



Name of Trust	Birchwood High School
Scope of document	Trustee Committee Terms of Reference 2024-25
Approved by	The Academy Trust Board
Date approved	25 th September 2024
Date for next review	September 2025

1. Overview

The Trustee Committees are committees of the Academy Trust Board (“the Board”). The Board has delegated certain responsibilities to the Trustee Committees under these Terms of Reference.

Any Trustee may attend any Committee meeting, including those who are not members of that Committee.

The Trustee Committees are:

- The Steering Committee
- The Audit and Risk Committee
- The Finance and Estates Committees
- The Curriculum Committee
- The Personnel and Student Welfare Committees

The Finance and Estates Committees and the Personnel and Student Welfare Committees are joint committees in that they meet concurrently and share a common membership.

In accordance with legislation and the relevant education acts the Trustee Committees will:

- Act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school;
- Be open about their decisions and actions.

Within their areas of responsibility, the Trustee Committees will:

- Agree strategic aims and objectives for the school
- Agree and monitor policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- Monitor, evaluate and hold school leaders to account for the Committee’s areas of responsibility.
- Report to the Academy Trust Board
- Ensure that the highest professional and ethical standards are met

The Trustee Committees will act in accordance with relevant statute and statutory guidance, the Academy Trust Handbook, the Articles of Association and the Funding Agreement and will also consider any relevant non-statutory guidance, advice and views obtained from third party specialists, views of stakeholders and advice given by the Principal and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

2. Membership

The Committee membership shall include a minimum of three Trustees. Additional non-Trustees can be members, but must not outnumber the trustee members, and do not have voting rights.

- With the exception of the Principal, Staff Trustees cannot be members of the Personnel Committee
- The Principal and the Finance Director will attend, but cannot be members of, the Audit and Risk Committee
- All Committee Chairs will be members of the Steering and Audit and Risk Committees.

3. Quorum

Quorum will be three Trustee members of the Committee.

4. Frequency of meetings



The Audit and Risk Committee will meet at least three times and other Committees will meet at least five times a year (unless the Board is informed otherwise) and as and when required.

5. Committee Chair’s Responsibilities

Each Committee will appoint a Chair, who will:

- Chair meetings
- Set the agenda in consultation with the Governance Professional and the SLT Link(s)
- Ensure arrangements are in place for minutes of meetings, and to sign minutes as a true record of the meeting
- Represent the Committee on the Steering and Audit and Risk Committees
- Reports to the Board will be by provision of meeting minutes and by verbal updates or other reports from the Committee Chair as requested

6. SLT link responsibilities

Each committee will have an SLT Link who will:

- Consult with the Chair and the Governance Professional to set the agenda
- Act as a link for communications between the Committee and the School
- Arrange for the timely provision of reports, policies and other documents

7. Authority

Trustee Committees are authorised to:

- investigate any activity within their terms of reference or specifically delegated to them by the board
- request any information they require from any employee, external audit, internal scrutiny, or other assurance provider. This would normally be in consultation with School Leaders
- obtain outside legal or independent professional advice the Committee considers necessary, this would normally be in consultation with School Leaders and/or the trust board

8. Committee Remits

All Committees	
1.	Review, approve and monitor policies as assigned to the Committee in the Policy Review Schedule
2.	Refer matters relating to committee responsibilities, capacity, membership and workload to the Steering Committee
3.	Note and refer any matters for inclusion in or modification to the Risk Register to the Audit and Risk Committee
4.	Monitor areas of the SDP relevant to the Committee
5.	Refer items to other Committees as required

Steering Committee	
1.	Plan Board meetings and have oversight of the Board’s strategic and compliance functions
2.	Review and monitor strategic aims and objectives (for consideration by the Board)
3.	Oversee Trustee membership, structure, skills, evaluation, ways of working and recruitment

Audit and Risk Committee	
Scope	
To maintain an oversight of the academy trust’s financial, governance, risk management and internal control systems and to report to the trust board and the accounting officer.	



