

Frequently Asked Questions

Academies are publicly funded schools, independent of the local authority, held accountable through a legally binding funding agreement with the Department for Education (DfE). Staff are employed by the academy trust.

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are groups of academies that have come together to form a charitable company, with a single group of 'members' (who have an overview of the governance arrangements) and a single board of trustees.

Even as part of a MAT:

- individual schools remain as separate entities, with separate names and DfE numbers
- individual schools still receive separate Ofsted judgements, and performance tables are still based on individual schools.

MATs are set up as charitable companies and are accountable directly to the Secretary of State through the Regional Schools' Commissioners.

The Aspirations Academies Trust is a ten-year old MAT founded by two highly successful headteachers, Paula and Steve Kenning. This Trust believes in providing education for children from the age of 2 to 18, and now has 16 academies, including 5 primary schools, 2 junior schools, 5 secondary schools, 2 all-through age schools and two studio schools (age 14-18). The academies are all found in four regions: South-West, South Coast, West London and Banbury. The Trust is very successful in improving schools and in developing new schools. All their academies are happy and successful places to learn and work and there are now over 9,000 pupils educated in Aspirations Academies.

As the accompanying vision statement highlights, Aspirations not only want students to achieve high level qualifications, they also want them to be well-prepared for success in this fast-changing world. To this end, in KS2 and KS3 Aspirations has developed a very successful 'No Limits' curriculum, and all post-16 students follow the Aspirations Employability Diploma alongside their A levels. Aspirations believe in high quality training for all staff and have recently created the Aspirations Learning Institute to deliver apprenticeships and a range of high-quality professional development.

Governance

As charitable companies, MATs have articles of association and a scheme of delegation, legal documents that set out the governance composition and procedures for the Trust. The people on the main governing board of a MAT are known as Trustees. These roles come with specific legal responsibilities which include:

- ensuring the organisation remains solvent and spends money in accordance with its charitable objectives
- ensuring the schools in the MAT provide a good standard of education
- managing any conflicts of interest.

MATs are also required to have a group of members who sit above the board of Trustees. The members have a hands-off, but significant, role. They monitor the performance of the Trust and hold the Trustees to account. They appoint Trustees and the Executive Headteacher. They will intervene if the Trustees are not performing by making changes at board level.

Responsibilities

MATs are required to produce a 'scheme of delegation' which outlines what decisions are taken, by whom and at what level of the organisation. MATs must also comply with the Academies Financial Handbook which acts as the financial framework for academy trusts and sets out the financial governance requirements that all trusts must adhere to.

Further information can be found on the website: <https://www.aspirationsacademies.org>