

Governance at The Mead Trust

Trustees | Members | Academy Advisors



Inspirational Learning for All

Welcome



I would like to welcome you to The Mead Academy Trust as you take up post as part of our governance structure, as an Academy Advisor, Trustee or Member. Thank you for committing to join us and share your valuable time and skills. It is very much appreciated.

The Mead Trust is very fortunate to have an experienced and dedicated team of Academy Advisors, Trustees and Members who are skilled in their role and who strive to ensure that the children receive the best educational opportunities. We believe that effective school and Trust governance is essential to maintaining high expectations and standards across all of our schools.

Our positive reputation reflects our drive to provide *Inspirational Learning for All* of our children, right from the start. The enriched curriculum we offer provides exciting learning opportunities, which extend beyond the classroom to engage and inspire inquisitive minds. It's our aim to meet the needs of each child individually and we provide the resources and the staff to achieve this. Our dedicated team is committed to providing a wonderfully creative learning environment to fascinate every child. Our Trust Central team is at the heart of the development of our Trust and ensures outstanding opportunities for professional learning and leadership development. We have a strong emphasis on evidence based practice and encourage all practitioners to be resourceful. AAGs, Trustees and Members are also welcomed at all professional development events and will have full access to our online CPD account with the National College.

You will be given a Trust email address and access to the Governance Portal on our Trust website. From there, you will be able to access all of the relevant induction materials that you will need, including key training and development material that we require all new members of our Governance team to undertake, on Safeguarding, Prevent duty, and GDPR.

Our Trust benefits greatly from the strong partnerships and sense of common purpose which we have developed with all of those involved in our Governance structure, parents, and members of our local communities. You may already be familiar with our schools, however, we always welcome visits from AAG, Trustees and members. Please arrange these through the school offices.

This document aims to provide some key information about our schools and the Trust. Please take some time to read this. The Trust staff team and I look forward to working with you and are hopeful that you will find your role within our governance structure an immensely rewarding one.

With kind wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lyssy Bolton'.

Lyssy Bolton, CEO of The Mead Academy Trust

An introduction



The Mead Academy Trust became an Academy Sponsor in 2014 and subsequently opened Castle Mead School, a new provision primary school with nursery in Trowbridge, and took on the running of River Mead School and nursery in Melksham.

The journey to securing outstanding leadership and learning across all of our schools is exciting. It is a genuine shared endeavour. Our talented and experienced team is working together highly effectively across sites, and drawing on each other's strengths to shape inspirational learning for all of our children.

The Mead Academy Trust is an organisation characterised by optimism, excellence and creativity. We love to share good practice and to continue to learn and challenge each other.



Our Schools: Castle Mead



Headteacher: Mrs Emma Larkham

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Gaby Simons

Castle Mead School was built in 2014 as a new school for the Castle Mead estate. The school continues to grow in size and when full there will be two classes in each year group with over 400 children on roll. There is a Resource Base providing specialist support for children with a range of complex needs.

The school has a good community feel and staff pride themselves on supporting children to be effective citizens in school and wider society. The school offers an exceptional learning environment, including specialist music and technology rooms, and group learning rooms. The Early Years classes have access to enclosed outdoor play areas that can be used all year round. The school also has extensive grounds and following the completion of the extension in 2017 these were landscaped to provide a fantastic outdoor space, which now includes a trim trail. Children grow their own fruit and vegetables and have chickens as part of the school environment. The school was delighted to be judged Good in all areas by Ofsted in its first inspection in June 2017.

Castle Mead is part of The Harbour Programme' which supports children with SEMH needs through in- and outreach provision. You can find out more at www.theharbourprogramme.org.



Our Schools: The Mead



Headteacher: Mr Mark Stenton

Deputy Headteachers: Mrs Theo Gaines, Mrs Becc Millard, Mr Nigel Andrews

The Mead is a happy, vibrant place where children are enabled to dream, strive, achieve and celebrate. It is situated across two sites on the outskirts of Trowbridge; a larger site with 14 classes and a Nursery in Hilperton, and a smaller setting with four classes (including a pre-school provision) in Wingfield village. There are extensive grounds on both sites, which include wildlife areas, trim (agility) trail, pond, fruit and vegetable gardens. These are used extensively to enhance approaches to teaching and learning.

