



## **Job Description**

Job Title:	Head of Governance
Salary:	Essex Schools Pay Scale 12, £54,495 - £62,014.
Contract Type:	Part time/Permanent (0.6 contract)
Reporting to:	Chief Executive Officer & Trust Board
Location:	Trust Central Team (with travel across Trust Schools)

## **Core Purpose**

The Head of Governance is the Trust's strategic lead for governance, compliance and assurance, responsible for ensuring that governance across the Trust is highly effective, legally compliant and aligned to best practice.

The postholder will act as the Trust's principal adviser on governance matters, supporting Members, Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer and senior leaders to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

The role combines strategic leadership with operational delivery, including direct responsibility for clerking the Trust Board and committees, while developing a consistent, high-quality governance function across the Trust.

## **Principle Accountabilities and Key Responsibilities**

### 1. Strategic Leadership of Governance

- Lead the design, implementation and continuous improvement of the Trust's governance framework, ensuring it is robust, proportionate and aligned to the Trust's strategic priorities and growth plans.
- Ensure governance structures (Board, committees and School Governing Boards) are effective, clearly defined and operate with appropriate levels of delegation and accountability.
- Keep abreast of national developments, regulation and best practice in academy trust governance and proactively implement improvements across the Trust.
- Provide strategic analysis and advice to the CEO and Board on governance effectiveness, identifying risks, gaps and opportunities for development.
- Develop and maintain an annual governance cycle, aligning business planning, compliance requirements and Board priorities.

### 2. Governance Advice and Assurance



- Act as the Trust's principal adviser on governance, constitutional and procedural matters, ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and guidance.
- Provide high-quality, timely and impartial advice to Members, Trustees, Committee Chairs and senior leaders to support effective decision-making.
- Ensure that governance decisions are properly constituted, legally compliant and supported by clear and accurate records.
- Support the Board in maintaining high standards of accountability, transparency and ethical conduct.
- Advise on conflicts of interest, ensuring these are correctly identified, declared, managed and recorded.

### 3. Board and Committee Clerking

- Act as Governance Professional and clerk to the Trust Board and a minimum of three committees, ensuring meetings are professionally organised and effectively managed.
- Plan and manage the annual cycle of meetings, working closely with the Chair and senior leaders to ensure business is forward-planned and strategically focused.
- Draft and agree agendas that reflect statutory requirements, strategic priorities and key risk areas.
- Coordinate the preparation and submission of high-quality papers, ensuring they are compliant, concise and issued in a timely manner.
- Attend meetings and produce accurate, high-quality minutes that provide a clear record of discussion, decisions and agreed actions.
- Maintain robust systems for tracking actions, ensuring follow-up and accountability
- Support Chairs to review and improve meeting effectiveness and governance practice.

### 4. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

- Act as Company Secretary, ensuring the Trust meets its obligations under company law, charity law and the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Oversee the preparation and submission of statutory returns and filings, including those to Companies House, ESFA and other regulators.
- Maintain all statutory registers and governance records, including Register of Interests, membership records and attendance logs.
- Ensure governance information is published accurately and in line with statutory requirements on Trust and school websites.
- Advise the Board and executive leaders on changes to regulatory requirements and their implications.



## 5. Governance Systems and Documentation

- Lead the development, implementation and maintenance of governance documentation, including policies, procedures and frameworks.
- Ensure there is clear ownership, version control and review cycles for all governance-related policies.
- Maintain and develop governance systems (e.g. digital governance platforms) to improve efficiency, accessibility and record keeping.
- Manage the Trust's policy register and ensure all policies are reviewed within agreed timelines and aligned to statutory requirements.
- Ensure documentation is audit-ready and supports internal scrutiny and external inspection.

## 6. Governance Membership and Development

- Lead on the recruitment, appointment and succession planning of Trustees and Governors, ensuring governance bodies are appropriately constituted and skilled.
- Oversee processes for elections, appointments, resignations and terms of office.
- Design and deliver a structured induction programme for new Trustees and Governors.
- Coordinate ongoing training and development, ensuring governance stakeholders maintain the skills and knowledge required for their roles.
- Lead governance self-evaluation processes, including skills audits and external reviews, and support implementation of improvement actions.

