



**DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER  
ACADEMY TRUST**

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Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant

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# WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE TRUST BOARD AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Thank you for your interest in joining the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT). We are delighted that you are considering applying for the role of Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant, a pivotal position at the heart of our Trust.

At DCAT, our mission is rooted in our Every Child Strategy, a commitment to ensuring that every pupil flourishes academically, socially and personally. Achieving this ambition relies upon strong governance, high-quality leadership and effective collaboration across our schools and central team. This role plays a vital part in enabling that success by ensuring our governance is robust, our leadership is well supported, and our strategic priorities are effectively coordinated.

This is a unique opportunity to work at the centre of Trust leadership, supporting the work of the Trust Board, its committees and the Executive Leadership Team. The postholder will provide professional governance advice, ensure high standards of compliance and organisation, and play a key role in facilitating effective decision-making across the Trust. At the same time, the role offers the opportunity to contribute to executive coordination, communication and strategic delivery at the highest level.

We are seeking an individual who brings professionalism, discretion and strategic awareness, alongside excellent organisational and communication skills. The successful candidate will be confident working with senior leaders and Trustees, able to manage complex priorities, and committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance and integrity.

At DCAT, we pride ourselves on being a collaborative and supportive organisation, underpinned by our values of wisdom, respect and aspiration. We are committed to professional development, continuous improvement and creating an environment in which colleagues can thrive and make a meaningful contribution to our shared mission.

We hope the information within this pack gives you a clear insight into the role and the opportunities it offers. We look forward to receiving your application.

*J Dunn*

Rev. Dr. Jack Dunn  
Chair of the Trust Board



Mark Talbot  
Chief Executive

# ABOUT THE TRUST

DCAT is a thriving and growing Trust on the south coast of England, with 28 current schools, 9000+ children and 1300+ staff.

## Our founding aims

**D**eveloping the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential.

**C**ontinuing development of staff is valued and improves education for young people.

**A**ll schools are improving and perform above national expectations.

**T**he distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated.

- All Saints CE Junior Academy
- Chantry Community Primary School
- Christ Church CE Primary & Nursery Academy
- Dudley Infant Academy
- Heene Church of England Primary School
- Hurst Green CE Primary School & Nursery
- Lanesend Primary School
- Little Common School
- Newick Church of England Primary School
- Ninfield CE School
- Northiam C of E Primary School
- St Andrew's CE Infants' School
- St Blasius Shanklin C of E Primary Academy
- St Catherine's College
- St Columba C of E Primary School
- St Francis Catholic & Church of England Primary Academy
- St James' CE Primary Academy
- St John's Meads C of E Primary School
- St Joseph's Infant School
- St Joseph's CE Junior School
- St Leonards CEP Academy
- St Margaret's Church of England Primary School
- St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School
- St Paul's CE Academy
- Sedlescombe CE Primary School
- The Haven CE Methodist Primary School
- The March CE Primary School
- Tollgate Community Junior School

The Trust came into being in 2014 and strives to ensure that all children in our care reach their God-given potential. Our vision is to grow from strong foundations of clear aims, firm values, and positive relationships. We aim to bring together church schools, to drive and maintain improvement and to share economies to maximise resources for teaching and learning in the classroom.

Our vision is to provide every child in each of the academies with the very best education possible; inspirational, fully rounded and rooted in our Christian beliefs and values.

The Trust undertakes to ensure each academy delivers a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum for all. Each school within the Trust, however, is unique and encouraged to have their own identity. Our central team are there to support the schools, for example in Academy Improvement Reviews, governance support, HR, Finance and CPD offerings.

To find out more you can read our Every Child Strategy here: [The Every Child Strategy 2026–2028](#)

# JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Position</b>	Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Director of Operations (Governance) CEO (Executive Assistant)
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Providing governance support to the Trust Board and its committees, and executive assistance to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team. The role helps ensure governance processes run effectively, meetings and communications are well organised, and Trust priorities are coordinated efficiently.
<b>Key relationships:</b>	Trustees Chairs of Local Governing Bodies Executive Team Trust Centre team
<b>Key Terms and Conditions:</b>	East Sussex Single Status Grade 13, scp 34-36 Salary range: £47,410 - £50,582pa FTE (Actual Salary Range: £45,161 - £48,183 pa) Term time plus 4 weeks (43 working weeks) Permanent
<b>Base</b>	Eastbourne Office, St Catherine's College, with flexible working options Meetings are generally held at Church House, Hove

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be required to undertake appropriate safeguarding checks including an enhanced DBS checks.

