

Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited

Year Ended 31 August 2022

Audit Findings Report



Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited
Audit Findings Report - Year Ended 31 August 2022

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Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited

Audit Findings Report - Year Ended 31 August 2022

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to set out significant matters which came to our attention during the course of our work in connection with the audit of the financial statements and the independent reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity for the year ended 31 August 2022.

The report forms part of the ongoing communication we are required to have under International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Its content is prescribed by the Academy Trust Handbook and auditing standards, and includes:

- The auditor's approach to the audit
- Areas covered by the audit
- The auditor's findings, including any significant concerns, if arising, including ratings of the importance / risk
- Audit recommendations
- The academy trust's response to the auditor's recommendations including timescale for action
- The status of any audit recommendations from the previous year

In the context of the above, we as auditors are required to report significant findings from the audit, which include:

- The auditor's views about significant qualitative aspects of the academy trust's accounting practices, including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures
- Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit
- Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed, or subject to correspondence with management
- Written representations the auditor is requesting
- Other matters, if any, arising that, in the auditor's professional judgement, are significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process

We also report to you any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit and any other deficiencies, which, in our professional judgement are of sufficient importance to merit your attention.

The matters included in this report have been discussed with the academy trust's management during the audit.

1.1. Use of this report

The report is prepared solely for the confidential use of the academy trust and relates only to those matters which came to our attention as part of our normal audit and assurance report procedures which are principally designed to enable us to form an audit opinion on the financial statements and an assurance opinion on regularity.

Our work was not carried out for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness and should not be relied upon to disclose errors or irregularities which are not material in relation to the financial statements or regularity report. It is prepared solely for the use of the Board of Trustees of the academy trust and should not be communicated in whole or in part to any third party and we accept no responsibility to any party who places reliance on it.

1.2. Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff we met during our audit for their co-operation and assistance.

Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited

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2. Overall Objective

Our work is designed to consider whether:

- the financial statements of the academy trust give a true and fair view of the state of the academy trust's affairs at 31 August 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the ESFA Accounts Direction, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- the information given in the Report of Trustees is consistent with the financial statements; and
- anything has come to our attention which suggests in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and the income received has not been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not confirm to the authorities which govern them.

2.1. Audit approach

Our overall audit approach is risk based and our detailed approach to individual components of the financial statements is derived from the results of our risk assessment on each area.

Our objective is to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence in order to form an audit opinion on the financial statements which have been prepared by management. Our audit plan is tailored to ensure that we carry out the minimum amount of audit work required to achieve our objective. The level of detail of our testing depends on the risks identified and the relative complexity of individual audit areas. This ensures that we concentrate our audit work on the areas identified as being of the highest risk of material misstatement and our work in lower risk areas is proportionately lower. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities, which are set out in our letter of engagement.

2.2 Approach to regularity assurance

Our work is a limited assurance engagement as defined in our engagement letter. The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity. A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion. Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the academy trust's income and expenditure.

2.3 Materiality

Audit materiality on the financial statements as a whole relates to the level at which misstatements or omissions individually or in aggregate would affect the decisions of users of the financial statements, and the financial statements would no longer show a true and fair view.

The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and includes consideration of both the amount (quantity) and the nature (quality) of misstatements.

In carrying out an audit, we are concerned that accounts as presented show a true and fair view. Truth and fairness does not imply absolute accuracy but rather that the accounts reasonably state the affairs of the entity and do not contain any significant inaccuracies.

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2. Overall Objective (continued)

2.3 Materiality (continued)

Certain items within a set of accounts, such as trustees' emoluments or loans, must be legally disclosed and therefore in this context materiality would not be relevant.

Similarly, certain transactions or balances including issues of irregularity or propriety, may reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users at a lower level and we determine this level accordingly.

