



Astrea Academy Trust

LEARN, THRIVE, SUCCEED

Trustees

Candidate Pack



A Letter from the Chair

Astrea was founded in 2015 and welcomed its first schools in May 2016. Within three years, 27 schools had joined the trust across two regions and encompassing four local authority areas. The trust's journey has been one of two parts: an initial entrepreneurial, fast-growing phase between 2016 and 2020, then a period of post-pandemic consolidation, deepened alignment and greater definition of what it means to be Astrea.

In 2025, we launched the Astrea 2030 strategy, marking the start of "Astrea 3.0", the realisation of our collective ambition as a trust and as a community united by scholarship. We can have confidence that our approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and culture are delivering results, so our new strategy is about going further and faster, hand-in-hand with the communities we serve.

We are clear-sighted about the challenges ahead of us in achieving the academic standards that all our pupils deserve, and we are tenacious in our resolve to overcome the barriers that stand in the way.

To achieve our strategic objectives, we prioritise knowledge, scholarship and outcomes. We champion schools as calm, purposeful and brilliant places of academic rigour, exemplary behaviour and broad opportunity. We go further for those children who need more from us, building schools around the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, knowing this will serve all children well.

We invest in the expertise of our professionals and our volunteers and bring them together to make the most of their collective potential. We offer broad opportunities, investing in electives and the co-curricular offers of our schools and we play a key part in enabling our communities to thrive in a way that is distinctively local.

We are seeking to appoint up to three new trustees to strengthen, diversify and advance the actions of the Board. Further detail on the specific skillsets we are looking for are outlined in the Candidate Pack, but more than anything else, we are looking for people who are truly motivated and committed to the mission of improving the lives of children in Cambridgeshire and South Yorkshire.

As the Chair of Trustees, it is an enormous privilege to serve the students and school communities at Astrea Academy Trust and I hope you too will consider this a rewarding opportunity to have an impact on the lives of thousands of young people and all those who work so hard to make it happen. We have a new strategy in place to tackle the challenges ahead, a committed and passionate executive team and a clear moral purpose to deliver on our mission.

Thank you for your interest.



Mr Ben Brown
Chair of Trustees

About the Trust

The trust has 26 academies across South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire

We are committed to ensuring that all children in the trust have accelerated opportunities that enable them to learn, thrive, and lead successful lives. Our ambition is to tackle historical educational disadvantage and to play our part in the social regeneration of areas that have experienced poor education opportunities.

The trust has grown rapidly since its creation and now educates around 15,000 students in 26 academies. In Cambridgeshire, the trust comprises four secondary schools and one SEMH special school. In South Yorkshire, the trust works through seventeen primary academies, one all-through school, and three secondary schools.

The trust's Executive Team is led by Rowena Hackwood as Chief Executive Officer. A wider central team supports the work of individual academies in core areas such as academic support, inclusion, governance, finance, HR, estates, and IT. With a 2030 strategy in place, we are clear and specific about our vision for behaviour, curriculum and teaching quality.

All our academies are rated **GOOD** by Ofsted.



Astrea in Numbers

26
ACADEMIES

2,000
MEMBERS
OF
STAFF



£115m
TOTAL
INCOME

100%
RATED 'GOOD'

14,000 PUPILS

£3.9m
REINVESTED
INTO SCHOOLS
TO IMPROVE
FACILITIES AND
INFRASTRUCTURE



Our Academies

PRIMARY



SECONDARY



ALL-THROUGH



SPECIAL



Our Vision and Values

Our future success is underpinned by a strong set of shared values. These values are important because they support the vision, shape the culture, and make a statement about what we hold dear.



SCHOLARSHIP:

We are informed by the best of academic and organisational thinking and research, using this where we can and expanding it where possible.



CURIOSITY:

We ask searching questions, not taking things at face value, seeking out the best of what is known and engaging in appreciative enquiry.



TENACITY:

We deliver on our promises and see things through to completion. We embody pace, urgency and determination in our focus on improving outcomes for children and on our own performance.

Governance

Astrea is principally a charity and, like all multi-academy trusts, we are also a company limited by guarantee. Trustees are therefore also company directors, and have a responsibility to act in accordance with charity law, company law as well as school governance standards.

The trust invests to ensure that members of the Board are well-supported by professional governance expertise and advice.

We currently have ten Trustees who collectively offer a range of skills and experience from across the public, private and third sectors.

Trustees' responsibilities under charity law can be summarised as:

- ensuring the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit;
- complying with the charity's governing document (the Articles of Association) and the law;
- acting in the charity's best interests;
- managing the charity's resources responsibly;
- acting with reasonable care and skill;
- ensuring the charity is accountable.

As directors, they also have the following duties in accordance with the Companies Act 2006:

- to act within powers;
- to promote the success of the company;
- to exercise independent judgment;
- to exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence;
- to avoid conflicts of interest;
- not to accept benefits from third parties;
- to declare interest in proposed transaction or arrangement.

For the purposes of English school governance requirements, the Board of Trustees is the governing body for each school in the trust as well as of the trust as a whole. It therefore has responsibility for:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils,
- the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.



Role Description: Trustees

We are seeking to appoint up to three new Trustees to join the Board. Trustees are expected to carry out the following specific responsibilities:

Strategic direction - Trustees will work in partnership with our Executive Leaders to ensure that:

- there is a clear strategic direction and a common understanding of this by stakeholders, including the regular review of strategic plans and priorities;
- operational plans and budgets effectively support the vision and strategy;
- stakeholders' views (e.g. parents, pupils, local communities, and employees) are regularly sought and considered;
- there is a regular review of external factors that might affect the trust, such as political, financial or demographic.