## Job Purpose

The Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant plays a pivotal role in ensuring the effective functioning of high-quality governance and executive leadership across the Trust.

The postholder provides professional governance advice, clerking and compliance support to the Trust Board and its committees, while also delivering high level executive assistance to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team.

The role ensures that governance is robust, decision making is well informed, and the Executive Team operates efficiently through excellent organisation, high quality briefing support and strong coordination across the Trust.

This role sits at the centre of Trust leadership and requires professionalism, discretion, strategic awareness and the ability to work confidently with senior leaders, trustees and stakeholders.

## Why this role matters

The Trust is committed to delivering the Every Child Strategy, ensuring that every pupil flourishes academically, socially and personally. Achieving this ambition requires strong governance, effective leadership and clear communication across the organisation.

The Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant plays an important enabling role in this work. By ensuring that governance operates effectively, executive leaders are well supported, and strategic priorities are clearly coordinated, the postholder helps create the conditions in which schools and leaders can focus on what matters most: improving outcomes and opportunities for every pupil.

Through professional governance support, excellent organisation and strong relationships across the Trust, the role contributes to the collective leadership that underpins the Trust's mission.

# Key Responsibilities

## Strategic Governance Advice

- Provide independent, high-quality governance advice to the Chair, CEO and Trustees, ensuring adherence to the Academy Trust Handbook, statutory frameworks, Trust policies and best practice guidance.
- Support the Chair in creating conditions for effective board operation, constructive challenge, and balanced contribution from all trustees.
- Support the design, implementation and continuous improvement of governance systems, processes and documentation, for the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies.

## Governance Framework and Compliance

- Maintain and regularly review the Articles of Association, Scheme of Delegation, committee Terms of Reference, governance handbook ensuring full compliance and up-to-date publication.
- Ensure correct recording and publication of appointments, registers of interest, GIAS entries, policy cycles, and statutory reports (e.g., gender pay gap, modern slavery).

## Trust Board and Committee Administration

- Provide clerking to Trust Board meetings, including working groups
- Plan agendas with Chairs and senior leaders to enable strategic, forward-looking discussion, and ensure papers are high-quality, succinct and circulated in good time
- Produce accurate minutes, action logs and maintain oversight of meeting cycle planning.
- Support efficient management of panels and working groups, identifying opportunities to streamline processes

## Board Evaluation, Training & Development

- Coordinate the board's self-evaluation cycle, including skills audits, succession planning and training needs analysis.
- Plan whole-board and targeted training ensuring statutory training completion.
- Ensure the recruitment of Trustees and Governors is undertaken strategically and informed by skills audits and succession planning, ensuring the Board and Local Governing Bodies benefit from a broad and relevant range of expertise.
- Maintain induction programmes for trustees and local governors, ensuring onboarding is comprehensive and timely.

## Stakeholder Communication & Two-Way Governance Engagement

- Act as a professional point of contact between the Executive Team and key stakeholders including Trustees, school leaders, governors and external partners.
- Support Local Governing Bodies and clerks with governance advice and guidance, providing training and support when required.
- Line manage DCAT Clerks.
- Work closely with the Trust's Marketing, Communications, Events and PR Lead to ensure executive communications, announcements and strategic messaging are accurate, timely and aligned with Trust priorities.

- Support the preparation and coordination of executive communications including Board briefings, leadership updates, Trust announcements and key strategic documents.
- Ensure communications arising from governance meetings, Executive decisions and strategic initiatives are effectively shared with the Marketing, Communications, Events and PR function for wider dissemination where appropriate.
- Provide administrative and briefing support for Trust communications including newsletters, strategic updates, events and leadership messages.
- Coordinate with the Marketing, Communications, Events and PR Lead to ensure consistent messaging across governance papers, executive communications and Trust publications.
- Maintain clear communication channels between the Executive Team, governance structures and the Trust's communications function.

### **Executive Assistant Support**

- Provide proactive and confidential EA support to the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team.
- Manage complex executive diaries, ensuring priorities are clearly structured and time is used effectively.
- Support the preparation of board reports, strategy papers and Trust wide communications.
- Act as a central coordination point for Executive Leadership Team activity.
- Support administrative coordination for Executive Leadership Team meetings, ensuring they are well organised, documented and followed up through clear action tracking.
- Anticipate executive needs and proactively manage information, deadlines and priorities.
- Support the CEO in maintaining oversight of strategic initiatives and Trust priorities.
- Support the planning of Trust-wide projects and operational initiatives.
- Engaging with sector to ensure that ELT is informed of sector best practice and emerging issues.