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3. Strategy and areas covered

3.1. Overall audit strategy

Our overall audit strategy included:

- discussions with management and reviewing interim figures, the budget return and internal reviewer reports to update our understanding of the academy trust, to identify any changes and identify areas of higher risk;
- reviewing the design and implementation of internal control systems affecting the areas of the financial statements identified as higher risk;
- carrying out risk assessment procedures to assess the overall audit risk and risk on individual audit areas
- using the risk assessment to plan and develop an appropriate audit plan and procedures
- substantive testing, along with observation, enquiry and walk through tests of systems to confirm that the systems and controls as advised to us are operating effectively and as stated
- verifying any material balance sheet figures
- performing analytical review of income and expenditure
- confirming that the financial statements had been prepared in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2021 to 2022 in all material respects

3.2. Regularity work

Our work on regularity included:

- enquiry of officers of the academy trust
- review and testing of income and expenditure for compliance with the funding and other agreements, the Academy Trust Handbook and the academy trust's system of controls
- examination of relevant documents
- review of the activities carried out by the academy trust
- review of the delegated authorities set out in the Academy Trust Handbook
- a review of governance, as set out in the Academies Accounts Direction 2021 to 2022

3.3. Higher risk areas identified at the planning stage

The following areas were identified as high risk at the audit planning stage and our audit approach concentrated on these areas accordingly:

- Income recognition – under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that income may be misstated due to incorrect revenue recognition
- Management override – under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk of the management override of controls in all entities
- Related parties - specific controls and disclosures are required in this area. There is a risk that accounting procedures may treat related party transactions in the same way as other transactions hence the additional requirements could be overlooked
- The ability of the Academy to continue as a going concern. The Academy has made a deficit in the last few years. We will review how the school has addressed this issue.
- Considerable rewiring work has been completed on the school. Correct accounting treatment of the income and expenditure will be considered
- Employee remuneration is a significant expense. We will review the controls in this area.

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4. Audit summary

Our audit work is substantially complete subject to the matters set out below:

- receipt of the signed letters of representation
- completion of the subsequent events review

We anticipate issuing an unmodified audit opinion on the financial statements and an unqualified assurance report on regularity.

We have not identified any additional areas of risk, following our fieldwork, other than those matters identified at the planning stage and detailed in section 5.1.

We have not identified deficiencies in internal controls as confirmed in section 5.2.1. Section 5.2.2 confirms no deficiencies were identified in the previous year either.

We have not identified issues with regularity as confirmed in Section 5.2.3. Section 5.2.4 includes an update on the status of previous recommendations

As previously advised, we consider that the potential threats to our auditor independence, and any safeguards adopted are as follows:

- Preparation of the statutory financial statements and audit work carried out by the same team. The safeguards adopted to counter any management or self-review threats arising are approval of any adjustments by informed management.

Included in the appendices to this report are:

- details of the adjustments made to the trial balance figures to arrive at the figures in the final accounts, presented as a deficit reconciliation (Appendix 1)
- a summary of the unadjusted misstatements identified during audit testing (Appendix 2)
- our views on the significant qualitative aspects of the academy trust's accounting practices (Appendix 3)
- draft letters of representation for the audit and regularity assignment (Appendix 4)