The friendly, energetic and professional staff work together to establish a happy, popular school community. They take pride in offering a rich and vibrant curriculum with specialist teachers in music and PE, as well as early language learning for all years.

The career progression for staff is well-recognised, supporting initial teacher training through to roles at a leadership level.



Our Schools: River Mead



Headteacher: Mrs Karen Austin

Deputy Headteachers: Miss Louise Harrison

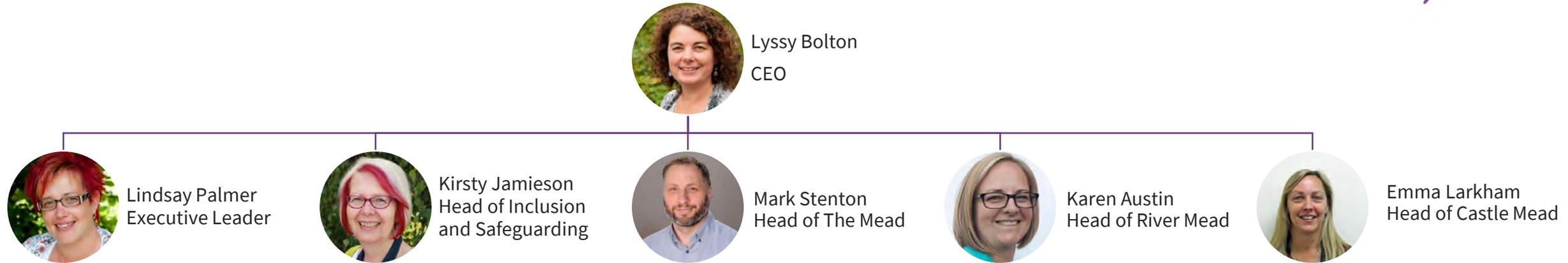
River Mead School is currently a single entry primary and nursery school with provision for 2 year olds upwards with an average NOR of 245. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has a 20-place Resource Base providing specialist provision for pupils with a range of complex needs; these children spend time with their peers in mainstream when appropriate. There is a wide range of outdoor spaces, gardens and playgrounds including a multi-functional all weather activity pitch.

It is a very friendly school with a committed staff where everyone embraces the 'River Mead family' ethic, and where the mutual respect for all who work in the school is very evident.

The staff pride themselves on the pastoral support they offer the children, and creating a 'school family'. There are a number of children who receive support from social services and staff recognise that it is only when children feel safe and secure that they are able to learn at their best. The school offers a wide range of spaces for nurtured learning, including the 'River Bank' (offering emotional support through art), the 'Nest' (for nurture groups including breakfast and lunch) and the 'Warren' (learning through a multi-sensory approach).



Executive Leadership



The Executive Leadership Team work closely together to focus on school and Trust-wide improvement and development. Heads also meet regularly in order to undertake peer support and challenge. The Head of Teaching School and School Effectiveness and Head of Inclusion and Safeguarding work alongside the CEO across all Trust schools.

The Head of Teaching School and School Effectiveness works closely with the CEO in order to support and challenge effectiveness across our Trust. This includes coordinating the work of Trust subject teams, which meet regularly to develop provision and practice. She also coordinates high quality professional development, including appraisal, for Trust staff and facilitates school to school support for all schools within the Teaching School Alliance.

The Head of Inclusion and Safeguarding works collaboratively to support and challenge the work of our SENCOs, Inclusion Teams and DSLs, ensuring that provision and practice for our most vulnerable children is of the highest quality. She also supports opportunities for research and development in this area, including The Harbour Programme, an early intervention for children with SEMH needs, their schools and families.

