

Reach South Academy Trust

Improvement Board

Terms of Reference 2026–27

1. Purpose

An Improvement Board is established by the Board of Trustees where a school requires enhanced governance oversight to secure rapid improvement, address significant concerns, or support a period of intervention, recovery or stabilisation.

The Improvement Board provides intensive scrutiny, challenge and support to academy leaders and the Executive Team, with a focus on securing sustainable improvements in educational standards, leadership, safeguarding, culture, attendance, behaviour and operational effectiveness.

Where an Improvement Board is established, it shall operate in place of the Local Governance Committee (LGC) for the duration of the intervention period, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Trustees.

The Improvement Board operates within the Reach South Academy Trust Scheme of Delegation and reports directly to the Board of Trustees and Chief Executive Officer.

2. Authority

The Improvement Board is authorised by the Board of Trustees to:

- Scrutinise all aspects of academy performance and improvement
- Monitor implementation of any Academy Improvement Plan, Recovery Plan or Trust intervention strategy
- Seek information and assurance from academy leaders and Trust executives
- Receive reports from Trust leaders, external partners, advisers and school improvement professionals
- Escalate concerns, risks and recommendations directly to the Trust Board and Executive Team
- Exercise any delegated responsibilities assigned by the Board of Trustees for the duration of the intervention period

The Improvement Board may only exercise delegated authority expressly granted by the Board and may not exercise powers reserved to the Board of Trustees

3. Membership

The Improvement Board shall ordinarily comprise:

- At least three individuals appointed by the Board of Trustees
- Up to two senior Trust leaders appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer
- Additional members with relevant expertise where considered necessary by the Board of Trustees

In making appointments, the Trust Board shall seek to ensure members collectively possess expertise in school improvement, leadership, governance, safeguarding, curriculum, finance or organisational change as appropriate to the academy's circumstances

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees

The Headteacher and relevant Trust leaders shall attend meetings unless otherwise determined by the Chair.

The Governance Professional shall provide clerking support to the Improvement Board.

4. Meetings

The Improvement Board shall ordinarily meet at least once every half term, with additional meetings arranged where necessary

The frequency of meetings may be increased where the level of risk or pace of improvement requires enhanced oversight

Meetings may be held in person, virtually or through hybrid arrangements

The quorum shall be one half of the membership, rounded up

Agenda papers shall normally be circulated at least five working days in advance

5. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Improvement Board are set out in full in Appendix 1.

The Improvement Board provides assurance to the Board through scrutiny of the following key areas:

- Academy improvement and recovery planning
- Leadership capacity and effectiveness
- Educational standards and pupil outcomes
- Safeguarding and pupil welfare
- Attendance, behaviour and culture
- Inclusion, SEND and vulnerable pupils
- Risk management and compliance
- Stakeholder confidence and community engagement
- Readiness for reintegration into standard governance arrangements

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Improvement Board shall focus on securing sustainable improvement and restoring the academy to a position where governance can return to standard Local Governance Committee arrangements.

6. Reporting

The Improvement Board shall:

- Provide reports and recommendations to the Board of Trustees following each meeting
- Escalate significant concerns, risks and barriers to improvement
- Monitor delivery against agreed improvement milestones
- Report on the effectiveness of intervention activity and the impact of support provided
- Make recommendations regarding the continuation, modification or cessation of Improvement Board arrangements

7. Review

Improvement Board arrangements are intended to be temporary and targeted. The Board of Trustees shall review the need for the Improvement Board at least annually, and ordinarily within twelve months of establishment

The Board shall determine whether:

- Improvement Board arrangements should continue;
- Delegated responsibilities should be revised;
- Governance should transition back to a Local Governance Committee; or
- Alternative arrangements are required.

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually and amended as necessary.

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Appendix 1:

Area	Responsibilities
Improvement Planning and Leadership	Monitor implementation of the Academy Improvement Plan, Recovery Plan or Trust intervention strategy
	Review progress against agreed improvement milestones and success criteria
	Receive assurance regarding leadership capacity, capability and effectiveness
	Challenge delays, barriers and underperformance and ensure appropriate corrective actions are implemented
Educational Standards and Outcomes	Scrutinise attainment, progress, attendance, behaviour and wider indicators of school effectiveness
	Monitor the impact of improvement activity on pupil outcomes
	Receive assurance that appropriate intervention and support are in place where performance falls below expectations
Safeguarding, Inclusion and Pupil Welfare	Monitor safeguarding culture, compliance and statutory requirements
	Review provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and other vulnerable groups
	Receive assurance regarding pupil welfare, inclusion and equality obligations
	Escalate significant safeguarding concerns where necessary
Risk, Compliance and Operational Effectiveness	Monitor significant risks that may affect the academy's improvement trajectory
	Receive assurance regarding compliance with statutory, regulatory and Trust requirements
	Review outcomes from audits, inspections, external reviews and compliance activities
	Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken to address identified weaknesses
Stakeholder Confidence and Community Engagement	Monitor engagement with parents, staff, pupils and the wider community where relevant to recovery and improvement
	Consider stakeholder feedback and its implications for improvement planning
	Support the rebuilding of confidence in the academy where required
Governance Review and Transition Planning	Review progress towards sustainable improvement and readiness to return to standard governance arrangements
	Receive assurance that leadership, performance and compliance improvements are embedded and sustainable
	Make recommendations to the Board regarding continuation, modification or cessation of Improvement Board arrangements