



Terms of Reference for Finance, Audit and Operations Committee

Written: February 2025

Date agreed: March 2025

Review date: March 2026

Membership: 3 Trustees

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Trust Premises Manager should attend to provide information and participate in discussions.

Quorum: Three members of the committee

Meetings: A minimum of four times a year

The committee will monitor, evaluate, hold to account and report in line with the scheme of delegation on:

Finance

1. Review an annual budget, ensuring resources are allocated in line with the trust's strategic priorities and curriculum plans.
2. Present the annual balanced budget to the trust board for approval
3. Review and approve a realistic three-year financial plan, taking into account the Trust's vision, known risks and opportunities
4. Receive the trust's management accounts in order to monitor the trust's cash position and income and expenditure against the approved budget
5. Challenge, review and provide advice on pupil number estimates (that underpin revenue projections) termly
6. Report back to each meeting of the trust board, alerting them to potential problems and significant variations to the approved budget at the earliest opportunity
7. Ensure that the trust board's approach to pay and benefits is transparent, proportionate, justifiable and in line with equality and diversity objectives.
8. Develop a framework for the pay of the senior executive leader and the leadership team
9. Comply with statutory requirements to publish trust staff rates of pay and benefits.
10. Ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for staff pay increments
11. Monitor spending of pupil premium, PE and sport premium (and other relevant premiums); ensure that funding is spent effectively and is having the intended impact on pupil outcomes





12. Review and approve any adjustments to the trust's approved budget (subject to the scheme of delegation)
13. Approve expenditure if over an amount in line with the financial policy.
14. Undertake detailed scrutiny and recommend approval of the school resource management self-assessment checklist annually
15. Ensure that the trust's financial procedures are complied with
16. Review and act upon any issues identified by benchmarking against similar trusts, internal or external scrutiny
17. Ensure that the trust follows basic procurement rules and achieves best value for money when acquiring goods and services
18. Review, adopt and monitor all policies delegated by the board:

Delegated policies:

Policies (that may be delegated to the committee to review) include those outlined in the Scheme of Delegation

Financial, Health and Safety Audits and Risk Management

19. Oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny
20. Support development and review of the trust's risk management policy, setting out the framework the trust has adopted for risk management.
21. Ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny
22. Evaluate the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks and report this to the trust board
23. Assess whether procedures are designed effectively and efficiently, and check whether agreed procedures have been followed
24. Review the external auditor's plan each year
25. Review the annual report and accounts
26. Review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's managers in response to those findings
27. Review findings from other assurance activities by third parties including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations
28. Assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor – refer to section 4.17 of the Academy Trust Handbook
29. Produce an annual report of the committee's conclusions on the above assessment to advise the board of trustees and members, including recommendations on the reappointment or dismissal or retendering of the external auditor, and their remuneration





30. Seek assurance that the risks identified are those which may occur, for example, operational risk, financial risk, compliance risk, regulatory and legal risk, major accident
31. Review the ratings and responses on the risk register to inform contingency and business continuity planning and the programme of work, ensuring risks and control measures are adequately identified and modified as appropriate
32. Provide reports for each full trust board meeting, highlighting emerging risks or significant anomalies at the earliest opportunity
33. Agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year
34. Agree who will perform the work
35. Consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of internal scrutiny
36. Consider progress in addressing recommendations
37. Recommend to members the appointment of an external auditor (in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association)
38. Receive the external auditors' annual plan, annual report, and accounts and recommend appropriate actions to the trust board in response to the findings
39. Review the trust's insurance cover in compliance with its legal obligations

Staffing responsibilities

40. Review the staffing structure of the Trust, ensuring that it meets the requirements of the trust development plan, the curriculum and is affordable
41. Review staff work-life balance, working conditions and wellbeing, including monitoring staff absence rates
42. Oversee the operation of the appraisal policy, including making arrangements for the senior executive leader's performance management
43. Review pay decision data to ensure that pay increments are awarded fairly
44. Ensure that staffing procedures (including recruitment procedures) comply with equality legislation and safer recruitment practice
45. Monitor the provision of staff training and CPD, ensuring sufficient budget is allocated

Premises, health and safety responsibilities

46. Ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times, having regard to statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education
47. Review the school's accessibility plan





48. Receive an annual health and safety audit report and monitor any arising actions
49. Receive regular reports on accident statistics, near misses, incidents of violence or aggression
50. Ensure that a process is in place to approve educational visits, ensuring that health and safety planning and risk assessments have been undertaken for them
51. Ensure that inspections of the trust premises and equipment take place (annually and at appropriate intervals), and a report is received identifying any issues
52. Monitor the health and safety training that staff and trustees undertake
53. Review, adopt and monitor all policies delegated by the board:

