

Brighouse High School Academy Trust 2015-16

The Governors' statement of founding principles

The principles will be upheld in all governors' decisions relating to Brighouse High School and community of Brighouse. Any change to these principles must be agreed at a meeting of the full governing body.

The governing body manages the academy on behalf of the members of the academy trust. The key responsibilities are to

- ensure the quality of educational provision
- challenge and monitor the performance of the academy
- manage the academy trust's finances and property
- employ staff

The governing body is committed to upholding high standards of education for the pupils and community of Brighouse High School. Governors will ensure that Brighouse High continues to have a comprehensive intake and that clear and transparent admission criteria are consulted upon annually in line with government guidelines. The academy may use additional freedoms to promote high levels of achievement and will ensure that these freedoms are not used to the detriment of any group or individual inside or external to the academy.

The governors will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the performance of the academy and hold the Head teacher and Senior Management team to account to ensure that standards never fall below those that OFSTED would judge to be those of a "Good" school. Equally the governors are committed to recognising and celebrating the achievements of individual pupils and groups within the school.

The governors will hold to account the Head teacher and finance team and ensure that systems for accounting are within the requirements of the Companies Act. Systems for budgeting will be fair and transparent and will be monitored specifically by the Finance Committee.

The governing body will be a fair and equitable employer and so long as national agreements exist, the governors will ensure that the pay and conditions for staff within the academy are at least as good as those set out in the national agreements. The governing body shall continue to have a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) as a regular and calendared termly meeting. The JCC will be the focus of negotiation, consultation and information sharing for the schools and its employees. See Appendix F – Joint consultative Committee

Context

These Standing Orders are based, in priority order, upon

- 1 The Articles of Association of Brighthouse High School Academy Trust (BHSAT)
- 2 The Academies' Financial Handbook, July 2015 issue
- 3 Governors' Handbook issued January 2014 revised November 2015
- 4 Previous best practice including helpful and relevant guidance from the Academies' Financial Handbook that preceded the September 2015 edition

Members

The membership of the BHSAT consists of

- a. the three signatories to the Memorandum or their successors in office;
- b. 1 person appointed by the Secretary of State, in the event that the Secretary of State appoints a person for this purpose;
- c. the chairman of the Governors; and
- d. any person appointed under Article 16 of the Articles of Association;

Members must hold at least one meeting a year which is called the Annual General Meeting but may call other meetings which are simply called General Meetings.

Matters that should be considered by trustees at least once a year but which may also be considered along with governors at joint meetings are:

- the academy's goals and how they are being met;
- review of the management structure to ensure it is operating effectively;
- review of the performance of external providers eg E.g. bankers, services provided under SLAs;
- review and approval of the academy's annual accounts and report of the trustees;
- review and approval of the financial budget for the following year;
- review and approval of the levels of insurance cover for the academy's assets;
- findings made by the auditors and the auditor's management letter, and any other financial reviews, and consideration of what actions should be taken arising from their recommendations;

- review of the risks to which the academy is exposed and determination of whether systems are in place to mitigate those risks.

Although governors may call the General Meetings, these are separate and distinct from meetings of the governing body to which members may belong.

Members may not derive any personal benefit or gain from the academy of which they are trustees but see Annex D re: limitations as to liabilities of, and limits on benefits available to members (as well as governors).

Annex A sets out the following matters in respect of membership:-

- Additional or reduced membership
- Appointment of members
- Termination of membership
- Conduct of general meetings
- Voting rights of members

Governors

The composition of the governing body that reports to the members of BHSAT is:-

- a. Eight governors appointed by the members who may also be governors
- b. One governor appointed by the Local Authority
- c. The Principal (head teacher)
- d. Two teaching staff governors elected by the teaching staff
- e. One non-teaching staff governor elected by the non-teaching staff

- f. Seven parent governors who have a child attending the School and who are elected by the parents of children attending the School
- g. Up to three governors co-opted by a majority of those on the governing body who are not themselves co-opted

The Secretary of State has the right to appoint additional governors at his/her discretion.

Potential governors who can be deemed to be “Local Authority Associated Persons” must have the permission of their Local Authority prior to assuming office. The governing body may not have more than 19.9 % of its governors as “Local Authority Associated Persons”. Parents employed by a local authority are “Local Authority Associated Persons”.

The status and responsibilities of the governing body are based on those set out in the Academies’ Financial Handbook valid at the time the School became an academy and which are still regarded as sound principles to follow. These are:-

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance is the way in which organisations are directed and controlled. It defines the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different stakeholders and participants in the organisation, determines the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs including the process through which the organisation’s objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance.