General
1. advise the Board on the effectiveness and resources of the external/internal auditors to provide a basis for their reappointment, dismissal, re-tenuring, or remuneration.
2. ensure there is co-ordination between internal scrutiny and external audit and any other review bodies that are relevant
3. consider the reports of the scrutineers and, when appropriate, advise the Board of material control issues
4. encourage a culture within the trust whereby each individual feels that he or she has a part to play in guarding the probity of the trust, and is able to take any concerns or worries to an appropriate member of the management team or in exceptional circumstances directly to the board of trustees
5. Ensure the provision of an annual summary report provided by the internal scrutineer and areas reviewed by internal scrutiny covering key findings, recommendations, and conclusions.
Risk
1. conduct regular reviews of the risk register and oversee the annual review of the trust's risk register by the board
2. monitor the effectiveness of risk management policy and processes
3. review any risks to the academy trust's systems of internal control and agree a programme of work to address, and provide assurance on, those risks to the trust board as appropriate
4. review, monitor and assess periodically major aspects of risk such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • damage to the trust's reputation • loss of funds • changes in government policy • risks to standards, systems and controls
External audit
1. review the external auditor's plan each year
2. review the annual report and accounts
3. review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's SLT in response to those findings
undertake the annual review of the effectiveness of the external auditor and recommend to the Board and the members whether to reappoint the external auditor
Internal scrutiny
1. take delegated responsibility on behalf of the board of trustees for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control both financial and otherwise including risk analysis and risk management; and for ensuring the trust is complying with the overall requirements for internal scrutiny, as specified in the academy trust handbook
2. review/agree an annual programme of internal scrutiny, which is objective and independent, covering systems, controls, transactions, and risks.
3. advise the trustees on the adequacy and effectiveness of the trust's systems of internal control, governance, and risk management processes
4. review the scrutineer's findings and actions taken by the trust's SLT in response to those findings
consider the appropriateness of executive action following internal scrutiny reviews and to advise the board on any additional or alternative steps to be taken
5. undertake the annual review of the effectiveness of the internal scrutineer and decide whether to reappoint the internal scrutineer.
Other responsibilities
1. consider appropriate actions following any serious incidents, including fraud, which are reportable to the Education and Skills Funding Agency or would have a major financial or reputational risk to the trust
2. ensure that all significant losses have been properly notified and investigated as required by the A.T.H
3. undertake regular reviews of the committee's effectiveness including benchmarking against best practice.
4. To review the Academy's procedures for whistleblowing and for detecting fraud
5. To oversee the school's compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018;
6. To receive reports from the school's Data Protection Officer;



Finance and Estates Committees
Finance
1. Ensure adherence to the essential principles of sound financial management and governance as set out in the Academy Trust Handbook
2. Review, approve and ensure adherence to the trust's Schedule of Financial Delegation;
3. Review procurement decisions in line with the procurement policy and the Schedule of Financial Delegation
4. Consider and approve all matters as required by the Committee under the Scheme of Financial Delegation
5. Monitor projected student numbers with reference to future income and consider implications of the indicative funding, notified annually by the DfE
6. Consider, review and recommend acceptance/non-acceptance of the three year budget to the board, in line with the necessary reporting deadlines
7. Receive and make recommendations on the broad budget headings and areas of expenditure to be adopted each year, including the level and use of any contingency fund or balances. Monitor the compatibility with the school's improvement priorities and the SDP
8. Liaise with and receive reports from the other committees, as appropriate, and to make recommendations to those committees about the financial aspects of matters being considered by them (including, in particular, the PP and SEND strategies referred by the Curriculum Committee)
9. Monitor and review the management accounts. Ensure compliance with the overall financial plan for the academy, and that expenditure is in line with the financial regulations of the DfE, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the board.
10. Monitor and review procedures for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of financial procedures, including the implementation of bank account arrangements and, where appropriate, to make recommendations for improvement.
11. Agree and review KPI's and benchmarking information. To review and act upon any issues identified by benchmarking against similar trusts.
12. Review and recommend approval of the school resource management self-assessment checklist
13. Ensure that the financial statements are drawn up and filed
14. Receive external auditors' reports and annual accounts and, in consultation with the Audit Committee to recommend to the full governing body action as appropriate in response to audit findings.
Estates
1. Consider and monitor all matters relating to the school premises and grounds, security and health and safety and to be aware of the respective responsibilities of the Trust Board in relation to premises and health and safety
2. Ensure the discharge of trustees' responsibilities regarding Health and Safety under all relevant legislation
3. Ensure that the Secretary of State for Education is informed of any matters for which he/she has responsibility, and to monitor such issues in order to ensure that appropriate action is taken.
4. Ensure the discharge of Trustees responsibilities regarding litter under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
5. Consider and make recommendations to the Audit and Risk Committee on risk management and insurance arrangements with regard to vandalism and other premises-related matters
6. Support and advise the Curriculum committee on the elements of the Accessibility Plan that relate to the physical environment of the school.
7. Consider findings of termly Health and Safety Committee meetings, ensure that action is taken and report to the Board as appropriate
8. Ensure and review the regular inspection of premises and grounds (with particular reference to both Health and Safety and condition) and receive reports on issues identified and priorities for maintenance and development
9. With the Finance Committee, approve the costs and arrangements for repairs, maintenance and redecoration. Review costs and programme for premises development work including applications for CIF funding and use of reserves where agreed with the Finance Committee / Board and to oversee the preparation and implementation of contracts
10. Receive the annual safety and security audit of the premises and report issues to the Board

Curriculum Committee
1. Review, monitor and evaluate the curriculum offer
2. Receive, monitor and challenge, information from the Principal and / or the Senior Leadership Team about how the curriculum is taught, evaluated and resourced
3. Ensure, on behalf of the Board, that its strategic responsibility to raise standards is acted upon.



