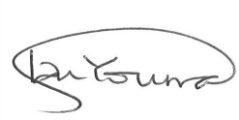
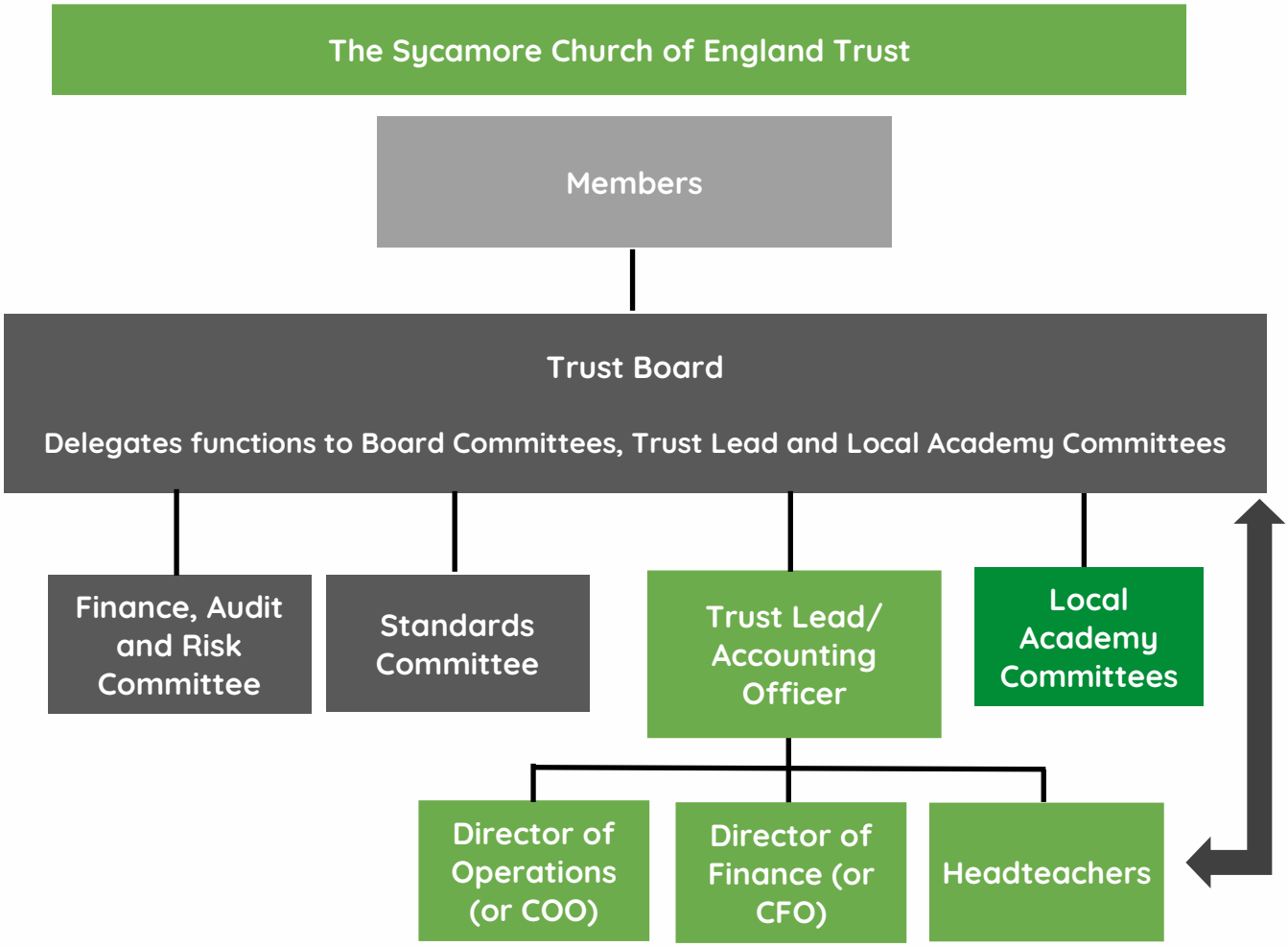
The Sycamore Church of England Trust

