CEDARS ACADEMY TRUST

Cedars Academy: Low Fell
Cedars Academy: High Heworth

Committee Terms of Reference

Academic year 2026-27

Policy name	Committee Terms of Reference: Resources, Audit & Risk; Curriculum & Pupils; Headteachers Performance Management
Version	1.0
Status	Live
Approval body	Trust Board
Date approved	Trust Board on 21 October 2026
Review cycle	Annual
Next review due	October 2027
Published on	Trust website
Applies to	Trust-wide, across both sites

Resources, Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference

The Cedars Academy Trust. Approved by the Trust Board. Review: annually. Next review due October 2027.

1. Purpose and status

1.1 The Resources, Audit & Risk Committee (the Committee) is a committee of the Trust Board (the Board). It oversees the Trust's finances, internal control, risk, premises and health and safety, and staffing resources.

1.2 It is the Trust's audit and risk committee. The Academy Trust Handbook 2026 (ATH) lets a trust with income under £50 million combine that committee with finance (ATH 3.6).

1.3 These terms follow the ATH, the Trust's Articles of Association and funding agreement, and the Scheme of Delegation 2026-27. Where they differ, the Articles and the funding agreement apply.

1.4 The Committee may act only on powers the Board has delegated. A decision it takes under these terms and the Scheme of Delegation counts as a decision of the Board. The Board may take back any power it has delegated.

1.5 The Committee scrutinises and challenges. Day-to-day management stays with the co-headteachers and the Academy Business Leader.

2. Membership

2.1 The Committee has not fewer than three trustee members. The Board appoints them, and reviews the membership each year when it reviews these terms.

2.2 Employees should not be members. The Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer should attend to give information and take part in discussions. Other staff may attend by invitation (ATH 3.9).

2.3 At least one member should have recent or relevant accountancy or audit experience (ATH 3.10). Members should have the training they need on finance, risk and audit (ATH 1.31).

2.4 The Board appoints the Chair. The Chair of Trustees should not be the Chair of the Committee (ATH 3.11). If the Chair is absent, the members present choose one of themselves to chair that meeting.

2.5 Only trustee members may vote.

3. Quorum

3.1 The quorum is three trustee members. A meeting that is not quorate may not take decisions.

4. Meetings

4.1 The Committee must meet at least once a term, and at least three times a year (ATH 3.7). The dates for the year are set with the Board's calendar of meetings.

4.2 The Governance Professional must give members at least seven clear days' notice of a meeting and send the agenda and papers at least five working days before it. The Chair, or any two members, may call an extra meeting. The Chair may give shorter notice where a matter is urgent.

4.3 A question is decided by a majority of the members present who are entitled to vote. The Chair has a casting vote if the votes are equal.

4.4 Members must declare any interest in an item. A member must withdraw from the item if there is a conflict of interest or if their ability to be impartial is in doubt.

4.5 The Governance Professional, or a clerk the Board appoints, takes the minutes. The members approve them at the next meeting and the Chair signs them as a true record.

4.6 On request, the Trust must make the agendas, approved minutes and papers of committee meetings available for public inspection. It may leave out material about a named employee or pupil, and anything the members agree must stay confidential (ATH 1.56, 1.57). Attendance at meetings is recorded and published on the Trust website each year (ATH 1.55).

4.7 The Committee may invite non-members to a meeting to help or advise. They do not vote.

4.8 The external auditor and those carrying out internal scrutiny must have access to the Committee (ATH 3.13).

5. Delegated functions

Finance

5.1 To receive the latest management accounts and monitor the budget, including the end of year position.

5.2 To scrutinise the Trust's financial plans and give the Board assurance that the Trust remains a going concern and is financially sustainable. If the Accounting Officer reports that the going concern is at risk, to advise the Board on its response (ATH 2.21).

5.3 To review the budget for the year ahead, the three-year budget forecast and the budget forecast return to DfE, and to recommend them to the Board for approval.

5.4 To review and challenge pupil number estimates at least once a term.

5.5 To review the Investment and Reserves Policy and recommend it to the Board. To monitor reserves and investments against it.