4.	Ensure that the School Development Plan reflects the requirement to raise standards, and to monitor and evaluate it accordingly.
5.	Review and analyse the performance of the school, against national and local indicators (to include the consideration of individual pupil groups), and to ensure that the Board is aware of significant gaps and actions required to raise standards
6.	Receive reports from any external reviews and monitor the implementation of any resulting action plans
7.	Make recommendations to the Finance Committee on resources that are needed to meet the needs of the whole curriculum, and the sustainability of the non-statutory elements.
8.	Receive regular reports from the Principal and/or Senior Leadership Team on the quality of teaching and learning, to identify areas for improvement, and to ensure that any necessary action is taken to maximise outcomes for pupils
9.	Ensure that annual assessment and examination arrangements comply with national requirements
10.	Ensure that the requirements of children with special needs and disabilities are met, as laid out in the Code of Practice, and receive termly reports from the headteacher/SENCO and an annual report from the SEND governor
11.	Monitor the progress and achievement of Disadvantaged pupils, including the impact of Pupil Premium Funding on the achievement and attainment of this group. To ensure that the Pupil Premium Funding is spent appropriately, that the conditions of funding are met and to review the strategy statement for recommendation to the Board
12.	Monitor the progress and attainment of vulnerable groups, including CLA and CWSW, and groups sharing protected characteristics (where appropriate).
13.	Monitor and review the school's use of assessment, reporting and intervention
14.	Monitor the school's publicity, public presentation and relationships with the wider community insofar as they relate to the curriculum remit (to include open evenings)
15.	Receive reports on, evaluate and monitor the schools extra curricular programme and monitor accessibility and take up by individual student groups
16.	Oversee arrangements for educational visits
17.	Promote the identification and celebration of student achievement
18.	Review, monitor and evaluate the Career Guidance strategy and associated policies. Including access and impact for vulnerable groups of students.



Personnel and Student Welfare	
Personnel	
1.	Liaise with relevant committees to review and agree the annual and longer-term salary budgets and other costs relating to personnel, eg training.
2.	Review the staffing structure as necessary and in relation to the School Development Plan ("SDP").
3.	Ensure the review the Single Central Record and monitor the annual audit feedback.
4.	Review staff selection procedures, ensuring that they conform with safer recruitment practice, and to review these procedures as necessary.
5.	Review and recommend for adoption by the Trust Board procedures for dealing with staff discipline and grievance and ensure that the staff are informed of all relevant policies
6.	Should the need arise, to draft, in consultation with staff, criteria for redundancy, for approval by the Trust Board.
7.	Undertake any other formal consultations on personnel matters.
8.	Review the school's focus on staff well-being and to monitor progress
9.	Regularly review the personnel services the school buys into to ensure the school is receiving a quality service, that risks are managed and is receiving value-for-money
10.	Review CPD undertaken by members of staff at the school (liaising with the Curriculum Committee as required), including the cost of CPD to the school.
11.	Review the implementation of HR internal controls at least annually and more frequently if necessary.
Student Welfare Committee	
1.	Monitor and receive reports on all aspects of Safeguarding within the school. To include the review and monitoring of all Safeguarding policies and procedures
2.	Review and monitor implementation of the Equality Policy and Equality Objectives. To include an annual review of the school's compliance with the public sector equality duty for consideration by the FGB.
3.	Review and monitor arrangements relating to Behaviour throughout the school. Including monitoring current and emerging patterns, trends and risks.
4.	Review and monitor arrangements relating to Attendance. Including monitoring current and emerging patterns, trends and risks.
5.	Consider, review and monitor current and emerging patterns, trends and risks relating to pupil wellbeing, liaising with the Curriculum Committee as required
6.	Consider the results and monitor issues arising from staff, student and parent surveys together with reports from respective stakeholder meetings (matters arising may be referred to other committees as appropriate).

Other than Staff Trustees who cannot be members of the Personnel Committee