

Introduction

1) Aims

- a) The Executive Pay Policy (“Policy”) aims to
 - i) Ensure executive pay is fair, reflective of responsibilities, proportionate to the sector and capable of attracting, retaining and motivating high calibre individuals.
 - ii) Guide Trustees on how to conduct high quality performance management meetings and make evidence-based decisions on executive pay based on the outcome.
 - iii) Ensure the Trust fulfils its obligations under the statutory and legislative frameworks around executive pay.

2) Scope

- a) This Policy applies to managing performance and setting pay for the CEO and DCEO.
- b) Other roles may fall in scope in the future when salaries increase to a level of £100k or more.

3) Legislative Framework

- a) The Trust is free to determine how decisions on executive pay and benefits are made but has an obligation to comply with the provisions of the Academies Trust Handbook (ATH) and the DfE guidance document Setting Executive Pay.
- b) The key obligations on the Trust are to;
 - i) Document and approve a process for determining executive pay.
 - ii) Ensure the decision-making process around executive pay and benefits is clear, robust, evidence-based, and independently and objectively scrutinised by the Trust Board (“Board”).
 - iii) Document the rationale behind the decisions made, including whether the level of pay and benefits represent good value for money.
 - iv) Take account of all aspects of individual and Trust performance when determining pay and benefits, including the degree of challenge in the role.
 - v) Ensure conflicts of interest are avoided by having full sight of the broader business interests of Trustees and senior executives.
 - vi) Consider the basic presumption that executive pay and benefits should not increase at a faster rate than that of teachers, in individual years and over the longer term unless exceptional circumstances support this.

Roles and Responsibilities

4) Board of Trustees (“Board”)

- a) The Board commits to reflecting the “key principles of public life” – objectivity, openness, accountability, selflessness, integrity, openness, and leadership when taking decisions around executive pay and expects its senior leaders to model these behaviours in leading the Trust’s schools.
- b) The Board has defined and approved this Policy embodying these principles and reviews it on a regular basis to ensure it continues to deliver its stated aims and continues to comply with prevailing sector guidelines.
- c) The Board appoints the Trust’s CEO Performance Management Committee (“Committee”) and approves its terms of reference. The Board ensures the Committee implements the

policy effectively using the appropriate authority and responsibility delegated to it. The Chair of the Committee (or their nominee) will document all Committee meetings which will specifically include decisions made and their rationale.

- d) The Board publishes a list on its website, in £10k bandings, of the number of employees whose base pay, including taxable benefits and pension contributions, exceeds £100k, for the prior year ended 31 August, and includes a high-level report on executive pay in its annual report and accounts.
- e) In considering the recommended pay awards for the CEO and DCEO the Board may, should they deem this appropriate, consider additional evidence or factors that may seem pertinent or important when considering decisions on pay. The reason and rationale for including such factors would be explained and evidenced as part of this process
- f) The Board will review and approve all pay recommendations for the CEO and DCEO.

5) CEO Performance Management Committee

- a) The Committee:
 - i) Ensures the Policy is implemented effectively using the appropriate authority and responsibility delegated to it by the Board.
 - ii) Completes the performance management process for the CEO and determines pay recommendations for the CEO including appropriate salary progression.
 - iii) Provides an annual report to the Board, in relation to agreed executive performance management objectives and recommendations regarding pay.
 - iv) Keeps up to date with relevant legislation and sector guidelines through research and training and seek specialist professional guidance as necessary.

6) CEO

- a) Undertakes the performance review of the DCEO together with a member of the Committee.
- b) Presents evidence of the DCEO's performance against objectives to the Board along with the impact on Trust performance, and makes a recommendation for the DCEO's pay progression, supported by benchmark data where appropriate.

Performance Management

7) Key Principles

- a) The Trust recognises the importance of adopting a well-designed performance management process as a prerequisite for successfully implementing pay decisions based on performance.
- b) The process for assessing performance is underpinned by leading practice principles:
 - i) Setting measurable outcome-based, performance and development targets aligned with the Trust's strategic plan.
 - ii) Agreeing objectives in advance to ensure clear expectations.
 - iii) Checking evidence of progress at regular meetings throughout the year.
 - iv) Providing direction, challenge and support as necessary.
 - v) Managing the process transparently to ensure good governance and compliance with relevant standards.

8) SMART Objectives

- a) The Committee will work with the CEO to identify and implement performance objectives which are SMART and aligned with the strategic aims of the Board.
- b) Appendix 2 includes detailed guidance on how to ensure objectives are SMART together with a framework and examples.