## 7. Trust-wide Governance Coordination

- Provide professional leadership and oversight of governance across all schools within the Trust
- Support, guide and quality assure the work of Local Governing Body clerks to ensure consistency of practice and high standards.
- Develop standardised processes, templates and guidance to support effective governance across the Trust.
- Offer advice and support to school leaders and governance stakeholders on governance-related matters.
- Promote a culture of strong, effective and compliant governance across the organisation.

## 8. Risk, Audit and Assurance



- Work collaboratively with senior leaders to ensure governance supports and strengthens the Trust's risk management framework.
- Contribute to the development and review of the Trust's risk register, ensuring governance risks are clearly identified and mitigated.
- Support internal scrutiny, audit processes and external reviews, ensuring governance requirements are met.
- Ensure all governance documentation and processes are inspection-ready, particularly in relation to Ofsted and ESFA expectations.
- Monitor compliance and report on governance performance, providing assurance to the Board.

## 9. Stakeholder Engagement and Relationships

- Build and maintain effective working relationships with Members, Trustees, senior leaders, school leaders and external partners.
- Act as a key interface between governance and operational leadership, ensuring clear communication and alignment.
- Liaise with external advisers, including legal and governance professionals, where required.
- Represent the Trust in external governance networks to share best practice and remain informed of sector developments.

## 10. Safeguarding, Ethics and Standards

- Ensure governance arrangements support compliance with safeguarding legislation and statutory duties.
- Promote ethical leadership and high standards of conduct in line with the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- Maintain strict confidentiality in all aspects of the role
- Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within governance practices and decision-making.

The Vine Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



<p>Qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree level qualification or equivalent experience.</li> <li>• Relevant governance or professional qualification (e.g. CGI / Level 4 Certificate in Governance)</li> <li>• Evidence of continuous professional development</li> </ul>	<p>Essential Desirable Essential</p>
<p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant experience in governance, compliance or company secretarial role within a complex organisation (education, public sector, charity or similar)</li> <li>• Experience of advising Boards, Trustees or senior leaders at a strategic level</li> <li>• Experience of clerking Board and/or committee meetings and producing high-quality minutes</li> <li>• Experience of leading or coordinating governance across multiple sites or teams</li> <li>• Experience of statutory compliance, regulatory returns and governance assurance</li> <li>• Experience of policy development, review and implementation</li> <li>• Experience within the education or multi-academy trust sector</li> </ul>	<p>Essential Essential Essential Essential Essential Essential Desirable</p>
<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong understanding of academy trust governance frameworks and regulatory requirements</li> <li>• Strong understanding of academy trust governance frameworks and regulatory requirements</li> <li>• Knowledge of Academy Trust Handbook, company law and charity law</li> <li>• Understanding of governance best practice, including Board effectiveness and assurance</li> <li>• Awareness of risk management, audit and internal scrutiny requirements</li> </ul>	<p>Essential Essential Essential Essential Desirable</p>
<p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent organisational and planning skills, with the ability to manage complex workloads and competing priorities</li> <li>• Excellent written communication skills, including report writing and high-quality minute taking</li> <li>• Strong verbal communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to influence and build relationships at senior level</li> <li>• Ability to provide clear, confident and constructive challenge to senior stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>Essential Essential Essential Essential</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret governance requirements and apply them in practice</li> <li>• Ability to work independently, exercise sound judgement and maintain confidentiality</li> <li>• Strong IT skills and ability to use governance systems and digital platforms effectively</li> </ul>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p>
<p>Leadership and Personal Qualities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of integrity and commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life</li> <li>• Ability to operate with independence while working collaboratively with senior leaders and Trustees</li> <li>• Professional, resilient and able to remain calm under pressure</li> <li>• Highly motivated, proactive and able to take initiative</li> <li>• Ability to lead, influence and support others (including clerks and governance stakeholders)</li> <li>• Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion</li> <li>• Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people</li> </ul>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p>
<p>Other Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to attend evening meetings and work flexibly to meet the needs of the role</li> <li>• Ability to travel across Trust schools as required</li> </ul>	<p>Essential</p> <p>Essential</p>