



**Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
at 1.00pm via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Trustee name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	A = absence
Mr Ian Storey –(Chair) Trustee	IS	
Mr Mike Quigley- Trustee	MQ	
Mr Peter Mabbott - Trustee	PM	A
Mr Tim Hill – Co-opted	TH	A
Mrs Pat Bryn-Jones – Co-opted	PBJ	A
Mr Geoff Gadie – Co-opted	GG	A

In attendance: [staff or other invited persons]

<b>Staff name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Role</b>	A = Absence
Karen Bonser	KB	Karen Bonser, Senior Business Leader - Business Development	
David Cotton	DC	Chief Executive Officer & Accounting Officer	
Gary Corban	GC	Chief Operations Officer	
Patrick Knight	PK		Left meeting at 1.27pm
Jonathan Creed	JC	ICCA, Associate Director	Left meeting at 1.47pm
Jenni Harrison Hill	JHH	Company Secretary & Clerk to Board of Trustees	

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/when</b>
<b>Agenda item 1</b> ARC/06/2021	<b>Elect Chair</b> I Storey was nominated and appointed as Chair	
ARC/07/2021 <b>Agenda item 2</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received and agreed from P Mabbott and G Gadie. No apologies were received from T Hill or P Bryn Jones. The meeting was quorate with two trustees in attendance.	
ARC/08/2021 <i>Agenda item 3</i>	<b>Declaration of interest and any changes to be advised</b> There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Trustees confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.	
<b>ARC/09/2021</b> <b>Agenda item 4</b>	<b>Minutes of the meeting dated 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b> The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed by the chair.	

<p><b>ARC/10/1920</b> <b>Agenda item 5</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising</b> Extraordinary committee meeting 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020  <b>ARC/03/2021 Review Risk Assessments for September opening</b>  <b>Action:</b> Business Managers of PFI schools in the Trust to be contacted to ensure no lettings being permitted.  East Leake Academy Committee requested the full risk assessment document.  <b>Action:</b> Full risk assessment to be provided.  Both actions completed.</p> <p>Committee meeting 24<sup>th</sup> June  <b>ARC/03/19/20 – Further exploration of introducing software to record staff reading policies</b>  On hold, currently reviewing existing software.  <b>ARC/24/1920 6.5 External opportunities to provide Internal Audit – update on ICCA renewal and/or collective MAT projects</b>  KB has a project starting with LEAD Trust to review internal audit and we will be commencing an internal audit tender to start Sept 21.  <b>ARC/69/1920 External and Internal Audit Plans approval for 2020/2021</b>  <b>Action:</b> Agenda item for next Full Board Meeting to discuss possible review of Local Academy Committees governance.  Completed – discussed at Trust Board meeting.  <b>ARC/70/1920 Safeguarding and Compliance</b>  <b>Action:</b> Invite P Knight for next meeting in autumn term for update  P Knight attended the meeting to provide update.  ARC/71/1920 Financial Year end report  <b>Action:</b> Trustee Report to be updated for current financial year and brought back to committee for approval, prior to Full Board approval.  In progress, to be completed and presented to Finance and Resources Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November, all Trustees invited.  <b>ARC/73/1920 Accounting Officer Exception Report</b>  <b>Action:</b> Structure of agenda and Accounting Officer report to be considered.  <b>Action</b> JHH research Audit and Risk committee requirements for Accounting Officer report  HM treasury link from AFH on audit and risk Role of A&amp;R is to support the board and trust by reviewing the comprehensiveness &amp; reliability of assurances on governance, risk management control environment and the integrity of financial statements and annual report.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda item 6</b> <b>ARC/11/2021</b></p>	<p><b>Accounting Officer Report</b>  Includes all areas of Accounting Officer Responsibilities and Audit and Risk Committee updates relating to committee delegated responsibilities.  Documents received by the committee:  - <i>Accounting Officer report for November 2020 Meeting</i>  - <i>Appendix 1 Accounting officer meetings schedule 2020-21</i></p>	

- *Appendix 2 Executive safeguarding report October 2020*
- *Appendix 3 DAT- Report 06 19-20 Key financial controls – internal Audit – Draft- without responses*
- *Appendix 4 overview of Academy reviews 19-20*
- *Appendix 5 Internal scrutiny report – Diverse Academies 2019-20*
- *Appendix 6 Risk management report for A&R*
- *Appendix 7 Claims and complaints data*
- *Appendix 8 Covid 19 Update report 15.10.20*

The Chair informed the committee that structure of agenda has been amended to ensure no duplication of items which are then covered again in the Accounting Officers report.

