

Old Basford School

Governance Statement for the Academic Year 2024-2025

Introduction

Following a 'Good' Ofsted inspection in December 2023 the staff have continued to relentlessly deliver high levels of teaching and learning to its pupils and particularly worked on areas identified by Ofsted as needing tweaking.

The Board of Trustees (The 'Governing Body') has worked with the Senior Leadership and school staff to ensure that the school operates as effectively and efficiently as possible. The accountabilities and responsibilities of the Board are described below.

Scope of Responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Old Basford School 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 the Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Headteacher, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement.

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 six times during the year. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee within the Board of Trustees has also met three times and reported to the main Board of Trustees' meetings. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Attendance at meetings for the 2024-2025 Academic Year												
Governor Name	Autumn 2024				Spring 2025				Summer 2025			
	Pay 15.10	TB1 15.10	FRA 10.12	TB2 11.12	TB3 4.2	FRA 25.3	TB4 25.3		TB5 13.5	FRA 15.7	TB6 15.7	
Karla McLeod	Y	Y	Y	Y	Res							
Caroline Aldrich	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Adedoyin Adedipe	-	Y	-	A	A	-	A		A	Left		
Marguerite Adewoye	A	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Yacine Blair	-	Y	-	A	Y	-	Y		Y	-	A	
Sally Eaton					Y	-	Y		Y	-	Y	
David Lawson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	A		Y	Y	Y	
Carrie Paechter	-	Y	-	Y	A	-	Y		Y	-	A	
Katie Priddy	-	Y	-	Y	Y	-	Y		Y	-	Y	
Jamie Ross	-	Y	-	Y	Y	-	Y		Y	-	Y	
Emily Singh				Y New	Y	-	Y		Y	-	Y	
Julie Wirszycz	-	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Laura Duffin	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	

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Ms Mcleod resigned as Chair of Governors and Mrs Caroline Aldrich was elected as Acting Chair of Governors and Julie Wirszych as Vice Chair.

Trustees carried out their role in contributing to the work of the trust by ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- Upholding the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

This was achieved by contributing to the strategic discussions at Board of Trustees meetings which determine:

- the vision and ethos of the school;
- clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
- that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- the school's budget, including the expenditure and use of the pupil premium and sports premium allocations;
- the securing of higher level needs education funding where required;
- the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
- the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies.

Trustees held the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this included:

- agreeing the outcomes from the Headteacher's self-evaluation form and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
- considering all relevant pupil performance data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
- asking challenging questions of school leaders;
- ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
- ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
- acting as link Trustees (rather than operating a committee structure) on specific issues, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the Board of Trustees on the progress on the relevant school priority
- completing our annual cycle of monitoring

Trustees ensured that school staff had the resources and support they required to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and emerging and developing premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

Trustees were available to serve on panels of Trustees to:

- plan, prepare and manage the appointment of new staff;
- appoint senior and middle leaders;
- appraise the Headteacher;
- set the Headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff.

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Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board and is skilled at challenging the financial direction of the school. Finance decisions are discussed, challenged openly and minuted. The Board of Trustees met six times during the year and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee has met three times to suit the financial management programme. This committee has received monthly financial reporting from the school and carries out budget assessment and approval on behalf of the Board of Trustees. It has approved the budget set for the year along with the audited accounts and has been responsible for the Trustees Report accompanying the accounts.

Financial accountability starts with the Headteacher as Accounting Officer who delegates day to day financial management to the School Business Manager acting as Chief Financial Officer.

The School Business Manager attends the committee as staff member.

The Committee Chair challenges the School Business Manager on every component of the budget throughout the year and observes the selection process of major service contractors ensuring that bid assessment criteria contribute to appointing economically effective suppliers. Transparency of procurement is always required to ensure compliance with policy.

The Trust Chair, with members of the Pay Review Committee, monitors staff recruitment and appointments along with the annual performance management and pay review of the Headteacher and staff pay awards.

The school and Trustees work to apply expenditure for educational use as a priority. Grant funding is optimised as the school establishment is achieved by bottom-filling with pupils year on year. The school continues to have a waiting list of pupils wishing to enter the school in some year groups however numbers entering in Foundation stage are showing a national decline and this is reflected just slightly at Old Basford.

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 Finance, Audit and Risk 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; and
- identification and management of risks.

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Review of value for money

The school is fully committed to ensuring that all pupils receive the highest levels of education, where teaching enables them to make consistently good and better progress which exceeds expectations. We set high standards for behaviour, welfare and safety for all our pupils. The Trustees and Senior Leadership Team ensure that all resources are targeted in line with the School Development Plan and priorities are reviewed regularly to ensure there is an impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

As accounting officer, the Headteacher 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:

Targeted improvement:

The staff structure is under regular review and is adjusted accordingly to fully support the needs of all pupils including those who are in receipt of Pupil Premium and those with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs. Changes have included the appointment of both additional teaching and support staff to enable all pupils to reach their full potential. In addition, performance reviews and appraisals have been developed which clearly link expectations of pupil performance with teacher targets.

Focus on individual pupils:

The Trustees and senior members of staff have ensured that resources are directed where they are most needed and most effective in meeting educational requirements of our pupils.

For those pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding and at risk of underachieving, we implement a variety of intervention programmes on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. Funding is allocated to optimal effect as indicated by the detailed breakdown on the school website.

Collaboration:

Old Basford School is a very active member of Nottingham Schools Trust – a collaborative partnership focusing on improving education for the children of Nottingham. The NST's priority is to provide sustainable school to school support to all member schools within the trust and we take full advantage of the breadth and expertise that already exists in the member schools. The NST guiding principles are to challenge, support and improve member schools and academies to ensure that all children succeed.

Better Purchasing

Fitness for purpose:

Contracts and suppliers are regularly appraised and renegotiated to ensure value for money. In addition, each purchase request details how value for money has been ensured by commenting on price comparisons and discounts available with competitors. This process ensures that the school receives the best mix of quality and effectiveness for all services and products, at the least cost, particularly in the purchasing of consumables. Individual budget holders are held accountable for their budgets and are assisted by the School Business

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Manager to ensure budgets are maintained and used effectively. This process has ensured tight control on expenditure.

Benchmarking:

Benchmarking is an area that has been established and we continue to follow procedure. The whole budget is now benchmarked before it is set to ensure we achieve best value for money in all areas.

Options Appraisal

All large contracts follow a strict procurement process. At least three quotes are received which are analysed to produce the analytical matrices that assist both Business Manager and Board of Trustees to consider the proposal prior to making any decisions. Through this process, the school may choose an option that was not the cheapest but will be the most cost effective over time. We have successfully entered into business contracts with cleaning and a catering companies, which have given us superior quality services but with greater cost effectiveness.

Economies of scale:

The school works collaboratively with other schools through the NST and Nottingham City Council to look at economies of scale.

The System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all 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. In 2024/5 Wright Vigour were employed to support school in our internal control measures.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks.