

Little Acorn Trust is an ambitious primary phase multi academy trust based in Withywood in the south of Bristol. The trust currently consists of one primary school, but also manages two children's centres on behalf of the local authority, through which the trust supports families in education and welfare development. Over the next three years the trust plans to grow to include a further three to four primary schools, and is therefore looking for two **non-executive directors** who can apply their knowledge and experience in **PR, Marketing and Communication, and Property, Architecture, Planning and Estate Management** to help the MAT develop and achieve its strategic aims.

Additionally, they would be very interested to hear from candidates with expertise in **legal or information technology** disciplines. ***Board meetings will take place in south Bristol, BS138RB.***

ABOUT THE TRUST

Established in September 2014 as a multi-academy trust, the Little Acorn Trust's purpose is to improve and enhance the educational opportunities, experience and outcomes for children in the early years and primary phase of education. The Little Acorn Trust is dedicated to providing the good grounding in early years and primary education that will support lifelong learning, improve life choices and life chances. The trust believes that every child can achieve and develop the ambition, resilience, resourcefulness, and independence that underpins success. Pursuing this goal, the trust is committed to working with families, the local community, and other support agencies for the development of the child.

Currently responsible for Four Acres Academy, the trust also manages Four Acres and Bishopsworth Children's Centres, through a service level agreement with the Local Authority. All are Ofsted rated "good" and continuing to improve. The trust has extensive experience in a context of social and economic deprivation and sees clear value in close collaboration and co-operation between schools from varied locations. Little Acorn Trust is committed to diversity, equal opportunity and social justice.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Little Acorn Trust is seeking to expand and take on an additional three to four primary schools within the next three years. The trust is inviting schools to join the multi academy trust as

partners, where there is mutual support and learning. Beyond this initial growth, further expansion will then be developed to complement the schools within the MAT and the context within which it is operating. The trust may decide to become sponsors and take on schools that require improvement. The CEO is the Executive Head of Four Acres Academy. The trust anticipates the role will expand with the needs of the trust as the partnership grows.

The key challenges for the trust are;

- to manage growth at the right pace and attract schools to the MAT that will bring coherence and the right benefits to all in the partnership
- to develop structures and processes for operation and governance that will support and sustain the trust through the expansion of the MAT
- to effectively address and manage the long-term sustainability and operational challenges around the Children's Centres.
- And, a key challenge for all schools and academies is to work within the ever changing framework of Government policy and local context and to successfully deliver its own aims and objectives.

TRUST ETHOS & VALUES

The core values of the trust underpin all its actions and interactions.

Respect – for the rights of others and for its own responsibilities; for democratic principles, for justice and the rule of law.

Integrity – within the trust and in its external dealings; working ethically, with professionalism, high standards and expectations.

Equality – being committed to diversity and equal opportunities; being a fair employer supporting personal and professional development of all staff.

Collaboration – working in collaboration to maximize opportunities and potential: with appropriate external agencies; with other schools to develop teaching and learning; with the local community in the interest of all children and their families.

Commitment – to the trust and the success and well-being of its academies; to promoting a positive working environment that celebrates dedication and commitment.

The model employed by the Little Acorn Trust incorporates a culture of high expectations and challenging targets with regular and consistent monitoring of children's progress and performance, and with specific attention to the performance and progress of key groups including

those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with special educational or additional language needs.

Through distributed leadership the trust empowers senior and middle leaders to engage with and lead specific aspects of enquiry, change and improvement; and where required will not shy away from non-negotiables that are necessary to start the improvement process.

Little Acorn Trust believes that teachers are also learners – where professional development, through both internal and external collaboration and training, is fundamental to both the trust's and the learners' development and improvement.

ROLE SPECIFICATION

NUMBER OF POSITIONS ADVERTISED: 2

ROLE SUMMARY:

The role of the Board of Directors of the trust is to:

- determine the quality and direction of the strategic vision and development, and the legal and financial operation of the trust.
- understand and oversee the strategic development and quality of provision of each school/academy within the trust.
- challenge and monitor performance/impact/effectiveness of the trust's work and standards within each academy.
- identify and oversee the development of resources for the trust's work.
- promote the trust's work and develop effective communication with all stakeholders

The Directors may lead areas of work rather than committees.

