

Eastwood Park Academy Trust (EPAT)

EPAT

Believe Succeed Together

Strategic and Operational Overview

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Contents

1.0 Background	3
1.1 History.....	3
1.2 Reasons for Formation.....	3
1.3 Growth	3
1.31 Non-sponsorship	3
1.32 Sponsorship.....	4
2.0 Ethos and Vision.....	5
3.0 Governance Structure.....	6
3.1 Terms of Reference.....	7
4.0 Operational Structure	8
4.1 Terms of Reference.....	9
5.0 Finance.....	11
5.1 Government Grants	11
5.11 Conversion Grant	11
5.12 Sponsored Academy Funding.....	11
5.13 Regional Academy Growth Fund.....	11
5.2 EPAT Central Fund - EPATCF	11
5.21 EPATCF Contribution	12
5.22 EPATCF Contribution – Appeals Process	12
5.3 EPATCF Expenditure.....	13
5.31 EPATCF Surplus.....	13
6.0 School Improvement Strategy	14

1.0 Background

1.1 History

Eastwood Park Academy Trust (EPAT) was formed on 1st February 2017. The founder schools were The Eastwood Academy (a secondary converter academy) and Bournemouth Park Primary School (a maintained primary school).

1.2 Reasons for Formation

The principal reasons for establishing the Trust were to:

- Form strong, collaborative partnerships with other local¹ schools.
- Improve educational provision, standards and outcomes in local schools.
- Improve the transition from primary to secondary education.
- Improve recruitment, professional development and career opportunities for staff.
- Centralise business services, procurement and administrative functions, thereby generating efficiencies and economies of scale.

1.3 Growth

EPAT is a cross-phase 'Starter Trust' (< 5 schools) with aspirations to become a sustainable 'Established Trust' (~> 5 schools) providing high quality educational provision, standards and outcomes in local schools.

Growth will be in line with the principles delineated in the DfE guidance [Multi-Academy Trusts - Good Practice and Expectations for Growth](#)

¹Within the locality of Southend-on-Sea, South East Essex and South Essex.

1.31 Non-sponsorship

Schools that express an interest in joining the Trust are encouraged to meet with representatives to discuss the potential and suitability of the match.

The Governing Body of an 'interested' school is required to pass a resolution to join the Trust (subject to due diligence).

Due diligence is undertaken in line with the Trust's Due Diligence Policy and the CEO coordinates and manages the transfer of the school into the MAT, including, in the case of maintained schools, the conversion into an academy.

1.32 Sponsorship

The Trust's [sponsor](#) application was approved on 24th November 2016.

The Regional School Commissioner (RSC) selects an appropriate school that needs a sponsor. If this school isn't an academy, it will have to convert to an academy before the Trust can become its sponsor.

The RSC discusses the plans for the school with the local [Headteacher Board \(HTB\)](#). If the RSC agrees that the Trust is the right sponsor, they will approve the match.

Due diligence is undertaken in line with the Trust's Due Diligence Policy and the CEO coordinates and manages the transfer of the school into the MAT, including, in the case of maintained schools, the conversion into an academy.

2.0 Ethos and Vision

The Trust's ethos - *'Believe, Succeed, Together'* – is an unwavering belief that all pupils can and will succeed and this will be achieved together.

The Trust's vision is to provide sustainable, high quality educational provision, standards and outcomes in local schools.

This vision is articulated into 10 commitments:

1. To provide opportunities for all **primary** pupils to achieve:

- Good Level of Development (GLD) at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Required Standard (WA) in Year 1 Phonics.
- Expected Standard (EXS) at KS1.
- Expected Standard (EXP+) at KS2.

2. To provide opportunities for all **secondary** pupils to achieve:

- Expected Progress at KS3.
- 9-4 in GCSE English and Mathematics.
- English Baccalaureate (EBacc).
- Expected Attainment 8 (A8).
- Expected Progress 8 (P8).

3. To provide environments in which all pupils feel proud of their academy, shown by their excellent behaviour, attitude to learning, attendance and punctuality.

4. To provide safe and secure environments in which all pupils are able to thrive and any concerns they have are dealt with promptly and effectively.

5. To provide learning environments in which the majority of teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good.

