

External Review of Governance

At WMG Academy for Young Engineers

17th March 2021

Sherry Gladwin

Associate Consultant, Entrust Governor Services

Context:

This external review of governance at WMG Academy for Young Engineers Trust was commissioned by the Trust Board.

The Trust consists of two university technical colleges. WMG Academy Coventry was inspected by Ofsted on 14 – 15 March 2017 when it was judged to be Good and WMG Academy Solihull was last inspected by Ofsted on 27 – 28 February 2019 when it was also judged to be Good.

In summary, governance is a strength of the Academy as indicated in the most recent Ofsted reports. Governors possess a wide range of knowledge and skills, which supports the effective functioning of WMG Academy Coventry and WMG Academy Solihull. Trustees and Governors possess an ambitious strategic vision for growth, sustainability and expansion. Integral to their vision is the “business-like and business-led” approach that sits at the heart of the ethos of both academies.

The external review was commissioned by the WMG Academy Trust Board and forms an important part of their drive toward excellence. An external review of governance is conducted biannually.

Evidence Base:

The evidence base for the review included:

- The WMG Academy for Young Engineers Coventry and Solihull website.
- The last Ofsted report (14 – 15 March 2017).
- Executive Principal’s reports.
- Associate Principals’ reports
- Trust and Local Governing Board minutes and associated paperwork.
- Trust Finance Committee minutes
- Policy Documents.
- Instrument of Governance.
- WMG Academy Coventry Development Plan.
- WMG Academy Solihull Development Plan
- WMG Academy Trust Board Handbook.
- WMG Academy Code of Conduct for Trustees and Governors.
- WMG Academy Code of Conduct for Staff

Interviews with the Governors:

Review interview meetings took place with each of the following

Mike Wright - Chair of the Trust Board

Stuart Baker – Chair of WMG Academy Solihull LGB

Dave Williams – Chair of WMG Academy Coventry LGB

Rosie Drinkwater OBE – Chair of Trust Finance Committee/Vice-Chair of the Trust Board

Kate Tague – Executive Principal

Stewart Tait – Associate Principal Solihull

Matt Brady – Associate principal Coventry

Diane Campton – Director of Finance

Sara Dunn – Clerk

Rob Grute – Staff Governor Coventry

Jason Kirwan – Staff Governor Solihull

The review interview focused on questions from the all-party parliamentary group's paper published in June 2012. (See Appendix A)

Review of the documentation:

Web-site

Detailed checking of the WMG academy website and links indicated that the website is compliant with statutory guidelines, however a little tweaking would enhance the documentation. For instance;

Contact details page: In addition to the good information already provided. The inclusion of the names of the Executive Principal, Associate Principals, and the names and addresses of the Chair of Trustees/Governing Board, as well as brief details about the academy sponsor would enhance this page.

Admissions arrangements: In addition to the good information already provided including a link to the Local Authority's procedures, cross referencing to the Admissions policy and Appeals policy would be helpful to parents.

Ofsted report: Fully compliant

Examination results: In addition to the good information already provided. Examination results are not required for 2019/2020 and so schools should continue to display 2018/2019 results as the academy has done, and, mark these as not current results. The required link to the DfE 16 to 19 tables is available. The inclusion of a table detailing KS4 results including Progress 8, Attainment 8, Progress in English and Mathematics, Ebacc and destinations. Similarly, a table setting out the KS5 accountability measures for 2018/2019 should include Progress, Attainment, English and Mathematics Progress. Retention and Destination.

Curriculum: In addition to the good information already provided, the inclusion of a few sentences regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014, and how the academy meets the 16 to 19 programme requirements would enhance information. It would be helpful to include some external links for parents who may wish to find out more about the curriculum on offer at the academy.

Remote Learning: Fully compliant

Behaviour Policy: Fully compliant

Pupil Premium: Excellent information provided but the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement needs to go on the website in the autumn term of each year. From discussions, the statement for the current academic year is ready for posting on the website.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Catch-up Programme: Fully compliant

Equality objectives: There is a good Accessibility action under policies plan but could not locate the equality objectives easily.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Fully compliant

Careers Programme Information: In addition to the good information already provided, the inclusion of the telephone number for the careers leader would be helpful to parents.

