



Terms of Reference

Finance and Audit Committee

2024-25

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Fisher", written above a horizontal line.

CEO SIGNATURE

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CHAIR OF TRUST BOARD SIGNATURE

DATE APPROVED - 18.07.2024

NEXT REVIEW DATE – Summer 2025



Purpose

Our Finance and Audit (F&A) Committee is drawn from members of the Trust Board. The purpose of the F&A Committee is to ensure St Bartholomew's CE Multi Academy Trust is fully compliant with the [Academy Trust Handbook](#), balancing the requirements for effective financial governance and management of funds.

Responsibility

They are responsible for:

Finance

- Review an annual budget, ensuring resources are allocated in line with the trust's strategic priorities and curriculum plans.
- Present the annual balanced budget to the trust board for approval.
- Review and approve a realistic three-year financial plan, considering the trust's vision, known risks and opportunities.
- Receive the trust's management accounts to monitor the trust's cash position and income and expenditure against the approved budget.
- Review pupil number estimates (that underpin revenue projections) on a regular basis.
- 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.
- Ensure that the trust board's approach to pay and benefits is transparent, proportionate, and justifiable.
- Undertake detailed scrutiny and recommend approval of the school resource management self-assessment checklist annually.
- ensure that the trust's financial procedures are complied with.
- review and act upon any issues identified by benchmarking against similar trusts, internal or external scrutiny.
- ensure that the trust follows basic procurement rules and achieves best value for money when acquiring goods and services.
- Review, adopt and monitor all policies delegated by the Trust Board as detailed in the policy review schedule.
- Ensure reasonable options to maximise income have been identified and are enacted once agreed.



Audit and risk

- Oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny.
- Support development and review of the trust's risk management policy, setting out the framework the trust has adopted for risk management.
- Ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny.
- 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.
- Assess whether procedures are designed effectively and efficiently, and check whether agreed procedures have been followed.
- Review the external auditor's plan each year.
- Review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's managers in response to those findings.
- Review findings from other assurance activities by third parties including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations.
- Assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor – refer to section 4.17 of Academy Trust Handbook.
- To 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.
- 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.
- Provide reports for each full trust board meeting, highlighting emerging risks or significant anomalies at the earliest opportunity.
- Agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year.
- Agree who will perform the work for internal scrutiny.
- Consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of internal scrutiny.
- Consider progress in addressing recommendations from internal scrutiny work.
- To review the trust's insurance cover in compliance with its legal obligations.
- Overseeing all matters relating to Health and Safety ensuring that the appropriate policies and practice are in place to meet statutory responsibilities.



Membership

The membership is currently made up of up to 5 Directors. Any Director can be drawn upon to fulfil the quorum, subject to that Director not having a conflict of interest which would make them ineligible to take part in discussions/votes.

The Finance & Audit Committee appoints a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee at least every three years. If the Chair of the Trust Board is a member of this committee then in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook, they cannot be appointed as Chair of the committee.

Meeting Frequency / Administration

The Committee meets at least three times each academic year and otherwise as required. Any additional meetings require at least 7 days' notice unless circumstances are urgent and agreed with the Chair of the Trust Board and/or Chair of the Committee. Where decisions within the remit of the Committee are required between formal meetings, they will be agreed by email between delegated Directors.

The Chair will be responsible for drawing up the agenda in conjunction with the DFO and the Clerk and ensuring it is circulated to Committee members at least 7 days in advance. This may be via electronic communication. Should the Chair or Vice-Chair not be present at the meeting, a temporary Chair should be elected for the meeting. The quorum is 3 Directors. The minutes will be taken by the Clerk.

Standing agenda items are detailed in a separate working document entitled "Meetings Cycle" which is maintained by the Clerk and the DFO.