

Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Boulevard Academy Trust 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, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of good propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between the Boulevard Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in the internal control.

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 6 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Carol White	6	6
Paul Tempest	5	6
Andy Grace	6	6
Louise Adams	5	6
Adele Lytollis	4	6
Linda Robinson	5	6
James Davies	2	3

Governance Reviews

Governors have continued to develop a shared understanding of their strategic governance role, in particular following the publication of the DfE's competency framework for governance. In order to strengthen the current governance skill set, one additional governor has been appointed and the trust is currently working with Academy Ambassadors to recruit a senior executive from a business background to become a trustee. This appointment, if successful will mean a full complement of trustees.

In view of the rapidly changing education landscape locally, regionally and nationally, governors are also keeping a watching brief on recent and ongoing developments with the support of the trust's advisory board that meets termly to provide confidential advice on options for ways forward.

The executive board has reviewed how governors might link more effectively with academy senior leaders and agreed key link and monitoring areas of responsibility aligned to the

academy's improvement plan priorities and based on governors' particular experience, expertise and skill set while recognising the time constraints that some governors have in relation to their employment.

In June 2016, the chair of the executive board was appointed to be a National Leader of Governance (NLG). This has enabled the chair to share her recent experiences of working with other schools and governing bodies and given all governors the benefit of membership both of the National Governors Association and The Key for School Governors. In addition, governors have attended external training in relation to their link roles, in particular:

- Governors' responsibilities for school exclusions
- Safeguarding
- Coaching and mentoring
- The reformed GCSEs

Review of Value for Money

As accounting officer the Principal 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 the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The accounting officer considers how the trust'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 where appropriate. The accounting officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Using the Crescent Consortium to achieve best value in the bulk purchase of laptops
- Changing energy suppliers to a better contract now that the academy has a better understanding of volume and use.
- Negotiating all contracts in the best interests of the academy to take into account the growing cohort.

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 the 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 academy trust 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 Boulevard Academy Trust for the period 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The board of trustees have reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that need to be put in place to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees are of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017 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 trustees, Principal and academy business manager have significant experience of managing risk and successfully implementing controls to offset such risk in an educational environment.

The Risk and Control Framework

The academy trust'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 board of trustees
- Regular reviews by the Executive Board of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programs
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- Clearly defined purchasing guidelines
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks

The board of trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided:

- To appoint Smailes Goldie as internal auditor to carry out checks and report to the board every term on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities.

The internal auditor gives advice on financial matters and performs a range of checks on the academy's financial systems. In particular check carried out in the current period include:

- Testing of purchase systems
- Testing of payroll systems
- Testing of bank reconciliations
- Testing of petty cash controls

Review of Effectiveness

As accounting officer the Principal has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year the review has been informed by

- The work of the independent auditor.
- The work of the external auditor
- The work of the executive managers within the academy trust 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 internal control systems and ensures continuous improvement of systems are in place.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 4th December 2017 and signed on its behalf by:

Carol White

Chair

Andrew Grace

Accounting Office