

Internal scrutiny report 2019/20

Derby Diocesan Academy Trust
Derby Diocesan Academy Trust 2

Executive summary

Internal scrutiny for the period of 2019/20 has been undertaken by using independent external reviews across key areas highlighted and formally agreed by the Finance and Audit Committee.

Approach and summary of work undertaken and standards 2019/20

- **H&S risk audits** have been completed with RAG ratings supplied for each school within the trust in distinct areas namely: Management of health and safety, in-house compliance and contractor compliance. YMD Boon Ltd have acted as specialist Independent scrutineers.
- **Procurement-** ERA (Expense Reduction Analysts) conducted full review of purchasing in schools. Best practice identified for suppliers without wholesale need identified to change of systems currently employed.
- **Utilities-** Report raised that Water suppliers across the schools provided varying levels of service and cost. Recommendation to have consistent provider has been implemented.
- **Attendance and Pupil family Support-** Review undertaken across all schools by specialist company One Education Ltd
- **Budget/Finance monitoring and Payroll-** Ongoing financial scrutiny for all schools within the trust. Actioned by DDAT Finance team and reported/monitored by Finance and Audit committee.

Classification of opinions

The scrutineer has described the level of confidence in respect of each business system reviewed and produced formal action points which have been noted by the finance committee.

Summary of opinion and recommendations

Health & Safety

- Full exhaustive review undertaken across this key area
- All schools have had 1 full review and subsequent follow up review
- Log and ratings spreadsheet supplied to finance committee to monitor and direct further support.
- Overall position is low risk with some highlighted areas in isolated schools
- Full rolling program is in place
- This will continue each year and separate risk register is provided to ensure appropriate procedures are in place.

Procurement and Utilities Review

- Overall opinion- good practice maintained
- Recommendations Low- potential benefits in reviewing large regular supply contracts across the trust.
- Management response- Water Services provision has been implemented as whole trust supply basis given the recommendations provided.

Attendance and Pupil family Support

- Full Assessments have been provided to the board and audit committee with specific scrutiny on attendance and some additional investigation into safeguarding.
- Overall Opinion- Low to medium risk for attendance. Issues raised relating to consistency of safeguarding practice across schools. Some evidence of excellent practice in some schools along with areas in other schools that could be improved.
- For the 25 schools that were audited there were five that received no red flags at all and were rated overall as Green.
- Of the remaining 20 schools, 4 were rated as red for attendance.
- The remaining 16 schools were rated red for a variety of the areas listed above including significantly 4 schools rated red for safeguarding.

Management Response

- Recommended that full safeguarding audit is undertaken in the next academic year subject to additional grant funding
- Lead Director appointed for safeguarding at board level.
- A set of DDAT Safeguarding Standards for schools to be developed.

Budget/Finance monitoring and Payroll

- Overall opinion- sound systems embedded
- Recommendations – low – additional signature on payment runs recommended as final approval. Noting that existing procedures are adequate. Some late returns for payroll and associated activities identified including reconciliation and pension deadlines.
- Management response- Finance team to provide training and reinforce best practice.
- DDAT Handbook to be updated and re-iterated for 2020/21 with regards to future notice of concern letters being raised.

The trust will continue to prioritise internal scrutiny. A full audit committee is established which continues to identify areas for review in the subsequent years. The trust will continue to use qualified and experienced external companies to undertake the specific review areas as directed along with suitably qualified internal directors and partners for Financial scrutiny.