

Our Team – Trustees

Craig Graham (Chairman of the Board)

Craig originally wanted to pursue a career in law after studying it at university, but along with his business partner, decided to set up his own commercial estate agency business. Since 2011, his business has grown significantly into a group of companies offering advice, finance and agency services to both buyers and seller of businesses and commercial properties. Craig is hands on in his own business overseeing HR, Finance, Compliance and Operations, and his strengths to the school lie in commerciality and leadership. Craig is committed to enhancing the lives of young people and this fuels his desire for excellence within every aspect of the trust. Craig is an experienced school governor and has been involved with schools as a governor and chair of governors since 2013. Craig is a keen Rugby fan and in addition to the work he does with the trust his business is a patron of the Bolton Lads and Girls Club.



Anne Quigley (Vice Chairman of the Board)

School Improvement Trustee

Anne is now retired but having worked in the Education Sector for over 30 years as a teacher, Headteacher, Executive Headteacher and School Improvement Professional, she has a continuing passion for supporting children and young people to engage in education that supports them as 21st century citizens. Anne would consider her strengths to be leadership and management, teaching and learning, professional development of all staff and managing change in education. As well as being School Improvement Director and Vice Chairperson of the Trust, Anne is also Chair of the Local Governing Board for Masefield Primary School.



David Webb

David graduated from Lancaster University with a MSc in 1996 and began his professional career in the Utilities industry. He has since worked with several blue-chip companies including Shell, United Utilities, Eon and Manchester Airport Group. David currently works within the Civil Aviation sector defining and implementing change in Passenger Operations. David also specialises in the analysis and management of risk. David was a Parent Governor at Masefield Primary School and was appointed to the Board of Directors for BASE Academy upon its formation in August 2016.



Jennifer Walsh- HR Trustee

Jenny is a fully qualified Chartered member of the CIPD and is currently employed as Head of People at a local MAT. Jenny has over 18 years' experience of providing high level HR advice and support to schools and MATs across Bolton.

Jenny is passionate about education and with her existing knowledge of the Trust can use her experience to support the board of Trustees in driving forward the success of BASE Academy.



Douglas Overbury

Douglas is now retired after working in the financial sector for over 45 years. For the first 10 he worked in the accounting profession. He was then a financial manager in the construction trade and latterly moved into the motor trade, overseeing the production of management accounts. Douglas has also been involved as both church and circuit treasurer in the Methodist Church. Using his experience and skills of working within the business sector Douglas will contribute towards the strategic, financial direction and compliance of the Trust.



Cate Marsden

Cate is a dedicated educator with over 25 years of experience in teaching and leadership. Cate's career began in Bolton as an NQT, and she now serves as the Director of External Partnerships at Woodbridge Trust. In this role, she oversees initiatives that promote the inclusion of learners across Bolton and beyond, ensuring specialist support for pupils aged 2 to 19 with a wide range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Throughout Cate's career, she has held key leadership positions, including Head of Ladywood Outreach, SEND advisory Teacher Bolton LA, Deputy Headteacher- mainstream setting and SENCo, developing extensive expertise in SEND. Cate also contributes to national training and development as a Course Coordinator for the National Institute of Teaching, where she leads the delivery of the National Professional Qualification (NPQ) for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCoS). Additionally, she is a qualified ADOS assessor within the autism pathway and a Master Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).

Cate is passionate about fostering inclusive education and ensuring that every learner receives the support they need to thrive.



Karen Spencer

Karen has worked in the retail banking industry for the past 20 years. She is a Professional Manager with a proven track record for driving teams to create a culture of continuous improvement. Karen is adept at simultaneously coordinating multiple projects with a high degree of efficiency and has an extensive technical knowledge of Retail Banking. She is passionate about delivering excellent customer service, with the ability to build successful working relationships. Karen has worked within the parameters of stakeholder management and using her breadth of skills will contribute towards the business and financial direction of the Trust.



Lisa Whittaker - Accounting Officer and CEO

Lisa is the Executive Headteacher/CEO of Base Academy Trust. She established the Trust in 2016. With over 30 years' experience in the Education Sector including over 19 years' experience as both a Head teacher and Executive Head teacher in 3 schools, Lisa has a passion for school improvement and securing educational excellence for all pupils. She takes a particular interest in the use of pupil premium and research to ensure that the most disadvantaged, vulnerable pupils and SEND pupils excel. Her skills include strategic planning, school improvement, performance management and leadership. Lisa has been a local leader since 2011 and achieved her NPQEL in Jan 2020. She is a strategic partner on the Forwards as One steering group and is a visiting fellow with Ambition institute and facilitates on the NPQSL. Lisa trained as an Ofsted inspector in Jan 2023 and is contracted to work as a team inspector.

