

# Trustees' Report (continued)

## Section 172 (1) Statement for the Financial Year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021

The Trustees of the Board of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust consider, both individually and collectively, that they have acted to promote the success of the Trust taking into account the needs of pupils, colleagues, Trustees, members and other stakeholders and the Trust's wider role in society. In doing so they have taken into account the following matters set out in s172 (1) (a) to (f) of the Companies Act 2006:

- a) The likely consequences of any decision in the long term,
- b) The interests of the Trust's employees,
- c) The need to foster the Trust's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others,
- d) The impact of the Trust's operations on the community and the environment,
- e) The desirability of the Trust maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct, and
- f) The need to act fairly as between Trustees of the Trust.

The Board is mindful that the long-term success of the Trust is critically dependent on the way we work with a large number of notable stakeholders. The table overleaf sets out our focus on the key relationships and shows how engagement with them is addressed by the Board of Trustees, committees, and work streams to help the Trust's decision making. It is important for all Trustees of the Board to gain sufficient understanding of the issues relating to every stakeholder so that their views are considered in Board discussions.

A robust governance framework is in place to ensure that stakeholder considerations are captured, and enhancements made to strengthen the views of our stakeholders in the Board meetings.



# Trustees' Report (continued)

| Stakeholder Group  | Forms of Engagement  | How this stakeholder group influenced the Board agenda and long term decision-making s172 (1)(a)  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>People (our employees) s172(1)(b)(e)</b></p> <p>At the end of August 2021, the trust had 1366 employees.</p> <p>We create an environment in which our people can make a positive contribution, develop their careers and reach their potential. Our ambition is to be an employer of choice across the Education sector and across Bradford.</p> | <p>At Board level: Employees are a key asset to the Trust. We can't have great schools without great people. The BDAT "Growth to Great" strategy is now in its second year of a three-year strategy with the main emphasis being enabling the Trust to be an employer of choice. The Board receives regular updates on progress against the Trust's Employee strategic objectives including key performance recruitment and retention data. Two additional all-staff temperature checks were conducted during 2020-2021 to ensure staff wellbeing, workload, safety, and morale was monitored and informed Trust decisions.</p> <p>At Academy Level: To facilitate engagement, we have established a 'Talent Management work stream including executive team members, school leaders and other key staff. We also have a staff voice group, made up of teachers and non-teaching staff which drives company direction and activity, for example, development of the annual staff survey, and sharing collective practice around wellbeing across school.</p> <p>Engagement with our stakeholders takes many forms with regular and ongoing discussions. This includes presentation to the staff board and sub-committee performance management, annual career discussions, work streams and professional development networks, termly CEO newsletters, employee engagement surveys and most recently through twice-weekly senior leadership briefings on Coronavirus related activity.</p> | <p>During the year 2020-21 the Trust has delivered Board approved employee development initiatives to motivate, engage and support high performance and to retain key talent.</p> <p><b>Early Career Development</b><br/>BDAT is a key strategic partner in the pilot of the Early Careers Framework with the Ambition Institute. This provides better and wider training for our early careers teachers than the traditional Initial Teacher Training (ITT) route only and provides mentoring and tutoring opportunities for our more experienced staff. During 2020-21 we also increased the number of ITT placements within our academies recruiting more Newly Qualified Teacher's (NQT) and teaching students within our Trust. We are the main partner in the roll out of the outstanding Gorse ITT to Bradford, which is part of the DFE Innovation work stream project. The number of apprentices also increased across the Trust utilising the Governments' apprenticeship levy program in core business and administrative support areas.</p> <p><b>Continuous Development</b><br/>The Director for Professional and Careers Development strategically leads professional development. All academies have a ring-fenced staff development budget to invest in their employees – we are seeking to maximise the effective use of this by investing in programmes across our family of schools. The last year has concentrated on online training due to Covid-19 restrictions and a more holistic training approach will return in 2021-2022.</p> <p><b>Leadership Development</b><br/>BDAT staff have continued to be signposted to the full suite of National Professional Qualification (NPQ) leadership qualifications often utilising funding through the opportunity area.</p> <p><b>Diversity and Wellbeing</b><br/>Reflecting our Christian ethos and values. BDAT encourages academic, vocational, mental, physical, and spiritual opportunities and development for each member of our academies. We encourage both professional and personal development and seek to support staff wellbeing. The Trust and each of our academies have Diversity and Wellbeing policies that set out our wellbeing offer including coaching, mentoring, lifestyle coaches and mindfulness. In 2020-21 the Trust will be focusing on Inclusion - one of the key BDAT values, shared across our family of schools. We define it as "understanding everyone is equal, without exception, valuing and encouraging diversity and difference and seeking to learn from others" BDAT recognise 2020 has been a year where we have seen a number of inequalities, gaps and biases come to the forefront across our society. The Black Lives Matter agenda showed that inherent racial inequality and prejudice is still prevalent in our country and Covid-19 has exacerbated the class, poverty, BAME and ethnic divides across many of the most deprived areas in the UK. We will be launching our inclusion strategy in Autumn 2021 and setting up a staff working group to drive this across our schools with additional Trust Board oversight.</p> |