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5. Key findings

5.1. Matters identified at the planning stage

	Issue identified	Notes
1	Income recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Annual Grant (GAG) and other ESFA income included in the financial statements was successfully agreed to final funding confirmation from the ESFA. Management confirmed that there is no ESFA clawback in respect of pupil numbers. We confirmed that pupil numbers are within the range where no clawback would be expected. Accrued / deferred income had been correctly provided where income is for a period other than the year ended 31 August. Non-recurrent grant income and other material sources of income were agreed to offer letters and contracts to ensure correctly recognised in the period (see rewiring work below). A sample of prepayments, accrued and deferred income have been tested to contracts or other relevant documentation. <p>No material issues have been noted re the recognition of income.</p>
2	Management override	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have carried out tests of observation and enquiry and walkthrough tests of systems and controls, as well as checking the adherence to control procedures when carrying out substantive testing. We reviewed the nominal ledger for large and unusual items including journal entries. Accounting estimates, judgements and assumptions were reviewed. <p>No indication of management override of controls or manipulation of items in the financial statements was noted.</p>
3	Related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register of business interests and declarations by trustees and key management personnel were scrutinised Minutes of trustees, meetings and other relevant records and documents were scrutinised. Income and expenditure were scrutinised in comparison to declared interests. <p>No unidentified related party transactions were found or no non-compliance procedures have been noted.</p>
4	Going concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy closely monitors and controls budgets, cash flows and forecasts. We reviewed budget forecasts, considered likely future reserves and cash balances and discussed with management <p>No indication of going concern issues were noted for at least the next twelve months.</p>
5	Rewiring work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have reviewed documents in connection with grants and loans to finance the project We reviewed tender documents and purchase invoices connected with the project <p>The accounting entries in respect of the project have been discussed with management and appropriate adjustments made to the accounts. These have been agreed with management and are further explained in the adjusted errors section in Appendix 1.</p>
6	Employee Remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have carried out tests of observation and enquiry and walkthrough tests of systems and controls, as well as checking the adherence to control procedures when carrying out substantive testing. <p>No material issues were noted.</p>

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5.2. Matters identified during the fieldwork

Our work is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness and should not be relied upon to disclose errors or irregularities which are not material in relation to the financial statements or regularity report. Our report relates only to those matters which came to our attention as part of our normal audit and assurance report procedures which are principally designed to enable us to form an audit opinion on the financial statements and an assurance opinion on regularity.

Grading structure

For each recommendation we have assigned a grading of High, Medium or Low priority depending on the importance or risk of the issue as explained below:

Priority	Classification
High	A high priority issue that must be addressed immediately
Medium	An important issue which should be addressed soon.
Low	Issues that relate to minor control deficiencies that should be addressed within an agreed timescale, or an advisory issue for consideration.

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5.2.1. Internal controls – Audit

No significant issues were noted.

5.2.2. Status of previous recommendations – Audit

No significant issues were noted.

5.2.3. Issues and recommendations – Regularity

No significant issues were noted

5.2.4. Status of previous recommendations – Regularity

1	Formal approval of Budget	
	<p>Observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted the 2021-22 budget had not been formally approved in the Board minutes. We understand that this was partly as a result of Covid-19 restrictions effecting planned Board meetings in the latter part of the year. <p>Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academies Financial Handbook states an Academy should "Ensure the board approves a balanced budget for the financial year and minutes their approval [2.3.1]". 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy should ensure that future budgets are formally approved by the trustees and this is minuted. This can be in person or virtually. <p>Priority : HIGH</p>
	Management Response	Timescale: 31 August 2022
	We will ensure this is signed off in a timely manner in future periods.	
	Update 2022	
	The 2022-23 budget was approved during year by the Trustees and minuted as such.	

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2	Membership - Companies House Details	
	<p>Observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was noted that according to Companies House records for part of the year the Academy had only two members. In addition details of changes in Trustees were not notified to Companies House in a timely manner. <p>Implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Academy should have at least three members at all times with a preference for at least five members as specified in the Academies Financial Handbook. Companies House records are incorrect. 	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Companies House now records three members. Care should be taken to ensure that all matters at Companies House are kept up to date. The Trust should consider increasing the number of members. Changes in members and trustees are reported to Companies House in a timely manner. <p>Priority : MEDIUM</p>
	Management Response	Timescale: 31 December 2021
	This will now be updated and we will continue to keep this up to date.	
	Update 2022	
	<p>The academy had at least 3 members during the year.</p> <p>Following a catch up exercise in March 2022 when Companies House records to date were brought up to date, all updates since then, have been completed within a month.</p>	

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Appendix 1 – Surplus/Deficit reconciliation

Set out below are the identified audit misstatements and other items that have been adjusted in the financial statements, showing a reconciliation between the deficit per the trial balance presented for audit and that reported in the final draft of the financial statements.