9) Process & Timeline for the Performance Review

a) Objective setting (October)

- i) The Committee meet with the CEO to agree performance objectives for the review period which will run in line with the academic year.
- ii) The Committee will also review recommendations from the CEO on the appropriate objectives for the DCEO.
- iii) The Chair of the Committee presents a report to the Board giving information regarding the agreed objectives.

b) Benchmarking (July/Sept)

- i) The Committee will commission, as necessary, any benchmarking or other independent reviews required to help inform decisions on pay progression due to be made in the Autumn term.

c) Mid-Year Review (March)

- i) The Committee schedule a mid-year review meeting with the CEO, and the CEO submits a self-review and evidence of progress to the Committee at least 1 week prior to the review meeting.
- ii) The Committee meet with the CEO to review and discuss the evidence, posing careful questions to help challenge and understand progress, and offer support where appropriate.
- iii) At the mid-year review, it is important to make sure that objectives are still relevant to the strategic priorities of the Trust and agree what assistance if any, the CEO needs to meet the objectives if they are not on track
- iv) The Chair of the Committee will inform the Board of the outcome of the review where appropriate.
- v) Following a similar format to that outlined above, the CEO conducts the mid-year performance review for the DCEO, together with a member of the Committee.

d) End of Year Review (October)

- i) The Committee schedules the end of year review meeting with the CEO, and the CEO submits a self-review and evidence of achievement to the Committee at least 1 week prior to the review meeting.
- ii) The Committee meet independently prior to the end of year review meeting to ensure they can independently assess the CEO's self-review and the evidence presented, including mid-term review notes where applicable, along with Trust wide information and benchmarking data where applicable.
- iii) The Committee meet with the CEO to complete the end of year review of performance. During the meeting the evidence submitted by the CEO will be reviewed and discussed to determine to what extent objectives have been met.

- iv) Following a similar format to that outlined above, the CEO conducts the end of year performance review for the DCEO, together with a member of the Committee.

Pay Review

10) Key Principles

- a) The process for determining pay is underpinned by the following key principles:
 - i) Pay reviews must be based on the outcome and evidence from the performance management process, including Trust operational and financial performance and salary benchmarking where applicable. (Full details are listed in Appendix 1)
 - ii) The rationale for pay decisions must be fully documented with underpinning evidence to give the Board assurance of a clear link between the key factors and pay.
 - iii) The decisions about pay must be independently and objectively reviewed, to avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure no individual is involved in deciding his or her own remuneration.
 - iv) The outcome of the pay review is to be within agreed contractual arrangements, reflect value for money, and relative to pay practice across the Trust, and the wider sector.
 - v) Decisions must be justifiable and appropriate in relation to the Trust's educational and financial performance, and responsibilities of the role.
 - vi) The outcomes must be in the best interest of the Trust, represent value for money, be proportionate in relation to the pay progression of other staff across the Trust and defensible in terms of public sector pay.
 - vii) Recommendations for pay progression must be ratified by the Board.

11) Process & Timeline for the Pay Review

- e) Determining the Pay Progression (October)
 - i) On completion of the performance review for the CEO and the DCEO, the Committee will schedule a meeting to discuss the impact of the performance reviews on pay.
 - ii) The Committee will meet and review all available evidence including the self-review submitted by the CEO accompanying evidence, notes from the mid-year and end of year review meetings plus any independent reviews and benchmarking data.
 - iii) The Committee will determine their recommended annual pay progression for the CEO based on the evidence gathered and fully document their rationale.
 - iv) The CEO and a member of the Committee will follow a similar process for the DCEO.
- f) Approval and Implementation (October/December)
 - i) Having fully considered all relevant information, the Committee will decide on their recommendation for appropriate pay progression for the CEO and report the outcome to the Board for review and approval.
 - ii) The CEO and a member of the committee will decide on their recommendation for appropriate pay progression for the DCEO and report the outcome to the Board for review and approval.

12) Salary Ranges - How Pay Progression is Managed

- a) For the CEO and DCEO, the Trust has adopted the Teachers Leadership Pay Scale (cf 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions', DfE, published annually in September) and has assigned a salary range for each role with a minimum and maximum salary and fixed incremental points in between. The allocated ranges for 2025/2026 are:

	<u>CEO</u>		<u>DCEO</u>	
	<u>2024/2025</u>	<u>2025/2026</u>	<u>2024/2025</u>	<u>2025/2026</u>
L29			£99,067	£103,030
L30			£101,533	£105,595
L31			£104,040	£108,202
L32			£106,626	£110,892
L33			£109,275	£113,646
L34				
L35	£114,759	£119,350		
L36	£117,601	£122,306		
L37	£120,524	£125,345		
L38	£123,506	£128,447		
L39	£126,517	£131,578		