5.6 To review the Finance Handbook including Delegation of Financial Powers each year and recommend it to the Board (ATH 2.4).

5.7 To approve contracts and service level agreements within the band the Finance Handbook gives the Committee, and to recommend those above it to the Board. To consider requests for unbudgeted spend as the Finance Handbook sets out.

5.8 To review value for money and benchmarking data, and to make sure a benchmarking exercise is carried out each year. The Accounting Officer must show how the Trust has secured value for money in the governance statement (ATH 1.40).

5.9 To make sure the Trust controls and manages its assets and keeps a fixed asset register (ATH 2.7).

5.10 To make sure the Trust understands the risk of fraud, theft and irregularity and has proportionate controls. To advise on the Trust's anti-fraud arrangements and its whistleblowing procedure.

5.11 To satisfy itself that the returns the Trust sends to DfE that affect funding, including pupil number returns and funding claims, are accurate and meet the funding criteria (ATH 3.14).

5.12 To monitor pupil premium spending, and to make sure the strategy statement is published by 31 December each year. The Curriculum & Pupils Committee monitors the outcomes.

5.13 To monitor PE and sport premium spending at Cedars Academy: Low Fell, and to make sure the report the grant conditions require is on the Trust website.

5.14 To monitor free school meals, and universal infant free school meals at Cedars Academy: Low Fell, and compliance with the school food standards at both sites. Catering at Cedars Academy: High Heworth is contracted to Gateshead Council.

5.15 To make sure the school resource management self-assessment checklist is completed, and submitted where DfE asks for it.

5.16 To approve charges for lettings, which must cover the full cost (ATH 2.41).

5.17 To satisfy itself that the Trust has adequate insurance or is a member of the Risk Protection Arrangement (ATH 2.45).

Internal scrutiny

5.18 To agree each year a risk-based programme of internal scrutiny, using the risk register. The programme must give coverage across the year and include financial and non-financial risks (ATH 3.3, 3.8).

5.19 To agree who will carry out the programme, and to satisfy itself that they are independent, objective and suitably qualified. Senior leaders and the finance team must not do the work (ATH 3.15).

5.20 To receive a report from those carrying out internal scrutiny at each meeting, and to monitor progress on the recommendations the Trust has agreed.

5.21 To consider the annual summary report for each year ended 31 August. The Trust must send it to DfE by 31 December with the audited accounts (ATH 3.15, 3.21).

5.22 To make sure the findings of internal scrutiny are made available to all trustees promptly (ATH 3.16).

5.23 To keep the Trust's approach to internal scrutiny under review, and to make sure the governance statement confirms the approach used (ATH 3.19, 3.20).

5.24 To report to the Board on the adequacy of the Trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and the management of risks (ATH 3.8).

Risk

5.25 To review the risk register regularly, including ratings, controls and actions, and to advise the Board whether significant risks are identified, assessed, managed and reported. The Board keeps overall responsibility for risk and must review the full register at least once a year (ATH 2.43).

5.26 To consider new and changing risks, and to advise the Board where the Trust's risk profile, controls or risk management arrangements need to change.

5.27 To review the Business Continuity Plan and recommend it to the Board (ATH 2.44).

5.28 To make sure the Trust is aware of the risk of cybercrime, has proportionate controls, is working towards the DfE digital and technology standards including cyber security (ATH 1.21), and takes action after any cyber incident. To monitor data protection compliance with the Trust's data protection officer.

5.29 To advise the Board on how compliance is checked and reported, for example on safeguarding, health and safety and employment.

External audit

5.30 To review the external auditor's plan each year, and consider whether its scope covers the significant areas of financial reporting, control and regularity risk.

5.31 To review the annual report and audited financial statements, including the governance statement, and recommend them to the Board for approval.

5.32 To review the external auditor's findings and management letter, and the actions management has taken in response. To advise the Board whether the response has been appropriate, reasonable and timely (ATH 4.14, 4.15).

5.33 To assess each year the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor, and to report its conclusions to the Board and the members, including any recommendation on reappointment, dismissal, retendering and fees. The members appoint the auditors (ATH 4.15). The Trust should retender at least every five years (ATH 4.5).

