

Scope of responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge that we have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Group (which consists of The Alec Reed Academy and Alec Reed Academy Enterprise Ltd) 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 Principal and Chief Executive Officer, 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 the Academy 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

As Trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for 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 five times during the year. Whilst it has met fewer than six times advocated by the Academies Trust Handbook, the Trustees are of the opinion that that they have been able to maintain sufficient oversight of the Academy Trust's finances through the establishment of three sub-committees: Education, Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk, and Human Resources, to which responsibilities have been formally delegated in the Scheme of Delegation. The purpose of the sub-committees is to assist the decision-making of the full Board of Trustees by enabling more detailed consideration of the Academy's operations. The committees draw any matters of significance or concern to the attention of the full Board of Trustees. The strategic business of the Board of Trustees is identified and programmed across the four meetings.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Louise Prince (Chair)	4	4
Dee Morrison	3	4
Phil Mead	0	2
Phil Cosby	4	4
Dee Martin	3	4
Christopher Gliddon	3	4
Jane Wotherspoon (Vice Chair)	4	4
Gagandeep Sethi	2	4
Pratik Shah	4	4
Efe Airefetalor	2	4
Rohan Desai	4	4
Yasmin Hassan	1	3
Heather McNeil	2	3
Trudy Puddle	2	4
Yash Rawal	2	2

Conflicts of interest

The Academy maintains a register of business interests for trustees, members and senior leadership and publishes this on its website. The register is kept up to date and all trustees who join during the year are asked to complete a declaration of interests. This identifies any potential conflicts of interest between trustees and their related parties and the Academy. In addition, the meetings of the Trust Board and its committees commence with a declaration of any interests for items on the agenda. These arrangements cover the Subsidiary as well as the Academy.

Governance reviews

The Board of Trustees has continued to review its involvement in the operations of Academy and its strategic direction, and trustees have extended their involvement by partnering curriculum and other areas and taking the lead for policy areas. This has increased the impact and effectiveness of the Board of Trustees in understanding the operational challenges. Trustee skill sets have been reviewed and new trustees with appropriate skills recruited as necessary.

The Board has three committees: Education, Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk, and Human Resources, to which responsibilities have been formally delegated in the Scheme of Delegation.

The Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee assists the Board's decision making, by giving more detailed consideration to financial areas, controls and audit arrangements including recommending the appointment of the external and internal auditors and to review their audit and internal scrutiny reports, which the Board is responsible for. This supports the sound management of the Academy's finances, resources, audit and risk including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk committee attendance in 2024/25:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Pratik Shah	3	6
Phil Cosby	6	6
Dee Martin (Chair)	6	6
Jane Wotherspoon	6	6
Gagandeep Sethi	5	6
Rohan Desai	3	6

Review of Value for Money

As accounting officer, the Principal and Chief Executive, 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 educational and wider societal outcomes, as well as estates safety and management, achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

Review of Value for Money (continued)

The Accounting Officer considers how the Academy'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 published by the DfE. The Accounting Officer for the Academy has delivered value for money during the year by:

- ◆ Continuing to make effective use of information about student progress for teachers to use to close the attainment gaps and tailor teaching approaches and interventions, motivate students and to involve and inform parents and carers.
- ◆ Collaborating with other schools through the Ealing Learning Partnership and the PiXL Club, Partners in Excellence. PiXL is a partnership of primary through to post 16 academies and aims to share best practice, raise educational standards and develop character in young people.
- ◆ Income has been generated through using the Academy for community sports lettings and events. The Community Sports Centre made a surplus of £99,000 and income from external lettings totalled £93,000. The Navratri festival returned to the Academy, with over 5,800 people visiting the Academy over 10 nights.
- ◆ The Academy has fixed term contracts for electricity and gas which are providing protection during the current period of price increases and volatility and the strategy to reduce expenditure on energy has been progressed through the installation of further LED lights, including the astro pitch and road lights, which now have sensors to reduce the amount of time they are on.
- ◆ Identifying savings through rigorous uptake of competitive quotes, retendering of contracts, and energy efficiency measures. The Government's framework contracts are used to obtain competitive contracts wherever possible and appropriate including purchase of energy and IT hardware.

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 on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Alec Reed Academy and Group's 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 The Alec Reed Academy and Group for the year ended 31 August 2024 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 Alec Reed Academy and Group 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 on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Alec Reed Academy and Group's significant risks that has been in place for the year ending 31 August 2024 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 Alec Reed Academy and Group's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. It includes:

- ◆ comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget, medium term financial forecast which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- ◆ monthly management accounts monitoring financial performance against the forecasts, major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes, all reviewed by the Finance & Resources, Audit & Risk Committee;
- ◆ oversight of internal controls by the Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee;
- ◆ setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- ◆ clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- ◆ benchmarking financial performance with similar academies using data provided by the DfE;
- ◆ delegation of authority and segregation of duties; and
- ◆ identification and management of risks.

The Board of Trustees has appointed Stephen Meredith from Alliotts Chartered Accountants to perform an Internal Scrutiny function reviewing the control environment and regulatory structure of the Academy based upon a program designed to review all significant financial and other control processes. The appointment is compliant with the revised FRC Ethical Standard, and the role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Alec Reed Academy and Group's financial systems. Alliotts were not asked to make a visit last year as the Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee determined to treat the visit from School Resources Management Advisor (SRMA) as the internal scrutiny visit. The SRMA visit was an independent review of procurement, budgeting and governance arrangements

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Principal and CEO 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 School Business Resources Management Advisor;
- ◆ the work of the external auditor;
- ◆ the financial management and governance self-assessment process;
- ◆ the review of the Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee; and
- ◆ the work of the executive managers within the Academy 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 and plans to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Conclusion

Based on the advice of the audit and risk committee and the accounting officer, the board of trustees is of the opinion that the academy trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

L Prince

(Chair of Trustees)

P Cosby

(Accounting Officer)

Date: 8 December 2025