Trust Performance - Trustees are responsible for the performance of the trust, for its impact upon stakeholders and for its corporate behaviour. They fulfil this role by:

- ensuring that the trust's values are understood and put into practice;
- ensuring that the trust measures its impact and progress towards its strategic objectives and regularly considering reports on the trust's performance;
- guaranteeing that there are policies in place to direct key areas of the charity's business, including effective employment policies;
- recruiting the Chief Executive and holding them to account for the management, performance and administration of the charity;
- providing support and challenge for the Chief Executive, ensuring they receive regular, constructive feedback on their performance and in meeting their objectives;
- ensuring that there are complaints systems in place for stakeholders.

Prudent Management of Resources - Trustees are stewards of the Trust's assets, both tangible and intangible, and are responsible for how they are used. As such, they are responsible for:

- ensuring that the trust's financial obligations are met and that there are adequate financial controls in place to ensure all money due is received and properly applied, and that all assets and liabilities are recorded;
- undertaking to act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to the trust and always in the interests of the trust;
- being accountable for the solvency of the trust;
- reviewing the condition and use of the assets owned by the trust;
- regularly identifying and reviewing major risks to the trust and ensuring systems are in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.

Role Description: Cont.

Good Governance - Trustees should ensure that the trust upholds the highest standard of governance by ensuring that:

- the governance structure of the trust is appropriate to a charity of its size, stage of development and its charitable objects;
- decisions are always made with a view to promoting the education and well-being of Astrea pupils;
- the board maintains a clear and well-understood scheme of delegation;
- Trustees have a code of conduct and comply with it, and that there are mechanisms in place for the removal of Trustees in the event of non-compliance;
- major decisions and policies are made by the Trustees acting collectively;
- a skills audit is regularly conducted to ensure the board has the skills required to govern the trust;
- the board regularly reviews the trust's governance structure and its own performance.

Compliance - Trustees must ensure that the trust complies with all legal and regulatory requirements by:

- ensuring that Astrea complies with charity law and with regulatory requirements;
- ensuring the trust does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its Articles of Association, funding agreement or the Academy Trust Handbook;
- verifying the trust complies with the requirements of any legislation and other regulators that govern the activities of the trust;
- acting with integrity and avoiding conflicts of interest.



All candidates will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, capabilities and experience:

- a strong interest in education and a commitment to raising standards;
- strategic vision and understanding;
- the ability to communicate effectively, to express ideas clearly and to engage actively with others;
- a willingness to abide by the trust's Code of Conduct and the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership;
- the ability to deliver support and challenge to the Executive Team and the schools; to challenge and probe and participate in robust debate;
- a willingness to undertake relevant training to develop a greater understanding of the schools, the trust and the role of Trustee;
- an interest in voluntary service and a willingness to commit the necessary time to the business of the trust.

Applications are particularly welcomed from candidates with senior-level experience in the following areas:

- a substantial personal or professional connection to the Doncaster City or Barnsley area;
- insight or expertise in broadening access to sports, the arts and civic engagement, or involvement in the funding of such initiatives;
- significant procurement expertise, with experience operating at scale;
- a strong commercial background, with the ability to contribute to strategic decision-making and governance.

We are also open to candidates who bring relevant policy-making experience, including those who have previously held political roles or advised on policy development. Having successfully recruited a good number of trustees with professional experience of education, this round of recruitment is focused on broadening the range of experience at the board level and so it is likely that appointments will be made from outside the education sector.

Operational success

relies fundamentally

on **the success**
of our people 

Commitment and Expectations

The Board of Trustees meets a minimum of five times a year in September, October, December, March and July. The first of these is a two-hour remote meeting. The others are held in person for three hours in an afternoon, with the opportunity to visit a school in the morning.

Candidates would also be expected to sit on two of the Board's committees, which meet up to five times a year (depending on the committee). These meetings will be held remotely.

We estimate the time commitment to be a minimum of 20 hours per term, which includes visits, meetings, and the reading of papers.

Trustees are expected to get to know our schools by visiting and attending school events, such as open days or parent forums. Trustees are also encouraged to attend Astrea conferences to support their own development in the role.

The role of trustee is voluntary and not remunerated, however any reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed in line with the trust's policy.

The appointment of all Trustees is to a term of four years.



Appointment Details and How to Apply



If you are interested in learning more about the role of Trustee at Astrea Academy Trust, please contact Stephen Casey at recruitment@astreaacademytrust.org to arrange an informal conversation.

Please include your current CV and a short statement outlining why you would like to become a Trustee at Astrea.

Formal application materials will then be provided to those who wish to proceed.

Application deadline: Midnight (BST), Sunday 29 March 2026
Interviews scheduled: Tuesday 28 April 2026

An appointment will be confirmed subject to the receipt of satisfactory references (referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

Safeguarding - We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts are subject to enhanced DBS checks.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - We embrace diversity and champion equality of opportunity. As an equal-opportunity employer, we welcome applicants from all backgrounds and consider all requests for flexible working.

We know that diversity fosters creativity and innovation. We are committed to building a fair, inclusive culture where everyone feels they belong and where a diversity of perspectives is valued and encouraged.

Disability Confident Employer - As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to supporting disabled applicants and colleagues by:

- Ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- Guaranteeing an interview for disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role
- Providing reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment and interview process



Please visit our website to
learn more.

www.astreaacademytrust.org



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