6. To provide opportunities for all pupils to develop high levels of literacy appropriate to their age.

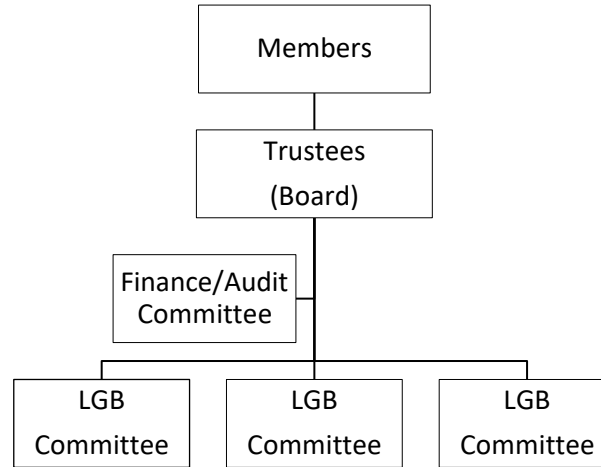
7. To provide opportunities for all pupils to develop high levels of numeracy appropriate to their age.

8. To provide environments in which all pupils are able to broaden their education through a range of SMSC opportunities.

9. To provide environments in which every opportunity is taken to celebrate and share success.

10. To provide opportunities and experiences for all pupils so that they are well equipped for the next stage in their education, training or employment.

3.0 Governance Structure

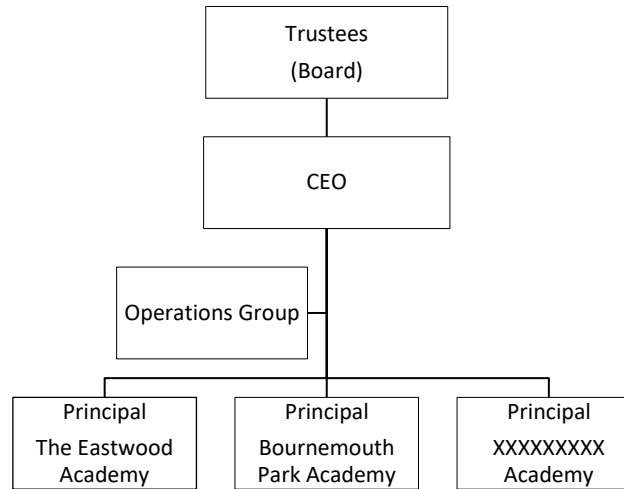


Level of Governance	Number	Personnel	Meeting Frequency
Members	4	Tracy Summerhill, Dan Hagan, Angela Winfield and Simon Watkins	Annually
Trustees (Board)	5	Adeela Fethi (Chair), Karen Heath (Vice Chair), Neil Houchen (CEO), Ian Harkes, and Mark Wilson	Termly
Finance and Audit Committee	5	Mark Wilson (Chair) Adeela Fethi, Neil Houchen (CEO), Ian Harkes, Karen Heath and Mark Wilson	Termly
LGB Committee	9-11	Principal (ex officio), 2 staff, 3 parents, 3-5 community-based.	Termly

3.1 Terms of Reference

Level of Governance	Area	Responsibilities
Members	Constitution	Appoint and remove Trustees. Amend and approve changes to the Articles of Association.
	AGM	Attend and contribute to the AGM.
Trustees (Board)	Strategy	Set the vision, ethos and strategy for the Trust. Approve the ADP and SEF of each academy within the Trust.
	Leadership	Appoint executive positions in the Trust e.g. CEO, and in each academy appoint the Principal, Vice/Assistant Principals and Finance Officer. Determine and approve the leadership structures in each academy.
	Performance	Ensure that all academies in the Trust are effectively challenged and supported to maximise outcomes. Scrutinise academies' pupil performance data, termly reports and SEF, and measure impact against ADP key development priorities and the vision of the Trust. Hold the CEO to account. Undertake a 360 ^o review of its own performance on annual basis.
	Finance	Refer to the terms of reference of the Finance and Audit Committee.
	Operations	Approve Trust policies (those applicable to all employees in the Trust). Approve and review the terms of reference of committees e.g. LGB Terms of Reference Ensure effective consultation and communication with all constituent parts of the Trust.
	Safeguarding	Review the LSB Audit for Safeguarding for each academy in the Trust.
	Admissions	Determine the admissions arrangements for all academies in the Trust.
Finance and Audit Committee	Finance	Review individual academy budgets and the annual budget for the Trust. Review the long-term budget plan (3YBF). Regularly monitor the actual income and expenditure against budget at academy and Trust level. Consider the achievement of value for money. Consider responses to any external management letters. Ensure the annual accounts are produced in accordance with Company and Charity law and DfE guidance. Authorise the award of contracts over monetary values as defined in the Trust's Financial Regulations. Review the internal scrutiny reports on the effectiveness of the financial procedures and controls. Review and approve virements and transactions in accordance with the Trust's Financial Regulations. Oversee tendering and award of contracts in accordance with the Trust's Financial Regulations. Annually review and update the Trust's Financial Regulations and finance-related policies. Review information/returns to the DfE and/or EFSA that affect funding. Undertake independent checking of financial controls, systems, transactions and risks. Discuss with the external auditor the nature/scope of each forthcoming audit and ensure that the auditor has the fullest co-operation of staff.
LGB	General	Discuss issues relating to pupil performance; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and personal development, behaviour and welfare. Make recommendations to the Board. Act as a critical friend to the Principal.
	Visits	Undertake visits in line with designated areas of responsibility and the key development priorities in the ADP.
	Engagement	Review and discuss outcomes of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.
	Exclusions	Review suspensions and permanent exclusions in line with DfE guidance.

