



The Education Endowment Foundation

Brief for trustee applicants

March 2026



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

The EEF exists to break the link between family income and educational achievement. As an independent charity, we generate, synthesise and mobilise evidence to improve teaching and learning for children and young people aged two to nineteen, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Since our establishment in 2011, the EEF has become a trusted and influential voice within the English education system. Our evidence and guidance are widely used by practitioners and policymakers, and our Teaching and Learning Toolkit continues to inform decisions in schools across the country. With that reach comes responsibility: to ensure our work remains rigorous, relevant and sharply focused on the areas of greatest need.

The context today is both challenging and urgent. The economic attainment gap persists and remains entrenched. Leaders are making difficult strategic choices in resource-constrained environments. The demand for clear, trustworthy evidence – not only about what works, but how to implement it effectively – has never been greater.

The attainment gap appears early in children's development, and widens through school and 16-19 education. In response, we are strengthening our work in the early years to support essential foundations. And we are committed to coherence across all phases, so that learning builds seamlessly from early development through to further study, employment and training.

In 2022, the Department for Education re-endowed the EEF with £137 million, securing our work for at least another decade. More recently, an additional £40 million has been committed to extend and strengthen our work for 16–19 year olds, where attainment and progression gaps remain widest. With this long-term funding and expanded remit comes both opportunity and heightened responsibility.



As a Trustee, you will help guide a high-profile organisation operating at the intersection of research, policy and practice. The Board safeguards mission clarity, upholds the independence and integrity of our evidence, ensures robust governance and financial stewardship, and supports an executive team delivering substantial publicly funded programmes with system-wide impact.

Trustees provide strategic insight and constructive challenge to ensure that every investment advances our core purpose.

For these appointments, we are particularly seeking two individuals, one with a successful track record of leadership within a multi-academy trust or local group of schools, alongside a leader with deep strategic expertise in the early years sector, ideally including experience at national level.

Above all, we are looking for people who share our commitment to improving outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people and who are motivated by the moral purpose at the heart of our work.

The EEF benefits from a highly capable team, led by an experienced executive, and strong cross-sector partnerships. The stewardship of the Board over the coming years will be critical in shaping the next phase of our impact.

We hope you will consider joining us in this important endeavour.

With best wishes,



Handwritten signature of Professor Becky Francis CBE in black ink.

Professor Becky Francis CBE,
Chief Executive Officer

Handwritten signature of Dame Christine Gilbert, Chair, in black ink.

Dame Christine Gilbert,
Chair



About the EEF

The EEF was founded in 2011 by leading social mobility charity The Sutton Trust, in partnership with Impetus, with a £125m founding grant from the UK Department for Education.

Since our foundation:

- ❖ The EEF has funded over **450 projects** to help build the evidence base, including over 200 randomised trial.
- ❖ **80%** of all state-funded schools in England have taken part in an EEF project.
- ❖ **85%** of school leaders report using EEF guidance when thinking about how best to support their disadvantaged pupils.
- ❖ Around **200,000 teachers** – from those just starting out to experienced leaders – have received professional development that was built on EEF-backed evidence.

We are the What Works Centre for Education. What Works is based on the principle that good decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence; the Centres enable policy makers, commissioners and practitioners to make decisions based upon strong evidence of what works and to provide cost efficient, useful services.

How we work



The EEF supports schools, nurseries and colleges to improve teaching and learning for two – nineteen-year-olds through better use of evidence. It does this by:

- ❖ **Summarising evidence:** reviewing robust evidence on teaching and learning and presenting in an accessible way.
- ❖ **Finding new evidence:** funding the development and independent evaluation of programmes and approaches that aim to raise the attainment of children and young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and, where appropriate, support effective provision to scale-up.
- ❖ **Putting evidence to use:** supporting education practitioners, as well as policymakers and other organisations, to use evidence in ways that really make a difference to teaching and learning.

How we work

Find out more

To read our current Strategy, please follow [this link](#).

You can find more about the EEF via [our website](#) including information on our current [Board](#), our [In-House Team](#).

Our most recent annual accounts can be reviewed [here](#).



Visit our website
[educationendowment
foundation.org.uk](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