- b) Progression through the range is not automatic but is informed by the outcome of the annual performance management process.
- c) The Board has decided that there should be a minimum of a two-point gap between the pay scales of the CEO and DCEO.
- d) The Committee considers the annual cost of living increase agreed for those on the Teachers Leadership Pay Scale and factor this into their decision-making process.
- e) The breadth and position of the salary ranges are only reviewed when there has been a significant change in responsibilities.
- f) The scale points are increased annually with effect of the 1st September in line with the nationally agreed annual cost of living increase.
- g) For new appointees, the Committee determine the appropriate starting salary within the assigned salary range, taking into consideration.
- i) Pay arrangements for current and/or previous incumbents, along with current market forces and market rates.
 - ii) The skills and experience of the candidate and their current remuneration package.
 - iii) The total remuneration package being offered by the Trust.
- h) From time to time, the Committee will commission independent, external advice to benchmark the allocated ranges to ensure they remain appropriate and competitive.

13) Salary Benchmarking

- a) The Trust recognises the useful role that benchmarking of salaries can play to ensure that decisions about pay are evidence-based, and pay levels remain comparable with the wider trust sector.
- b) The Committee may therefore consider periodically commissioning an independent benchmarking report as part of its decision-making process. This will be done at least every 3 years and more frequently if there has been significant change, for example, to the Trusts size/structure.
- c) To ensure the benchmarking is conducted responsibly, the following principles are to be adopted:
 - i) Benchmark against individuals with similar responsibilities, rather than by job title as the responsibilities can vary significantly across the sector.
 - ii) Benchmark with other trusts of a similar complexity and size in terms, number of pupils, academies, income, character, range of provision and location where applicable.
 - iii) Consider what total compensation may look like when further benefits are offered by other trusts, in addition to base salary.
 - iv) Use external independent advice where required and available.
- d) Where the Trust is an outlier at the upper or lower end of the benchmarking scale, or where performance management and related salary increases are deemed potentially contentious, an explanation will be documented with clear reasoning and rationale for supporting the position.

Appeals

14) The Appeals Process

- a) If the CEO or DCEO are dissatisfied with a pay decision, the following process should be followed.
- b) In the case of the DCEO, in the first instance the matter should be discussed informally with the CEO, and if the CEO is dissatisfied, the Chair of the Board.
- c) If unresolved then they may choose to pursue this formally by submitting a letter of appeal within 5 days of the notification of the pay decision or the informal discussion as referred to above. Appeal letters should be submitted to the Chair of the Board.
- d) The letter of appeal must detail the grounds of appeal which should be based on one or more of the following.
 - i) Incorrect application of terms and conditions of employment.
 - ii) Failure to have regard for statutory guidance.
 - iii) Failure to take account of relevant evidence.
 - iv) Failure to consistently apply this Policy and the associated Performance Management procedure.
 - v) An allegation of bias.
 - vi) Unlawful discrimination.
- e) Typically, an appeal should be heard by a panel of three non-executive members of the Board not involved in the original recommendation, normally within 10 working days of receiving

the written appeal. The employee raising the appeal should be given the right to be accompanied and make representations in person.

- f) An appeal submitted under this policy is considered a “grievance” and therefore the appeal cannot be raised again under the Trust’s formal Grievance Procedure.

Appendix 1 – Evidence to Consider when Reviewing Pay

To manage remuneration and pay progression effectively, the Committee must consider the following evidence in their decision-making process and document its conclusions.

1) *Academic Performance*

- a) Pupil outcomes across the Trust – how do they compare with national averages/comparable schools with similar contexts in trusts in same area/region.
 - i) Key Stage 2 headline measures.
 - ii) Key Stage 4 headline measures and post-16 performance (in the event the Trust's growth strategy extends to including secondary education).
 - iii) Ofsted rating.
- b) the level of improvement required to ensure that the Trust is providing the highest standard of education.
- c) the level of progress being made towards the required improvement.

2) *Educational Challenge*

- a) The level of complexity and challenge compared with other comparable trusts
 - i) % of SEND pupils.
 - ii) % FSM.
 - iii) % EAL pupils.
 - iv) Level of deprivation.
 - v) Number of looked after children.

3) *Broader Challenge*

- a) Compared with other trusts, the role and responsibilities may not be typical and may have a level of complexity or challenge which warrants a higher salary.
 - i) There may be existing significant concerns across the Trust which the role is contending with.
 - ii) The role may be taking the lead in future expansion plans for the Trust.
 - iii) There may be additional accountabilities (e.g. leading a teaching school alliance).

