

What are Academy Board link members for SEND expected to do?

One aspect of the delegated role of an Academy Board is SEND, as outlined below:

- Ensuring adequate resources are provided to pupils with SEND that support their educational progress.
- Seeking assurances that staff are trained to implement strategies and support plans.
- Working in partnership with other stakeholders, such as parents, external agencies, and the wider Trust community, to ensure that pupils with SEND are well-supported and included in all aspects of school life.

Academy Board members can explore these aspects when reviewing the information presented during Academy Board meetings and during termly visits to meet with the SENCO.

The following prompts are possible lines of enquiry and suggested activities to support link members for SEND in their support and challenge work. This should be used in conjunction with the 'SEND One Page Overview Guidance' tool.

Activity	Possible Actions
Ensuring adequate resources are provided to pupils with SEND that support their educational progress.	
Monitor SEND funding and impact	Scrutinise 'SEND on a Page' Ask: How do you know the interventions you are funding are effective? Ask: How do you know that additional adults are effective? Ask: How do you know that the money for EHCPs is being used to deliver the legally required provision outlined in them? Ask: Are any pupils currently going through a statutory assessment of needs (for an EHCP and additional funding)?
Monitor SEND data presented to the Board (e.g., outcomes, attendance, behaviour, wider opportunities participation)	Scrutinise 'SEND on a Page' Scrutinise the Leadership reports containing data for SEND Ask: How is the progress of pupils with complex needs monitored?
Are all pupils on the SEN register supported by a SEN Support Plan or EHCP which outlines their needs, targets and the planned support?	Visit to see SENCO and look at an example of a SEND plan Ask: How do you know that all pupils are supported by effective SEND plans? Ask: How are parents involved in the Assess>Plan>Do>Review cycle?
Seeking assurances that staff are trained to implement strategies and support plans.	
Staff training provided for SEND – is this strategically linked to the areas of need in school?	Scrutinise 'SEND on a Page' – what is the biggest area of need and has training been targeted towards this? Ask: How do leaders know that provision for this area is effective?
Are SEND needs accurately identified?	Ask: How are needs identified quickly? Are external and internal specialist support accessed to support this process? Explore 'SEND on a Page' – what is the SEND profile & the most common area of need?
Are teachers enacting the planned provision for pupils with SEND?	Visit the school to observe inclusive practice – what does it look like here? Ask: How do leaders know that all planned provision is being enacted? What monitoring have they done? When? Any actions in response?
Working in partnership with other stakeholders, such as parents, external agencies, and the wider Trust community, to ensure that pupils with SEND are well-supported and included in all aspects of school life	
Approve policies and strategies on website, making sure these are current – SEN Information Report; Accessibility Plan; SEND Policy; Equalities Policy and Objectives	Check compliance
Analyse pupil voice and parent feedback	Ask: What do parents of, and pupils with SEND, say about school? Do pupils feel safe? Request and scrutinise data, exploring the school's response in relation to feedback

Deeper Questioning ideas:

Strategic Oversight:

- How is SEND provision reflected in the School Improvement Plan?
- What are the current SEND priorities – do these reflect the last Trust review?

During on onsite visits:

- Can you show an example of how a teacher has adapted their planning for a child with SEND?
- How do we ensure high expectations for all, including those with SEND?
- How is the school promoting communication and language development?

What distinguishes the Link Role for SEND from that of other Academy Board members?

Specialist Knowledge	Develops greater understanding of SEND duties and provision Keeps informed through training and guidance (e.g. SEND Code of Practice)
Direct Link with SENCO	Meets regularly (termly) with SENCO to discuss provision and priorities. To also complete SEND focused visits to see provision. Offers insight to the board from visits and conversations
Champion of Inclusion	Promotes equity, access, and pupil voice in board discussions Ensures SEND is not overlooked in strategic planning through questioning in Board meetings
Monitors and Challenges	Helps the board scrutinise SEND data, funding, and impact Tests how inclusive practice is applied in daily school life
Supports Governance Effectiveness (Leadership)	Contributes to policy, risk, and assurance reporting Helps build and inclusive, informed board culture

Available Trust Support for SENCOs:

- Trust SEND and Inclusion Lead – jenni.machin@enhanceacad.org.uk
- Trust SENCO – joanna.grogan@enhanceacad.org.uk
- Trust Educational Psychologist – anthony.gray@enhanceacad.org.uk
- SENCOs also have access to Local Authority specialists