**ARC/12/2021**

The Accounting Officer report was shared on screen and presented.

- **Accounting Officer Management Group**

The committee was informed that no change in membership to the group has occurred.

**ARC/13/2021**

- **Safeguarding**

This item was taken out of order, after election of Chair, to allow for guest speaker to present.

*Document: Appendix 2 Executive Safeguarding report October 2020*

P Knight shared the above document on the screen.

P Knight presented the document and its findings.

The committee were informed that the next audits to be carried out are Samuel Barlow academy and Retford Oaks academy. If schools remain open, then academies will undergo an audit this academic year.

Behaviour and safety are improving across all academies. The academies which remain high priority due to new leadership posts or changes in key personnel for safeguarding are:

The Holgate academy  
 Sam Barlow academy  
 Redgate primary academy  
 Walton academy

The committee were informed that in the past the whistleblowing policy hierarchy of reporting and need for confidentiality is lengthy so rather than staff knowing the exact staff to report to they will be questioned on how they would obtain that information should an incident arise

The Educare contract will be reviewed in May 2021 to ensure this still remains to meet the needs of the trust alongside other external professional development advisors

The safeguarding policy has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes required from documents detailed in the report for the 20-21 academic year.

P Knight discussed the recommendations from the Executive Safeguarding report. The trustees were informed that there remain some further embedding of knowledge regarding peer on peer abuse and this is being looked at further, and investigating wider training on this subject.

The audit process, with the new leadership structures now in place, has highlighted areas where clarification of lines of responsibility between Human Resources and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) were required. It is very clear that DSLs have the responsibility for the SCR, the Principals have the Accountability and HR Advisors support with the Administration. Trustees were informed that it is the DSL and Principals responsibility to ensure the Single Central Record (SCR) is checked regularly, as a minimum expectation all DSL's are being directed to look at SCR at least once per term.

Cultural safeguarding and child protection were reported to trustees, as identified from the audit, as secure.

**Trustee Question:** The report identifies 2019/20 action points, at what point will they all be actioned and completed?

Response: The points have been actioned as part of the response to the audit, these will be tested as the first part of the 2020/21 audit to check the responses are in place, as well as having had progress checks in 19-20

If actions from previous audits are raised in 2020/21 then that becomes an urgent priority.

**Trustee Question:** Are all safeguarding governors across trust accessing My Concern in light of current link visit restrictions?

Response: DSL's are responsible for producing reports through reporting suite and extracting trends for safeguarding link governors, DSL's can meet with link governors remotely. There is some development required on the reporting arm of My Concern to improve the reporting to Governors which is being addressed

**Action:** P Knight to reiterate to DSL and Principals importance of arranging virtual meetings with safeguarding link governors.

The committee was informed that audits are being carried out remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions, with the aim to complete before Christmas and, if possible, carry out academies visits in 2021 to test culture and practices which can't be done remotely.

Good practice found during audits is shared as audits progress to ensure continual improvement.

P Knight left the meeting at 1.27pm

ARC/14/2021

- **Internal and External Audits**

**Trustee comment:** An audit trail of items being carried out would be beneficial

**Action:** K Bonser to include audit trail of items carried out.

ARC/15/2021

- **Internal Scrutiny reporting**

This item was taken out of order, after election of Chair, to allow for guest speaker to present.

Document: Appendix 3 DAT – Report 06 19-20 Key Financial controls Internal Audit – Draft- without responses was received by the committee.

Document: Appendix 5a ICCA- DAT Annual report 2019-20 was received by the committee

J Creed informed the committee that for 2019/20, all reviews in the internal audit plan have been completed.

P Knight

KB

The review of key financial controls report offers reasonable assurance opinion with a small number of recommendations.