4) *Educational Experience and Qualifications.*

- a) The postholder may have significant additional qualifications or experience which is provided added value and therefore warrants a higher salary
 - i) School Business Management qualifications and experience.
 - ii) National Leaders of Education/National Leaders of Further Education.
 - iii) Other relevant qualifications.

5) *Financial Performance*

- a) The current and forecast financial stability of the Trust and whether the Trust faces a deficit or surplus in year position.
- b) The auditor's view of the Trust and the Trust's progress towards implementing audit recommendations.
- c) Financial performance of the Trust compared with other trusts.

- d) The requirement, if any, for additional financial support or income generating initiatives to achieve a balanced budget.

6) Cost of total remuneration package

- a) When determining appropriate pay progression, the cost of the total remuneration package should be considered which may include the following,
 - i) Performance-related pay and other bonus payments awarded during the financial year.
 - ii) Pension contributions or payments in lieu of pension contributions.
 - iii) Salary sacrifice arrangements.
 - iv) Other taxable benefits.
 - v) Non-taxable benefits available only to senior members of staff.
 - vi) Other remuneration and the cost to the provider e.g. car allowance.
 - vii) Annual leave provision.

7) Ratios

- a) Cost of salary per pupil when benchmarked against comparable trusts.
- b) Cost of total leadership team compared to trusts of a similar size and with similar characteristics.
- c) % difference between highest and lowest paid staff.
- d) Rate of pay increase across the Trust.
- e) Senior leadership team cost as a % of total staff cost.

Appendix 2 – Setting SMART Objectives

When objectives are SMART, the outcome is clarity around expectation for the CEO/DCEO, and this makes the evaluation of the outcomes more straightforward and transparent for them and the Committee.

Objectives are deemed to be SMART if they are.

- a) **Specific** – The objectives must have a clear focus, detailed actions and outcomes, and the postholder must know what is expected of them.
- b) **Measurable** – Clear success criteria must be stipulated for each objective together with the evidence needed to demonstrate success. Where a baseline of past performance exists, future progress should be assessed against this.
- c) **Achievable** - The person needs to have the time, and/or access to the necessary support/resources required to achieve the objective.
- d) **Realistic & Relevant** - The objectives must be aligned to the context of the Trust (in particular its Vision and Strategy) and the individual’s responsibilities. The person needs to have the skills and experience to achieve them.
- e) **Time-bounded** – A review date must be specified and a timeframe for review with the use of interim milestones for monitoring progress where appropriate.

To support the Committee in presenting SMART objectives, the following framework is suggested with example objectives showing how the framework can be applied.

OBJECTIVE A short overview of what the CEO/DCEO need to do.	ACTIONS Details/key steps of how the objective will be achieved.	EVIDENCE Examples of how they show the objective has been achieved.	REVIEW DATE Specific timeline for completion.	DESIRED OUTCOME Details of what success looks like.
IMPROVEMENT OF EARLY YEARS LITERACY Deliver an improvement in early years literacy by investing in trust- wide quality-assured programmes delivered by highly trained staff.	Consult with headteachers to establish current programmes in use, the best solution to transition to, and the impact of change. Roll out the best of breed programme throughout all schools in liaison with headteachers. Hold headteachers accountable for the training of staff teaching and leading the programme in their schools. Analyse data when available to evaluate the effect of the programme.	Staff/headteacher surveys. Details of the programme adopted and reasons why it was chosen. Staff training logs. Teacher assessments of early literacy.	March 2026 (mid-cycle review)	Headteachers and leaders feel confident in overseeing the implementation of the programme in their school. All staff members are suitably trained on the new programme. The minimum average result for literacy across the trust increases from 75% to 85%.

OBJECTIVE A short overview of what the CEO/DCEO need to do.	ACTIONS Details/key steps of how the objective will be achieved.	EVIDENCE Examples of how they show the objective has been achieved.	REVIEW DATE Specific timeline for completion.	DESIRED OUTCOME Details of what success looks like.
SUCCESSION PLAN FOR TRUST GROWTH Create a talent plan to ensure the Trust has the skills and experience within the Senior Leadership Team to lead it into its next stage of growth.	Produce a “capability grid” which assesses the strengths and development areas of the current Senior Executive Team. The “grids” should clearly identify skills/experience gaps between current role and future potential roles. Produce a plan of the agreed actions and next steps for personal development/recruitment required to bridge those gaps.	Completed grid showing the assessment of the skills gaps. Structure showing potential roles required to deliver growth. Personalised development plan for each member of the senior leadership team.	Present a report to the Chair May 2026	Senior leaders have a clear plan for their personal development. The Trust Board have reassurance and clarity on the steps being taken to position the Trust for future growth.

Executive Pay Policy

October 2025



THE CREATIVE LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP TRUST