Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust

Internal Scrutiny Summary Report

Year 2021 - 2022

Introduction

Internal scrutiny is a process that provides independent assurance to the Board of Directors that its financial and other controls, and risk management procedures, are operating effectively. As a minimum, it involves a series of tests to ensure systems are effective and compliant but goes beyond mere transaction checking.

The programme of internal scrutiny is informed by the AHMAT Trust's Risk Register, which is owned by the Board of Directors and overseen by the AHMAT Finance and Audit & Risk committee.

The Board of Directors and Finance and Audit & Risk committee identify how well risks are managed, how effective our processes are and how agreed procedures are being followed, as well as identifying areas where efficiencies or change should be made.

The risk management process is iterative and ongoing and is influenced by the findings of the programme of internal scrutiny which in turn inform the risk register. The planning of the programme of internal scrutiny is a risk-based joint enterprise between the Board of Directors , the AHMAT Finance and Audit committee, RO and the auditors appointed to conduct the internal scrutiny.

The Accountable Officer has prepared the following summary of the internal scrutiny work commissioned by the Board of Directors over Bishop Fleming.

We have included the areas reviewed, the key findings and recommendations arising with our associated management responses.

Trust overview

Constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the academy trust. The Directors of Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust.

The Academy Trust was opened on 1st September 2014 with Knowl Hill CE Academy and White Waltham CE Academy, and Bisham C of E Academy joined on 1st September 2017. It is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy.

Details of the Directors who served throughout the period, except as noted, are included in the Reference and Administrative Details below.

The trust operates Bisham CE Academy, Knowl Hill CE Academy and White Waltham CE Academy in Maidenhead, Berkshire. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 630 and had a roll of 4 in the school census on 1st October 2021.

Members Directors	**Members** Oxford Diocesan Board of Education H Hall – resigned 14/06/2022 C Haines – 15/06/2022 G Joyner (Oxford Diocesan Board of Education) W Stileman – resigned 24/11/2021 R West
	Directors H Hall - resigned 14/06/2022 C Haines C Pitteway – resigned 21/09/2021 C Dean – appointed 21/09/2021 H Macdonald – end of 2nd term 31/08/2022 A Eden (Responsible Officer) – resigned 31/08/2022 I Cooke (CEO and Accounting Officer) C Warne
Senior Leadership Team	I Cooke (CEO) M Thompson (Head of School – White Waltham)- resigned 18/04/2022 L Denham ((Head of School – White Waltham) – appointed 06/06/2022 N Bourner (Head of School – Knowl Hill) L Morel (Head of School – Bisham) – resigned 31/08/2022
Registered Office	Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust (wef 01.09.19) Church Lane Marlow Bucks SL7 1RW
Company Registration Number	08163445 (England & Wales)
Independent Auditor	James Cowper Kreston 8th floor, Reading Bridge House, South, George St, Reading RG1 8LS
Bankers	Lloyds Maidenhead Branch 45 High St Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JS
Solicitors	Winckworth Sherwood 16 Beaumont Street Oxford OX 2LZ

The Board of Directors normally meet once each term. The Board of Directors establishes an overall framework for the governance of the Academy and determines membership, terms of reference and procedures of the Finance & Audit Committee. In addition, it monitors the activities of the Local Governing Bodies through the minutes of their meetings, reports from Chairs of Local Governing Bodies, and views all monitoring paperwork. The Board of Directors may from time to time establish working groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

There is a Finance and Audit & Risk Committee that meets termly. The F & A and Risk Committee has its own terms of reference detailing the responsibilities discharged to it. Its membership is:

- Director – Finance Responsibilities
- Director – Chair of Bisham Local Governing Body
- Director – Chair of Knowl Hill Local Governing Body
- Director – Chair of White Waltham Local Governing Body
- CEO who is treated for all purposes as being an ex-officio member

The following decisions are reserved to the Board of Directors:

- to consider any proposals for changes to the status or constitution of the Academy and its committee structure;
- to appoint or remove the Chair and / or Vice Chair;
- to appoint and / or consider the performance management of the CEO; and
- to appoint the Trust Business Manager.