Premises, health and safety

5.34 To receive premises and health and safety updates, so that the Trust meets its statutory duties, and to monitor the actions in the health and safety action plan.

5.35 To make sure the Trust manages asbestos effectively (ATH 1.24).

5.36 To make sure the Trust manages its estate strategically and effectively, and keeps it in a safe working condition. This includes its duties for the health and safety of building occupants (ATH 1.25).

5.37 To make sure the fire risk assessment is reviewed as the fire risk assessor recommends.

5.38 To make sure the DfE land and buildings collection is completed and submitted by the published deadline.

5.39 To make sure children are kept safe where outside organisations or individuals use the Trust's premises, for example community groups and sports clubs.

5.40 To approve the Accessibility Plan and review its premises actions each year.

5.41 To be aware of safety alerts issued to schools, and to make sure appropriate action is taken.

5.42 To be aware of any significant incident at either site, and to support the co-headteachers in managing it.

5.43 To review proposals to enter a lease or other contract lasting more than three years, including the lease of Cedars Academy: High Heworth, and to recommend them to the Board.

Staffing

5.44 To make sure the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is up to date, and that a trustee checks it periodically.

5.45 To receive general staffing updates, and to monitor staff attendance and sickness absence.

5.46 To monitor staff wellbeing, including staff survey results, and the amount, type and impact of staff training.

5.47 To review the staffing structure each year, with the curriculum and development plans, as part of workforce planning, and to recommend it to the Board. To monitor changes to the structure made within the approved budget, as the Finance Handbook and the Scheme of Delegation set out.

5.48 To review any proposed restructure or redundancy, and to recommend a decision to the Board.

6. Policies

6.1 The Committee must make sure each policy below is in place, is reviewed each year, and is adopted by the body the Scheme of Delegation or the Policy Register names. The Board approves the policies the Scheme of Delegation reserves to it, including the Pay Policy, the Investment and Reserves Policy and the Finance Handbook.

6.2 Finance and premises:

(a) Finance Handbook including Delegation of Financial Powers

(b) Investment and Reserves Policy

(c) Expenses Policy

(d) Charging and Remissions Policy

(e) Debt Management Policy

(f) Gifts and Hospitality Policy (in preparation)

(g) Lettings Policy

(h) Premises Management Policy

(i) Health and Safety and First Aid Policy

(j) Food Policy

(k) Risk Management Policy and the Business Continuity Plan

(l) Data Protection Policy and Records Retention Schedule

(m) Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy

6.3 Staffing:

(a) Staff Code of Conduct

(b) Allegations Against Staff and Low Level Concerns Policy

(c) Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

(d) Grievance Policy and Procedure

(e) Capability Policy and Procedure

(f) Sickness Absence Management Policy

(g) Pay Policy and Appraisal Policy

6.4 Pupils' health:

(a) Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

(b) Allergy Safety Policy

7. Confidential items

7.1 To approve any confidential minutes of the last meeting, and to monitor any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

7.2 To be aware of staffing issues about grievances, capability, disciplinary or sickness absence cases, without affecting the separate panels that decide them.

7.3 Where a Trust HR policy gives a decision to the Committee, to provide a panel of at least three of its trustee members. Panel members must not be employed by the Trust and must have had no earlier involvement in the matter. This applies to dismissal on capability grounds, grievance outcomes, dismissal for sickness absence and, where a co-headteacher is the subject, dismissal for misconduct. Appeals go to a separate panel the Board sets up.

7.4 To agree annual pay awards and teacher pay progression for staff other than the co-headteachers, under the Pay Policy. Eligible teachers receive one pay point per appraisal period, unless their performance is being managed under the Capability Policy and Procedure.

7.5 To receive the co-headteachers' recommendations on applications to move to the upper pay range, and to decide them. The co-headteachers must be satisfied that the teacher is highly competent in all elements of the Teachers' Standards and has made substantial and sustained achievements and contributions.

7.6 To receive an anonymised report from the co-headteachers on teacher appraisal outcomes moderated across both sites, with detail on any unsuccessful outcome, and to decide whether each appraisal is successful. To note the report on appraisal outcomes for other staff.

