

Creating a
better future
for the next generation

A guide to corporate partnerships



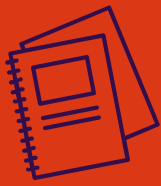
“Corporate Britain has a huge role to play in education and particularly in bringing leadership skills and experience to academy trusts. I encourage academy trusts and business leaders to come together through Academy Ambassadors.”

Sir Paul Marshall, Founder of Marshall Wace LLP and Chair of Ark Schools

**Academy
Ambassadors**
A NEW SCHOOLS NETWORK PROGRAMME

Employers in education: *part of a better future*

Improving the life chances of young people, particularly the disadvantaged, is critical to the UK's social and economic success. Our future economic prosperity depends upon the growth in skills and confidence of school leavers.



Nearly **750,000** children
are still taught in academies
which are less than Good¹



New Schools Network's Academy Ambassadors Programme provides a free, bespoke service to HR, corporate responsibility and talent teams in organisations that are seeking board roles for their senior leaders. The Programme matches business expertise with academy trusts seeking to strengthen their boards.

We are the
5th
largest economy
in the world



...but our system ranks in the
twenties
when judged on the educational
performance of our 15-year-olds²



“Helping students achieve their full potential through effective schooling and tutoring is critical to ensuring the development of talent in the UK, while also being hugely rewarding for those involved in the process. Any way in which I can bring the skills I’ve learned through my professional experience to bear in this context is a huge honour.”

Gemma Rogers, Deputy Global Head of the Financial Intelligence Unit at HSBC

¹ Ofsted state-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information 2019.

² OECD PISA Excellence and Equity in Education, 2015.

Q & A

What are academies and academy trusts?

Academies are state schools that are funded directly by the government, rather than the local authority. Over 50% of children are now educated in an academy. The number of academies has expanded rapidly from 200 to over 8,500 since 2010 with two-thirds coming together to create academy trusts. Each trust has a board that includes non-executive directors (NEDs) from outside education.

Why should employers be involved?

There is no better way for an organisation to focus its engagement in education than by working at board level. Employee time invested in academy trust non-executive director roles has significant impact across many schools and pupils. Employees are rewarded with intellectual challenge and the development of their leadership capabilities.

The rapid growth in the number of academy trusts has generated exceptional demand for business leaders to join their boards. Education leaders recognise that they cannot transform standards alone. The demand for non-executive directors ranges from start-ups to the largest trust in England which comprises over 60 schools.

What does an academy trust board do?

The board members lead the trust and provide oversight. Academy trusts face the same challenges as any business: defining a compelling vision and strategy; operating within financial constraints; and creating a strong and effective governance structure.

CASE STUDY:

PwC



PwC is an international professional services firm. Since 2015 Academy Ambassadors and PwC have promoted board opportunities to its staff via the company intranet, mailouts and teleconferences. By Summer 2019, 21 senior employees had been appointed to academy trusts boards.

Reece Booth, who led the partnership with PwC, says: *“Encouraging staff to get involved with the Academy Ambassadors Programme aligns with the two main principles of our corporate sustainability strategy: ‘doing the right thing’ and ‘being a catalyst for change’. That in turn leads to our employees making more enlightened business decisions based on their first-hand involvement with the wider community.”*

Kieran McGing, Associate Director at PwC Manchester, agrees: *“I have been able to bring in a range of new ideas and challenge from both a risk and financial perspective. The role can be challenging at times but ultimately it is a rewarding experience that I would recommend. I know that I am bringing a key skill set to the board.”*

CASE STUDY:

Lloyds Banking Group

LLOYDS
BANKING
GROUP



Lloyds Banking Group is a financial services body with millions of UK customers and a presence in nearly every community. Building on a long tradition of engagement in education, the Group decided to consolidate its efforts by focusing on governance in one specific region. The nationwide programme, StandingOut, was launched in Yorkshire – an area of significant educational need that also has a strong Lloyds Banking Group presence.

StandingOut offers employees a range of structured opportunities to get involved. The HR and talent development teams are closely involved and specific teams are targeted to ensure key personnel are put forward for the governance roles.

David Rowsell, Head of Education & Employability Programmes, explains: *“At Lloyds Banking Group we have enjoyed a great partnership with the Academy Ambassadors Programme. They have proved very effective at connecting a number of Lloyds executives with multi-academy trusts, which now benefit from the expertise of some of our most senior colleagues. This partnership is part of our wider commitment to improving school performance through good governance, supporting our aim to help Britain prosper.”*

What skills & experience are required on the board of a multi-academy trust?