Grow together, Learn forever

Scheme of Delegation

Applicable to:	All Trust Schools
Adopted By:	Trust Board
Date Reviewed:	October 2026
Authorised Signatory:	
Mr Ian Young – Trust Leader and CEO	
Mr Mark Granby – Chair of Board of Trustees	
Review Period:	Annually
Next Review:	October 2027

Date	Reason
October 2023	Reviewed and updated with change of name
30 October 2024	Scheme of Delegation reviewed and agreed at Trust Board Meeting (no changes required)
October 2025	Review of content – minor changes e.g. reference to most recent Academies Trust Handbook



Governance Structure and Lines of Accountability

- The board of trustees is responsible for the three core governance functions[1].
- The board of trustees appoint the chief executive (Trust Lead), to whom it delegates responsibility for delivery of its vision and strategy and will hold the Trust Lead to account for the conduct and performance of the trust, including the performance of the academies within the trust, and for its financial management.
- In turn, the Trust Lead line manages other senior leaders and Headteacher's, including setting their appraisal targets.
- The board constitutes committees for finance, audit and risk and standards; these look in detail at resources and progress and attainment across the trust. As board committees, at least three trustees must sit on each[2].
- The board delegates some of its school level functions to Local Academy Committees and uses these to promote stakeholder engagement and as a point of consultation and representation. Trustees do not need to sit on Local Academy Committees, and so lines of communication to the board of trustees must be clearly established.
- As the Local Academy Committee has fewer governance functions than the governing body in a maintained school, this model will affect the Local Academy Committee's role in Ofsted inspections.

[1] As detailed in the DfE Governance Handbook

[2] Terms of reference of committees are detailed in the Trust's Governance Handbook

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the members

The members of the trust are guardians of the governance of the trust and as such have a different status to trustees. Originally, they were signatories to the memorandum of association and will have agreed to the trust's first articles of association (the legal document which outlines the governance structure and how the trust will operate). The articles of association describe how members are recruited and replaced, and how many of the trustees the members can appoint to the trust board. The members appoint trustees to ensure that the trust's charitable object is carried out and so must be able to remove trustees if they fail to fulfil this responsibility. Accordingly, the trust board submits an annual report on the performance of the trust to the members. Members are also responsible for approving any amendments made to the trust's articles of association. They are also responsible for appointing the external auditor for the trust.

There must be at least three members, although the DfE prefer at least five, and while members are permitted to be appointed as trustees, in order to retain a degree of separation of powers between the members and the trust board, and in line with DfE expectations, not all members should be trustees. Members are not permitted to be employees of the Academy Trust.

The role of the trustees

The MAT is a charitable company, and so trustees are both charity trustees (within the terms of section 177(1) of the Charities Act 2011) and company directors. Because trustees are bound by both charity and company law, the terms 'trustees' and 'directors' are often used interchangeably. NGA uses the term trustee as it avoids the possible confusion caused when executive leaders are called directors but are neither company directors nor trustees.

The trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the trust, and in accordance with the provisions set out in the memorandum and articles of association and its funding agreement, it is legally responsible and accountable for all statutory functions, for the performance of all schools within the trust, and must approve a written scheme of delegation of financial powers that maintains robust internal control arrangements. In addition, it must carry out the three core governance functions:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
2. Hold the executive to account for the educational performance of the trust's schools and their pupils, and the appraisal of staff.
3. Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure its money is well spent.

The board of trustees has the right to review and adapt its governance structure at any time which includes removing delegation.

3 The roles and responsibilities align with the expectations in the October 2020 DfE publication Academy Trust Governance – Structures and Role Descriptors

The role of the trust board committees

The board of trustees may establish committees to carry out some of its governance functions which may include making decisions, although any decisions made will be deemed decisions of the trust board. The membership (there must be at least three trustees) and responsibilities of board committees are set out in the committee's terms of reference. It is usual for the trust board to appoint board committee chairs and committee members according to their skills.