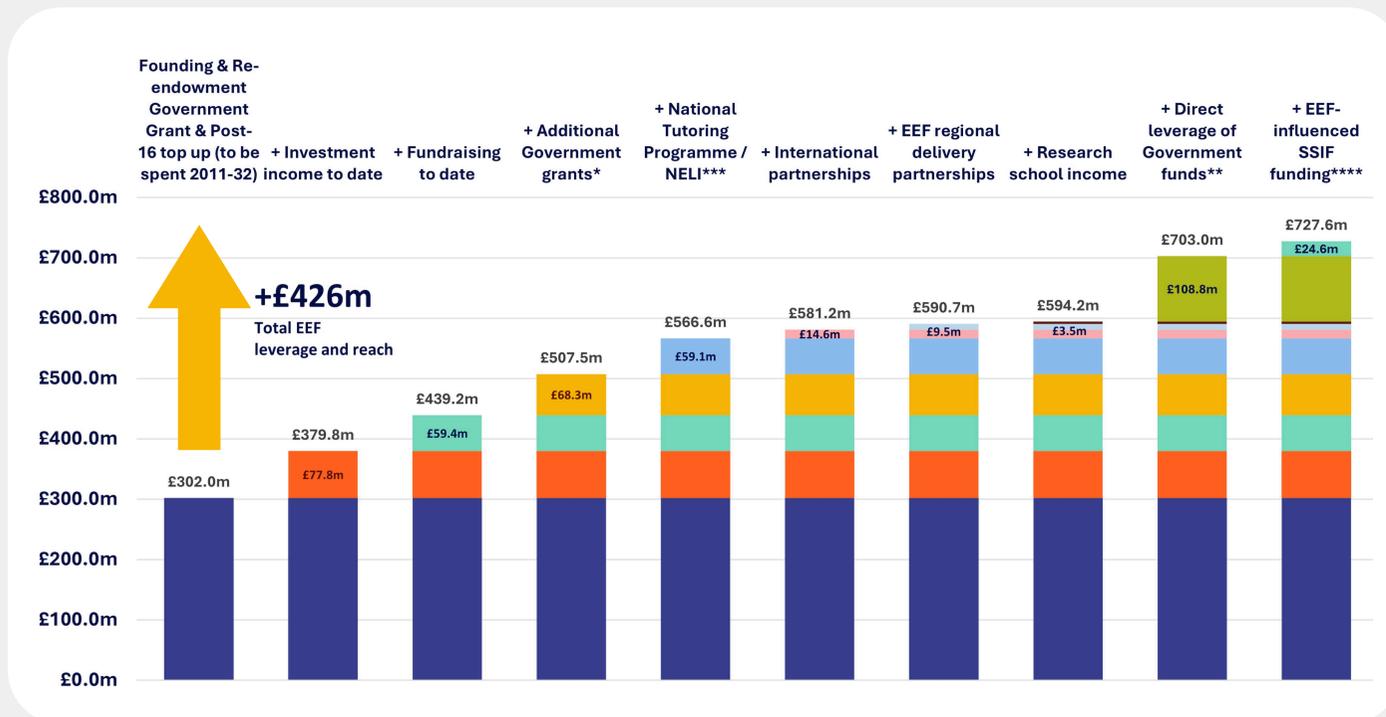


Read our current strategy
**Education Endowment
Foundation 2025 - 2035**



Working in partnership to maximise our reach

We work in partnership with funders and other organisations who share our commitment to offering the best possible education opportunities to children and young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. As of 2026, £426m of spend in the sector has been directly leveraging EEF's activities and outputs.



* Additional Government Grant Comprising:

- £10m Dept for Education (DfE) co-funding for 'Literacy Transition Catch Up' round;
- £3.4m DfE co-funding for 'Improving the Home Learning Environment' round;
- £2.5m DfE co-funding for 'Early Years: professional development and leadership' round;
- £1m for Research Use round;
- £1m for Character round;
- £271k DfE funding to deliver the EEF-evaluated Early Years Foundation Stage Profile pilot.
- £5m Evidence Guardianship
- £43m Accelerator Fund.
- £2.1m Maths Champion scale up

** Direct Leverage of Government Funds Comprising:

- £1m DfE funding for EEF Research Schools in the Opportunity Areas;
- £2.3m DfE funding for EEF evaluated projects delivered as part of its Teaching and Leadership Innovation Fund (TLIF)
- £2.5m DfE funding to deliver the British Council's international exchange programme, with EEF overseeing the independent evaluation;
- £26m DfE funding for the scale-up of EEF-evaluated 'Magic Breakfast' project.
- £57m DfE funding for the scale up of EEF-evaluated NELI between 21-22 and 23-24

**** EEF Influenced SSIF Funding

44% of the £56m successful DfE-funded Strategic School Improvement Fund bids cited EEF-funded projects and EEF guidance reports in their applications

*** National Tutoring Programme and NELI Comprising:

- £51m DfE grant variation to the EEF to run NTP Tuition Partners;
- £8.1m for scaled up delivery of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) in 20-21.

Role description

Role title: Trustee

Role purpose

The EEF Trustees build on the existing platform to help take the already successful organisation forward to its next challenges. The main duties of the Trustees are to act as a champion of the mission and reputation of the Charity, with the following responsibilities for the governance of the EEF.

Joining the Board offers the opportunity to influence the EEF's strategy and governance, guide the allocation of resources to high-impact research, and support evidence-based improvements that can transform the life chances of children and young people across England.

Trustees contribute at the heart of a high-profile organisation, helping to ensure that every investment drives meaningful change and that the EEF remains the leading authority on evidence-informed education.