The Governing Body

Each academy is governed by a governing body constituted under a Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association. The governing body is responsible for ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are maintained. It should exercise its powers and functions with a view to fulfilling a largely strategic leadership role in the running of the academy, addressing such matters as:

- policy development and strategic planning, including target-setting to keep up momentum on school improvement;
- ensuring sound management and administration of the academy, and ensuring that managers are equipped with relevant skills and guidance;
- ensuring compliance with legal requirements;
- establishing and maintaining a transparent system of prudent and effective internal controls. (Note that the academy’s annual report and accounts must include a statement on the efficiency and effectiveness of such controls – see suggested layout in part 5 of the handbook);
- management of the academy’s financial, human and other resources (in particular control over the spending identified in the academy’s development plan);

- monitoring performance and the achievement of objectives, and ensuring that plans for improvement are acted upon;
- helping the academy be responsive to the needs of parents and the community and making it more accountable through consultation and reporting;
- setting the academy's standards of conduct and values;
- assessing and managing risk (including preparation of a statement on the academy's risk management for its annual report and accounts).

The governing body also has a duty to take appropriate action when there are weaknesses in the academy. Where individual governors have concerns which cannot be resolved about the running of the academy or a proposed action, they should ensure that their concerns are recorded in minutes.

NB: All duties and responsibilities of governors detailed in this handbook apply equally to persons who are not governors of the academy but who have been appointed to serve on a committee of that academy in an honorary capacity.

The governing body must appoint a head teacher to the academy who will also act as an ex-officio governor. The head teacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the academy, the implementation of all policies approved by the governing body and for the direction of teaching and the curriculum. The governing body should formally delegate these powers and functions to the head teacher.

As academies are companies limited by guarantee with charitable status, the governors who sit on the governing body are the legal trustees of the charity. This confers certain obligations upon the trustees to protect the assets, property and good name of the charity. The legal requirements of trustees are set out below.

Governors have full responsibility for the charity and must:

- act together and in person and not delegate control of the charity to others;
- act strictly in accordance with the academy's governing documents;
- act in the academy's interests only and without regard to their own private interests;
- manage the academy's affairs prudently throughout the life of the academy;
- not derive any personal benefit or gain from the academy of which they are trustees; and
- take proper professional advice on matters on which they are not themselves competent.

In managing the academy's finances governors must:

- make sure that bank accounts, financial systems and financial records are operated by more than one person;
- make sure that all the academy's property is under the control of the trustees;
- keep full and accurate accounting records; and
- prepare accruals accounts giving a true and fair view of the academy's incoming resources and application of resources during the year and of its state of affairs at the year end.

In applying the academy's income governors must spend it solely for the purposes set out in the academy's governing documents and spend it with absolute fairness between persons qualified to benefit from the charity.

Conduct of Governors

Governors and staff are public servants and as such must not use public monies or official business for personal benefit. The governing body should avoid obtaining goods and services that include elements of private use or accepting excessive hospitality from prospective suppliers. The Treasury rules about the receiving of hospitality and gifts should be followed, as these rules are there to protect staff and governors. A register should be maintained to record hospitality and gifts received. This should record, as a minimum, the name of the organisation that gave the hospitality/gift, the date it was received, its nature and approximate value.

Governors should be aware that the Prevention of Corruption Act places the burden of proof on the recipient of favours.

The Treasury publication "Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies" outlines as best practice for governors.

The members of the trust, the governing body, and the members of its sub-committees abide by the equality principles as set out in the Academy's Equality Policy Statement. The principles therein described are summarised here:-

1. All learners are of equal value;
2. We recognise and respect difference;
3. We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging;
4. We observe good equalities practice in staff recruitment, retention and development;
5. We aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers that already exist;
6. We consult and involve widely;
7. Society as a whole should benefit;
8. We base our practices on sound evidence;

9. We formulate and publish specific and measurable objectives.

Annex C sets out the following matters in respect of the governing body:-

- Composition
- Appointment
- Term of Office
- Disqualification
- Secretary
- Chair and vice Chair
- Powers
- Conflicts of interest
- Minutes
- Committees
- Delegation
- Principal (head teacher)
- Meetings
- Patrons
- Seal
- Accounts, reports and returns
- Notices
- Indemnity
- Rules
- Avoiding influenced company status

Limitations as to Liabilities of, and benefits available to, Members and Governors

Limitations as to liabilities of, and limits on benefits available to, members and governors are set out in the Articles of Association. The relevant paragraphs are included as Annex D to these Standing Orders

Additional governance duties

- to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction Governors should:
 - engage with key stakeholders;
 - operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved;
 - provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety;
 - contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses;
 - support and strengthen school leadership;
 - use performance management systems, including the performance management of the head teacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management;
 - ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively; and
 - use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.