Complaints Policy: Fully compliant

Annual Reports and Accounts: Fully compliant (The name of the Charity Trustees and members could appear in this section or cross referencing made to where they appear).

Executive Pay:

Trustees information and duties: Fully compliant

Charging and Remissions Policies: Fully compliant

Values and Ethos: In addition to the good information already provided, the business-like, business-led ethos permeates the website, the very high expectations underpinning the codes of conduct for governors and staff, and behavioural expectations students. A discrete statement expanding on values and ethos is found under company information but a link from the information about ethos would help parents when navigating the website.

Requests for Paper Copies: Fully compliant.

The last Ofsted inspection took place on 14 – 15 March 2017 for WMG Coventry.
The last Ofsted inspection took place on 27 – 28 February for WMG Solihull.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	Good
Achievement of pupils	Good
Quality of teaching	Good
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Governance / Leadership and management.

- Governance is a strength of the school
- Governors have a wide range of skills and knowledge, which help them to support the school's work effectively. They are clear about their vision that the school should be distinctive in its business-like approach, and ensure that this approach is applied to all aspects of the school.
- Governors have good subject knowledge and oversight of safeguarding. They have commissioned an external review to ensure that all of the safeguarding systems are effective.
- Where leaders require it, governors make sure that high quality support is in place. This includes coaching for leaders, external verification of departments and support for staff well-being. Consequently, staff feel well supported and confident in the early stages of the school's development.

Strategic Planning

The Trustees and Governors are clear sighted and drive the strategic direction and goals for the academies. Through very good collaboration and dialogue with senior leaders, Trustees and Governors know, understand and direct the key priorities for the academies. Initially, on opening the Coventry and Solihull academies, Trustees' and Governors' identified and focused on key priorities including:

- Student recruitment
- Staff recruitment
- Establishing the "business-like, business-led" culture an ethos of the academies
- Achieving a Good Ofsted grade
- Engaging business and business leaders
- Raising outcomes for students and ensuring they have good destinations

The successful achievement of the initial priorities released Trustees and Governors to collaborate with the Executive Principal and Associate Principals to focus on:

- Refining and using behaviour and attendance data more effectively and communicating changes to parents (Ofsted report March 2017)

- Growing the academy to 1168 students (including diversifying the intake), marketing and clarifying advice/guidance for those interested in joining the academy
- Ensuring that all Teaching and learning reflects the best quality in the academy (Ofsted report March 2017)
- Improving student progress at Key Stage 4 and embedding curriculum changes (Ofsted report March 2017)
- Improving students' basic skills from their low starting points in Year 10
- Continuing to engage business and business leaders in the work of the academies
- Engaging leaders, staff, and Trustees/Governors in relevant training to keep abreast of educational developments
- Promoting staff and student well-being

The overall strategic plan of the Trust Board provides a robust framework with clear objectives and challenging targets, it drives the agenda for Trustee and Governing body meetings. Senior leaders create the separate Coventry and Solihull Academy development plans, and provide Trustees and Governors with helpful dashboard data linked to quality assurance and performance data including classroom observations, student performance, attendance, behaviour, qualifications and so on. Trustees and Governors are well supported in their monitoring role by the SLT and oversee the academies' progress toward achieving the aggressive targets they set i.e., 0% NEET.

SLT team discussions are constituent parts of sub-committees that feed into the Trust Board's overall strategic plan. Trustees and Governors have created dedicated opportunities to drill down into students' performance data and inform the academies' strategic planning and target setting. Such opportunities include the Trust Academic Standards sub-committee and the Trustees' "Away Day" where focused dialogue with the SLT generates critical reflection, self-evaluation and review, which shapes the academies' vision, strategy and future planning. The Trustees "Away Day" held on 1st December 2020 was focused and robust. Trustees considered the Trust's internal position and strategy and agreed specific strategic actions for senior leaders to respond to and present plans for discussion at LGB and Trust Board meetings. Strategic actions emanating from discussions included developing a five-year teacher recruitment and retention strategy; a buildings maintenance programme; creating a task force to develop premises and blended learning strategy to accommodate the academy's expansion to 1168 students; an investigation into HNC/HND growth and funding; and promoting blended learning post COVID-19 to include; staff, closing the Pupil Premium gap, parental engagement, safeguarding and mental health.