The Directors are responsible for setting general policy, adopting an annual development plan and budget, approving the annual statutory accounts, monitoring the Academy by the use of budgets and other data, and making major decisions about the direction of the Academy, capital expenditure and staff appointments.

The Directors have devolved the day-to-day management of the Academy to the CEO and the Senior Leadership Team ('SLT'). The SLT comprises the CEO, and the Head of Schools. The SLT implement the policies laid down by the Directors and the CEO reports back to them on performance.

Internal Scrutiny

The Trust has an established approach to risk management, including the maintenance of a trust-wide risk register that is regularly reviewed by AHMAT Finance & Audit & Risk Committee. We have used our view on risks facing the trust and the related assurances available to direct our internal scrutiny work for the year.

The Academy'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 Directors;
- 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 (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks.

An internal assurance review was undertaken of Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust in accordance with the terms of engagement between Bishop Fleming and Ashley Hill Multi Academy Trust in June 2022.

Bishop Fleming conducted a 1 day internal assurance review. This review was conducted remotely with evidence uploaded onto a central system for scrutiny. The scrutiny was not hindered or impacted in any way by working remotely.

The review has been undertaken to provide an independent assurance report to the Academy's Finance and Audit & Risk Committee on the adequacy and effectiveness of the financial control environment operating within the Trust in accordance with the requirements contained in the Academies Financial Handbook.

The following areas were selected to check for compliance:

- payroll systems
- fixed assets
- expenditure

Summary of Findings

TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM COLOUR KEY

Matters that we consider should be brought to your attention and recommendations we have for possible improvements are summarised in the columns in the report - the final 'outcome' column uses a 'traffic light' system.

Payroll	-	-	-	**7**	**1**
Fixed Assets	-	-	-	**3**	**1**
Expenditure	-	-	**2**	**6**	-
TOTAL	-	-	**2**	**16**	**2**

The key is as follows:

	This recommendation must be addressed as a matter of priority, as the required internal controls are not currently in place.
	This recommendation should be addressed as weaknesses have been identified with the current internal controls.
	This recommendation will improve the current internal controls and be in line with best practice.
	No recommendation, as the internal controls in place are sufficient.
	At the time of our visit there was nothing to report on this particular area.

Bishop Fleming performed one internal audit review during the year, and their work was completed satisfactorily. They have raised 2 Green (good practice) recommendations listed below with management response.

Findings	Recommendations	Management Response and Update
Expenditure		
The Financial Procedures manual was reviewed and confirmed that the quote/ tenders limits appear appropriate for the size of the academy. There may be merit in collating and maintaining a list of recurring / contracted services for the Trust to provide greater visibility over contract renewals and performance.	We recommend that a list of recurring services is drafted and presented to the board. This should detail the contractor, services provided, and the date of renewal in order that the contracts can be reviewed ahead of an impending renewal.	Spreadsheet uploaded to Smartsafe and then presented to the Board.

Findings	Recommendations	Management Response and Update
Expenditure cont		
A customer list is maintained on the finance system. Any new suppliers details are checked and the supplier approved. It was confirmed that a list of suppliers is held in Xero. In the event of setting up a new supplier (which does not happen often, we understand from trust management), the supplier details will be verified from a trusted source to enable the approval of credentials.	We recommend that a process is created to ensure that there are sufficient checks in place for new suppliers in order to identify any potential related parties (or indeed to check any changes or additions from the annually updated register of interests against the existing supplier list).	A new process for new suppliers will be introduced, a short email form to be completed which will be approved by the Trust Business Manager after checking for potential related parties, company status and details verified from a trusted source.

Internal Scrutiny for 2022 - 2023

The Board of Directors has decided:

- For the financial year 2022-2023 the company Bishop Fleming has been appointed to conduct the internal assurance
- James Cowper Kreston have been appointed as our auditors for financial year 2022-2023 in compliance with Academies handbook 2022.

Therefore, the trust has appointed two different auditing bodies to conduct the internal scrutiny arrangements and external audit thus complying with the requirements of the Academies handbook 2022.

Additional information

Audit team

Head of Internal Audit: Alastair Campbell
Email: ACampbell@bishopfleming.co.uk

Manager: Molly Hershaw
Email: mhershaw@bishopfleming.co.uk