	£'000
Deficit per academy's trial balance	(408)
Adjustments:	
Local Government Pension Scheme FRS102 adjustment	(184)
Local Government Pension Scheme actuarial surplus	1,910
Rewiring accrual	(15)

Surplus per statutory financial statements	<u><u>1,303</u></u>
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Appendix 2 – Unadjusted misstatements

There were no unadjusted misstatements above the level of “clearly trivial”.

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Appendix 3 – other findings from the audit

3.1 Views on significant qualitative aspects of accounting practice and financial reporting

Accounting policies

We have reviewed the accounting policies selected and operated. The academy trust has followed the standard policies common to most academy trusts and set out in the Academy Accounts Direction. No significant issues have been identified.

Accounting estimates and judgements

The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year, and the areas of judgement critical to the academy trust's financial statements are noted below.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Details of the major assumptions used by the actuary in his calculations are shown in the Pension and Similar Obligations note in the accounts.

This year has seen an actuarial surplus of £1,910,000 and a significant reduction in the net actuarial liability.

Pension scheme assets have suffered an actuarial loss in the year due to lower than anticipated returns. However, liabilities have seen a much larger actuarial gain as a result of a significant increase in the net discount rate used to measure future obligations.

The discount rate is determined by reference to market yields on high quality corporate bonds at 31 August 2022. Market conditions during the year and the increase in historically low interest rates means that the discount rate has more than doubled from 1.7% to 4.25%.

Despite the current high inflationary environment, the CPI assumption has only increased from 2.8% to 3.05%.

The Accounting Standard prescribes quite narrowly how the inflation assumption should be derived from market value at the year-end date. Therefore the current period of high inflation is somewhat allowed for insofar as it is captured in long-term market expectations as at 31 August 2022, but is lower than the current annual rate of inflation.

The actuary has noted that there is likely to be a significant inflationary increase to LGPS benefits of 9.9% in April 2023 based on the level of CPI increases in the year to September 2022. The CPI determination includes a year one CPI figure of 9.9% to allow for this.

We have considered the pension scheme assumptions and judgements, including the rationale behind the assumptions used and compared them to other schemes, and no significant issues have been identified.

Harpur v Brazel ruling

In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that employees permanently contracted to work only part of the year, do not have a reduced holiday entitlement, and holiday pay should be calculated based on average pay, ignoring weeks where there are no earnings.

This will impact trusts where use has been made of term-time only or 'zero hours' staff, and holiday pay has been calculated based on days worked rather than full holiday entitlement.

We have discussed the ruling and the method of holiday pay calculation with management and concluded that the trust calculates and pays holiday pay evenly during the year so is unaffected by the ruling.

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3.1 Views on significant qualitative aspects of accounting practice and financial reporting (continued)

Depreciation

Details of the depreciation rates applied are shown in the Accounting Policies note in the accounts.

We have considered these rates and no significant issues have been identified.

Going Concern

The trustees' assessment of going concern is set out in the Accounting Policies note in the accounts.

We have considered this assessment and no significant issues have been identified.

Financial Statement Disclosures

We have nothing to report in respect of disclosures, as they are in line with the Academy Accounts Direction 2021/22.

3.2 Significant difficulties encountered during the audit

There were no significant difficulties encountered during the audit.

3.3 Significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed, or subject to correspondence with management

The impact of the Harpur v Brazel ruling was discussed as outlined in section 3.1 above.

3.4 Other matters significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process

No other matters noted.