4.0 Operational Structure



Level of Operation	Number	Personnel	Meeting Frequency
Trustees (Board)	5	Adeela Fethi (Chair), Karen Heath (Vice Chair), Neil Houchen (CEO), Ian Harkes, and Mark Wilson	Termly
CEO	1	Neil Houchen	N/A
Operations Group	7+	Sharon Freeman, Scott Sterling, Chris Niner, David Piercy, Louise-Hodgson-Clark, Rhod Thomas and external advisors ²	As directed by the CEO
Principals	2	Neil Houchen and Rhod Thomas	Weekly

²KSP Education Improvement Services Ltd, current and ex headteachers, ex-HMI, LLE, SLE, NLE, Southend West School Sports Partnership (SWSSP).

4.1 Terms of Reference

Level of Operation	Area	Responsibilities	
Trustees (Board)	Line Management	Line manage the CEO and hold him/her to account.	
CEO	Safeguarding	Ensure safeguarding arrangements across all academies are effective and comply with statutory provisions.	
	Ethos and Vision	Promote the ethos and vision of the Trust.	
	Leadership		Be the strategic leader of the Trust.
			Provide motivational and inspirational leadership at all levels of the Trust.
			If directed by the Board, act as an academy Principal for a period of time.
	Line Management		Line manage the Principals and hold them to account.
			Direct and coordinate the work of the Operations Group.
	Finance		Be the Accounting Officer for the Trust.
			Ensure compliancy with the requirements of the Master Funding Agreement and Supplemental Funding Agreements.
			Ensure that all resources are organised and managed to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils.
	Legal		Ensure all legislative and statutory requirements for academies are met and are compliant with DfE guidance.
	Human Resources		Represent the HR function at internal and external meetings, as and when required.
	Policies		Be responsible for devising and implementing Trust-wide policies.
	Communication		Be the main point of contact for the Local Authority, EFA, DfE and other key bodies in respect of all aspects of the Trust.
			Act as an ambassador for the Trust and communicate effectively with all stakeholders.
	Trust Growth		Coordinate applications for the transfer of new academies into the Trust.
			Ensure due diligence is undertaken in accordance with the Trust's Due Diligence Policy.
			Direct and manage the transfer of academies into the Trust.
	Curriculum		Be responsible for developing primary and secondary curricula which meet the Trust's vision.
			Be responsible for developing recording, tracking, monitoring and evaluative systems which meet the Trust's vision.
Performance		Ensure outstanding teaching and learning through effective recruitment, CPD and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.	
		Produce reports on the educational performance of the academies.	
		Be accountable for the quality of teaching and learning, standards and outcomes for all of the academies.	
		Ensure a culture of continuous improvement within the Trust.	
CPD		Oversee performance management to ensure staff are motivated/enabled to carry out their roles to the highest standard.	
CPD		Ensure high quality CPD is provided in all academies which supports the Trust's vision.	
Equality		Ensure compliance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.	
		Ensure all employees are treated fairly and equitably.	
Meetings		Attend and contribute to AGM, Board, Finance and Audit Committee meetings.	
		Attend and contribute to LGB Committee meetings, where required.	

