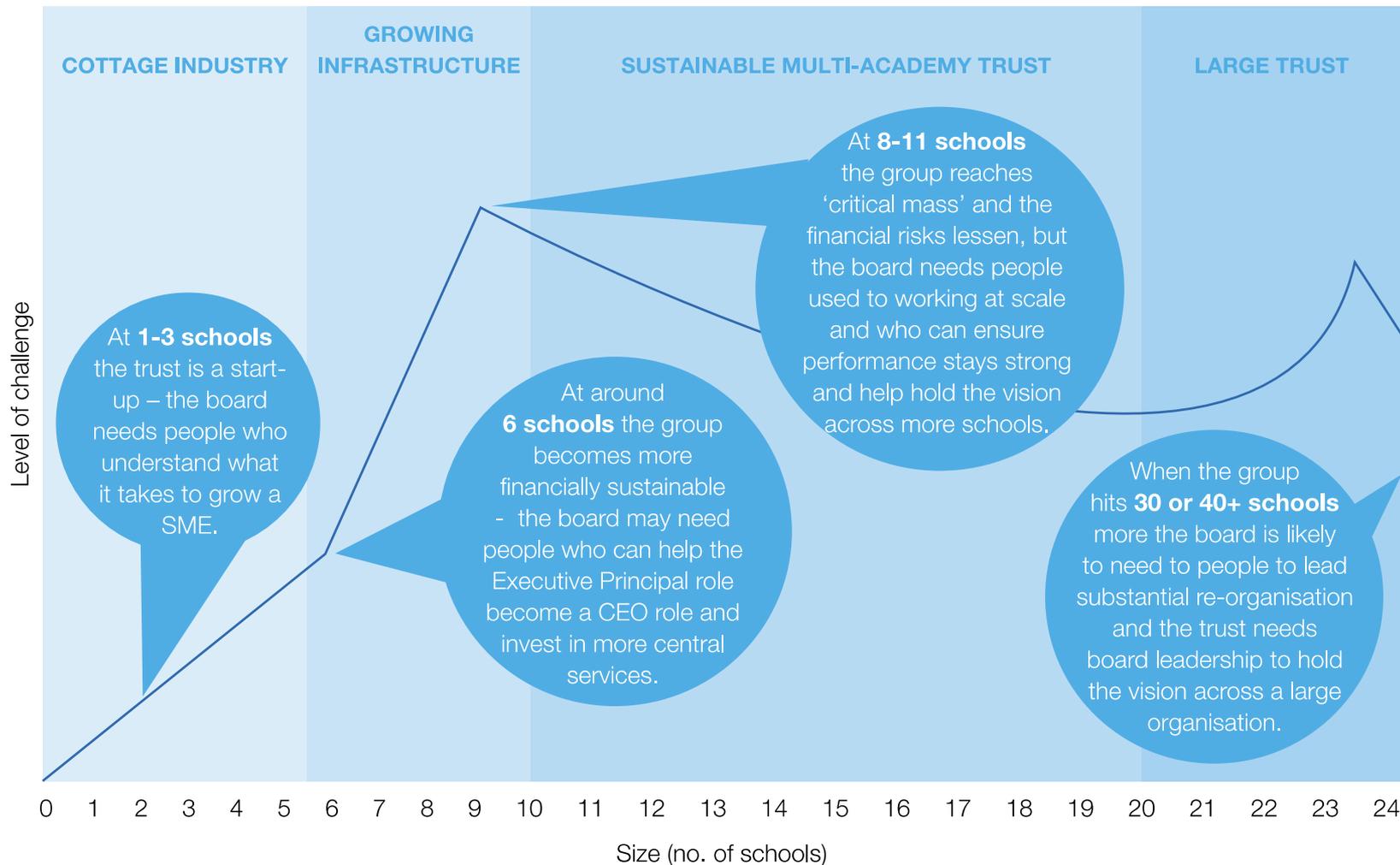
6

Ofsted put an increasing premium on good governance:

More trusts are asking whether they have the board they need to deliver real impact on Ofsted requirements to 'develop and sustain an ambitious culture and vision'



...and growing trusts particularly need the right board to face the challenges on the journey



Why have other trusts changed membership of the board?

DfE report 'What does a high performing academy sponsor look like' talked to 88 academy sponsors/MATs and found that:

- 'Having individuals with strong commercial skills at board level is crucial – and the importance grows when chains grow beyond 4-5 schools'
- 'Trusts need to be aware of key transition points – particularly the phase from 5-10 academies when there is a need to develop skills and infrastructure.'
- Two high-performing sponsors appointed board members to trouble shooting roles during growth – “their input was considered transformative”



*“The **STEP Academy Trust** has been extremely fortunate to have recruited two outstanding directors through Academy Ambassadors. With excellent support from the Academy Ambassadors; two high level business and finance professionals were recruited to join our Board of Directors. As a growing multi-academy trust, non-executive directors of their calibre will be hugely beneficial to our academy trust.”*

Mark Ducker, Executive Principal at STEP Academy Trust

Hear the story first-hand: Nikki King, Chair, and Andy Reese, CEO, of Greenacre Academy Trust



2 Next steps in recruiting the board you need

Start with clarity of vision - where do you want to be in 24 months, who do you need and will will take you there?

Be ambitious

- Is the trust on the cusp of change – growth, ethos, structure or locality?
- Are there problems of trust and credibility with any key partners: the DfE, Regional Schools Commissioners, EFA, parents, local community?
- Has the performance of any academies been unexpectedly low or apparently 'held back' by local circumstances?

Start with clarity of vision - where do you want to be in 24 months, who do you need and will will take you there?

- Is the chair likely to move on in the next 1-2 years?
- Skills-gap-analysis is the start but can't be the end
- Be honest about capability: you may have financial skills but are they at the right level?
- Look forward - do you need specific business-growth, change management or building development experience?

Start with clarity of vision - where do you want to be in 24 months, who do you need and will will take you there?

- Look back - which area do you as CEO currently get least challenge from the board?
- Check - do you need to add people or slim and refresh the board? 81% of higher-performing sponsors have 9 or fewer board members. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Source – DfE June 2014 ‘What does a high performing academy sponsor look like’

Five tips for recruiting calibre

- 1 Use the role specification to **sell** the role.
- 2 Be honest and do not hide problems - high calibre business people thrive on challenge.
- 3 Be clear about your vision and explain the ethos and values of the trust.
- 4 Think about recruiting more than 1 at a time – 90% of trust recruiting through academy ambassadors recruit 2-at-a-time to the board for efficiency and impact.
- 5 Interview, be ambitious

How do I get involved?

- 1 Express your interest to Academy Ambassadors by email: academyambassadors@newschoolsnetwork.org or call 020 7952 8475.
- 2 Talk to the Academy Ambassadors team about the skill set you are looking to recruit.
- 3 Complete our trust specification form detailing the skills you need for the challenges you face.
- 4 Review a shortlist of candidate CVs.
- 5 Meet and interview your preferred candidates.
- 6 Offer the role to the successful candidates.



At each step Academy Ambassadors can advise and provide exemplars from other trusts.

What next?

- Consider when your trust last reviewed its governance model and schedule this into the governance calendar
- Ensure you have a skills analysis across your trust governance
- Ensure you have succession planning in place
- Contact Academy Ambassadors for recruitment support

Find out more

Email: academyambassadors@newschoolsnetwork.org

Phone: 020 7952 8475

Online: www.newschoolsnetwork.org/trustee

Submit a role specification:

<http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org/trust-specification-form>

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