“The inclusive culture and team ethos that underpins the vision of success for every child is tangible.”
Jayne Bullock, Chair of Castle Mead School Academy Advisory Group

Our vision



Our Charter for Living and Learning



OUR GOLDEN RULE
Treat people as we would like to be treated



Our purpose is to encourage, support and develop every child so that they reach their full potential



We prepare children to live responsibly and peacefully in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, equality and friendship

Ready • Respectful • Safe



Our Relationships

We have a right to

- Feel safe and happy
- Belong
- Enjoy school

We have a responsibility to

- Think kind thoughts and speak kindly
- Be gentle
- Be polite
- Be helpful
- Co-operate and collaborate
- Resolve problems peacefully
- Understand and celebrate difference



Our Learning

We have a right to learn

We have a responsibility to

- Take control of our learning
- Identify and solve problems
- Be creative and express our ideas
- Help, support and encourage others



Our Environment

We have a right to

- A vibrant and exciting environment where we can flourish
- An environment that can be enjoyed by all

We have a responsibility to

- Look after our school
- Take care of our resources
- Reduce, re-use and re-cycle

Friendship • Respect • Equality • Determination • Inspiration • Courage • Excellence

Our purpose is to encourage, support and develop every child so that they reach their full potential.

We prepare children to live responsibly and peacefully in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, equality and friendship.

Our vision is to be schools where:

- There are expectations of excellence
- Individuals are valued
- Achievements are celebrated
- Children are happy and safe

We aim that our schools are held in the highest esteem by pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider community.

We want pupils and staff to enjoy coming to school every day, and we take pride in moving our schools ever forward.

We are committed to maximising pupil achievement and development and central to maintaining our *Ethos and Values* is our Charter for Living and Learning.

We teach our children to be Ready, Respectful and Safe in all aspects of their lives.

“I look forward to coming in every day”
Staff Opinion Survey respondent, January 2021

Strategic principles



Everything we do is underpinned by 12 strategic principles.

They set out what we want to achieve as an educator, employer and driver of positive change in our communities. They articulate *what we stand for* and *act as touchstones* in our schools.



Culture of Opportunity

Adults create a culture where difference is acknowledged and celebrated. Individual achievements are recognised all members of the school community are encouraged to have a voice. Where there are barriers adults pride themselves on embracing different approaches and opportunities to ensure that children understand that barriers don't have to limit their lives and that there is an *equitable* experience for all.

Enabling Environment

Children are entitled to an irresistible, warm, welcoming, and well organised environment (both indoors and outdoors) that provides for independence, choice, a wealth of sensory experiences; reflecting the children's interests and celebrating their achievements.

Relational Teaching

Children develop in the context of relationships and the emotional environment around them. All adults are expected to model and teach children how to show love, care, tolerance, respect, openness and honesty with each other.

Valuing children and childhood

Every child is a unique. Their ability to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured should not be underestimated. Independence, risk taking, leadership, self-regulation and co-construction are valued. Children are entitled to the freedom to play, to take responsibility for their learning and behaviours, to identify and solve problems and the excitement of being outdoors. Children's rights are respected and protected (UNICEF, 2012)



Assessment Led Learning

Assessment is continuous, specific, relevant and provides clear pathways to future success in learning through a forensic understanding of the children's progress. Teachers recognise how on-going assessment links to the summative assessment cycle in schools and the wider assessment and accountability system.

Planning for Excellence

Planning is responsive to the children's interests and fascinations and is targeted to identify gaps in skills and understanding and to provide repeated opportunities to practise what most challenges us. Learning sequences have a clear structure, using a 'teaching backwards' approach ensuring high quality outcomes in all subjects.

Understanding Learning

Learning is an active experience designed to provoke rich dialogue, active listening and sustained shared thinking between all participants through experimentation and discovery. Knowledge of the concepts of 'threshold' and 'mastery' are used to inform teaching and learning sequences. "...the mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting..." (Plutarch, in Kidd 1992)

Inspirational Curriculum

Teachers plan for a curriculum that inspires, motivates and engages all children in memorable experiences. Connections are made between subject areas to ensure learning contexts are authentic and meaningful and provide opportunities for application of skills, investigation and purposeful play. "It's not what you do but the way that you do it." Careful consideration is given to the intent, implementation and impact of all learning sequences.

Responsive Teaching

By implementing successful evidence-based strategies and frameworks adults model and exemplify excellence at every level. Expert subject knowledge enables teachers to identify and define the selection of skills to be taught and to design experiences to ensure that the learning journey makes sense and ignites deeper level thinking for all children.



