

Standards and Curriculum Committee

Meeting minutes

Tuesday 12th May 2026

At 5pm

This meeting was held on Microsoft TEAMS

Attended: Christine Cottle (**Chair**)
 Kate Evans (KE)
 Cheryl Mathieson (CM)
 Alwyn Harries (AH)
 Joanna Hooper (JH) – **Mid Devon LB Representative**
 Oliver Heathman (OH) - **Moorland Hub LB Representative**
 Corinna Tigg (CT) – **East Devon Hub LB Representative**

In attendance: Rachael Sharpe (**CEO**)
 Charlotte Roe (**Governance Professional**)

Kelly Yeo (**EYFS Lead**) - For Item 9.
 Vicky Gillon (**ECT Lead**) - For item 10.
 Pete Halford - For item 11.

Minutes: Nicol Bush- **Clerk to the Trust**

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and apologies The meeting opened with a welcome to all attendees and apologies were received and accepted from MT. Reflection – Vision and Values <i>“Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities”</i> The Chair reaffirmed the Trust’s vision and values and reminded Trustees and Chairs, that all discussions during the meeting were expected to remain aligned with them.	
2.	Declarations of interest Kate Evans is Director for Education of the Good Shepherd Trust, Diocese of Guildford and a Governor at Boscastle County Primary School. There were no new declarations of interest brought forward to the meeting.	
3.	Any other business There was no other business brought to the meeting	
4.	Approval of last meeting minutes (Circulated to members before the meeting) For review and approval: - The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed electronically by the Chair. - The Part II minutes (circulated privately to those who attended) of the meeting held on 29th March 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed electronically by the Chair.	

5.	Matters arising from minutes of 4th February 2025 (not on the agenda) The Chair to raise any matters arising from the previous committee meeting 5.1 CEO to provide the meeting with the Trust's times table data- The CEO shared the most recent Trust-wide multiplication tables data, reporting an average score of 19.5, an improvement from 18.3 the previous year, though still below the national benchmark of 20. It was noted that 62% of pupils were currently achieving the expected threshold score of 20. The CEO highlighted difficulties in consistently accessing this data and emphasised the importance of the MIS system embedding it more effectively, including the ability to analyse pupil premium data. In response to a question, it was confirmed that parents were encouraged to support learning at home, and it was noted that the Trust Maths Lead was exploring a more aligned approach to times tables development, including clearer guidance for parental engagement. <i>Trustees asked whether there were particular schools performing strongly in multiplication tables and whether effective practice could be shared across the Trust.</i> The CEO responded that several schools showed strong data, while some schools required further scrutiny. She confirmed that a detailed breakdown had been reviewed and that the Trust Maths Lead would work with individual schools to analyse variation, identify areas for improvement, and ensure effective practice was shared across the Trust.	
6.	Risk Register The CEO reported that she had reviewed the risk register, noting that the identified risks were visible and had been discussed at the previous meeting, including amendments which had since been made. She advised that the purpose of the item was to ensure Trustees were aware of the current risks and to review them again at the end of the meeting.	
7.	Christian Distinctiveness and Ethos Committees AH reported that work was underway to consider how LAC ethos reports could better support his role as trustee for Christian distinctiveness, helping to demonstrate a clearer and more consistent "golden thread" of ethos across the Trust. He noted that this work was still at an early stage, with the longer-term aim of developing a more robust and connected model of ethos oversight.	
8.	Focus: Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes, SATS results and targets for the year (The scorecard and analysis reports were circulated before the meeting) PH and the CEO provided an overview of the Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes report and invited Trustees to ask questions. The following comments and questions were raised: - The CEO advised that, from September, a new MIS system would be in place to enable Headteachers to set targets with staff and track pupil progress more effectively, addressing current limitations in data use. She noted that this had contributed to a perception of coasting at Key Stage 2, which was not acceptable. The CEO further reported that she had proposed at board level a Trust-wide target focused on improving pupil outcomes, with a particular emphasis on pedagogy. She invited consideration as to whether such a target should be set centrally by the Trust or refined in response to feedback from Headteachers before final agreement. <i>Trustees raised that low combined Reading, Writing and Maths outcomes compared with individual subject performance, noting that small cohort sizes should make it easier for leaders, particularly in Year 6 and mixed Key Stage 2 classes, to identify pupils missing from the middle group. Trustees asked how this situation was arising, how effectively key leaders were monitoring it, and at what stage this analysis was taking place, including whether it was being addressed from Key Stage 1 onwards.</i> The CEO shared that Venn diagram analysis of pupil outcomes was not being used consistently across the Trust, limiting leaders' ability to identify pupils missing from combined Reading, Writing and Maths outcomes. She advised	