Trustees have developed an overarching five-year strategic plan, which together with the academy's improvement cycle drives improvements in all areas of the academy and determines financial spending. The WMGAT Strategy and the 1168/Beckett Plan was circulated prior to the meeting of the Trust Board on 25th January 202. The strategy was developed to "safeguard the long term financial stability of the Trust

while maintaining the key objectives of improving standards, and responding to the future needs of employers and maximising opportunities for Trust's students".

An examination of the Development plans for both Coventry and Solihull confirmed discussions with Trustees and Governors. The Development plans are focused on the four strands of the Ofsted framework (Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, Leadership and Management) and progress is tracked and measured in terms of the Ofsted three I's; impact, implementation and impact. Trustees and Governors keep abreast of developments with strategic planning through weekly meetings between the Chair of Trustees and the Executive Principal, and the Chairs of the Local Governing Board (LGB) and Associate Principals. Progress with initiatives and the implementation of strategies are ragged rated in terms of impact at regular milestones each term.

Policies

Trustees/Governors ensure that they meet the regulatory responsibilities set by the DfE, The Academies Trust, The Education, Skills and Funding Agency, Ofsted and so on. Careful review of the academies' policies has shown that they meet statutory requirements and guidelines, and that they are fit for purpose. All of the statutory policies are in place. The Equalities and Equal Opportunities policies were uploaded to the website on request. Policies are reviewed on a regular basis and in line with the expectations set out in the schedule for reviewing policies. Careful consideration of the agenda and documents provided for the meeting of the Trustees' Finance Committee on Wednesday 17th March 2021 evidenced that the statutory requirements regarding financial policies were being met. At that meeting the cash card policy, and the purchasing policy was reviewed.

Trustees make good use of diarised meetings, and will call extra-ordinary meetings dedicated to reviewing policies to ensure that the Academy is properly supported and meets statutory requirements. At the meeting of the Trust Board held on 25th November 2020, a large number of policies were ratified.

Instrument of Government

The current Instrument of Government is held by the local authority and dated 12th December 2006.

The WMG Academy Trust is composed of senior members from industry and the University of Warwick who led the development of WMG Academy and oversee its running from a strategic perspective. The Trust Board is complemented by several sub-committees (Trust Finance and All Purpose Committee, Trust Nominations and Remunerations Committee, and Trust Academic Committee) that meet to discuss specific areas of the Academy Trust. Each Academy has a Local Governing Body (LGB) that operates through delegated powers and functions of the Trustees; the Chair of each LGB is a Trustee and sits on the Trust Board.

External Review of Governance

Name of School

Entrust Governor Services | 17th March 2012 | **Final report**

Commission reference number:



The WMG Academy Trust's governance structure consisting of the Trust Board, its associated sub-committees, and LGBs is as structured below and in accordance with the WMG Trust Memorandum and Articles of Association. Trustees and Governors adhere to the clear Scheme of Delegation is in place.

I of G Structure (The Trustees B)	Role	Experience/Vacancies
Mike Wright	Chair of the Trust Board	Retired Executive Director of Jaguar Land Rover
Stuart Baker	Trustee/Chair of WMG Solihull	Operations Executive – Controls Systems, Rolls-Royce
Sally Lucas	Trustee	Executive Director Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce
Rosie Drinkwater OBE	Trustee/Vice Chair/Chair of Trustee Finance Committee	Financial lead at Warwickshire University
Ben Story	Trustee	Strategic Marketing Director Rolls-Royce
Charlotte Horobin	Trustee	Region Director Make UK
Nicola Constant	Trustee	Finance/CFO for WMG
Kate Tague	Trustee/Executive Principal	Headteacher
Diane Campton	Director of Finance	
Jose Lopez		Resigned as Trustee in September 2020
Dave Williams	Trustee/Chair of WMG Coventry	Executive Director HR Jaguar Land Rover

Trust Finance and General Purpose Committee	Role	Vacancies
Diane Campton	WMG Finance Director	
Nicola Constant	Trustee	
Rosie Drinkwater	Trustee/Chair of Finance Committee	
Charlotte Horobin	Trustee	
Glenda Kershaw		Resigned
Kate Tague	Trustee/Executive Principal	

Trust Nominations and Remuneration Committee	Role	Vacancies
Stuart Baker	Trustee	
Rosie Drinkwater	Trustee	
Kate Ireland	Trustee	
Mike Wright	Trustee	
Dave Williams	Trustee	