As you will be joining the MAT at an early stage of its development, you will play a key role in determining its future and the pace and direction of growth.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Trust is looking for:

- A **Communications** non-executive director with knowledge and experience in **PR and Marketing** to support the trust in its growth strategy:- to increase pupil numbers at each of the Academies, to increase family and community engagement in education and to manage reputational risk. The Trust would welcome someone with a track record in

successfully raising the profile of local organisations, developing stakeholder engagement, marketing strategies, use of social media, PR in the local context.

- A non-executive director with a background in **Property and Estates Asset Management**, knowledge and experience of architecture, planning, development of buildings and outside environments, who can support the trust leadership in effectively managing and developing its academies as contexts for learning.

Additionally – the trust would welcome and be very interested to hear from business professionals with knowledge and experience of **information technology**, or with a **Legal** skill set that could support the trust in its development.

CORE COMPETENCIES :

- Non-executive/ Trustee
- Branding/ Marketing
- Estate Management and Development
- Change Management
- Communication
- Restructuring
- Risk
- Strategic
- Succession Planning
- Turnaround

TIME COMMITMENT

4-8 hours /month minimum

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The trust aims to achieve effective governance through a balance between local school autonomy and collective responsibility. Schools within the trust are encouraged to develop as distinctive communities with their own local governing body but also to operate within the overall shared vision of the multi academy trust. It is important that the character of each school is protected to enable it to be most effective in its local community.

Trust Board

There are currently three Members, who are also Directors, and a further three Directors.

The Directors meet six times a year.

There is an Audit and Finance Committee comprising primarily directors.



Over the forthcoming months the Little Acorn Trust is seeking to strengthen its model of governance by:

- increasing the Members to five and creating greater distinction between the Members and Board of Directors
- increasing the Board of Directors up to nine by bringing in additional external business skills and expertise to complement existing skills and by inviting new non-executives to join the board from the new partner academies.

The Trust works with a number of consultants to bring specific advice to the Board, who are also invited to attend director and/or local governance meetings for specific issues. At present, there are consultants in legal matters, health and safety, and school improvement.

Local Governance

There is a Local Governing Body for each academy in the trust which itself comprises sub committees of local governors set up by the board of directors to develop areas of work, provide advice and information about the way their academy is working and make recommendations to the board of directors. Local Governing Committees report regularly to Directors. For Four Acres Academy, there is currently a Teaching and Learning sub-committee and a Community and Well-being sub-committee.

Governance is reviewed on an annual basis as the trust's work expands, and specific working groups or committees will be set up in future as required.

BACKGROUND ON ACADEMY TRUSTS

Academy schools, which are charities run independently of local authority control, now account for 66% of secondary schools and 19% of primaries – and their number is growing all the time.

Many of these schools are grouped together as multi-academy trusts. If the schools are to fulfil their potential, the trusts need non-executives (known in charity law as trustees) to bring a wide range of skills and experience to help guide strategy, ensure their ambitions can be soundly financed and keep their schools up to the mark delivering for their pupils.

Trusteeship is a voluntary, unpaid role for people who have the energy and skills to make a real contribution to shaping the future of our schools. You do not need to have any specialist knowledge of education.

APPLICATIONS



If you are interested in applying for the role, please send your CV and a short expression of interest detailing which role you are applying for to academyambassadors@newschoolsnetwork.org. For more information, please call 0207 952 8556.

KEY DATES

Applicants should be aware of the following key dates in the recruitment process –

Deadline for applications: 20th July 2016

Interviews: Candidates will be shortlisted and invited to an informal interview either in August or early September with representatives of the Little Acorn Trust board; and from here, if successful, will be invited to attend the board meeting in October to meet the board, subject to an offer being made.