The committee were informed that, due to significant changes made in February regarding hosting and latest version of accounting system, some of the recommendations reflect difficulty for staff accessing audit evidence, in addition to some missing/processes not being followed fully; however, the report remains a positive opinion, the management points are not of major consequence.

**Trustee Question:** Was the difficulty for accessing audit evidence due to the new system version or covid-19?

Response: J Creed confirmed that both covid-19 and new system changes contributed to making it difficult for staff to accessing the documents.

**Trustee Question:** The internal scrutiny report- appendix 5a section 2 states "Insufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow an opinion to be given as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's governance and risk management arrangements for the year ending 31 August 2020." This is not addressed in Internal scrutiny report appendix 5?

Response: Page 7 of the report refers to Browne Jacobson – Trust Lawyers- Full Governance Review to provide a source of assurance in this area.

**Trustee Comment:** This needs to be clearly documented in the report that it covers the statement from appendix 5a.

**Action:** K Bonser to amend Internal scrutiny report to reflect that ICCA had not been requested to work on governance assurance due to the Trust organising a Governance Review through Lawyers, Browne Jacobson.

J Creed then provided an update to the committee 2020/21 – three pieces of work scheduled for autumn term, commencing this half term.

- GDPR arrangements, specifically around home working and procedures put in place.

- Overarching procurement framework for Key financial controls, scheme of delegated authorities and higher value purchasing arrangements.

- Arrangements for re-opening of academies – due to new lockdown restrictions this has now been put on hold.

**Trustees discussed** the necessity to continue with the audit of re-opening of schools if they can be carried out safely due to it being a core risk.

**Trustees agreed** it was essential for audit around risk assessments for re-opening procedures to ensure assurance that risk assessments and controls are effective.

**Action:** K Bonser and J Creed to discuss how the audits can be safely carried out.

J Creed left the meeting at 1.47pm

**Trustee Question:** is there confidence that the format and contents of internal scrutiny report is in line with what is expected in the new requirements?

Response: The draft report by ICCA has been sent to External Auditors for review and they were assured that it met the requirements.

The training provided on internal scrutiny also informs what the report should include, the report has been based on this.

**KB**

**KB**

GCO confirmed that the report had a lot more content than he had discussed with other CFO peers in the country

External Financial Audit – Report will be provided in December, alongside the statutory accounts

**ARC/16/2021**

- **Risk Management**

K Bonser informed the committee that compliance and assurance review (appendix 4) for 2019/20 not all areas were covered due to lockdown. Work is planned for spring and summer term.

**Trustee Question:** Do the academy internal reviews go to Standards and Outcomes Committee as well as Audit and Risk?

Response: it is relevant to both committees and so should be considered at Standards and Outcomes for the relevant risks and Finance and Resources for the financial risks.

Action: J Harrison-Hill to ensure appropriate committees receive the reports

**JHH**

Health and safety- Queen Elizabeth's Academy has been graded red major non-compliance. K Bonser is working to ensure update on progress and it is being treated as a high priority to ensure significant progress.

**Action:** Progress will be reported at audit and risk meeting on 24/02/2021 and in the interim any ongoing concerns will be raised with the Chair as appropriate.

**KB**

The committee was informed that for 20/21 Health and Safety will be focused on those academies with high scores but will be carried out after Christmas due to lockdown, as the audit requires to be on site to carry out.

Academy and HQ Risk Registers for headquarters, grades above 4.5 other than covid-19 control infectious diseases are DAT taking control of post 16, and funding areas. A large amount of work is being carried out locally with risk registers.

**Trustee Question:** for headquarters, unlike academies, the category of risks is expandable, for example: risk of liability to staff would come under Headquarters?

Response: K Bonser confirmed that was correct and that the risk had been considered under control of infectious diseases.

**Trustee Question:** how is the grading arrived at?

Response: The score for likelihood and impact are The same as those used in the academy risk registers 1-3 for likelihood and impact and multiplied together – min of 1 and max of 9 total score

K Bonser informed the committee that the risk registers now had more high risks (reds) than usual due to the impact of covid-19 on other areas wider than infectious control. The report (Appendix 6) shows high risk areas, tolerance, and appetite for risk. The committee's role is to consider if agree with the tolerance level and control of risks.