Trust Academic Committee	Role	Vacancies
Stuart Baker	Trustee	

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Matt Brady	Trustee/Associate Principal	
David Kershaw	Trustee	
Kate Ireland	Trustee	
Stewart Tait	Trustee/Associate Principal	
Mike Wright	Trustee	
Dave Williams	Trustee	
Kate Tague	Trustee/Executive Principal	

WMG Academy Coventry Governing Body	Role	Vacancies
Matt Brady	Associate Principal	
Diane Campton	Director of Finance	
Shaun Clayton	Governor	
Jane Coleman	Governor	
John Dodge	Governor	
Kieran Gill		Resigned as Governor
Rob Grute	Staff Governor	
Cllr David Kershaw		Resigned as Governor 23rd October 2020
Dr Steve Maggs	Governor	
Kate Tague	Accounting Officer/Executive Principal	
Graham Thompsett		
Dave Williams	Trustee/Chair of WMG Academy Coventry	
Reg Wooley	Parent Governor	Resigned as Governor 16th August 2020

WMG Academy Solihull Governing Body	Role	Vacancies
Stuart Baker	Trustee/Chair of WMG Academy Solihull	
Steve Charlton	Parent Governor	
Shaheen Charlwood	Governor	
Jonathan Clarke		Resigned 15th February 2021
Genie Creamer-Hyland	Governor	
Richard Earp	Governor	
Jason Kirwan	Staff Governor	
Andy Mottershead	Governor	
Liz Northwood	Governor	
Stewart Tait	Associate Principal	
Kate Tague	Accounting Officer/Executive Principal	

The WMG Trust Articles of Association provide for the Trust Board to appoint the Chair of WMG Coventry LGB and WMG Solihull LGB. The Chair of the WMG Trust Board is appointed by the Trustees and members. The Vice-Chair explained her role in the process, whereby she held a meeting with each member of the Trust Board to

appraise the work of the Chair and consider reappointment. The Vice-Chair reported unanimous support and praise for the current excellent leadership and agreement that he should continue in the role of Chair of the WMG Trust Board. The appointment of the Chair to the Trust Board and the appointments of the Chairs of the respective LGBs takes place in September each academic year. The details of the appointments are recorded in the governing body minutes.

Attendance

The Trustees and Governors are highly skilled and occupy professional roles (many in engineering) that carry a great deal of responsibility. They are extremely committed to the vision and work of the Trust. Attendance at meetings is very good and reflects their high level of professionalism and dedication.

Attendance at meetings since September 2020 is as follows:

WMG Trust Board: 33 attendances and 9 apologies

WMG Trust Finance Committee: 18 attendances and 2 apologies

WMG Trust Nominations Committee: 9 attendances and 1 apology

WMG Trust Academic Committee: 8 attendances and 1 absence

WMG Coventry LGB: 29 attendances, 7 apologies and 3 no apologies

WMG Solihull LGB: 38 attendances, 3 apologies and 1 no apology

During a meeting with the Chair of the Trust Board, it was clear that the “business-like, business-led” ethos that permeates the academies also permeates leadership and management, including governance. Records demonstrate good attendance at Trust Board, sub-committees and LGB meetings. When Trustees and Governors cannot attend a meeting, they provide an apology in advance to the meeting, which is duly receipted by the clerk. Trustees and Governors non-attendance at meetings is monitored, and the Chair of Trustees addresses this matter through 1:1 conversation. Trustees and Governors carry high levels of professional responsibility in their line of work and strike a good balance between fulfilling their professional responsibilities and maintaining commitment to the WMG vision so it becomes a living reality. Usually Trustees and Governors request to stand again for office at the end of their four-year term.

Minutes

Discussions took place with Trustees, Governors, Senior leaders, the Clerk, and the Director of Finance listed above. The discussions were complemented by a thorough review of the minutes provided (See below for details). Importantly, all meetings of the Trust Board, its sub-committees, the LGB’s are clerked (including the annual “Away Day”), and clerking is by the same clerk, which makes a significant contribution to continuity and coherence. The Clerk is knowledgeable, highly skilled and very experienced. She has undertaken training for clerks provided by Warwickshire County Council and Entrust. More recently, she attended GDPR,

Safeguarding and Ofsted readiness training. The Clerk supports Warwickshire County Council with the training of other clerks.