Community Engagement

Community engagement is a two-way street where the school, families, and the community actively work together, creating networks of shared responsibility for student success. It is a tool that promotes civic well-being and that strengthens the capacity of schools, families, and communities to support young peoples' full development”

Professional Growth

“Every teacher needs to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better.” (Williams, 2012). Outstanding teaching and leadership is developed through: sharing best practice, researching and critiquing evidence based approaches, supporting clear pathways of career progression, engaging in practitioner enquiry and actively encouraging creative thinking, risk taking and innovation.

Courageous Leadership

All leaders have a clear vision, underpinned by a sense of moral purpose which is understood, owned and implemented by the whole community in the pursuit of shaping inspirational learning and continually improving outcomes. Choices about organisation, structure, resources and priorities are made bravely. The qualities of leadership are recognised, valued and nurtured across the whole school community.



What is a Trust?



The DfE's definition of an Academy Trust is:

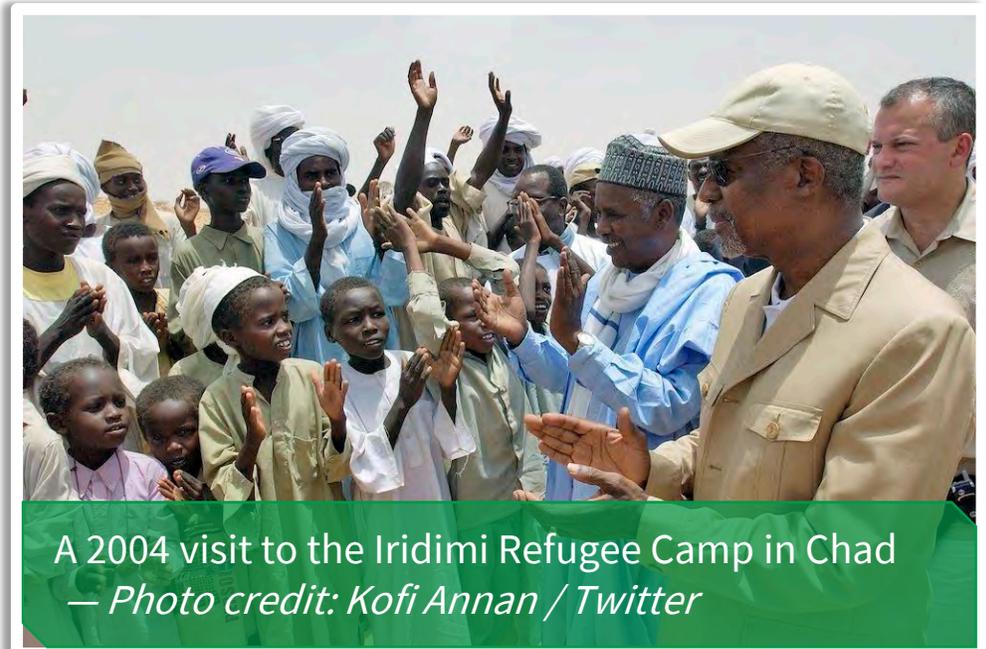
“Academy trusts are not-for-profit companies. They employ the staff and have trustees who are responsible for the performance of the academies in the trust. Trusts might run a single academy or a group of academies. Some academies are supported by sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. Sponsors work with the academy trust to improve the performance of their schools”

However, The Mead Academy Trust believes that:

“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children” ,
Kofi Annan, The State of the World's Children, 2000

Therefore:

"Our Trust is a group of schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards... Our trust has a single legal and moral purpose: to advance education for the public benefit."



A 2004 visit to the Iridimi Refugee Camp in Chad
— Photo credit: Kofi Annan / Twitter

Academy Trust... Or education charity?