The Academy Trust Handbook 2025 makes it clear that the board of trustees 'should have an audit and risk committee to which the board delegates financial scrutiny and oversight'. This may sit within the terms of reference of the finance committee. In trusts with income above a certain level, there must be a separate audit and risk committee.

The role of the Trust Lead (TL)

The Trust Lead has the delegated responsibility for the operational management of the trust including the performance of the trust's academies and so the Trust Lead manages the appraisal of our headteachers.

The Trust Lead is also the accounting officer for the trust and so has overall responsibility for the operation of the academy trust's financial responsibilities and must ensure that the organisation is run with financial effectiveness and stability, avoiding waste and securing value for money.

The Trust Lead leads the executive management team of the Academy Trust. The Trust Lead will delegate executive management functions to the executive management team and is accountable to the trust board for the performance of the executive management team.

The role of the Local Academy Committees

The trustees may establish Local Academy Committees (LACs) to carry out some of its school level functions. Trustees are not required to sit on LACs. Trustees will appoint the chair and ensure that two parents are elected to each LAC. They will also ensure that where a school is a faith school that a faith partner is appointed to safeguard the faith foundation of the school. There will also be an elected staff partner and then other partners appointed to ensure the committee has the range of skills to effectively discharge its functions. The LACs should meet on a termly basis.

Typically, functions of a LAC will include:

- Building an understanding of how the school is led and managed.
- Ensuring that the curriculum intent is ambitious and meets the needs of the school community and that it is implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that there is compliance with trust policies.
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Being a point of consultation and representation

As with academy committees, LACs are appointed by the board, and so delegation can be removed at any time.

The role of the headteachers

The headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of their school and are managed by the Trust Lead. They report to the LAC on matters which have been delegated to it. The headteachers also form part of the senior leadership team for the trust and will work in collaboration with other members of the executive.

The scheme of delegation

Key
Column 1: Members
Column 2: Board of Trustees of The Sycamore CE Trust
Column 3: Trust Board Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
Column 4: Trust Board Standards Committee
Column 5: Trust Lead
Column 6: Local Academy Committees (P: Partner School, S: Sponsored School)
Column 7: Headteachers
Green box Function **cannot** be legally carried out at this level.
Ö Action to be undertaken at this level (Trust)
Ö Action to be undertaken at this level (School)
A Provide advice and support to those accountable for decision making
<>Direction of advice and support

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trust Board	FAR Committee	Standards Committee	Trust Lead	LAC		Head teacher
							P	S	
Governance framework									
Governance	Members: Appoint/Remove	√							
	Foundation Trustees: Appoint/Remove	√							
	Co-opted Trustees: Appoint/Remove		√						
	Role descriptions for members	√							
	Role descriptions for trustees/chair/ specific roles /committee/ LAC: agree		√			<A	<A		
	specific roles/committee/LAC: agree		√						
	Parent LAC representatives: election process								√
	Board committee chairs: appoint and remove		√	<A	<A	<A			
	LAC chairs: appoint and remove		√			<A	<A	<A	<A
	Clerk to board/board committee: appoint and remove		√						
	Clerk to LAC: appoint and remove		√			<A			
Systems and structures	Articles of association: review and agree	√	<A			<A			
	Governance structure (committees) for the trust: establish and review annually		√			<A			
	Terms of reference for board committees and scheme of delegation for LAC: agree annually		√			<A			
	Skills audit: complete and recruit to fill gaps		√			<A>	√	√	<A
	Register of business and pecuniary interests: establish and publish		√				√	√	
	Annual self-review of trust board and committees		√						