The Trustees, Governors and Executive Principal receive good support from the Clerk to maintain focus on key strategic matters and direction. Annually, the Chair of Trustees, Executive Principal and Clerk meet to undertake an internal governance review, prior to this meeting they receive feedback from the Chair of each LGB regarding all of the key issues. The information provided and the review team discussion supports the development of an annual meeting planner. The annual meeting planner provides a standardised schedule for all of the meetings of the WMG Trust Board, associated sub-committees and LGBs. Included in the annual schedule of meetings are opportunities to review all aspects of the Academy's work and development cycle including aspects like the Academy Development plan, the Scheme of Delegation, Governors' attendance at meetings, Governors' training and development, policies and so on.

All meetings of the WMG Trust Board, its associated sub-committees and LGB's focus on the strategic priorities identified in the overall strategic plan which drives agendas and meetings. For instance, the meeting of the Full Trust Board on 25th January 2021 considered and approved the Five-Year Capital Plan and Five-Year Revenue Budget (to be reviewed annually), and an "in camera session" with the Executive Principal approved the senior leadership structure for five years.

Minutes from all meetings are of a high quality and reflect the core functions of the Governing Body. There is good recorded evidence of Trustees and Governors holding school leaders to account through posing pertinent and challenging questions to senior leaders, setting high expectations and strategic actions for senior leaders to fulfil, and providing excellent support for senior leaders by making professional development available and showing regard for staff wellbeing.

Extraordinary meetings such as the meeting of the Trust Board held on 28th August 2020, called during the pandemic, supported senior leaders in addressing statutory regulations and adjusting existing policies such as safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, isolation and pay statement, cleaning routines and so on, to fulfil government requirements and ensure smooth, safe and healthy daily operation in the academies.

WMG Trust Board minutes provide a record of Trustees and Governors meeting the requirements for external accountability through engaging in independent audits, publishing annual reports and accounts, and approving a memorandum of key issues (25th January 2021).

Effective chairing of meetings is evident from the minutes, meeting time is used efficiently, and the Entrust model agenda supports Trustees and Governors in their pursuit to be highly focused, efficient and effective. Items for discussion are addressed, concluded or rolled forward to the following meeting if necessary. Actions emanating from discussions about key priorities are strategic, specific and focused.

They are delegated to the appropriate sub-committee or LGB who are required to report back in a timely fashion. Toward the end of a meeting the agenda items for the following meeting are set, an approach that ensures good progression and continuity.

Minutes record key decisions such as starting the recruitment process to appoint a senior leader and the dates that key policies are adopted and approved, for instance the meeting of the Trust Board held on 25th January 2021 approved the admissions policies for Coventry and Solihull with some small amendments. Interviewees reported that minutes are circulated within 24 hours for amendments. Minutes are agreed at the following meeting and signed by the Chair

Minutes seen included:

- Trust Board: 28th August 2020, 28th September 2020, 25th November 2020, 1st December 2020 (Away Day), 11th December 2020, 25th January 2021 and reports from the Executive Principal dated September 2020 and January 2021.
- LGB Coventry: 6th October 2020, 24th November 2020, 2nd February 2021, and reports from the Associate Principal dated September 2020, November 2020 and January 2021.
- LGB Solihull: 2nd October 2020, 27th November 2020, and reports from the Associate Principal dated November 2020, September 2020 and January 2021.

The minutes of governing body meetings are made available to parents and carers on request.

Involvement in Key Developments

The WMG Trust Board, its associate sub-committees and LGBs operate in line with its Articles of Association, there are clear terms of reference for sub-committees and LGBs, and delegated functions to support the work of sub-committees and LGBs. Evident from the documents seen is the exceptional contribution from Trustees and Governors to the Academy's development planning and self-review process, performance management, appointment of senior staff, staff recruitment and retention, monitoring, evaluation and review of progress including staff and students' targets and so on.

All Trustees and Governors are involved in scoping the vision, values, and future planning including student growth, buildings and MAT expansion, as well as the ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review etc. Primarily, it is the Trust Board that drives and shapes the parameters of the academy's strategic direction through the associated sub-committees and LGBs.