	Level of Operation	Responsibilities
Operations Group	Secondary Academy Improvement	Provide expertise in operational structures; curriculum design; teaching, learning and assessment; tracking, monitoring and evaluation; and personal development, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding Attend and contribute to Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings, where required.
	Primary Academy Improvement	Provide expertise in operational structures; curriculum design; teaching, learning and assessment; tracking, monitoring and evaluation; and personal development, behaviour, welfare and safeguarding. Attend and contribute to Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings, where required.
	Finance	Provide expertise on finance and accounting to optimise the Trust's financial performance and strategic position. Compile the annual budget for the Trust and long-term budget plan. Assist each academy in the compilation of their annual budget. Produce regular and accurate information relating to actual income and expenditure against budget at academy and Trust level. Contribute to the development, compilation and submission of bids for grants and other income streams. Review and improve existing Trust financial systems and policies ensuring they are robust, compliant and support current activities and future growth. Lead on the Trust's approach to risk management and co-ordinate the strategic risk register. Establish a high level of credibility, and develop strong working relationships with the EFSA, HMRC, DfE and external auditors. Ensure appropriate controls to safeguard Trust assets. Coordinate the due diligence processes in accordance with the Trust's Due Diligence Policy. Attend and contribute to Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings, where required.
	Operations	Work with the Board to develop a strategic building plan for all academies. Manage all service contracts within the Trust and ensure best value is achieved. Oversee the day-to-day management of catering, cleaning and caretaking in each academy. Oversee the management and maintenance of the academies' sites, grounds, buildings and their security. Oversee administration, finance, HR and payroll in each academy. Ensure health and safety compliance in each academy. Ensure effective systems of audit, control and risk management are in place and being implemented effectively in each academy. Develop a strong PR and marketing strategy for the Trust. Ensure the Trust is compliant with Data Protection legislation and requirements. Oversee the implementation of the IT strategy and IT infrastructure across the Trust. Contribute to the due diligence processes in accordance with the Trust's Due Diligence Policy. Contribute to the management of the transfer of academies into the Trust. Attend and contribute to Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings, where required.
	Governance	Provide advice, guidance and support to Members, Trustees and Local Governing Body Committees on governance, constitutional and procedural matters. Provide advice, guidance and support to Trustees on employment and personnel-related issues. Liaise with internal and external parties in regard to education, personnel and legal matters. Represent the Governing Board at meetings with internal and external parties. Ensure each level of governance within the Trust is properly constituted. Provide effective administrative support to all levels of governance with the Trust. Attend and minute all governance-related meetings within the Trust. Manage information effectively in accordance with legal requirements. Work with the Operations Team to ensure the Trust is compliant with Data Protection legislation and requirements. Provide advice with regard to the transfer of academies into the Trust.
	Principal	Lead and manage their academy in accordance with the Headteachers' Standards 2020 Attend and contribute to LGB Committee meetings. Attend and contribute to Board and Finance and Audit Committee meetings, where required.

5.0 Finance

5.1 Government Grants

5.11 Conversion Grant

Once a school receives an Academy Order i.e. confirmation that it can become an academy, it will receive a grant of £25,000 to cover the new academy's pre-opening costs.

5.12 Sponsored Academy Funding

Trusts are eligible for a range of grants that are summarised in [Sponsored Academies Funding](#) e.g. Pre-opening Fast Track Grant - £70, 000 for primary and £80,000 for secondary (including the £25,000 Conversion Grant).

5.13 Regional Academy Growth Fund

The [Regional Academy Growth Fund](#) (RAGF) supports successful trusts to grow and to improve standards in underperforming schools. Sponsor capacity grants are usually between £50,000 and £100,000.

5.2 EPAT Central Fund - EPATCF

In order to finance the Trust, a proportion of General Annual Grant (GAG) funding from each academy is used form a central fund (EPATCF) in line with the Academy Trust Handbook.

Full details are provided in the Trust's Central Funds Policy.

5.21 EPATCF Contribution

The following is excluded from the GAG central fund contribution: Pupil Premium funding; Year 7 Catch-Up Premium funding; PE Sports Grants; Nursery funding; Universal Free School Meals funding; Summer School funding; Top-Up funding for special educational needs (SEN) or Additional Educational Needs funding (AEN) in mainstream academies; other non-GAG Government funding; other income generated by individual academies; and PFI income.

The proportion that each academy contributes¹ to EPATCF is reflected in the projected level of need, which, in turn, is determined by the academy's most recent Ofsted rating and performance data. Where the most recent Ofsted inspection exceeds a period of 12 months, the weighting of the performance data will take precedence.

Ofsted Criteria	Key Performance Measures Criteria	Financial Contribution (%)
Outstanding	Well above national average	3.0
Good	Above national average	4.0
Requires Improvement	Below national average	5.0
Inadequate	Well below national average	6.0

¹The founding academies will contribute 3.25% for 2021/22 and 3.25% for 2022/23. Contributions will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5.22 EPATCF Contribution – Appeals Process

The Trust will give consideration to the funding needs and allocations of each constituent academy, in line with the [Academy Trust Handbook](#). There is an appeals mechanism (described below) for academies who may feel that they are being treated unfairly.