### **Administration**

- Work with all members of the Trust team to develop and improve systems, policies and initiatives in line with the Trust development plan
- Liaise professionally with schools, central teams and external stakeholders.
- Support the onboarding and governance integration of new schools joining the Trust
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### **Professional Development & Personal Qualities**

- Engage actively in CPD relevant to governance, administration and Trust leadership.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of education, charity and company law, safeguarding and compliance.
- Demonstrate excellent communication, organisation, resilience and relationship-building skills.

## General Responsibilities

- Adhere to Trust safeguarding policies and undertake all required safeguarding training. Carry out duties reasonably required within the scope and level of the role. Promote the values and mission of the Trust and contribute positively to a culture of professionalism, collaboration and continuous improvement.

## Other

- To undertake such duties at the discretion of the Executive Team as may reasonably be required by the changing needs of the Trust.
- To maintain a positive view of change and be prepared to adapt the role as the Trust grows, matures and evolves.
- The list of duties is not exhaustive and the postholder may be required to undertake other responsibilities appropriate to the grade of the post.
- Christian principles underpin the way the organisation runs and its partnership with schools and academies and the post-holder must be committed to the organisation's vision and values.

This job description only contains the main accountabilities relating to the post and does not describe in detail all the duties required to carry them out. The postholder may be required to undertake other duties and responsibilities that are commensurate with the nature and level of the post.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>Qualifications</b>	
Degree or equivalent professional qualification in an appropriate discipline or appropriate work experience	D
Evidence of commitment to ongoing learning and continuous professional development	E
Professional governance qualification or training (e.g. NGA, Chartered Governance Institute, ICSA or similar)	D
Relevant qualification in administration, governance or business support	D
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	
Strong knowledge of the operation of effective boards and governance structures	E
Understanding of the Academy Trust Handbook and academy governance requirements	E
Excellent written communication skills including the ability to produce clear minutes, briefings and reports for a range of audiences	E
Strong organisational and planning skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines	E
Strong IT skills including Microsoft 365, Teams and document management systems	E
Ability to produce engaging communications across digital and print platforms	E
Ability to interpret complex information and present it clearly and accurately	E
Ability to maintain strict confidentiality and professional integrity	E
Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to build positive relationships with Trustees, senior leaders and stakeholders	E
Ability to manage executive diaries, meetings and complex schedules	E
Knowledge of governance compliance processes including registers, statutory requirements and decision logs	E
Understanding of a curiosity to know more about, the education sector and academy trust governance	E
Ability to create effective strategic communications and preparing leadership briefings	E
<b>Experience of</b>	
Supporting senior leaders, executives or boards	D
Preparing quality agendas, minutes and meeting documentation	E
Managing complex administrative or organisational processes	E

Coordinating meetings, events or organisational activity across multiple stakeholders	E
Supporting governance, committee or board processes	E
Working within an academy trust, education organisation, charity or public sector body	D
Supporting organisational strategy or leadership activity	D
<b>Personal Attributes</b>	
Aligned with and able to model the Trust values of wisdom, respect and aspiration	E
High expectations for themselves and the quality of their work	E
Commitment to supporting the Trust's vision that every child achieves and thrives	E
Highly organised with strong attention to detail	E
Strong attention to detail and pride in producing high-quality work	E
Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues across schools and central teams	E
Ability to work independently and use initiative	E
Adaptable and responsive to change and a fast changing environment	E
Professional, discreet and trustworthy when handling confidential information	E

# HOW TO APPLY

If you are a senior leader and you'd like to know more about the Trust Governance Professional and Executive Assistant role, please get in touch with our Director of Operations and Governance, Jo Saunders - [jsaunders@dcac.academy](mailto:jsaunders@dcac.academy).

Please complete an application form and return to [jsaunders@dcac.academy](mailto:jsaunders@dcac.academy) by Monday 15th June 2026, by 9am. Application forms are available to download on the DCAT website - [DCAT](#). Please note that CV's will not be considered.

