



CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHAIR

WELCOME

Dear applicant

Thank you for your interest in joining DCAT as Chair.

Children stand at the heart of everything we do. We are continuously focussed on realising our vision, *helping every child achieve their God-given potential*. The Trust aims to develop each child in its 27 schools to be keen to learn and able to work together, to listen to and care for each other, and to be confident in the knowledge that they are known and valued.

The new Chair will join an organisation with a track record of success. We are well-placed to develop a new strategy, which will set out how we plan to work towards realising our vision, consistent with our values and the Government's emerging policy towards Multi Academy Trusts.

Over ten years, we have fulfilled our initial ambition for growth, with most schools rated in the top two Ofsted grades and all demonstrating measurable improvement. We now have the scope and opportunity to embed excellence. Our sound financial foundations, robust framework of governance and our committed and able Executive Team underpin our confidence. The recent departure of a long-standing and highly-regarded Chair has created this opportunity to enrich the Board by seeking an external appointment to lead its development and, in collaboration with the Executive Team, our new strategy.

A key part of the Chair's role will be to help build on that collaboration. This will involve enabling the talented and motivated Board actively to complement the current reconfiguration of the Executive Team in a partnership of accountability and constructive engagement in line with our new strategic intent. This is a challenging and rewarding role at a critical stage in the Trust's development.

DCAT's foundation lies within the Church of England, and our vision and values are an expression of our faith. But not all our schools are church schools and our Board is strengthened by the contribution of Trustees who do not have a religious faith. We seek someone whose own values are closely aligned with our own and who, leading the trustees, is committed to doing the very best for our schools and the children who attend them.

If you believe you have the experience, skills and attributes we are looking for, we would very much look forward to hearing from you.

Nick Taunt
Interim Chair



ABOUT US

Founded in 2015 initially to cater for the needs of Church of England schools in the Diocese of Chichester, DCAT has seen planned and successful growth. Today, nearly 9000 children are taught and supported by 1200 staff in 27 DCAT schools across the South coast.

We respect the uniquely individual character of each school while offering the strong support and guidance of a community of schools within an affirmative Christian culture.

That individuality is reflected in our schools' differences:

- Our primary schools range from 90 children to 667; and a secondary school of 1090 young people aged 11-16;
- Our children come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Nine schools are located in some of the most deprived areas in England and three in some of the least (IDACI);
- There is a wide spread amongst our schools of children with special needs or disabilities (SEND): six schools are above the national average of 21%, with our highest school having 37.1%.

This variety encourages mutual support and partnership in the Trust. Ofsted inspections consistently report improving outcomes in a positive and inclusive environment; five schools moved to 'good' from the inherited lowest ratings.

DCAT enjoys a high reputation regionally and attracts other schools to join us. It is a sign of our wide appeal that two outstanding schools have chosen to join DCAT. We are also highly successful in MAT mergers into our Trust. Currently in the top ten fastest expanded Trusts in the UK, the Department for Education has recognised DCAT as a 'strong' Multi Academy Trust.

The educational landscape is changing. In the Trust's response to national challenges, a platform for excellence with three key strategic dimensions is emerging to create the conditions to enable every child to thrive:

- **Aspiring to excellence in leadership** *We develop, sustain and empower strong, visionary leaders—today and in the future—who strive for excellence.*
- **Building excellence through collaborative teaching and learning** *We strengthen collaboration and innovation to deliver greater impact, ensuring excellence for all learners, especially underperforming groups.*
- **Creating excellent and empowering systems** *We design and implement sustainable, efficient systems that provide the foundation for schools to take their own steps toward excellence.*

The Chair has a key role leading the collaboration between the Executive Leadership Team and the Board to realise these aims across the Trust. We welcome and are excited to be at this challenging point in our development.

FIND OUT MORE

Visit our website at <https://dcat.academy/>

Please [click here](#) to see our Annual Reports and Financial Statements.



STAFF QUOTES

"Leadership team are around to support the staff when needed. They have a positive approach to staff and their wellbeing. They take the time to engage and get to know their staff well. Always pleasant and make us feel good."

"School leaders show great determination, with the willpower and patience to see things through."

"I feel we have a strong leadership team, through which staff are supported to develop their practice. Leaders are dedicated to improvement and are passionate about their work."

"I'm really enjoying working for DCAT. The support given during our recent Ofsted is something I've not experienced before."

"Very supportive, happy and caring work environment"

"DCAT have gone from strength to strength. I am proud to work for a Trust where every voice is heard and every person is valued."