Committees

Besides the full governing body meeting as a committee, there are three further committees with delegated powers. These committees are the Policy, Finance & Premises, and Curriculum & Community committees.

The Finance and Premises committee has an advisory sub-committee called the Audit committee.

The following matters will not be delegated and must be the concern of the full Governing Body:-

- The constitution of the Governing Body;
- The appointment / removal of the Chair / vice Chair;
- The appointment of the clerk;
- The suspension of governors;
- The delegation of functions;
- The establishment of committees;
- Issues concerning equality;
- School risk assessment (except financial risk management which is delegated to the Finance & Premises Committee)

- And delegation operates within the limitations of item 9 below

Nor will it delegate the following matters to an individual:-

- alteration, closure or change of category of schools;
- school discipline policies;
- admissions.

The chair and vice chair of the full governing body may not be the chair or vice chair of any of the committees with delegated powers.

Each committee operates under terms of reference that must be approved by the full governing body and reviewed each year. They provide the sole, agreed framework within which each committee operates.

1. Each committee will be composed, where at all possible, of at least one governor from each of the categories which form the whole governing body. The head - teacher is an ex-officio member of each committee. At least three other governors shall be a member of each committee. The membership of the committee may include persons who are not governors provided that a majority of the members are governors. but such persons are not allowed to vote.
2. The membership of each committee will be agreed on an annual basis at the first meeting of the whole governing body in the autumn term.
3. The chair of each committee is elected by the whole governing body on an annual basis at the first meeting of the whole governing body in the autumn term. No governor employed at the academy will act as chair to the committee. In the absence of the chair the committee will elect a temporary replacement from among the governors present at the committee meeting.
4. The chair of the Finance & Premises committee must be a qualified accountant.
5. The clerk of the committee is elected by the committee.
6. In the absence of the chair or clerk the committee will elect a replacement for the meeting.
7. The quorum for each committee is fixed at two governors who are members of each committee.
8. Each committee will meet as often as is necessary to fulfil its responsibilities and at least once each term.
9. The clerk to the committee will circulate an agenda for each meeting and papers at least a week before the committee meeting.

10. Attendance at each committee meeting, issues discussed and recommendations for decisions will be recorded. The written record will be forwarded by the clerk to the committee to the clerk to the governing body in sufficient time for its inclusion on the agenda and papers of the next meeting of the whole governing body. This is to meet statutory requirements, to provide information to the whole governing body and to seek ratification of decisions and recommendations.
11. The chair of the committee will be responsible for giving an oral summary of the committee's deliberations if necessary at meetings of the whole governing body.
12. Each committee is authorised to invite attendance at its meetings from persons to assist or advise on a particular matter or range of issues, including parents and members of the academy staff who are not governors.
13. Any governor may attend meetings of committees.
14. Only governors who are members of the committee may vote at committee meetings. Where necessary, the elected chair of the committee may have a second or casting vote.
15. In the event of a need to make genuinely urgent decisions between meetings on matters falling within the remit of the committee, the chair of the governors, in consultation with the head-teacher and chair of the committee, will take appropriate action on behalf of the committee. The decisions taken and the reasons for urgency will be explained fully at the next meeting of the whole governing body.
16. The committee chairs will meet with the chair of governors and head-teacher at the beginning of each term to plan the work of each committee in relation to the Academy's development plan and other issues.
17. Detailed work on final agendas will be organised by the clerk in consultation with the Chair and the head teacher.
18. In addition, items may be placed on the agenda by individual, or groups of governors, by writing to the clerk.
19. Papers which inform the agenda items will be sent to governors with the agenda or before the meeting. Only in specially agreed circumstances and by prior agreement with the Chair will information be circulated at the meeting.
20. Governors should inform the meeting of any item they wish to raise under Any Other Business at the beginning of the meeting.
21. The meeting will decide whether any item so identified may be raised under Any Other Business, whether it should be deferred to a subsequent meeting or whether it should not be heard at all.
22. A record will be kept of all persons attending a meeting of the Governing Body or its committees.