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Appendix 4 – Draft letter of representation – Audit

Kingswood Allotts Ltd
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors
Sidings Court
Lakeside
DONCASTER
DN4 5NU

Dear Sirs

The following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your audit of the academy trust's financial statements and, as relevant, your assurance engagement on regularity for the year ended 31 August 2022. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy us that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

General

- 1 We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees as set out in the terms of your engagement letter dated 11 July 2022 under the Companies Act 2006 for preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.
- 2 All the transactions undertaken by the academy trust have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.
- 3 All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit and regularity assurance engagement. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the academy trust, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all management and trustee meetings and correspondence with the Education and Skills Funding Agency, Department for Education and the Charity Commission.
- 4 The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- 5 The effects of uncorrected misstatements are immaterial both individually and in total. In particular, we confirm that the financial statements should not be amended for the misstatements set out your Audit Findings Report.
- 6 We are aware that you provide non-audit services. We understand that PAASE (Provisions Available for Audits of Small Entities) has been applied to permit financial statements production. Therefore we are satisfied that the potential threats to independence are small so non-audit services may continue

Internal control and fraud

- 7 We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control systems to prevent and detect fraud and error and which conform to the requirements both of propriety and good financial management. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.
- 8 We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving management, employees who have a significant role in internal control or others that could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- 9 We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Assets and liabilities

- 10 The academy trust has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the academy trust's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.
- 11 All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.
- 12 We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and where relevant the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

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Accounting estimates

- 13 The methods, data and significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework

Loans and arrangements

- 14 The academy trust has not granted any advances or credits to, or made guarantees on behalf of directors other than those disclosed in the financial statements.

Legal claims

- 15 We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for, and disclosed in, the financial statements.

Law and regulations

- 16 We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Related parties

- 17 Related party relationships and transactions, comply with the academy trust's financial regulations, relevant requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with regulatory, legislative and accounting standards requirements.

Subsequent events

- 18 All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

Going concern

- 19 We believe that the academy trust's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the academy trust's needs. We also confirm our plans for future actions required to enable the academy trust to continue as a going concern are feasible. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements

Grants and donations

- 20 Grants made by the Department of Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency have been applied for the purposes intended and the Accounting Officer has ensured regular and proper use and value for money of monies received from government.
- 21 All other grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions in the application of such income.
- 22 We confirm our previous request that the adjustments set out in appendix 1 of your Audit Findings Report be reflected in the financial statements.

We acknowledge our legal responsibilities regarding disclosure of information to you as auditors and confirm that so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information needed by you in connection with preparing your audit report of which you are unaware.

We confirm that so far as we are aware, there is no relevant other information needed by you in connection with preparing your reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity of which you are unaware.

Each trustee has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit/other information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully

.....
K Woodstones - Chair
Signed on behalf of the board of trustees

24 November 2022

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Appendix 4 – Draft letter of representation – Regularity

Kingswood Allotts Limited
Chartered Accountants
Registered Auditors
Sidings Court
Lakeside
DONCASTER
DN4 5NU

Dear Sirs

The following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience such as I consider necessary in connection with your assurance report on regularity to Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the year ended 31 August 2022. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy me that I can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of my knowledge and belief.

General

1. I have fulfilled my responsibilities as accounting officer under the requirements of the funding agreement between Armthorpe Shaw Wood Academy Limited and the Secretary of State for Education dated 4 September 2012 and the Academy Trust Handbook 2021.
2. I acknowledge my personal responsibility to Parliament for the regularity and propriety of the public finances for which I am answerable; for the keeping of proper accounts; for effective internal controls; for prudent and economical administration; for the avoidance of waste and extravagance; for achieving value for money; and for the efficient and effective use of all the resources in my charge.
3. I acknowledge my responsibility to notify the governing body and the ESFA of any instances of material irregularity or impropriety, or non-compliance with the terms of the academy trust's funding agreement and have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2021 in performing this duty.
4. Any instances of material irregularity, impropriety, or non-compliance discovered to date have been notified to the governing body and the ESFA.
5. Significant matters of which you should be aware have been brought to your attention including any instances of irregularity, impropriety or non-compliance with laws and regulations specific to the academy trust's authorising framework.
6. Full and free access has been granted to the all records, correspondence, information and explanations that you have considered necessary to enable you to perform your work.

Yours faithfully

.....
Accounting Officer – N Parker-Watts

24 November 2022