



November 2023

The appointment of a new chair of trustees

About the trust

The Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust is a small but growing multi-academy trust (MAT) based in south west Hertfordshire. It began in 2019 and its first priority became meeting the challenges and overcoming the impacts of Covid 19. For the last two years it has been focused on growth, and discussions are at an advanced stage with two local primary schools who propose to join. The Trust welcomes both Church of England and community schools.

The trust's philosophy centres on the promotion of connected independence, recognising that each of its schools needs to retain its own clear identity, with a strong sense of autonomy. Schools in the trust are encouraged to maintain a close relationship with their local communities, and to make the most of the knowledge and special status this creates.

The trust promotes and facilitates partnership and collaboration whilst providing its schools with strong governance and robust external administrative and financial structures. The trust is also there to support the schools' local governing bodies in their work, ensuring that the unique character of every school is protected, respected, and strengthened, and that specialist expertise is provided as required.

About the person

Our current chair of trustees, Dame Gillian Pugh, is retiring from the role after a long tenure. We are looking for a successor to build on her legacy and lead the trust through its next exciting phase.

The chair is central to the trust's success and growth. The role needs someone of strong intellect and positive vision, with a track record of senior professional or managerial experience. As it is a voluntary position, which requires dedication and time (about 3 days a month), it might suit someone whose regular employment is part-time, or someone who is semi-retired or recently retired and hoping to make a positive contribution to their community.

The chair must be someone who can offer leadership, inspiration, and strategic vision; someone well-used to working in structured or regulated environments, with extensive experience of governance; someone who sees the bigger picture, who is resilient, able to prioritise and not allow themselves to be consumed by the detail. Experience in education is not mandatory.

The successful candidate should have emotional intelligence and strong interpersonal skills with the clear ability to encourage others and develop effective relationships. They should be authoritative but respectful and able to lead and empower without the need to coerce.



About the opportunity

The trust board is responsible for the strategic oversight, administration, and management of the trust and all its schools, and the development and achievement of the trust's vision. It also must ensure compliance with Government and ESFA requirements, company law, and charity law.

The chair of trustees provides leadership to the trust board, ensuring that it carries out its functions and fulfils its roles effectively, always with a focus on strategic matters. The chair must make sure that the trust has agreed priorities, appropriate structures and processes, and a productive culture within which trustees and senior staff are able to add real value.

Naturally, the chair must also have some understanding of, and interest in, the field of education – although a significant amount of training is available.

The chair sets the board agenda and leads the other trustees in playing a full role in the development and direction of the trust's strategy.

Above all else, the chair (along with the trustees) has three specific priorities:

- To ensure that the trust has clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.
- To oversee the financial performance and probity of the trust and its schools, and to make sure money is spent well and wisely.
- To hold the executive leadership of the trust (the CEO) to account particularly for overall educational and management performance, and the performance management of the trust's staff.

With the last of these in mind, the chair works closely with the CEO, meeting frequently to support and advise, and regularly to appraise them in their role.

When required, the chair will represent and act as advocate for the trust in its dealings with external partners such as the Diocese, Ofsted, and the Department for Education.

The role of the chair has many facets. It can be complex and demanding, but training and support would be provided to help the successful candidate in their role as trustee and chair.

Ultimately the chair's position is extremely rewarding. It provides the opportunity to make a difference and achieve something significant that contributes to the present and future success of pupils, staff, and local communities.

For further information on the Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust and an application form please visit the website <https://www.chessvalleyplt.org.uk/> The closing date for applications is 25th November.

To discuss the post in more detail, email Gillian.pugh@chessvalley.plt.org