23. The time of departure of any governor leaving before the end of the meeting will be recorded in the minutes.
24. The Governing Body will be kept informed of governor attendance.
25. Minutes shall be approved by the Governing Body and signed as a true record by the Chair at the next subsequent meeting.
26. A dissenting view will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting if that is the wish of one or more governors present.
27. Any agenda item which is declared confidential will appear only on the Chair's copy.
28. A copy of the following will be made available at the School for public inspection at reasonable times:- agendas for the Governing Body's meetings; signed minutes of such meetings; reports, documents or other papers considered at the meetings; draft copies of minutes before they are signed.
29. Minutes of the meetings of committees with delegated powers will be circulated to all governors.
30. All incoming correspondence, excluding any concerning a complaint, is for the attention of the whole Governing Body. Items will be presented to each meeting of the Governing Body, including any upon which the Chair has already taken urgent action, so that the need for, and the nature of, action may be decided or confirmed.
31. The clerk to the governors will normally write letters on behalf of the Governing Body.
32. The head teacher has a statutory duty to keep the Governing Body fully informed, and will present a written report at least once per term to the Governing Body.
33. Where important information required by the Governing Body is given orally, it will be recorded in the minutes in appropriate detail.
34. Where information required by the Governing Body is not readily available, or where the help from an expert is required, reasonable time will be provided for obtaining the information and those with appropriate expertise may be appointed as executive members of the Governing Body.
35. The Chair will consult the Governing Body on matters raised where they appear to be not relevant to the agenda or for which due notice has not been given.
36. The Chair will ensure that all governors enjoy equality of opportunity to express their views.
37. Recommendations received from working parties will be recorded in the written minutes.
38. Decisions will be made after full discussion and by a simple majority by a show of hands unless one member or more require a secret ballot.
39. A decision of the Governing Body is binding upon all its governors.

40. The Chair or in his / her absence the Vice Chair, has authority to take urgent action between meetings provided that the following conditions exist:-

- delay in dealing with the matter would be seriously detrimental to a pupil, or potential pupil, or his or her parents, or to a member of staff or potential member of staff, or to the wellbeing or safety of the School and
- a meeting could not be called in sufficient time to deal with the matter without being seriously detrimental.

41. If any urgent action is taken by the Chair between meetings, the facts will be reported as soon as possible to the Governing Body

42. Public statements will be made only by the Chair or the head teacher or by any person to whom they specifically delegate this task

43. When the head teacher is absent, his or her place may be taken by the deputy head teacher but the deputy does not have a vote.

44. An acting head teacher does not have a vote if there is a substantive head teacher in post.

45. The Governing Body will decide who, other than a governor, the head teacher, or the clerk will be admitted to a meeting.

46. The Governing Body will decide which of its meetings, if any, will be open to the public.

47. If a meeting is to be opened to parents / the public, reasonable notice must be given.

48. Where relevant, at any and all meetings of the governing body, governors will draw attention as appropriate to their declared pecuniary or personal interests and will withdraw in the following circumstances:-

- in the event that he / she has a pecuniary interest, direct or indirect in the matter under discussion;
- if the subject of consideration is either the person himself / herself or a relative who is either employed at the school or seeking employment at the school;
- if a pupil being discussed is the child or relative of the governor.

49. Governors who have declared a personal interest must be allowed to attend a meeting of a committee of the Governing Body to give evidence if they have made relevant accusations, or are witnesses in the case, when it is discussing:

- disciplinary action against an employee or against a pupil; or
- a matter arising from an alleged incident involving a pupil

50. Requirements to circulate minutes and to keep governors informed can be deemed to have been executed if the relevant information has been posted to the governors' VLE

Policy Committee

This consists of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Finance & Premises committee, the Curriculum & Community committees, the JCC, and the head teacher. The only exception to this relates to the discipline of an individual member of staff when the head teacher shall not be present.

Purpose

To exercise overall control of the business to be executed by the other committees with delegated powers to ensure there is no duplication or conflict between them. It determines which matters are for decision by each Committee, including itself, and which only for recommendation to the full Governing Body, taking in to account the School's Standing Orders and relevant Statutes. It carries out the School's Pay and Recruitment Policies. It also ensures that there is an appropriate level of review of policies by an appropriate governors' committee at frequencies required by statute, or if no such requirement exists, at such frequencies as it deems suitable.

