



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

22/06/2022

Minutes
Audit Committee Summer 2022
Wednesday 22nd June 2022 at 9.30am at central office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Peter Hague (Vice), Jon Sharpe, Steve Tavener, Will Hermon

Apologies: Graeme Barriball, Trudy Rudge

In Attendance: Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow (Ex Officio), Toni Martin (Governance Officer), Adam Croney (Internal Auditor Thomas Westcott – item 4 only)

PH chaired the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared.

3. Confirm minutes of Audit Spring Meeting (22nd March 2022) and Matters Arising

- Early in the spring term (January), GB and JS (risk leads) to meet with WH to do thin out the risk register and remove information that is no longer required or essential (WH, GB, JS). *Carried forward and completed.*
- Once suite of cyber security policies are issued, ensure the Business Continuity plan is in line with these (WH) ***Carry forward to Autumn term once cyber policies complete and in place (WH)***

No confidential minutes. Committee agreed minutes and the Chair to signed a copy.

4. Internal Audit

The internal auditor, Adam Croney from Thomas Westcott briefed the audit committee on the report. The following key points were noted: Cyclical plan – as a guide for what needs doing and when – is fit for purpose, on-going issues with recruiting and training, governor networking and training opportunities, looking at GDPR and completion of skills audits. It was agreed that the internal audit report will feed into the trust improvement plan for next year.

Adam Croney left the meeting.

For the next internal auditor, it was agreed that EG will obtain 3 quotes including information on availability and suggested audit areas. These will be discussed at the next Audit meeting with a recommendation made to the full Board.

5. Confidential Agenda Items

Discussion under item 6d and 10 are recorded under confidential minutes.

6. Review Risks

a. **MAT Risk Register**

WH updated on the latest risk register and noted that some staffing risks are improving. The biggest risk is pre-school staffing at the moment and this will need to be closely monitored. The rising energy costs have been factored into the budget for next year. **Should we be factoring in the risk of industrial action and staff strikes?** WH explained the potential issues with this.

b. **Oversight of School Risks**

The committee discussed the top 3 risks from each school. When schools are approaching an Ofsted inspection, certain preparation is done to help with the said school's readiness. CG is due imminently and considered to be in a sound position. SSCA has been looked at in detail; curriculum, focus on reading and phonics, SEND, pupil behaviour is considered positive. Areas for improvement include the children revisiting what they have learned again to ensure it is embedded, improvement for lowest 20% of readers, and local governance effectiveness. More training required for the Chair, more triangulation of evidence required by the governors and ensuring the governing board is more effective in the way that it operates. Plans are in hand to improve this.

c. **School Resource Self-Assessment Tool**

Complete for 2022, no issues. Next submission is Spring term 2023.

d. **RSC Trust Review and White Paper Implications**

Covered under confidential minutes.

7. **Improvement Plan**

WH updated the committee on the certain elements of the improvement plan and provided a written update including any available evidence. Lots of moderation has been carried out and national average is the least expected for writing, and some greater depth standard children which is positive given the position after Covid. The new EYFS framework is now fully embedded and the achievement is looking positive. WH noted the KPIs and that the safeguarding, and teaching and learning is looking positive and the standards are looking good despite the previous issues with recovery from covid.

8. **Review Debt Report**

The short-term debt report was provided by the committee; currently small across the trust. The biggest debts are nursery payments but that could down to the time lapse between invoicing and payment.

9. **Review Financial Scheme of Delegation**

This was reviewed and approved by the committee. **What controls are in place for pay adjustment control, particularly for more senior staff?** This was explained briefly such as a committee or full Board discussion and decision on a change to pay, the minutes are provided to the HR team for action, HR then inform the finance team to action the pay increase. This provides a full audit trail to the decisions and ensures the Board are making these decisions and not senior staff.

10. **Going Concern**

Recorded in confidential minutes.

11. **External Audit**

EG updated the committee on the ESFA automated accounts, which standardises the codes that all academies use, in order that reports sent to ESFA from all trusts can be scrutinised in the same way.

Both points raised in the external audit have been addressed. No issues going forward into the next

external audit in the autumn term.

The Trust Annual Report content was discussed; it will include a summary of data at trust level as well as by school, and also information on the governance audits that have occurred this year. The drafted report will be run past the Audit Chair (TR) and Trust Chair (ST) prior to being submitted.

12. Policy Review

Reserves Policy has been updated following feedback from FSD. Audit committee are content for this to go to full Board on 6th July for approval.

Policy brought forward from RSS with minor complaints – Complaints – approved.

13. AOB

WH noted the Trust art exhibition in the town hall on 12th/13th July where each school will get a chance to display their art work. Directors, governors and parents invited to attend.

14. DONM

Next meeting is on Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 9.30 at central office (to include presentation from the external audit)

Meeting closed at 10.45am

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

T. Rudge – Director (Chair)
P. Hague – Director (Vice)
G. Barriball – Director
J. Sharpe - Director
W. Hermon – CEO / Director
E. Gilbert – CFO
J. Callow – Ex Officio