- Academy trusts are education charities that run schools to give children a better future
- Over half of pupils in state schools attend academies
- Like any other state school, academies are free to attend, and they are inspected in the same way as other state schools
- Trusts help their local communities thrive by giving children the best opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom



Evidence of Trust Effectiveness

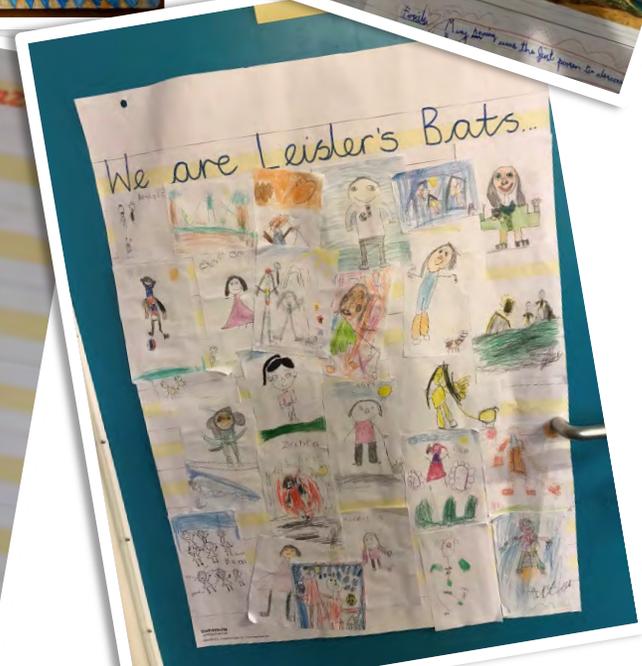
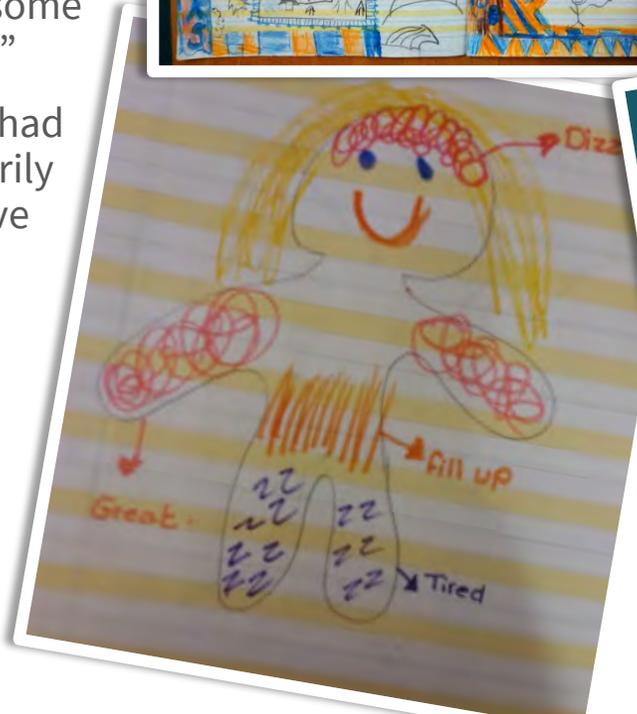
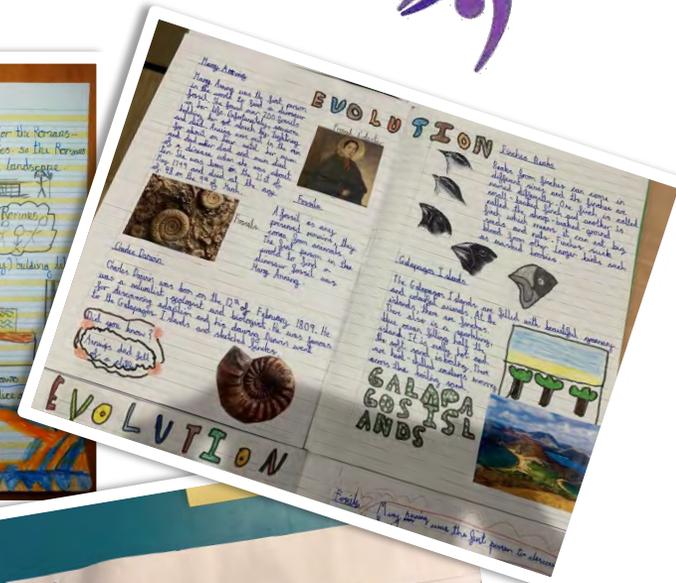


The House of Commons Education Committee, states:

“87% of Headteachers, and 83% of Chairs of Governors, describe partnership with other schools as critical to improving outcomes for children...”