QUOTES FROM THE CHILDREN

"I love DCAT enriched as we get to meet all the other schools"

We asked – what is it like to be a pupil in a DCAT school:

"Respected"

"At home"

"Supported"

"Safe"

"Happy, calm and safe"

"We do loads of activities"

THE CHAIR APPOINTMENT

The Board of Trustees is DCAT's most senior governance group, providing support, strategic direction and constructive challenge to our Executive Team. The Board also plays a critical and collaborative role in ensuring strong governance across 27 schools. We are looking for a Chair who will lead and inspire our Board to deliver our strategic ambitions successfully. At a time of change in the Education Sector, you will help us both seize the opportunities ahead and manage the risks.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROLE

Board leadership and strategic oversight

- Uphold the objects of the Articles of Association of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.
- Ensure the Trust Board fulfils its principal responsibilities of Strategic Leadership, Accountability & Assurance, and Engagement.
- Chair Board meetings and establish a high-trust and high-accountability culture, in which the Board discharges its statutory responsibilities.
- Shape and sustain a Board culture consistent with the vision and values of DCAT and which is supportive of its strategic and business objectives.
- Foster an effective partnership, based on trust and support, between Board and Executive Leadership Team.
- Utilise the Board in a way that makes best use of its collective talents and experience.
- Oversee all Board activities, and the activities of committees, and attend committee meetings as required.
- Act as a 'sounding board' for the CEO and senior team, for example to discuss ideas before formal Board consideration.
- Line-manage the CEO and hold them to account for their responsibilities.

Upholding the Trust's profile

- Act as an effective communicator and ambassador for DCAT, representing our vision and values in a style and tone appropriate to the audience.
- Manage key stakeholder relationships with Ofsted, DfE, DBoE and DoCET and others, in partnership with the CEO.
- Visit schools and the DCAT Centre.
- Act as ex officio Member of DCAT.

The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonable, commensurate with the profile and responsibility of the role. Some support with diary management etc will be available to the postholder.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Please note that written applications will be considered against the knowledge and experience criteria, with broader attributes explored at interview stage with selected candidates.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- Senior non-executive board experience is essential. It is likely that you have already held a post as Chair, Vice-Chair, Senior Independent Director or Committee Chair, with experience of leading and developing inclusive boards. (Experience gained as Chair, especially of another charity, is advantageous.)
- Experience of successfully developing fit-for-purpose governance arrangements and of modelling good practice, ideally within a charity setting.
- Broad senior management experience gained in either the commercial or public sectors, ideally with experience of multi-site, dispersed organisations.
- Insight into the education system would be an asset for this role along with an appreciation of the relevant regulatory frameworks and associated governance for DCAT.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- A fluent communicator with highly effective interpersonal and influencing skills.
- Listening skills: ability to establish rapport and personal credibility quickly.
- Sharp strategic skills: ability to both reflect on issues, and act.
- Advanced chairing skills: ability to build and foster strong and inclusive teams.

PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- Trusted and emotionally intelligent team-player with a 'low-ego' style.
- Leadership presence that fosters collegiate ways of working by empowering colleagues and encouraging engagement.
- Undisputed personal integrity with an unwavering commitment to the Nolan principles of Public Life.
- Demonstrates personal values which are compatible with DCAT's: the successful candidate will be motivated to work with and improve the prospects of children.



TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

REMUNERATION

This appointment is offered on a voluntary basis with all reasonable expenses incurred in post fully reimbursed.

Please note that additionally administrative support will be provided to the Chair.

TIME COMMITMENT

Around one day per week (up to 52 days per year). We are looking for a Chair who demonstrates personal flexibility as needed.

LENGTH OF APPOINTMENT

The Chair is initially appointed for a term of 4 years which may be renewed once.

LOCATION

Schools are situated along the South coast of England from Rye to Bournemouth. Centre staff work from bases in Eastbourne and Chichester, with Board and Committee meetings normally held at Church House, Hove. While online attendance at school meetings is acceptable, Board and Committee meetings are held face-to-face.



HOW TO APPLY

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/dcat-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- a CV (no more than three sides) or equivalent biographical information
- a short covering letter that explains your motivation, suitability and availability and confirms that you are not subject to any conflict of interest

Please tell us if there are any dates during the selection process (outlined below) when you would not be available to participate. If you have a disability and identify any barriers in the job description or person specification, please let us know during the application process.

Closing date is Friday 2nd May 2025.

SELECTION TIMETABLE

Closing date	Friday 2nd May 2025
First stage discussions	w/c 12th and 19th May 2025
Agreement of the shortlist	w/c 26th May 2025
Informal conversations with stakeholders	Early June 2025
Final interviews	Early to mid-June (TBC)