- The constituent academies must appeal, in writing to the CEO, within 10 working days from notification of a) their EPATCF contribution b) use of surplus funds (refer to section 5.31).
- The CEO will consider the appeal and notify the academy of their decision within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal.
- If the issue is not resolved, the academy can appeal to the Secretary of State, via the EFSA, whose decision is final.

¹The founding academies will contribute 3.25% for 2023/24 and 3.5% for 2024/25. Contributions will be reviewed on an annual basis.

5.3 EPATCF Expenditure

EPATCF is used to finance the following services:

Service	Details
Executive Leadership	CEO salary (excluding the element where the CEO is a substantive Principal of an academy); and CEO PM.
Educational Expertise	Operational Group work, directed by the CEO. Where existing Trust employees (other than the CEO) are deployed for specific time-limited tasks, the constituent academy will bill the Trust and the funds will be sourced from the Educational Expertise cost centre in EPATCF. The amount that is billed will be calculated according to the hourly rate ² of the employee (capped at the top of the relevant scale in the Trust's Pay Policy).
Governance	Company Secretary's salary; and Trustee expenses.
Finance	Centralised finance operations; external audits, internal audits; Dataplan payroll; Apprenticeship Levy (offset by Small Business Allowance); Sage Accounting Software and Orovia Budget Planning Software
Operations	Centralised corporate/business operations; EFA RPA insurance; SIMS licenses (not support costs) and web domain for the Trust.
Human Resources	HR; Legal; Health and Safety; JCC sundries; and Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

5.31 EPATCF Surplus

In the event that EPATCF records a surplus at the end of the financial year, the following will occur in priority order:

- Funds may be used for emergency works⁵.
- Funds may be retained and carried forward to the new financial year.
- Funds may be redistributed in proportion to each academy's contribution to EPATCF for the academic year in question.

⁴For teachers, the hourly rate will be their annual salary divided by 1265 hours. For support staff, the hourly rate will be their annual salary divided by 1950 hours.

⁵Works that, if not undertaken, could lead to academy closure.

6.0 School Improvement Strategy

The following is a broad overview of the work that will be undertaken with constituent academies as part of the Trust's School Improvement Strategy.

Area	Strand	Strategy
Safeguarding	Safeguarding	Review current safeguarding policies, systems and procedures to ensure compliancy and effectiveness.
Leadership and Management	Finance	Review the annual budget to determine sustainability and risk of deficit. Commission Dataplan payroll.
	Leadership and Management	Review leadership structure, effectiveness and capacity. Review performance management procedure and data.
	Staffing	Review staffing structure, effectiveness, capacity and sustainability. Review staff wellbeing. Review staff punctuality and absence. Review recruitment and retention. Review staff CPD programme and support systems.
	Policies	Make arrangements for Trust-wide policies to be consulted upon, through the JCC, prior to adoption.
	Human Resources	Commission HR, Legal, Health and Safety services. Implement, following JCC consultation, Trust-wide HR management policies.
	Site and Buildings	Conduct a full site analysis to determine priority of EFA bids/projects.
	Operations	Make arrangements to outsource catering, cleaning, caretaking and grounds maintenance with existing Trust providers. Review the IT infrastructure and harmonise with the IT strategy of the Trust. Review procurement and harmonise with existing Trust providers. Review of all other business contracts and harmonise with existing Trust contracts.
	Marketing	Harmonise marketing e.g. website, publications, signage, press releases etc.
	Curriculum	Review the curriculum structure/model so it meets the Trust's vision.
	Policies	Review key policies - Teaching and Learning and Marking and Assessment.
	Teaching and Learning	Review the quality of teaching, including a scrutiny of internal lesson observation data vs. external observations.
	Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes	Tracking
Policies		Review key policies - Attendance; Behaviour and Discipline; and any other pupil-management related policies.
Attendance, Suspensions, Behaviour Log, Rewards		Review policies, systems and procedures for managing attendance, suspensions, behaviour and rewards. Deploy Trust-wide tracking facilities to monitoring attendance, suspensions, behavioural incidents and rewards.
Quality of Education	Enrichment	Review the enrichment provision. Introduce Trust-wide tracking facilities to monitor enrichment and track uptake.
	Pupil Performance	Review pupil performance data using LA data reports, IDSR summary reports for the purposes of prioritising short-term intervention and medium-long term planning.