7.7 To review proposed severance payments and settlement agreements, and to recommend them to the Board. DfE approval is needed first where the non-contractual element is £50,000 or more.

7.8 The Committee has no part in decisions about co-headteacher performance or pay. The Headteachers Performance Management Committee and the Board take those decisions.

8. Reporting to the Trust Board

8.1 The Governance Professional sends the minutes of each meeting, or the draft minutes if they are not yet approved, for the agenda of the next Board meeting.

8.2 The Chair, or if the Chair is absent another member who was at the meeting, reports to the Board on what the Committee has done under its delegated powers, including any policy it has approved.

8.3 Each year the Committee must report to the Board and the members on its work, the adequacy of the Trust's internal control framework, and the external auditor (ATH 3.8, 4.15).

9. Authority

9.1 The Committee is authorised by the Board to investigate any activity within these terms, and to ask any employee for the information it needs. It may obtain independent legal or professional advice where it needs to.

10. Review

10.1 The Board must review these terms of reference at least once in every twelve months, at its autumn meeting, and after any change listed in section 8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation. The Trust publishes them on its website (ATH 1.55).

10.2 The Committee reviews its own effectiveness each year and reports any recommended change to its membership, remit or reporting to the Board.

Curriculum & Pupils Committee
Terms of Reference

The Cedars Academy Trust. Approved by the Trust Board. Review: annually. Next review due October 2027.

1. Purpose and status

1.1 The Curriculum & Pupils Committee (the Committee) is a committee of the Trust Board (the Board). It oversees the curriculum, pupils' progress and outcomes, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, personal development and equality at both sites.

1.2 The Board has named the Committee as its oversight body for inclusion, including SEND (ATH 1.19).

1.3 These terms follow the Academy Trust Handbook 2026 (ATH), the Trust's Articles of Association and funding agreement, and the Scheme of Delegation 2026-27. Where they differ, the Articles and the funding agreement apply.

1.4 The Committee may act only on powers the Board has delegated. A decision it takes under these terms and the Scheme of Delegation counts as a decision of the Board. The Board may take back any power it has delegated. Running the curriculum and the sites day to day stays with the co-headteachers.

2. Membership

2.1 The Committee has not fewer than three trustee members. The Board appoints them, and reviews the membership each year when it reviews these terms.

2.2 The co-headteachers and other senior leaders attend to report and advise. They are not members and do not vote. Other staff may attend by invitation.

2.3 The Board appoints the Chair. If the Chair is absent, the members present choose one of themselves to chair that meeting.

2.4 Only trustee members may vote.

3. Quorum

3.1 The quorum is three trustee members. A meeting that is not quorate may not take decisions.

4. Meetings

4.1 The Committee must meet at least once a term. The dates for the year are set with the Board's calendar of meetings.

4.2 The Governance Professional must give members at least seven clear days' notice of a meeting and send the agenda and papers at least five working days before it. The Chair, or any two members, may call an extra meeting. The Chair may give shorter notice where a matter is urgent.

4.3 A question is decided by a majority of the members present who are entitled to vote. The Chair has a casting vote if the votes are equal.

4.4 Members must declare any interest in an item. A member must withdraw from the item if there is a conflict of interest or if their ability to be impartial is in doubt.

4.5 The Governance Professional, or a clerk the Board appoints, takes the minutes. The members approve them at the next meeting and the Chair signs them as a true record.

4.6 On request, the Trust must make the agendas, approved minutes and papers of committee meetings available for public inspection. It may leave out material about a named employee or pupil, and anything the members agree must stay confidential (ATH 1.56, 1.57). Attendance at meetings is recorded and published on the Trust website each year (ATH 1.55).

4.7 The Committee may invite non-members to a meeting to help or advise. They do not vote.

5. Delegated functions

Strategy and improvement

5.1 To review the priorities in each site's Development Plan, and progress towards them.

5.2 To receive updates on how the curriculum is put into practice. The curriculum at each site must be broad and balanced and must meet the outcomes in pupils' EHC plans.