Trustees **agreed** that measures in place to control risks were satisfactory, and tolerance levels acceptable. The audit by ICCA requested by trustees on CV19 control measures would also provide

<p><b>ARC/17/2021</b></p>	<p>trustees with assurance that levels of controls were adequate and provide further challenge from an external provider.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Covid-19 Management</b></li> </ul> <p>The committee was informed the report received was prepared prior to half term, the next report will be prepared w/e 13.11.20..</p> <p><b>Action:</b> K Bonser to circulate next Covid-19 report to clerk for trust board.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question:</b> what are the current impacts on student and staff attendance in light of second lockdown?</p> <p>D Cotton informed the committee that pupil and staff attendance is being tracked on a daily basis. Clarification regarding staff who fall into clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable are being sought.</p> <p>Phase 2, which could include closures/rota systems are being looked at and information sought regarding at what point evidence can trigger these, together with procedures education provision should staffing levels become an issue.</p>	<p><b>KB</b></p>
<p><b>ARC/18/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial Management</b></li> <li>• <b>Fraud, Regularity, Whistleblowing, Impropriety and Bribery</b></li> </ul> <p>The financial management accounts have been reviewed up to August 2020 with no reports of any fraud, irregularity, or non-compliance. The audited accounts trustee report is in the process of being prepared with all trustees invited to attend the presentation of accounts at the finance committee meetings on the 25<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>Changes of business interests are updated on trust website throughout the year.</p>	
<p><b>ARC/19/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GDPR</b></li> </ul> <p>The Accounting Officer reports details the number of subject access requests, freedom of information requests, and GDPR breaches and action taken to support potential breaches resulting from working from home.</p>	
<p><b>ARC/20/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Serious Incidents</b></li> </ul> <p>None to report</p>	
<p><b>ARC/21/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>External Correspondence (ESFA/PHE/DfE etc.)</b></li> </ul> <p>ESFA/DfE correspondence is monitored through the Accounting Officer's Management Group, reviewed on a regular basis and action taken as requested. There are currently no outstanding returns</p>	
<p><b>ARC/22/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Claims and Complaints</b></li> </ul> <p>Appendix 7 shows data summarising and classifying the risks.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question:</b> Are there any new claims coming through?</p> <p>Response: we have received one this week will report back on this once more details are known.</p>	
<p><b>ARC/23/2021</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Any other matters</b></li> </ul> <p>No further matters were raised.</p>	
<p><b>Agenda item 7</b></p> <p><b>ARC/24/2021</b></p> <p><b>ARC/25/2021</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Policy approval (over and above those identified in AO report)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational visits policy</li> </ul> <p>Trustees <b>approved</b> the Educational Visits policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk management policy and strategy</li> </ul>	

	<p>It was requested that K Bonser send out the risk management policy for trustees to review and agree by email.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> K Bonser to forward policies to Clerk</p> <p><b>Action</b> Clerk to forward to committee trustees for approval/comments via email.</p>	<p><b>KB</b></p> <p><b>JHH</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda item 8</b></p> <p><b>ARC/26/2021</b></p> <p><b>ARC/27/2021</b></p>	<p><b>Issues referred to/from Board or academies as identified in the AO report</b></p> <p>No issues received.</p> <p><b>Items for trust Board update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee agreed it was essential for external audit around risk assessments for re-opening procedures to ensure assurance that risk assessments and controls are effective.</li> <li>• Committee agreed that measures in place to control risks were satisfactory, and tolerance levels acceptable.</li> <li>• Committee approved of Educational Visits policy</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Agenda item 9</b></p> <p><b>ARC/28/2021</b></p>	<p><b>Determination of confidentiality of business</b></p> <p><b>Equality Act consideration</b></p> <p><b>Nolan Principles</b></p> <p>Trustees considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Internal Scrutiny report would remain a confidential document until finalised.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications</li> <li>- Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Agenda item 10</b></p> <p><b>ARC/29/2021</b></p>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting 24<sup>th</sup> February 4.30pm</b></p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 2.45pm</p> <p>Signed.....(chair) Date.....</p>	