The Trust Academic Committee meets twice annually; it is composed of two academic governors (one from each LGB) plus the Chairs of each LGB, Chair of the

Trust Board, and independent representative and the Executive and Associate Principals. The sub-committee works on behalf of the Trust Board to drive the academic development and priorities set by the Trust. These priorities align with the priorities identified by Ofsted in its inspection framework. Through dialogue with senior leaders, Trustees identified the need for and sourced support from an external consultant who provided school leaders at all levels with coaching and mentoring support to build capacity and capability. The Academic Committee works closely with senior leaders to ensure that staff development meets identified professional development, improves the quality teaching, learning and assessment to maximise outcomes for students.

The Trust Nominations and Remunerations Committee meets twice annually; it works on a similar basis to the Trust Academic Committee. The function of the Nominations and Remunerations Committee is to consider and recommend to the Trust Board, appointments and succession planning for Trustees and Governors, senior leadership appointments, staff recruitment and retention, pay progression for staff at all levels in line with the performance management, appraisal and pay policies for staff, and so on.

Code of Conduct for Governors

From the documentation and discussions, it is evident that Trustees and Governors are highly professional, skilled and experienced. The Trustees and Governors ensure that staff and students have codes of conduct in place, and they adhere to their own code of conduct, which is linked to the Entrust competency framework centred on building effective teams, structures, compliance, self-evaluation and managing the board's effectiveness. The Chair sets high expectations for the conduct and behaviour of all colleagues involved in governance. He is an exemplary role model. Trustees and Governors promote and foster supportive relationships with senior leaders, staff, students, parents and employers. They operate with high levels of respect and integrity, which was evident during interviews. These were conducted in an atmosphere of openness and honesty where it was safe to challenge.

From the documentation provided and the discussions I have had, it is evident that the Trustees and Governors pursue excellence when discharging their core strategic responsibilities; ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the academy, its students and performance management of staff; and, overseeing the financial performance of the academy and making sure money is spent well.

From the minutes of meetings, and records of discussions held with Trustees and Governors, there is evidence that Trustees and Governors actively listen, welcome challenge, and respectfully challenge senior leaders and others. Reflection, acknowledgement of mistakes, collective problem solving, and the pursuit of excellence is encouraged.

The Findings:

Comments are grouped under 9 headings. Links between the 20 questions used in the review and the 9 headings are shown in brackets. Findings from the review of documentation feed into the overall comments.

Judgements for each of the 9 categories are:

STRONG / SOUND / WEAK.

1. How well Governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. (Q 9&10)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors possess a clear, united and ambitious vision focused on key priorities. The Five-Year Strategic Plan aims to deliver growth and sustainability for the Coventry and Solihull academies, and expansion of the MAT.
- A robust, clear and well-designed strategic improvement cycle drives the work, agendas and meetings of the Trust Board, its associated sub-committees, and LGBs.

Governance could be stronger if:

- Trustees and Governors can demonstrate how parents and carers are engaged in discussions about the strategic direction of the Academy and their feedback is used to help shape the vision.

2. How well Governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses. (Q 7.8 &14)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- The size and composition of the Trust Board, its sub-committees and LGBs is appropriate. There is no "dead wood", attendance at meetings is good and all Governors regularly contribute to overall decision-making through the Scheme of Delegation. Trustees and Governors recommended by the Nominations and Remuneration sub-committee are appointed by the Full Trust Board on the basis of skill. Parent governors undergo an election process, and an annual review of governance highlights areas for improvement so that outcomes feed into improvement planning and the upcoming cycle of governance. Governance is streamlined.

- Trustees and Governors work closely with the academies' senior leaders and engage in constructive dialogue in order to understand the needs of the academies, staff, students, parents, business and other stakeholders.

Governance could be stronger if:

- There was a detailed stakeholder engagement strategy to further develop the work of the Trust in engaging parents and carers in the academies.

3. How well Governors support and strengthen school leadership. (Q 7, 16 & 18)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors provide an effective structure of governance through board, sub-committee and LGB meetings. The Chair of the full board meets weekly with the Executive Principal, and the Chair of the LGB meets with their respective Associate Principal. Each Chair actively listens to the different school leaders to help identify and address matters before they become issues. Together they focus on raising standards and addressing staff professional development since this is integral to the academy improvement strategy. Targeted coaching and training is building capacity and capability in the leaders, managers and teaching staff.
- Trustees and Governors addressed findings in the last Ofsted report. In particular, they strengthened pastoral leadership and promoted even better behaviour through the appointment of a behaviour leader. Leaders and managers receive good support with managing attendance from an external agency (CSAWS).

