



Wrigleys Solicitors and Satis Education

Governance Reviews for Academy Trusts

Effective governance is key to the success of any academy trust as it ensures the trust is united in the delivery of a shared vision and purpose and committed to a strategic plan to better and improve the outcomes for children. It enshrines leadership with integrity and builds effective team-working while ensuring the business functions, compliance and risk management of the trust are fit-for-purpose.

Wrigleys and Satis Education have therefore joined forces to provide a governance review service which assesses and reports on the governance function of an academy trust and provides targeted recommendations and support where action is required.

The benefit of a governance review:

Academy trusts are required to comply with the Academy Trust Handbook which imposes strict governance requirements. A failure to comply, even a minor infringement, can attract the attention of the Education and Skills Funding (ESFA) and lead, should the ESFA be so minded, to a Notice to Improve and ultimately re-brokerage of the academy trust. This can be avoided by a regular governance review which provides targeted recommendations and support.

The Academy Trust Handbook identifies minimum good practice which academy trusts should apply unless they can demonstrate an alternative approach better suits their circumstances. A governance review will report on which practice or approach should be adopted and evidence this to the ESFA.

There is also a wealth of best practice which academy trusts can draw on to support and improve how they are governed and ultimately ensure their future success. A governance review will identify those areas that can be improved and recommend best practice that best suits their particular circumstances.

Wrigleys Solicitors LLP

Wrigleys has a nationally recognised team of dedicated lawyers who work with a range of academy trusts and have encountered and resolved many different governance issues. We are steeped in the sector and have a detailed understanding of the governance and compliance framework for academy trusts. Many of our staff are also experienced academy governors or trustees of academy trusts.

Satis Education

Satis Education has first-hand experience of governance in academy trusts, with a portfolio that spans visioning (including the development of growth plans and operating models), governance reviews, health checks and developing governance frameworks. Their team includes a former Director of Development and Governance of a large multi academy trust who has been involved extensively with academies since 2008.

Option 1 – Effective Governance

Option 1 reviews the effectiveness of the governance and comprises

- A desk-top review of the most recent trust board and committee minutes (including a sample of local governing body minutes), as well as terms of reference and scheme of delegation, to form lines of enquiry
- Meeting (by phone or video conference while Covid-19 restrictions apply) with key stakeholders to assess their understanding of the current governance model and how it operates
- Attending a full trust board meeting (by phone or video conference while Covid-19 restrictions apply) and reviewing subsequent minutes
- Reviewing the most recent skills audit
- Producing a written report outlining the current position in terms of governance (including strengths and weaknesses of the governance model) and recommendations for next steps.

Option 2 – Compliance

Option 2 reviews the compliance of the academy trust with key requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and your Master Funding Agreement and comprises a desk-top review of the academy trust's.

- Articles of association
- Funding agreement(s)
- Register of members
- Register of interests
- Register of related party transactions
- Latest audited accounts and annual report
- Programme of internal scrutiny
- Schedule of policies
- Website and GIAS data
- Governance professional's contract/job description and cv/biography

Having undertaken the desk-top review, we would produce a written report outlining the current position in terms of compliance and recommendations for next steps.

Option 3 – Effective Governance and Compliance

Option 3 combines options 1 and 2 to give an academy trust a comprehensive view of its effectiveness and compliance across all key areas

If you would like to arrange a governance review for your academy trust or request further details of the service, please contact:

Graham Shaw at graham.shaw@wrigleys.co.uk or 0113 204 1138 / 07955 855 314

Helen Stevenson at helen@satiseducation.co.uk • 01744 742351 / 07729 024631

Wrigleys Solicitors LLP

Rotterdam House, 116 Quayside,
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3DY
t: 0191 206 4105

19 Cookridge Street,
Leeds LS2 3AG
t: 0113 244 6100

Derwent House, 150 Arundel Gate,
Sheffield S1 2FN
t: 0114 267 5588

www.wrigleys.co.uk



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