5.3 To monitor the Trust's provision for relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, including that:

(a) all pupils make progress towards the expected educational outcomes;

(b) the subjects are well led, effectively managed and well planned;

(c) the quality of provision is regularly and effectively self-evaluated;

(d) teaching is delivered in ways that are accessible to all pupils, given their needs;

(e) parents have clear information on the content and on the right to ask for their child to be withdrawn from sex education; and

(f) the subjects are resourced, staffed and timetabled so the Trust can meet its legal duties.

5.4 To review the Trust's provision for the early years foundation stage at Cedars Academy: Low Fell, including that the policies and procedures the statutory framework requires, for learning and development and for safeguarding and welfare, are in place.

5.5 To review the Trust's enrichment and extracurricular offer, including after school clubs, and to monitor that the Trust website carries the information the law requires. To review the SEND Information Report each year and recommend it to the Board for approval.

5.6 To be satisfied that the Trust follows the statutory guidance on the cost of school uniform when it develops and applies its School Uniform Policy

Achievement, curriculum and inclusion

5.7 To review assessment and accreditation outcomes each year, and to monitor pupils' attainment and progress using whole-Trust data, shown by site.

5.8 To review whole-Trust data with a focus on:

(a) pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, including those who have claimed free school meals in the last six years, looked after children, and children who left care through adoption or another formal route;

(b) children in need of help and protection, and children who receive statutory local authority support from a social worker; and

(c) differences between the two sites and between pupils with different types of need.

5.9 To oversee inclusion across the Trust, including SEND and the annual review of EHC plans, and to give the Board assurance that practice is inclusive (ATH 1.18, 1.19).

5.10 To receive reports on how the Trust works with the local authority, including its replies to consultations on naming the academy in an EHC plan (ATH 1.20).

5.11 To monitor the outcomes of pupil premium spending. The Resources, Audit & Risk Committee monitors the spending.

5.12 To monitor how equality is promoted across the curriculum and progress on the equality objectives, in line with the Equality Act 2010. To make sure the Equality Statement and Objectives are in place and are renewed at least every four years.

Attendance, behaviour and personal development

5.13 To monitor data on attendance, punctuality and absence, and on behaviour, suspensions, exclusions and bullying, and the use of restrictive physical interventions.

5.14 To monitor the Trust's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including how it promotes fundamental British values in the curriculum, in line with the Prevent duty.

5.15 To monitor the Trust's careers provision and how education and training providers are given access to pupils.

Safeguarding, leadership and the community

5.16 To receive safeguarding updates, and to make sure the key aspects of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 are in place and followed. This includes the annual review of filtering and monitoring systems.

5.17 To review parent and pupil survey results, to monitor pupils' views, and to monitor how well the Trust engages and communicates with parents and promotes community cohesion.

6. Policies

6.1 The Committee must make sure each policy below is in place, is reviewed each year, and is adopted by the body the Scheme of Delegation or the Policy Register names. The Board approves the policies the Scheme of Delegation reserves to it, and re-

adopts the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the SEND Policy and the Behaviour Policy each year.

6.2 Pupils and curriculum:

(a) Attendance Policy

(b) Behaviour Policy, including suspensions and permanent exclusions

(c) Anti-Bullying Policy

(d) Relationships and Sex Education Policy (the Trust must consult parents when it changes the policy)

(e) Careers Policy and Provider Access Statement

(f) Equality Statement and Objectives (objectives renewed at least every four years; next due autumn 2028)

(g) SEND Policy and SEND Information Report

(h) Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

(i) School Uniform Policy (see 5.6)

7. Confidential items

7.1 To approve any confidential minutes of the last meeting, and to monitor any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

7.2 To review the quality of teaching and the impact it has on delivering the curriculum.

8. Reporting to the Trust Board

8.1 The Governance Professional sends the minutes of each meeting, or the draft minutes if they are not yet approved, for the agenda of the next Board meeting.

8.2 The Chair, or if the Chair is absent another member who was at the meeting, reports to the Board on what the Committee has done under its delegated powers, including any policy it has approved.

9. Authority

9.1 The Committee is authorised by the Board to investigate any activity within these terms, and to ask any employee for the information it needs. It may obtain external professional advice where the Board agrees.