# Trustees' Report (continued)

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| <p><b>Our Pupils s172(1)(c)(d)(e)</b></p> <p>The Trust supported 9,089 pupils during the financial year 2020-21 across our 17 academies. Each academy has a curriculum improvement plan with targeted support for pupils with the greatest need.</p> | <p>At Board level: Our academies hold the key relationship with our pupils. This is intentional as each of our schools are very different and serve a unique set of families. The Trust however does receive intelligence and data on a range of areas which highlight trends, concerns and areas for development. These include attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, education outcomes, cultural capital and extracurricular experiences and so on.</p> <p>Trustees do have an active role within our Academies. From 2018 we established Trustee link roles where each Trustee is a named link with an Academy and spends time throughout the year within a school and talking to staff and students. This gives qualitative feedback on pupils' views and lived experiences.</p> <p>When the Trust lead on core school business activity e.g., headteacher recruitment, student voice is always built into the interview process.</p> <p>At Academy level: Schools have extensive mechanisms to ensure student voice is heard. For example, most schools have student councils which feed directly into Governors, most schools complete regular student and parent surveys throughout the year. All schools consult with pupils on significant changes such as school day, plans for trips, food choice, environment etc.</p> | <p>At Board level: Education outcomes and pupil experience is at the core of all strategic plans reflecting the Trust's mission statement "to provide high quality education within the context of Christian belief and practice so that every child can fulfil their academic potential and accomplish their individual goals".</p> <p>Trustee decision making is always informed by the qualitative and quantitative feedback set out in the column on the left. For example, the Trustees receive regular reports on the disadvantage gap and the impact of the pandemic in increasing disparity in children's outcome and the decline in attendance. As a result, Trustees have ensured that interventions focused on narrowing the gap and improving attendance are central to the 2020-21 Covid-19 Catch Up plans.</p> <p>At Academy level: Student feedback informs all areas of academy action planning. Governors and members of the central executive team regularly visit schools and talk directly to students and families to ensure they have a say.</p> |