In addition:-

On behalf of the Governing Body it acts as the Staffing Committee and:-

- Will decide how many and which staff should work at the school;
- May dismiss someone working at the school;
- Must ensure disciplinary rules and procedures for staff are in place;
- Must ensure there are arrangements for hearing staff grievances;
- Will be responsible for making sure that the school keeps to its teacher appraisal arrangements and has procedures for dealing with staff capability;
- Will determine salary levels and changes in remuneration provided that no such decision shall conflict with nationally negotiated pay awards or employment legislation generally;
- Will be responsible for appearing before any employment Tribunal to defend the actions of the Governing Body

On behalf of the Governing Body it acts as the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the policy set out in the LA's Schools' personnel guidelines.

Both the head-teacher and the Policy Committee have the power to suspend a member of staff (on full pay) but only the Policy Committee may end a suspension.

In the event that unavailability prevents members of the Policy committee to attend a staffing or discipline committee, the Policy committee seconds appropriately trained governors from the rest of the governing body.

It is recognised that some staff issues are too urgent to await discussion and resolution at the next scheduled meeting of the Policy committee. In these circumstances, the head teacher will call together three members of Policy committee, or in their absence, any three suitably experienced and qualified governors to consider the matter in hand. These meetings will be minuted and decisions arising from them enacted as if they had been meetings of the Policy committee which will be appraised of the content of any such urgently arranged meetings at their next scheduled meeting.

The Performance Management committee presides over the performance management of the head-teacher. The committee is clerked by a deputy head teacher, not the clerk to the governors. It is composed of three governors who are preferably but need not necessarily be members of the Policy committee and who have received the relevant training. Staff governors may not be members of the Performance Management committee.

Terms of Reference

Sets performance related targets annually for the head teacher

Monitors progress toward the accomplishment of the targets.

Decides annually on the extent of additional remuneration due to the head teacher in acknowledgement of success in achieving targets.

Policy committee and any other committee drawn from its members or set up by it undertake to act, in every aspect of their activity, in accordance with equality principles set out in the School's Equality Policy statement.

Finance & Premises Committee

Purpose

To assist the decision making of the governing body, by enabling more detailed consideration to be given to the best means of fulfilling the governing body's responsibility to ensure sound management of the academy's finances and resources, including proper planning, monitoring and probity.

To similarly assist by considering health and safety issues, including risk management issues.

To make appropriate comments and recommendations on such matters to the governing body on a regular basis.

Major issues will be referred to the full governing body for ratification.

Terms of Reference

The committee is authorised:

1. To consider the academy's indicative funding, notified annually by EFA, and to assess its implications for the academy, in consultation with the head teacher, in advance of the financial year, drawing any matters of significance or concern to the attention of the governing body.
2. To consider and recommend acceptance/non-acceptance of the academy's budget, at the start of each financial year.
3. To contribute to the formulation of the academy's development plan, through the consideration of financial priorities and proposals, in consultation with the head teacher, with the stated and agreed aims and objectives of the academy.
4. To 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, ensuring the compatibility of all such proposals with the development priorities set out in the development plan.
5. To liaise with other committees, as appropriate, and to make recommendations to those committees about the financial aspects of matters being considered by them.
6. To monitor and review expenditure on a regular basis and ensure compliance with the overall financial plan for the academy, and with the financial regulations of the DfE / EFA, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the governing body.
7. To monitor and review procedures for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of financial procedures, on a regular basis, including the implementation of bank account arrangements and, where appropriate to make recommendations for improvement.
8. To prepare the financial statement to form part of the annual report of the governing body to parents and for filing in accordance with Companies Act and Charity Commission requirements
9. To receive auditors' reports and to recommend to the full governing body action as appropriate in response to audit findings.**

10. To recommend to the full governing body the appointment or reappointment of the auditors of the academy.
11. To consider any proposals in respect of borrowing
12. To consider any proposals in respect of buying or selling academy land or buildings, or other substantial on-off financial events
13. To monitor insurance arrangements
14. To remain apprised of significant matters affecting the academy's assets and programmes of capital spend e.g. computers, cars, whiteboards etc;
15. To scrutinise arrangements for contracts to be let and to be kept apprised of progress on contracts let
16. To be consulted on issues of risk management
17. To act, in every aspect of their activity, in accordance with equality principles set out in the School's Equality Policy statement.
18. To scrutinise financial aspects of ensuring pupil premium and other resources are used to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- 18.19. To receive information and make recommendations on all issues relating to Health & Safety, accessibility and security. To be apprised of the activities of the Health & Safety committee and make appropriate input where required.