Key responsibilities

Financial stewardship and performance management

- ❖ Ensure EEF's assets are protected and used responsibly.
- ❖ Approve budgets and review financial performance and sustainability.
- ❖ Understand financial information sufficiently to make informed decisions.
- ❖ Ensure that operational plans, budgets, and fundraising strategies support the EEF's vision and strategic priorities
- ❖ Agree mechanisms to measure the impact of the EEF in relation to its strategic objectives

Governance and compliance

- ❖ Ensure the EEF carries out its purposes for public benefit.
- ❖ Ensure compliance with the governing document, charity law, and other relevant legislation.
- ❖ Maintain oversight of policies, risk management, and regulatory reporting.

Individual and collective trustee duties

- ❖ Support and provide constructive challenge to the CEO and executive.
- ❖ Attend board meetings regularly and prepare by reading papers in advance.
- ❖ Ask constructive questions and challenge decisions where necessary.
- ❖ Participate in committees or working groups as required.
- ❖ Make decisions in the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries.

Strategic leadership

- ❖ Ensure clarity about vision, goals and EEF's strategic direction and culture.
- ❖ Monitor performance against objectives and KPIs, ensuring alignment with EEF's purpose and strategy.
- ❖ Support longerterm planning and sustainability.

Advocacy and representation

- ❖ Act as an ambassador and advocate for the work of the EEF.
- ❖ Support fundraising activities, partnerships, and stakeholder engagement as appropriate.

Grants Committee

The Board has established four committees to support effective governance, one of which is the Grants Committee. This Committee makes recommendations to the Board on grant awards, taking into account the EEF's mission, strategy, policy objectives, resource allocation, risk considerations, and emerging priorities.

Both Trustees will join this Committee, with the **Committee Chair position** opening shortly thereafter. The Grants Committee advises the executive team on potential new projects to incubate, ensures the grant-making process demonstrates rigour, provides appropriate safeguards and monitoring mechanisms, and monitors the balance of funding and policy objectives across the portfolio.

It assesses the status of the **EEF grants portfolio** as a whole, considers recommendations for withdrawal of funding where necessary, and reviews the effectiveness of selection processes, grant-making criteria, and support packages, drawing on good practices in the UK and internationally. Its work focuses on research programmes and approaches designed to raise attainment for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2024-25, we had 119 active projects, with 41 new projects granted during the year and 25 reports published. We run two application rounds per year with specific themes chosen for their potential to impact on disadvantaged children, and to fill gaps in the evidence base. The most recent themes have included Early Language, Cognitive Science, Mathematics in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, Attendance and Exclusions, EdTech, 16-19, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, Writing and Secondary Maths.

Person specification

Knowledge and experience

We are looking for two trustees bringing the following experience to the Board:

- ❖ One with experience gained as a successful current or prior leader of a sector-leading Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) or schools group, ideally with experience of working with relevant charities, public or government organisations.
- ❖ One with expertise in early years education and in the early years sector, ideally with experience at national level.

In addition both trustees will bring:

- ❖ Experience of dealing with strategic issues in large and complex organisations gained as an executive leader and / or non-executive board member.

Skills and abilities

- ❖ Ability to interpret information, debate constructively and rigorously challenge.
- ❖ Awareness of probity issues and commitment to high standards of integrity, transparency and impartiality.
- ❖ Ability to communicate effectively at senior level and explain issues and decisions both orally and in writing.
- ❖ Skills of networking, influencing and advocacy.
- ❖ Understanding of strategic planning processes.

Person specification

Personal attributes

- ❖ Empathy with the values and vision of the EEF.
- ❖ Collaborative leadership style, able to build consensus, support colleagues constructively, and foster a culture of participation and shared accountability.
- ❖ Sufficient availability to contribute fully to the role and engage actively in Board discussions and strategic oversight.

The Education Endowment Foundation welcomes applications from everyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, belief, or disability. All appointments will be made on merit, following a fair and transparent process. In line with the Equality Act 2010, however, the organisation may employ positive action where candidates from underrepresented groups can demonstrate their ability to perform the role equally well.



Terms of appointment

Remuneration

This role is offered on a voluntary basis. Reasonable expenses incurred in the course of carrying out the role will be reimbursed by the organisation.

Location

National, with face to face meetings taking place in the EEF's London offices.

Time commitment

Typically 6 days per year, which includes four board meetings per year, which take place during working hours and a full trustee away day. This includes a mix of face to face and virtual meetings. The expectation is that each of the new trustees will join the EEF's Grants Committee, which usually meets four times a year.

Term of appointment

Four year appointment with the opportunity for one renewal for an additional four year term.

Recruitment timetable

Closing date: **Monday 27th April 2026**

Preliminary interviews: **w/c 11th May 2026**

Final Panel interviews: **w/c 25th May 2026**

How to apply

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

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.