**Close date:** Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026, 9.00 am.

**Interview dates:** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026 – interview location to be confirmed.

## References

All successful appointments are subject to receipt of three satisfactory references, and all applicants will undergo safer recruitment screening, including checks with previous employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

*Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments will be subject to safeguarding checks including an enhanced DBS check. All school-based jobs are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as the work brings employees into contact with children who are regarded by the Act as a vulnerable group. Applicants for school-based jobs must, therefore, disclose all spent and unspent convictions.*

# Guidance Notes for Applicants

## Application Form

It is imperative that the application form is completed in full and signed. Please follow the instruction to use black ink or typescript as your form may be scanned or photocopied. If you are submitting your application form electronically, you will be asked to sign the form should you be invited to interview.

When submitting your application, it is important that you relate your skills, experience and abilities against the person specification, identifying against each criterion, examples of your expertise. The shortlisting panel cannot guess or make assumptions.

Please do not attach a previously prepared CV as an alternative, as this will not be considered. It is important that we are able to compare candidates' experience by drawing on the same range of information. Statements in support of an application will often need to be longer than the space provided on the form, and these should be attached to the application on a separate sheet. Please refer to the information contained within the recruitment pack for the length and presentation of your personal statement.

The selection panel will look to see how well you have focused your application on the needs of the school in addition to relating your skills and knowledge to the person specification with supporting evidence which demonstrates how you meet the range of criteria.

## Referees

We take up references on shortlisted candidates. Please give your current or most recent employer as one of your referees. For leadership positions we will take up three references. As an applicant for a Head of School post, you should provide the name and address of your Director of Children's Services, or CEO of your Academy Trust, together with a second referee who should be the Chair of Governors or in the case of a serving Deputy, the Head of School of your current school. We ask that you do not include photocopies of open testimonials. We will always write to your current or previous employer for a professional judgement of your suitability for the post. If you have been employed in your present school for less than five years, the governing body may wish to seek further supporting information from your previous employer(s).

## Qualifications

Please bring documentary evidence of your Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and other relevant qualifications (excluding GCSE, "O" and "A" levels) to your interview. The selection panel will ask to see the original certificate, and copies will be taken for your application. If you have achieved the National Professional Qualification for Head of Schools (NPQH) or any other professional qualifications e.g., National Qualification for School Leaders (NPQSL), National Qualification for Middle Leaders (NPQML), please bring copies of these qualifications to the interview for checking.

## Medical Information and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosure

Prior to appointment, you will need to complete a health statement which will be assessed by our OH referral service.

DCAT and St Margaret's Church of England Primary School are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All staff will be expected to hold or be willing to obtain an enhanced DBS disclosure issued with the school as the employer.

This disclosure will need to be approved by the school before we can fully confirm your appointment. Please note that having a criminal record does not automatically mean that an offer of appointment will be withdrawn.

## **Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (“the 2018 Regulations”)**

The post of Head of School is directly concerned with the management of early or later years provision; therefore, the post is covered by the 2018 Regulations.

The school will need to ensure that they are not knowingly employing a person who is disqualified under the 2018 Regulations in connection with relevant childcare provision. Accordingly, the successful candidate will be required to demonstrate to the school, by completing a self-declaration form as part of the preemployment checks process, that they have not been disqualified under the 2018 Regulations.

If the preferred candidate is found to be disqualified under the 2018 Regulations, the offer of employment will be subject to the application by the preferred candidate to Ofsted for a waiver and the receipt of a waiver from Ofsted.

### **Eligibility to Work in the UK**

In line with Safer Recruitment guidance issued by the DfE and other employment related legislation, you will be required to provide evidence of your identity and eligibility to work in the UK.

The evidence required is one of the following documents:

- a full British passport (current or expired) or other passport stating your eligibility to work in the UK.
- a full birth certificate issued in the UK or Republic of Ireland AND an official document showing your National Insurance number, for example, P45, P60 or a document issued by HM Revenue & Customs or another Government Department. (A document showing a temporary NI number would not be satisfactory.)

### **Data protection**

DCAT will only process the information you have provided in this form for the purpose of recruitment and selection and, if you are successful in securing this position, for purposes relating to your employment.

Your details will be kept both electronically and in hard copy. We will not disclose this information about you to outside organisations or third parties unless there is a legal requirement to do so, or for the prevention and detection of fraud.

For further information, see our privacy notice for job applicants at - [Trust Policies](#)

### **Self-declaration Form – Short-listed Candidates**

All candidates short-listed for interview will be sent a self-declaration form. The purpose of this form is to determine the suitability of candidates to work with children. This process follows statutory guidance set out in the DfE publication Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in working for our schools and wish you all the best.