** Activity arising with item 9 cross references to the functions of the Audit committee. The head teacher, School Accountant, and Responsible officer would attend with appointed members of the governing body who are not employed at the School. Internal control, financial reporting and liaison with external auditors summarise the duties of this committee. Full details of the committee, as laid down in the Academies' Financial Handbook (pre-September 2012) are reproduced retained as part of these Standing Orders and reproduced in Annex J.

Curriculum and Community Committee

Purpose

To provide challenge and hold the head teacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety

Takes responsibility for the development, oversight, and monitoring of:-

- Pupil safety, welfare, and guidance in every aspect of school life;

- Pupils' moral, social, cultural, and spiritual development;
- Measures to promote positive behaviour.

Promotes a supportive climate for learning and an ethos in which responsible, open, helpful, and understanding relationships are a feature and in which pupils have a role.

Advises the Governing body on all matters relating to the national curriculum, having liaised fully with the teaching staff, and ensures that the National Curriculum be implemented.

Establishes the widest possible network of contacts with industry and commerce, in order to foster good communications with them and to encourage their interest in the School and its curriculum.

Promotes the School and determine its marketing and publicity policies.

Supports the planning and implementation of policies designed to generate income.

Develops policy with respect to matters shared in common with the local community.

This committee acts, in every aspect of their activity, in accordance with equality principles set out in the School's Equality Policy statement.

Working Parties

In order to ensure the most efficient use of time and resources, and in some cases to ensure absolute propriety, the governing body makes provision in its annual schedule of meetings for working parties to provide information and / or make recommendations to the appropriate committee.

The purpose, terms of reference, chairmanship, composition, reporting context and discontinuance of the working party shall be determined by the governing body.

The head-teacher has the right to attend any meeting of an established working party.

Admissions

The School follows the requirements of the School Admissions Code and Schools Admissions Appeals Code issued by DfE.

Responsible Officer

The Responsible Officer is a governor who has the role to monitor and check the operation of the financial management arrangements that have been established and are operated by officers of the academy. The RO provides an independent oversight of the academy's financial affairs. The main duties of the RO are to provide the governing body with on-going independent assurance that:

- the financial responsibilities of the governing body are being properly discharged;
- resources are being managed in an efficient, economical and effective manner;
- sound systems of internal financial control are being maintained; and financial considerations are fully taken into account in reaching decisions.

The programme of checks performed by the RO is agreed with the Finance & Premises Committee. After each checking session the RO provides the Finance & Premises Committee with a written report. The RO is not a member of the Finance & Premises Committee, as he or she may find it necessary to criticise the workings of that Committee. Instead, the RO reports to the Finance & Premises Committee in an advisory capacity.

The RO is a governor (but not the chairman), or an appropriately qualified and experienced individual not on the academy staff, with the necessary financial interest and skills to be able to perform the role competently.

A recognised professional qualification is not necessary. However, the person selected must be able to show that the responsibilities being undertaken are fully understood and the importance of the role is fully recognised. The RO is to have sufficient understanding to recognise any irregularities which may arise and sufficient authority to ensure they are addressed. If the governing body is unable to find a suitably qualified RO, it may engage a firm of auditors to aid the RO in this function.

General areas for checking will cover

- Review that bank reconciliations have been carried out each month, including a review of validity of reconciling items;
- Review of the monthly payroll to ensure that any changes have been appropriately authorised;
- Check of a sample of orders to delivery notes and invoices to ensure that the documentation is complete and has been appropriately checked and authorised;
- Check of a sample of payments back to invoices, orders and delivery notes to confirm they are bona fide purchases;
- Review of a sample of expense claims to ensure there is appropriate documentation to support the claim and that the claim is appropriately authorised;

- Review the returns to the EFA / DfE to ensure the information supplied is consistent with the underlying accounting records and internal management reports;
- Carry out spot checks of petty cash balances and supporting vouchers and
- Review all major contracts and ensure formal tendering procedures exist and are being adhered to.

Joint Consultative Council (JCC)

The JCC offers a procedural framework within which potential problems between the governing body and the staff trade unions can be resolved constructively. The constitution and composition of the JCC is set out in Annex F to these Standing Orders.

School Policies

The Policy committee ensures that there is an appropriate level of review of policies by an appropriate governors' committee at frequencies required by statute, or if no such requirement exists, at such frequencies as it deems suitable.

Governors' Agendas

There is a cycle of issues that have to be considered and actions that have to be taken by governors. This cycle is agreed annually at the first Full Governors meeting of the academic year.