“School partnerships with clear lines of accountability and some element of obligation are more likely to be successful...”

“Primary Heads told us that, whilst becoming an academy had improved their practice and their school... This was primarily because of the advantages generated by the collaborative framework of a multi-academy trust...”



The Trust Dividend



The Confederation of Schools Trusts is a national organisation and sector body for trusts and multi-academy trusts. It advocates for, supports and connects executive and governance leadership in school trusts. It is a charity and is strictly apolitical.

www.cstuk.org.uk

The CST has pioneered the concept of a Trust Dividend – the benefits of running, being in, and working for, an academy trust.

A Trust Dividend seeks to identify what is the added value created by a school belonging to a trust and refers to the additional benefits brought about by deep and purposeful collaboration.



Confederation
of School Trusts

What is our Trust Dividend?



As a family of schools, **collaboration** creates opportunities for children and teachers.

Good practice is shared on the important things - curriculum, assessment, inclusion and behaviour.

Structured career pathways for teachers are supported by **high-quality professional development** so teachers and leaders learn together.

The support we provide to schools in HR, finance, IT, and marketing allows teachers and leaders to have **relentless focus** on the one thing that counts the most – the education of children.

Sir David Carter says:

"Parents need to feel that something special is occurring because the school is in an academy trust. Leaders need to make sure they are constantly communicating the benefits: improved standards, respected teachers who stay longer, improvements in resources, inter-school competitions"



"As a Headteacher I always valued the support and input from the governors. In joining the AAG, I now feel humbled to be given the opportunity to give something back to the school community by working alongside others to shape and strengthen the direction of the school to achieve the best outcomes for all the children."

Christine Folker, Castle Mead School Academy Advisor

What our Dividend looks like....



We asked members of our school communities to talk to us about belonging to an Academy Trust. Here are some of their responses.

Executive Leaders

I am acutely aware of and grateful for the guidance and support I receive and the division of labour that is possible. Executive Leaders enable collaborative thinking and a 'safe place' to ask questions and make sure we 'get it right' before plans go live. Our response to lockdown which has been unified, clear, safe and strong.

My strategic priorities are significantly supported by wider trust collaborative working: curriculum, progress and attainment in writing, high quality responsive teaching and use of assessment – all are enhanced for myself and my Senior Leaders by collaborative working

I find autonomy very important, especially when pushing hard to affect school culture. Such autonomy is not inhibited by the trust – rather it is again enhanced by the scrutiny, challenge and support received through effective line management

The trust is a vehicle for learning – no-one has all the answers and for leaders the trust ensures that headship and all other layers of leadership in our teams are not lonely places. Tensions will always occur in any teams, but the trust model ensures frameworks of sustainability, cohesiveness, strategic formulation and support

Supportive and challenging professional dialogue across teams at the other sites is really supportive, I'd feel stuck if I was working by myself as a subject leader

The trust has a team made up of people with a wealth of knowledge. We all get geeky about our particular thing, and know that's ok because someone else is geeking out about something else! We can 'tap in' to people's knowledge and experience when we need to

Career progression, in terms of people being able to have different opportunities at other sites, but also being able to develop people's passion and find somewhere they can 'grow' and do the thing they really want to

Senior Leaders

I appreciate having other leaders to bounce things about with. I can choose who will be best to support me in a particular situation. It's about knowing how to get your needs met. This includes Executive Leaders. I can think of where this has really supported me, but also where I have supported others across the trust. Teachers from other schools might come to me about something and I can support them in an 'indirect' kind of way. I think it works on lots of levels

Particularly during the pandemic:

- Joint responsibility and a team approach to ensuring guidance is interpreted, and that systems and processes put in to place
- The use of technology to work collegiately. I think I have seen/worked with Executive Leaders more than I ever have! (which has been lovely!)
- The opportunity to attend Executive Leadership meetings when appropriate (and just 'drop in') – being part of these meetings has made me feel valued and that I have the opportunity to be heard and contribute to the bigger picture
- The availability of support from the leadership team has been a real strength and something that I hope I have mirrored down the line to our team

What our Dividend looks like....