Governance could be stronger if:

- A secondary school leader with good skills and experience could join the governing body to add value to the governance of Coventry and Solihull.

4. How well Governors provide challenge and hold the Headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety. (Q 11)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors provide challenge and support for the Executive Principal and Associate Principals through the Academic Committee and rigorous Performance Management. Dedicated opportunities provided by the Trust

Academic Committee drill down into students' performance data and promote critical reflection and target setting that drives the pursuit of excellence. All staff are set challenging targets linked to the academy's vision, quality of teaching and students' performance in line with their roles and responsibilities.

- Trustees and Governors are well-versed in understanding metrics. They know what metrics they require and request metrics on a regular basis including academic progress against targets, outcomes, behaviour, attendance, lesson observations and so on to keep themselves informed. Through this approach individual and collective reflection is encouraged and respectful challenge takes place.

Governance could be stronger if:

- A detailed metrics dashboard was included in all senior leadership reports to the governing body to maintain close focus on progress at every meeting.

5. How well Governors use appraisal systems, including the appraisal of the Headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management. (Q 12)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors ensure that Performance Management is conducted in the autumn term, challenging targets are set for staff including the senior leadership team in line with the overall strategy, academy development plan and the student performance targets set by the academic Committee. Targets are personalised for each member of staff i.e., a generic target of supporting student recruitment in line with growing the academy is personalised for each member of employee and job role.
- The Nominations and Remunerations Committee of the Trust Board receives recommendations from the Executive Principal and approves pay rises for staff proposed who meet their targets. The executive's pay is set by this committee on the basis of having met targets.

Governance could be stronger if:

- The individual academy development plans were closely linked to the Trust's overall five-year strategy.

6. How well Governors ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively. (Q 13)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- The Trust Finance Committee of the Trust Board is Chaired by an experienced accountant and meetings are conducted with excellent focus and rigour. All external financial accountability measures are implemented and met, and there are robust financial management systems in place.
- The agenda, discussions and strategic actions of the Trust Finance Committee are driven by the Trust Board's overall five-year strategic plan for the academy.

Governance could be stronger if:

- Chairs follow-up with senior leaders that authorised capital works and maintenance is actioned quickly.

7. How well Governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved. (Q 3, 4 & 5)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors possess good knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They demonstrate excellent skills and professional experience which allows them to execute their statutory responsibilities to a high standard. Trustees and Governors are highly committed and dedicated to achieving the Trust's ambitious vision.
- Trustees and Governors ensure that there is an overall strategic plan in place, which informs and drives the agendas and discussions at meetings that are clerked by the same highly skilled clerk to maintain very good continuity and coherence.

Governance could be stronger if:

- Trustees and Governors continue to engage with the student voice which commenced prior to COVID-19 lockdown.
- Trustees and Governors gain more knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs.

8. How well Governors engage with key stakeholders. (Q 14, 15 & 16)

Governance in this area is **SOUND**.

Areas of Strength

- Trustees and Governors have good engagement with key stakeholders including staff, students and parents through surveys, meetings, school visits, parents' evenings, student voice and learning walks and so on.

- Parents exercise a great deal of trust in the Trustees and Governors to make good specialist provision for their children, and raise very few concerns.

Governance could be stronger if:

- Continue to find ways to engage with parents by developing a stakeholder strategy, and further develop governors' links with subject departments and other similar schools to share learning.

9. How well Governors use the Pupil Premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics. (Q 20)

Governance in this area is **STRONG**.

Areas of Strength

- The Pupil Premium Statement is well written and sets out clearly Trustees and Governors effective use of the funding to tackle and reduce barriers to learning such as persistent absenteeism and lateness, while fostering students' positive attitudes to learning and improving the quality of teaching.
- Clearly costed and focused intervention strategies are targeted at raising outcomes in English, Mathematics and Science. Intervention strategies are accompanied by robust target setting.