	that the new MIS system would enable visual Venn diagram analysis, including identification of pupil premium and SEND pupils, and that pupil progress meetings should be structured around this analysis. PH agreed, noting that while data was being produced, leaders were not yet sufficiently skilled at interrogating and analysing it, particularly at group and individual level. He highlighted the need for earlier and more rigorous analysis from the earliest stages to prevent gaps emerging later. 8.1 Update on focus visits from Local Advisory Committees. <i>A Governor noted that several schools within the LAC, and others referenced in recent minutes, had identified mathematics as a specific area of weakness, particularly around fundamental skills and returning to basics. The Governor asked whether the Trust was aware of this emerging pattern and whether it was being considered as part of a wider Trust level ASIP and sought clarification on the planned next steps to address this.</i> The PH highlighted the importance of using Trust-wide data more effectively to inform next steps, particularly in identifying CPD needs across schools. PH explained that data should not only describe performance but drive targeted support and improvement, with a clear focus on what actions are required. The CEO confirmed that subject leaders had responded positively to the data, quickly identifying areas for development and beginning to shape Trust-wide plans, particularly in maths. It was noted that future Trust priorities should be broad and flexible, enabling individual schools to respond to their specific contexts, with CPD aligned accordingly, supported by subject leads and the Education Support Team.	
9.	Focus: Curriculum subject focus – EYFS The EYFS Lead (KY) provided an overview of the EYFS curriculum presentation and invited Trustees to ask questions. The following questions were raised: <i>Trustees asked whether teaching staff were meeting all elements of the Teachers' Standards and, where this was not the case, how this was being identified and managed.</i> KY reported that consistent messages and key information were being shared through the EYFS hubs, which all schools could access. She noted that she did not hold direct responsibility for monitoring Teachers' Standards and would need to discuss this further with the CEO. Based on her revisits to four schools, KY said there were clear improvements in EYFS practice, particularly in adult-led learning, staff interactions, and overall provision. She highlighted stronger progression of skills from age 3, with well-sequenced continuous provision across the EYFS areas of learning. <i>Trustees asked whether there had been an increase in children, including those with SEND, presenting with speech and language difficulties at an early age, and whether the schools were able to access speech and language therapy, given historic challenges with availability of services.</i> KY advised that access to speech and language therapy remained challenging, with waiting times of approximately 85 weeks from referral. As a result, schools were providing as much support as possible in-house, including the use of Language Link and Speech Link, which had been implemented across most schools. She noted that some schools were also using the WellComm programme, which can assess children from age 3. KY added that she was unsure about access for 2-year-olds but felt that early baselining of communication and language, from pupils' earliest starting points, would be beneficial. The CEO advised that recent work with the Trust Inclusion Partner and SENCOs had focused on how the Trust funded and used educational psychologists. She noted that the Trust commissioned a private educational psychologist rather than buying into the local authority service, primarily to obtain professional reports to support EHCP applications. The CEO said she had asked SENCOs to carry out a data analysis of SEND needs to review whether this approach was appropriate, or whether greater impact would be achieved by commissioning speech and language therapy, given the likelihood that communication and language represented the primary area of need.	

	The CEO added that the Trust Inclusion Partner would triangulate the SEND analysis to inform future decisions about what specialist support should be commissioned, the priority was what was right for the children, rather than solely supporting EHCP applications. She reported that there was a noticeable increase in language delay among 2- and 3-year-olds entering settings compared with 5 to 10 years ago. The CEO confirmed that she had fed this concern into the SEND reforms and White Paper consultation, highlighting the lack of specialist support for children aged 0–2, despite this being a critical period for language and attachment development. The Chair thanked KY for her presentation and attendance at the meeting. 9.1 Update on focus visits from Local Advisory Committees. (Summer 1 Visit notes sent separately – summaries found on LAC Minutes) There were no comments from LAC Chairs brought forward.	
10.	Focus: Quality of teaching including ECT focus and impact on CPD plan (Written report circulated before the meeting and Q&A session) The ECT Lead gave an overview of the Focus, and invited Trustees to ask any questions, the following questions were raised: <i>Trustees asked whether feedback had been gathered from Early Career Teachers regarding their experience of the programme, including how they were finding it and whether there were any areas where additional support could be offered.</i> The ECT Lead reported that feedback had been gathered from Early Career Teachers through in-person sessions and surveys, she said the feedback had been positive overall, with Early Career Teachers stating they felt well supported and benefited from strong CPD opportunities aligned to both school and Trust priorities. A key theme raised was the amount of time spent out of class, with some concern about the impact on school staffing and cover. It was suggested that this time could be used more effectively, including opportunities to observe other teachers in practice. The ECT Lead confirmed that the programme would be adapted going forward to ensure sessions are purposeful and better aligned to their needs. The Chair thanked the ECT Lead for her written report and attendance at the meeting. 10.1 Update on focus visits from Local Advisory Committees. (Summer 1 Visit notes sent separately – summaries found on LAC Minutes) There were no comments from LAC Chairs brought forward.	
11.	Attendance Overview (Data and analysis shared before the meeting) Pete Halford (Attendance Lead) gave an overview of the Data and analysis, and invited Trustees to raise any questions, the following were raised: <i>Trustees asked for clarification that EHCP and SEND data were reported separately.</i> The AO confirmed that the statement was correct. <i>A further question was raised regarding whether schools identified as needing support had been linked with RISE groups, as discussed at a previous meeting, and whether this had been implemented or reviewed for appropriateness.</i> The AO confirmed that RISE group support had not yet been implemented, as further information had only recently been received indicating that RISE would operate on a more regional basis, focusing on priority areas such as attendance or pupil premium outcomes. He advised that the use of RISE groups had not been removed from consideration but would be reviewed and engaged with when appropriate. It was also reported that attendance across the Trust had improved overall, with outcomes for different groups showing a positive upward trend. <i>Trustees asked whether, in light of recent SEND reforms and policy developments, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were expected to become more difficult to access going forward,</i> The AO responded, in line with the SEND White Paper, EHCPs were expected to become more difficult to obtain, with thresholds likely to increase. He noted	