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trust Board	FAR Committee	Standards Committe	Trust Lead	LAC		Head teacher
							P	S	
Systems and structures	Annual self-review of LAC: complete annually		A>				√	√	
	Chair's performance: carry out 360 review periodically		√				√	√	
	Trustee / academy committee/LAC member contribution: review annually		√				√	√	
	Succession: plan		√			<A>	√	√	<A
	Annual schedule of business: agree		√	<A	<A	<A			
	Annual schedule of business for LAC: agree					A>	√	√	<A
Reporting									
Reporting	Publication on trust and schools websites of all required details on governance arrangements		√			<A	√	√	<A
	Annual report on performance of the trust: submit to members and publish		√			<A			
	Annual report and accounts including accounting policies, signed statement on regularity, propriety and compliance, incorporating governance statement demonstrating value for money: submit		√	<A		<A			
Being Strategic									
Being Strategic	Setting the vision, values and strategic aims of the trust		√			<A			
	Aligning the vision, values and strategic aims of the school with those of the trust					A>	√		<A
	Trust strategic plan: establish and monitor		√			<A			

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trust Board	FAR Committee	Standards Committee	Trust Lead	LAC		Head teacher
							P	S	
Being Strategic	School Improvement Plan: establish and monitor					A>	√		<A
	Determine trust wide policies which reflect the trust's ethos and values (facilitating discussions with unions where appropriate) including: admissions; charging and remissions; complaints; expenses; health and safety, premises management; data protection and FOI; staffing policies including capability, discipline, conduct and grievance: approve		√	√	√	<A			
	Determine school level policies which reflect the school's ethos and values to include e.g. admissions; SEND;				A>	A>	√	√	<A
	Central spend : agree		√	<A		<A			
	Management of risk: establish register, review and monitor		√	<A	<A	<A>			<A
	Engagement with stakeholders		√			√	√	√	√
	Trust's vision and strategy, agreeing key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured: determine		√			<A			
	Schools vision and strategy, agreeing key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured: determine				√	A>	√	√	<A
	Trust Lead: appoint and dismiss		√						
	School headteacher : appoint and dismiss		√			<A	<A		

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trust Board	FAR Committee	Standards Committee	Trust Lead	LAC		Head teacher
							P	S	
Being Strategic	Budget plan to support delivery of trust key priorities: including capital programme: agree and monitor		√	<A		<A			
	Budget plan to support delivery of school key priorities: agree			√		<A	√	<A	<A
	Trust's central staffing structure: agree		√	<A		<A			
	School staffing structure: agree			√		<A	<A	<A	<A
Holding to account									
Holding to account	Auditing and reporting arrangements for matters of compliance (e.g. safeguarding, H&S, employment, information security): agree		√	<A	<A	<A	<A	<A	A
	Reporting arrangements for progress on key priorities: agree		√	<A	<A	√	√	√	A
	Appraisal of the Trust Leader: undertake		√						
	Appraisal of headteachers : undertake					√	<A		
	Trustee monitoring: agree arrangements		√			<A			
	LAC partner monitoring: agree arrangements				A>	A>	√	√	
	LAC overall performance monitoring: agree arrangements				√		<A	<A	

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trust Board	FAR Committee	Standards Committee	Trust Lead	LAC		Head teacher
							P	S	
Ensuring financial probity									
Ensuring financial probity	Chief finance officer for delivery of trusts detailed accounting processes: appoint		√	<A		<A			
	Trust's scheme of financial delegation: establish and review			√		<A			
	Appoint the Trust External Auditors	√		<A		<A			
	External auditors' report: receive and respond		√	<A		<A			
	Appoint internal scrutineer and oversee programme of internal scrutiny			√					
	Trust Lead pay award: agree		√						
	Headteacher pay award: agree			A>		√	<A		
	Staff appraisal procedure and pay progression policy: agree			√		<A			<A
	Benchmarking and trust wide value for money: ensure robustness			√		<A			
	Develop trust wide procurement strategies and efficiency savings programme					√			
	Review and approve trust wide procurement strategies and efficiency savings programme			√		<A			