



Annex A - Trust Quality Descriptions

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Annex A – Trust Quality Descriptions

In the [Schools White Paper](#), the Department published five pillars of quality for multi-academy trusts. The first three pillars covered:

1. High-Quality and Inclusive Education
2. School Improvement
3. Workforce

The fourth and fifth pillars concerned Financial Management and Strategic Governance respectively. We have heard feedback about the importance of other centralised functions like human resources and estates management. We have also heard about the importance of being clear about the role of executive as well as non-executive leadership. To reflect this, we have expanded the pillars to cover:

4. Finance and Operations
5. Governance and Leadership

As part of the [Academies Regulatory and Commissioning Review](#), we committed to build on the Schools White Paper by setting out more detailed descriptions of each pillar. Following extensive engagement with the Review's External Advisory Group and other stakeholders, we set out the descriptions in draft form in April.

With minor changes, we are now adopting them formally alongside our commissioning guidance.

Together, the descriptions represent a clear and ambitious vision for the academies sector.

As set out in the guidance, stage two of our commissioning approach considers the quality of the trust. The descriptions define the types of quality factors that Regions Group can consider when making decisions. The descriptions should be read alongside the separate evidence annex which sets out the sources Regions Group will draw on to assess quality.

The descriptions will also inform wider policy-making and operational decision-making by the Department. We have, for example, closely aligned the descriptions and the [Multi-Academy Trust CEO Content Framework](#).

The descriptions are one of several ways in which we are providing greater clarity for the sector – helping to inform trusts' improvement and capacity-building priorities. (1) (s)60. (f)30.002 Tc -0.0

High-Quality and Inclusive Education

Theme	Description
Culture	Creates a culture in all its schools that is motivating and ambitious for all, including disadvantaged children and children with SEND, so that students can achieve their full potential.
Curriculum	Oversees the design and implementation of ambitious, broad, well-sequenced and knowledge-rich curricula in all of its schools.
Student outcomes	Achieves good outcomes for all its students by delivering education that is both high-quality and inclusive.
Accessible to all	Operates fair access. Welcomes and effectively teaches disadvantaged children and children with SEND from their local areas.
Inclusive pastoral support	Supports students and schools to address issues so students can stay in mainstream school where possible. Supports students to re-join mainstream education when they have spent time in Alternative Provision.
Enrichment	Enables children to take part in sport, music and cultural opportunities that enrich the curricula and support children's wider development.
Behaviour & attendance	Ensures its schools are places where all students attend regularly, are kept safe, feel calm and supported, and are able to actively participate and progress.
Destinations	Ensures all children leave its schools well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training and prepared to become confident citizens.
Collaboration	Works collaboratively with schools, trusts, local authorities, dioceses, parents and other civic partners to ensure the delivery of statutory functions and acts in the wider interests of the local community.

School Improvement

Theme	Description
Culture	Creates a culture of continuous improvement in its schools through self-evaluation, challenge, support and appropriate action.
School improvement model	Has a clearly defined and effective strategy to improve and maintain the performance of schools that are already part of the trust, as well as those that join.
Transformation	Takes on challenging schools and transforms previously underperforming schools by delivering broad and sustainable improvement.
System-led improvement	Supports the wider system in sharing best practice; helps underperforming schools to improve; and contributes to building a trust-led system.

Workforce

Theme	Description
Culture	Creates a high-

Finance and Operations

Theme	Description
Culture	Recognises the importance of effective and efficient use of resources for the benefit of all schools in the trust and the wider education system.
Financial strategy	Uses financial data and intelligence to set a stable, accurate and sustainable long-term financial strategy for the trust. Has a clear approach to delivering value for money through effective budgeting and risk management.
Resource allocation	Demonstrates efficient and effective use of resources, for example through school and trust resource management benchmarking tools and Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning.

Capital strategy

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Governance and Leadership

Theme	Description
Culture	

The following descriptions are for the trust's board and CEO:

Theme	Board	CEO	Both
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair leads the board to set and champion a clear strategy for the trust, which aligns with the trust's charitable objects, covers all pillars of trust quality and, where applicable, sets out its aspirations for growth over time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads the trust executive leadership team to create and implement an effective trust operating model with clarity about the delivery of trust-level and school-level activities, that aligns with the strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress rigorously to ensure strategic alignment and effective implementation.

Theme	Board	CEO	Both
Executive Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="461 316 987 352">• Ensures high-quality executive		

Theme	Board	CEO	Both
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds executive leadership team to account for the effective implementation of the trust strategy and operating plan, including in relation to the use of resources and the drivers of impact. • Assures itself of the integrity of financial information. • Assures itself that there are robust risk controls and risk management systems. • Assures itself that there is compliance with regulatory, contractual, and statutory requirements, including safeguarding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets annual operating plan, budget, and implements effective operational systems to deliver on the trust's strategy. • Delivers effective risk management across the key functions of the trust. • Ensures compliance with regulatory, contractual and statutory requirements including those within the Academy Trust Handbook. • Safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and has regard to any guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree annual operating plan and budget for the trust, that deliver on the trust strategy. • Agree metrics and process by which progress will be assessed.

Theme	Board	CEO	Both
Non-executive leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures a high performing governance structure where trustees and other non-executive leaders have the expertise to fulfil their functions effectively, with representation that reduces biases in decision-making. 		



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