The key skill for all trustees is to be able to offer strategic guidance, challenge and support across a range of areas including, but not exclusively, their own professional skill set. e.g. ALL trustees should offer a view as to how well the public funds are spent.



Auditing

Review the accounts/statements from CFO. Offer challenge as to how/where money is spent



Finance

Ensure best value by challenging leaders over spending decisions and if budgets are aligned to priorities



Branding and Marketing

Offer advice on messaging to stakeholder via challenge to execs



Human Resources

Challenge the execs on HR policies, Performance Management, recruitment, retention, well-being



CEO and General Management

Challenge expansion plans and whether systems are robust depending on complexity of organisation



IT / Technology

Challenge leaders on organisation- wide integration, efficiency and procurement



Change / Growth Management

Offer challenge for growth and transformation



Legal and Compliance

Challenge leaders over matters of due diligence and the way they are handling complex personnel cases or contracts they are minded to enter into



Corporate Governance

Advise on structures for more efficient/prudent operation/management



Property and Real Estate

Offer challenge to leaders in relation to how the trust manages its property portfolio including its use of capital development funding and facilities management



Entrepreneur / Founder

Challenging for innovation and advising on when systems need to change as trust develops/moves to a new phase



Risk

Offer challenge to executive as to how effectively they manage the range of risks as well as the trust's risk register

How does it work?

Companies like **PwC, Rolls Royce, Lloyds Banking Group** and **Mishcon de Reya** choose academy trust board roles for their talent development pipeline programmes because non-executive roles develop and test leadership competencies at pace in a mission-driven environment. New Schools Network's Academy Ambassadors Programme provides a bespoke service to HR and talent teams and currently work with organisations via promoting the latest board opportunities across England, visiting schools, business breakfasts, one-to-one meetings teleconferences and networking events.

The Programme is endorsed by the Institute of Directors (IoD) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI).

Will our people have impact if they volunteer?

The Academy Ambassadors 2016-17 cohort delivered over £4.5 million in value measured by time commitment alone, with much greater value delivered in terms of impact on academies' costs and performance.³

Non-executive directors have significant influence and impact- their authority is backed by the devolved funding, accountability and control inherent within the academies organisational structure.

Can the Academy Ambassadors Programme form part of our internal talent development?

Yes. The Academy Ambassadors Programme can either provide significant control to the employer over which employees volunteer or offer a more open partnership. For example, some employers choose to work with the Programme as part of diversity, female leadership, retiring partners or top talent development. The Programme usually involves communications to employees at an appropriate level: business breakfast events with senior leaders and occasional Ministerial events. Employers receive feedback on responses, appointments and impact. The key competencies developed are in the areas of: strategic leadership; accountability; people; structures; compliance and evaluation.

CASE STUDY:

Mishcon de Reya

Mishcon de Reya

Mishcon de Reya is an independent law firm based in London. The Academy Ambassadors Programme has worked with Mishcon de Reya to attract employees as non-executive directors through a variety of events, including one-to-one meetings, business breakfasts and the annual Mishcon de Reya Social Impact Fair where employees can meet many volunteering organisations.

Georgina Yik, Senior Social Impact Executive, says: *"We understand that lawyers are well positioned to impact society. We want our people to develop their potential and be exposed to new thinking from both within and outside the world of law."*

Kate Higgins, Legal Director, REAch2 South Central adds: *"With the help of the Academy Ambassadors Programme, I was placed with a growing and highly successful multi-academy trust. Two years on, I can honestly say that it has been a rewarding experience for me. Schools are businesses in a highly regulated sector, not dissimilar to law firms. I soon felt I was adding value, whilst at the same time benefitting from experience in the board room and learning new and interesting ways of tackling different issues."*

What are the benefits of a corporate partnership?



Priority board opportunities



Webinars



Business breakfasts



One-to-one meetings with governance experts



School visits



Ministerial events

Some of the organisations already involved:



Mishcon de Reya



Rolls-Royce®



“In my time as Chair at Pontefract Academies Trust, it’s already obvious that there are opportunities for business professionals to add value in support of a board’s activities.”

Phil Jones, Chief Executive of Northern Powergrid, and Regional Chair of Yorkshire and Humber CBI

Find out more at newschoolsnetwork.org/aap/partners

**New
Schools
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Ambassadors**
A NEW SCHOOLS NETWORK PROGRAMME



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