# Trustees' Report (continued)

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| <p><b>Our Suppliers s172(1)(c)(e)</b></p> <p>Provide goods and services on which we rely to deliver a quality education to our pupils.</p>  | <p>At Board level: Trustees are responsible for the strategic running of the Trust so do not frequently interact with suppliers. Reports are submitted to the Board on matters of importance regarding goods and services for example, when a concern arose around supplier contact in line with the Trust ethos, Trustee advice was sought. Trustees do support high value procurement of suppliers for example Trust wide insurance or HR. The Finance and Resources Committee and the Audit Committee which are sub-committees of the Board review details of related party transactions and areas of high spend e.g., supply staff cover.</p> <p>At Academy level: The Trust has a robust procurement policy with delegated authorities which are within the Scheme of Delegation. Academies regularly benchmark budgets to ensure value for money and spend against similar schools.</p>   | <p>At Board level: The Board sets the principles around the type of supplier they want Trust business to be associated with e.g., companies with a similar ethos, companies with a local Bradford focus or companies with a charitable background. This provides the parameters for procurement. This is checked through external audit and concerns would be reported to the Board as appropriate. Trustees also pay particular attention to suppliers who may have a related party interest or are high value. Other than that, Trustees are not expected to interact with day-to-day transactional business. View My Financial Insights, a new tool provided by the ESFA, helps the trust quickly benchmark suppliers' value for money.</p>   |
| <p><b>Our Regulators s172(1)(c)</b></p> <p>This includes financial regulators such as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Department for Education and Regional Schools Commissioner and other bodies who hold the Trust to account such as Ofsted or the Diocese of Leeds.</p> | <p>At Board level: It is the Trust's policy to be open and transparent in line with ESFA regulations and the Nolan Principles of Public Life. Trustees work closely with our external auditors to ensure a robust annual review is conducted. The Audit Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee review the annual reports and have the opportunity to discuss any audit findings. The trust has started working with the DfE research teams to develop and improve the digital platforms and financial tools that they make available to the sector.</p> <p>At Academy/Business level: There are normally four fundamental submissions annually to the ESFA however during 2020-2021 there were three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report and Financial Statements. This report reviews the past 12 month's operations from a corporate position and includes an Internal Scrutiny report linked to governance.</li> <li>• Annual Academies Return,</li> <li>• Budget Forecast Return Budget was consolidated with the Budget Forecast Return Outturn</li> </ul> <p>Ofsted review the education standards within the Trust academies. Trustees are involved in all Ofsted inspections and have face-to-face inspection slots. These were paused during 2020-2021 although the Trust continued external quality assurance visits.</p> <p>We are also accountable as a church Trust to the Diocese of Leeds who frequently visit our schools and are invited to all Trust Board meetings. Our church schools are also inspected under the SIAMs framework, although these inspections were paused during 2020-2021 due to the pandemic.</p> | <p>All feedback from the bodies to which we are externally accountable is fed back to the full Trust Board, discussed in Board meetings and then used to inform future activity and priorities. For example, the performance of the Trust is reviewed by the Regional Schools Commissioner – the feedback letter from this was shared with Trustees and used to inform key governance and executive pay conversations.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Executive Officer ensure that all submitted returns are complete, accurate, consistent, timely and in compliance with ESFA's requirements.</p> <p>Feedback from the ESFA is usually conducted through the industry through revisions of the Academy Financial Handbook. These changes are summarised with actions required and communicated to the Board, governing body and Headteachers.</p> <p>External inspection reports such as Ofsted reports are always shared with Trustees and frequently headteachers or senior Trust staff will attend Boards to report lessons learned.</p> <p>Where appropriate, feedback on new guidance from regulatory bodies will be used to refresh school and Trust level policies. The Trust finance policies for example are reviewed each year following the release of the Academies Financial Handbook and Annual Accounts directive. Many of the Trust HR policies were updated this year in light of the DfE Covid-19 Guidance for schools. These are scrutinised and signed off by Trustees.</p> <p>Safeguarding policies are reviewed routinely in response to Keeping Children Safe In Education updates and other best practice recommendations, for example, this year to increase focus and response to harmful sexual behaviour.</p> |



# Trustees' Report (continued)

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| <p><b>Our Community and the local Environment s172(1)(d)(e)</b></p> <p>The local neighbourhood being local housing, businesses, and the environment.</p> | <p>Understanding the local communities our students live in is key to supporting their needs and ensuring they have the best chance to achieve full potential. The Trust Board delegates community links to each local governing body and school as they understand best the communities they serve and hold the strong links to the church, community, and local businesses. Any concerns, positive feedback or complaints trends are reported back to the Trustees at academy level through the half-termly CEO report.</p> <p>While school governing bodies do take the main lead in liaising and supporting community issues, where concerns are significant the Trust does get involved to support the school voice, for example, this year as BDAT we have directly contributed to support school concerns over a local road widening project and impact on air quality. We are also actively supporting another school in the location of a new car park build where the original proposed location highlighted potential safeguarding and road safety concerns.</p> <p>Our Inclusion strategy aims to work with our communities and local families to build cohesive relationships understanding and celebrating our differences.</p> | <p>Community engagement is usually driven at school level however during the pandemic the Trust took the unprecedented decision of writing directly to parents.</p> <p>If trends or concerns in community communications are picked up these are discussed at Trust Board. Our community are informed of large projects or any events that may impact the local community and always have the opportunity to alert BDAT to discuss concerns as well as the school.</p> <p>Websites and social media are regularly updated with latest news items and upcoming events.</p> |