	that, historically, the Trust had been successful in securing EHCPs due to the strength of SENCO practice and the quality of evidence submitted. In response to a further question, the AO explained that the reforms indicated a shift towards schools meeting a greater proportion of needs within mainstream provision, with EHCPs becoming more limited. The CEO added that originally EHCPs were intended for around 1% of pupils, whereas nationally this had risen to approximately 5%, contributing to wider financial pressures within the system. She highlighted the need for more innovative approaches within schools to meet pupils' needs, alongside the use of additional inclusion funding, although the CEO noted this would be limited. 11.1 Update on focus visits from Local Advisory Committees. (Summer 1 Visit notes sent separately – summaries found on LAC Minutes) LAC Chairs invited to report any notable findings from the LAC meetings and to ask any questions relating to this specific focus raised in their LAC meeting.	
12.	Local Advisory Committee (LAC meeting documents circulated beforehand) Governors reflected positively on the emerging model, noting that the involvement of Academy Heads, was reassuring and encouraging, with early indications of increased energy and engagement at school level. The development of local hubs and challenge partner structures was welcomed as a means of strengthening communication, collaboration and peer support between Academy Heads. Governors particularly valued the greater empowerment of school leaders, recognising their knowledge of their individual contexts, alongside the continued support provided by the Trust. It was acknowledged that the model remained in its early stages and would require ongoing monitoring and review but was considered a promising development for the Trust.	
13.	Receive External Reports and review Tier 3 Action Plans Part II was taken 13.2 SIAMS- The CEO reported that there had been no further SIAMS inspections during the year, and that the focus had shifted to preparing for next year's inspection cycle alongside maintaining and strengthening Christian distinctiveness across the Trust. It was noted that the SIAMS Lead was due to retire at the end of the year, and that succession planning was underway, with RE and collective worship leads across clusters being developed to take on greater responsibility. This work was supported by an identified Headteacher working alongside the Diocese. The CEO advised that the aim was to establish a consistent and proactive approach to Christian distinctiveness, rather than one driven solely by inspection cycles.	
14.	Due Diligence The CEO reported that the Trust continued its positive management partnership with Woodbury Salterton, with an increasing focus on strengthening the school's engagement within the wider cluster. It was noted that, alongside ongoing support for the school, attention was now centred on creating further opportunities for collaboration, enabling Woodbury to both contribute its expertise and benefit from shared learning across the partnership. PH added that constructive discussions had taken place to further enhance this engagement, recognising the unique strengths and approaches Woodbury brings to the cluster. Plans were being developed to increase collaborative working from September, which were anticipated to be welcomed positively by staff.	
15.	Safeguarding The CEO reported that there were no significant issues to note in relation to standards and curriculum at that time. She advised that a matter relating to the use of part time timetables at one school had been raised and was being reviewed through the school's established processes. It was noted that the review would help inform any appropriate next steps and that governors would be updated in due course as part of the Trust's ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards of provision for pupils.	
16.	Policies	

	16.1 School Uniform (recommended for review and approval at the Summer 1 BoT meeting)- The Trustees reviewed the policy and recommended the policy to go to BoT for approval. 16.2 Intimate Care Policy 2026- The Trustees approved this policy, following some minor wording amendments. 16.3 Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy 2026- The Trustees approved this policy, following some minor wording amendments.	
17.	Risk Register RAG review The Trustees reviewed key areas of performance, and noted that pupil numbers remained a red risk, alongside ongoing challenges in writing outcomes and staff workload pressures, particularly in relation to SEND demands and their impact on capacity. Areas identified as amber included phonics attainment, maths performance, assessment accuracy, SEND system pressures (including access to EHCPs), estates risks with potential for disruption, and the evolving governance and cluster model, all of which require continued monitoring. The financial position, while improving, was also noted as subject to ongoing uncertainty. Green areas included strengthened financial forecasting moving into surplus, strong Early Years provision, positive parent engagement, improving attendance trends overall, effective sustainability initiatives, generally positive staff morale, and increasing collaboration through CPD and Trust-wide structures.	
18.	Evaluation of governance impact Trustees highlighted the key positives, including improved analysis of pupil outcomes, which supported clearer understanding and next steps, alongside improvements in Early Years provision and attendance. Trustees noted an increased openness, honesty and wider participation. The availability of clearer and more reliable data was highlighted as supporting more effective challenge. Trustees agreed that the more collaborative approach and range of perspectives were strengthening governance and contributing to more effective decision-making and progress.	

The meeting ended at 6.28pm

Signed by the Chair of the Committeeon July 13th 2026