



GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

As Trustees we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Alvechurch C of E Middle School has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Alvechurch C of E Middle School and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

GOVERNANCE

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 4 times during the period to 31st August 2020. Effective oversight of funds is achieved through the more regular meetings of the Finance and Audit committee and also the monthly meetings of the Finance Oversight Committee which was set in conjunction with the recovery plan to ensure robust monitoring. Those committees both report back to the Full Board after each meeting. With the onset of COVID restrictions meetings were held virtually and combined into one so Finance and Audit became an agenda item on the Full Board meetings. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee (Strategic)	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Gwen Onyon	4	4
Richard Hickin	2	3
Lysandre Notley	4	4
Janet Wright	4	4
Peter Griffiths	1	1
Tony Wallis	4	4
Louise Wilde	4	4

Susan Lambert	1	4
David Snell	4	4

There has been one change in the composition of the Board of Trustees in the period ended 31 August 2020 with the resignation of Mr Peter Griffiths who was replaced by Mr Richard Hickin. The Board oversees the work of the Local Governing Body with a sharp focus on the following key priorities:

- Continual review of challenging budget leading to staffing adjustments in order to ensure the school continues to remain viable and is able to deliver front end services to all students
- External support and reviews across all subjects conducted by Partner Middle School Headteachers have provided key areas of priority for 2020/21
- Reviewed key statutory policies to ensure Alvechurch C of E Middle School remains compliant with requirements for having up to date and relevant policies in school
- Reviewed curriculum offer and adjusted timetable to provide a broad and balanced curriculum across the school
- Focused developments at Key Stage 3 on ensuring pupils are 'High School' ready by the end of year 8
- Focused developments at Key Stage 2 on raising attainment in core subjects in end of Key Stage assessments whilst maintaining broad and balanced curriculum

The Board receives information from the Headteacher via the Headteacher's report at all Full Governing Body meetings. This includes analysis of pupil progress data, a review of School Self Evaluation and a review of the School Development Plan. The SDP is scrutinised by two Governors each term and they report to the full governing body.

Trustees have all completed a self evaluation of skills matrix which will inform areas for development for 2020/21.

There is a Local Governing Body (LGB) in place to support the work of the Trustees. Attendance in meetings in the period were as follows:

Governor	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Gwen Onyon	4	4
David Snell	4	4
Peter Griffiths	1	1
Lysandre Notley	4	4
Janet Wright	4	4
Louise Wilde	4	4
Susan Lambert	1	4
Andrew Thurgood	1	4
Richard Hickin	3	4
Lisa Tomlinson	4	4
Tony Wallis	4	4

The Finance and Audit Committee is a sub-committee of the LGB. Its purpose is to set the annual budget, monitor performance against that budget, monitor adherence with EFA submissions, deal with

SDP issues relevant to finance and report to main Trustees board. The committee was scheduled to meet 6 times over the year but the onset of COVID led to some meetings being combined with Full Board (these are included in the following figures).

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Peter Griffiths	1	1
Lysandre Notley	6	6
Gwen Onyon	6	6
Janet Wright	6	6
Lisa Tomlinson	6	6
Susan Lambert	3	6
Louise Wilde	6	6
David Snell	6	6

REVIEW OF VALUE FOR MONEY

As Accounting Officer the Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Robust financial governance and budget management.
- Reviewing controls and managing risk.
- Considering allocation/targeting/use of resources.
- Deploying staff effectively.
- Reviewing quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching.
- Reviewing quality of children's learning to enable children to achieve, and go beyond, nationally expected progress.
- Outlining procedures for accepting best value quotes, noting that this is not necessarily the cheapest quote.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks the achievement of Academy Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Alvechurch C of E Middle School for the period from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks that have been in place for the period from 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

THE RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

The Academy Trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees
- Regular reviews by the Finance and Audit Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- Clearly defined purchasing (assets purchase or capital investment) guidelines
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks

The Board of Trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided:

- Not to appoint an internal auditor. However, the Trustees have appointed Fiona Anderson the Financial Director of South Bromsgrove High School to perform peer review.

The internal reviewer's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

- Testing of purchase systems
- Testing of control account/bank account reconciliations

On an annual basis the reviewer reports to the Board of Trustees, through the Finance and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

As Accounting Officer the Chief Executive has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- The work of the internal reviewer
- The work of the external auditor
- The financial management and governance self-assessment process
- The work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance and Audit Committee and a plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on [DATE] and signed on its behalf by:

[SIGNED]

[SIGNED]

[NAME TO BE TYPED]

Trustee

[NAME TO BE TYPED]

Accounting Officer

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of Alvechurch C of E Middle School I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board of Trustees and the Education Funding Agency of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with EFA terms and conditions of funding, under the funding agreement in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

I confirm that I and the Academy Trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the Academy Trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Academy Trust's funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook 2019.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the Board of Trustees and EFA.



Mr David Snell

Accounting Officer

18/10/18