Inclusion Leaders	Being part of the trust enables us to have access to other specialist advice/services for example, a Complex Needs SLE, Harbour Project insight and involvement, Sensory OT insight, Team Around the School meetings
	Sharing what works in the different schools – and sometimes what doesn't work – is really useful. There is an appreciation that each school is different and individual yet the bringing together serves to strengthen us all
	Templates and resources made are shared. We also discuss ways of working at our meetings and this has been beneficial in making systems and processes more effective
	Working in a Trust enables a wealth of support and an opportunity to share good practice, challenges and the chance to just mull things over with people in the same role as you
	Supports my belief in the value of a system leadership approach and in turn this has enabled me to become more self-analytical and aware of my strengths and areas that I need to further develop
	There is always someone to go to if you need support; regular 1:1 sessions are supportive
Business Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer support• SBM business meetings• ICT provision – zoom, teams, chat functionality• Identified specific trust roles
Parents	<i>Thank you for the selfless hours that you put in after school and at weekends to ensure our children have the best education. You are all stars! Through the dark winter ahead, you will be the light in our children's eyes.</i>
	<i>I have friends who are parents at The Mead and Castle Mead. They know how proud I am to be part of Team Mead but they have gone out of their way to WhatsApp me and tell me how amazing they think The Mead Trust is.</i>
Communities	We help our local communities thrive by giving children the best opportunities to learn inside and outside the classroom

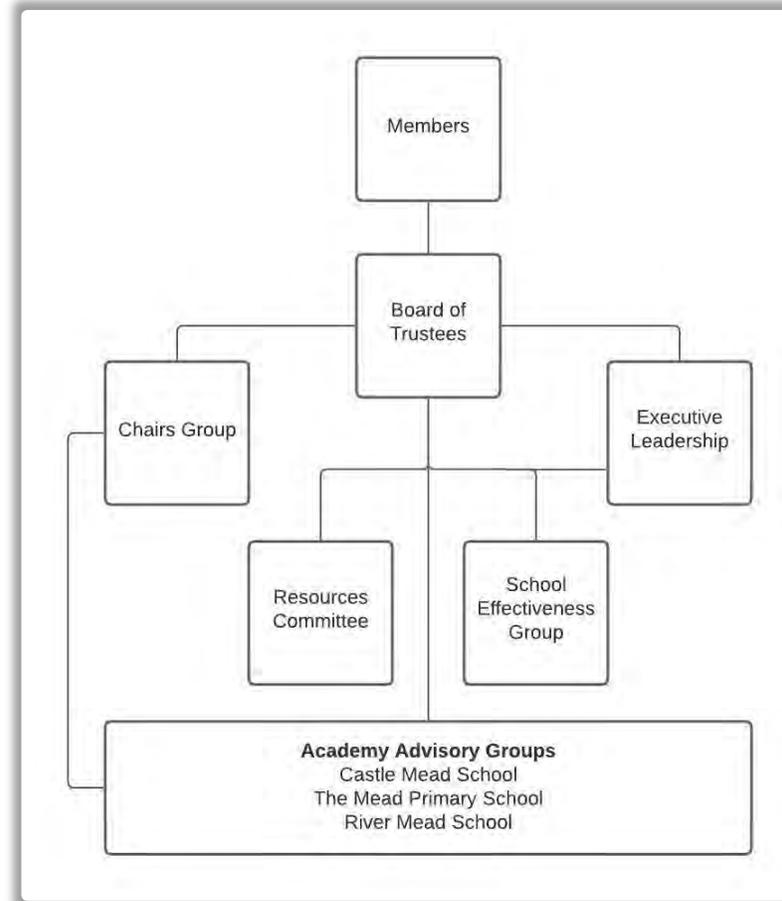
Governance Structure



The governance structure for The Mead Academy Trust is comprised of the following groups:

- The Academy Trust Members Board
- The Board of Trustees
- The Resources Committee
- The School Effectiveness Group
- An Academy Advisory Group for each school

You can view the full Governance Team on our website.



“The passion and commitment of the schools to enable all children to achieve their best, is tangible”

Kim Lyne, Chair of The Mead School Academy Advisor Group

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Inspirational Learning for All