10. Review

10.1 The Board must review these terms of reference at least once in every twelve months, at its autumn meeting, and after any change listed in section 8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation. The Trust publishes them on its website (ATH 1.55).

10.2 The Committee reviews its own effectiveness each year and reports any recommended change to its membership, remit or reporting to the Board.

Headteachers Performance Management Committee Terms of Reference

The Cedars Academy Trust. Approved by the Trust Board. Review: annually. Next review due October 2027.

1. Purpose and status

1.1 The Headteachers Performance Management Committee (the Committee) is a committee of the Trust Board (the Board). It carries out the yearly performance review of each co-headteacher, and recommends co-headteacher pay to the Board.

1.2 The Trust has no chief executive. Three co-headteachers of equal standing lead the Trust: the Headteacher of Cedars Academy: Low Fell, the Headteacher of Cedars Academy: High Heworth, and the Director of Inclusion. The Committee reviews each of them in the same way. No co-headteacher reviews another.

1.3 These terms follow the Academy Trust Handbook 2026 (ATH), the Trust's Articles of Association and funding agreement, and the Scheme of Delegation 2026-27. Where they differ, the Articles and the funding agreement apply.

1.4 The Committee may act only on powers the Board has delegated. The Committee decides the outcome of each performance review. It recommends co-headteacher pay, and the Board decides it (Scheme of Delegation, rows S15 and S16).

2. Membership

2.1 The Committee has not fewer than three trustee members, appointed by the Board.

2.2 No employee is a member. The Board appoints the Chair.

2.3 Nobody may take part in a decision about their own pay or performance (ATH 2.31). A co-headteacher must not attend any part of a meeting that concerns another co-headteacher's pay or review, unless the Committee asks them to.

2.4 Only trustee members may vote.

3. Quorum

3.1 The quorum is three trustee members. A meeting that is not quorate may not take decisions.

4. Meetings

4.1 The Committee must meet at least once a year to complete the review of each co-headteacher. The Chair may call other meetings when they are needed.

4.2 The Governance Professional must give members at least seven clear days' notice of a meeting and send the agenda and papers at least five working days before it.

4.3 A question is decided by a majority of the members present. The Chair has a casting vote if the votes are equal.

4.4 Members must declare any interest in an item, and withdraw if there is a conflict of interest or their ability to be impartial is in doubt.

4.5 The meetings are held in private. The agenda, papers and minutes are confidential. They are exempt from public inspection as material about named employees (ATH 1.57). Attendance is recorded and published as the ATH requires (ATH 1.55).

4.6 The Committee may invite the external adviser, and others, to a meeting to help or advise. They do not vote.

5. Delegated functions

5.1 To agree with the Board each year the arrangements and timetable for the performance management of the co-headteachers, and to recommend to the Board whether to appoint an external adviser to advise and support the review.

5.2 To agree objectives for each co-headteacher for the year, taking the external adviser's advice and the Development Plans of both sites into account.

5.3 To review each co-headteacher's performance each year against their objectives, with the external adviser, and to decide and record the outcome.

5.4 To recommend to the Board each co-headteacher's pay, under the Pay Policy. The Pay Policy must be documented and evidence-based. Executive pay must not rise faster than teachers' pay without DfE approval in advance (ATH 2.32, 2.33).

6. Reporting to the Trust Board

6.1 The Chair reports to Part II (confidential) of the Board meeting that each review is complete, and makes the pay recommendations. The Board decides co-headteacher pay.

6.2 The Governance Professional keeps the minutes and papers confidentially. They are not circulated with the Board's public papers.

7. Authority

7.1 The Committee is authorised by the Board to take advice from the external adviser and from the Trust's HR provider, and to ask for any information it needs to carry out the review.

8. Review

8.1 The Board must review these terms of reference at least once in every twelve months, at its autumn meeting, and after any change listed in section 8.1 of the Scheme of Delegation. The Trust publishes them on its website (ATH 1.55).

8.2 The Committee reviews its own effectiveness each year and reports any recommended change to its membership, remit or reporting to the Board.