Governance could be stronger if:

- Trustees and Governors ensure that Pupil Premium spending is evaluated annually following examination results to understand the impact of intervention strategies and spending on students' outcomes. The updated statement should be posted on the academy's website in October of each academic year (The statements on the website relate to 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/2020)

Suggested next steps

Key Objectives	Possible actions to inform Governor development
<i>To raise standards of engagement with key stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop a stakeholder engagement strategy to help establish closer links with parents and gain their input to help shape strategic planning.</i> • <i>Further develop working with SLT through Link Governor visits and meetings with subject leaders and departments</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop links with similar specialist schools and academies to share learning and expertise</i> • <i>Continue to develop engagement with the student voice</i>
<i>To raise quality of FGB and committee effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify and appoint a person who is knowledgeable, skilled and has experience of secondary school leadership to the governing body of Coventry and Solihull to add value</i> • <i>Ensure that all reports from senior leaders include detailed dashboard metrics to maintain close focus on progress in key areas.</i> • <i>Ensure that the aims and objectives of the Coventry and Solihull development plans link closely to the key priorities identified in the Trust's overall strategic plan.</i>
<i>To raise Governor knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attend training in Special Educational Needs and gain understanding of effective pedagogy and approaches to assessment for SEN students</i>
<i>To raise standards for Pupil Premium Pupils</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure that the Pupil Premium is evaluated to understand the impact of interventions on students' outcomes, and the Pupil Premium Statement is updated and posted on the Academy's website in October of each academic year.</i>

I would like to extend thanks to the Chair, the Headteacher and members of the Governing Board for their contribution and openness during the review interview process.

It is recommended that the Governors use the above information to formulate an action plan. This should be reviewed and evaluated regularly in order to contribute to school improvement.

Further support from Entrust may be commissioned/purchased as required by the school.

Sherry Gladwin
22nd March 2021

Appendices

Appendix A

Twenty Key Questions for a School Governing Board to ask itself

Right skills: Do we have the right skills on the Governing Board?	
1	Have we completed and analysed a skills audit of our Governing Board?
2	Do we appoint Governors on the basis of their skills, and do we know how to find people with the necessary skills?
Effectiveness: Are we as effective as we could be?	
3	Do we understand our roles and responsibilities and is this evident from minutes?
4	Do we have a professional (properly trained) Clerk, as opposed to a minuting secretary and do meetings run efficiently?
5	What is our training and development budget and does every Governor receive the support they need to carry out their role effectively?
6	How do we keep informed about good practice from across the country and are we influenced by it?
7	Is the size, composition and committee structure of our Governing Board conducive to effective working? (Might we consider change in light of new flexibilities?)
8	Does every member of the Governing Board make a regular contribution and do we carry out an annual review of the Governing Board's performance?
Strategy: does the school have a clear vision?	
9	Have we developed long-term aims for the school with clear priorities in an ambitious school development plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed?
10	Does our strategic planning cycle drive the Governing Board's activities and agenda setting?
Accountability of the executive: Do we hold the school leaders to account?	
11	Do we understand the school's performance data well enough to properly hold school leaders to account and is this evident in the minutes?
12	How effectively do we manage the performance of the Headteacher?
13	Are our financial management systems robust and do we ensure best value for money that is linked to progress of pupils? (For example, are we involved in discussions about the impact of pupil and sports premium spending and its impact?)
Engagement: Are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?	
14	How do we listen to and understand our pupils, parents and staff?
15	How do we report to our parents and local community regularly?

16	What benefit do we draw from collaboration with other schools and other sectors, locally and nationally?
Role of Chair: Does our Chair show strong and effective leadership?	
17	Do we carry out a regular 360° review of the Chair's performance?
18	Do we engage in good succession planning?
19	Are the Chair and committee Chairs re-elected each year?
Impact: Are we having an impact on outcomes for pupils?	
20	How much has the school improved over the last three years and what has the Governing Board's contribution been to this?

Appendix B

DfE Statutory Guidelines for School Websites

- School or college contact details
- Admissions arrangements
- Ofsted reports
- Exam and assessment data
- Performance data
- Curriculum
- Remote learning
- Behaviour policy
- Pupil premium
- Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up programme
- PE and sport premium for primary school
- Equality objectives
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Careers programme information
- Complaints policy
- Annual reports and accounts
- Executive pay
- Trustees' information and duties
- Charging and remissions policies
- Values and ethos
- Requests for copies