Board of Trustees/Directors
Meeting minutes
Monday 18th May 2026
At 4.00pm
Held online via Microsoft 'Teams'

Invited:

Cheryl Mathieson (Chair)	Rachael Sharpe (CEO)
Kate Evans (KE)	Alwyn Harries (AH)
Dominic Course (DC)	Graeme Scott (GS)
Ben Thorne (BT)	Jill Larcombe (JL)
Christine Cottle (CC)	Max Thomas (MT)
Tom Parkin (TP)	

Officers in Attendance: Matt Matthew (MM), Charlotte Roe (GP)

Minutes: Nicol Bush- Clerk to the Trust

No	Item	ACTION
1.	**Welcome and apologies** The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome, and apologies were received and accepted from PW and MT	
2.	**Reflection** – Vision and Values "*Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities*" The Chair reaffirmed the Trust's vision and values and reminded members that all discussions during the meeting were expected to remain aligned with them. Trustees agreed the current approach should be developed to better reflect the Trust's vision. The Chair proposed a more flexible and topical approach, potentially with input from the diocesan representative, which would be considered further with a view to possible implementation from July.	
3.	**Declarations of interest** • Dominic Course is Chair of Governors at South Dartmoor Community College and a Director of DACORS Ltd. • Graeme Scott is an employee and Executive Chairperson for educational software company, The Mario Framework. • Kate Evans is Director for Education of The Good Shepherd MAT and Governor at Boscastle County Primary School. • Paul Waterworth is Director of Gerrard Stuart Financial Services Ltd • Jill Larcombe is a Clerk to the DAG, Clerk to two federations, and a governor at Castle Primary School. • Tom Parkin - Headteacher of South Molton Primary School, part of The Harbour School Partnership Trust There were no new declarations brought to the meeting.	
4.	**Any other business** There was no other business brought to the meeting	
5.	**Approval of meeting minutes from 30th March 2026** **For formal approval:** • The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 30th March 2026 were **approved** as a true record and were signed accordingly.	

	• **Part II** minutes of the meeting (circulated separately in advance of the meeting) held on 30th March 2026 were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
6.	**Matters arising from 30th March 2026 not on the agenda** **6.2 Part II Matters arising- CEO to confirm the review of the data protection and mobile device policies -** It was confirmed that these policies were under review, in particular in relation to the inconsistencies regarding the use of mobile phones, and the matter was in hand.	
7.	**Trust Risk Register (updated after committee meetings)** The Chair noted that the risks presented were drawn from the individual committee registers, with no changes having been identified at the S&C meeting. It was reported that F &GP had discussed the finance risk and considered that, in light of recent progress, it could be reduced from red to amber, although this had not yet been reflected in the register. There were 24 risks in total, including two rated red relating to finance and pupil recruitment, with the remaining risks rated amber. The Chair noted that the RAG ratings would be reviewed at the end of the meeting to reflect any developments arising from discussions.	
8.	**Chief Executive Officer's Report (Circulated to Trustees beforehand)** The CEO invited any questions. The following comments and questions were raised: The CEO noted that her report had been presented in a revised format to place greater emphasis on impact. She explained that safeguarding continued to be reported at each subcommittee, with updates linked to the relevant focus of each committee area. The Trustees discussed the importance of maintaining a clear overview of safeguarding across the Trust. It was noted that, while detailed information was shared at committee level and through separate safeguarding reports, there would be value in including a brief summary within the CEO report to provide a collective overview. It was agreed that future reports would include a concise summary of safeguarding and compliance to give a clearer Trust wide perspective. • *Trustees asked for clarification on the new school improvement model and team realignment, noting that the rationale for moving from a fragmented approach to a more aligned, Trust wide model was understood and supported. They queried how the model would respond where a school required urgent or more intensive support, given the increased emphasis on accountability resting with Academy Heads.* The CEO confirmed that where a school required urgent support, a tailored, time limited improvement plan would be implemented, drawing on targeted internal expertise and, where appropriate, external support. An example was provided of a current school receiving intensive support with clear priorities and accountability retained by the Academy Head, supported by a challenge partner. The CEO noted that this approach would be used as needed, with strong quality assurance intended to minimise the need for such intervention. **Part II was taken** Trustees discussed the results of the recent staff appraisal survey and noted that support staff did not always perceive the value of the process, in contrast to teaching staff where established standards provided a clearer framework. • *Trustees questioned how engagement could be improved and recognised that this would require a wider cultural shift to ensure all staff felt included and understood the purpose and benefits of appraisal.* It was suggested that existing teaching assistant standards could be used as a starting point in developing a more consistent approach for support staff. Trustees requested a brief update on the digital strategy at the next meeting, to provide assurance on progress and the Trust's position by the end of the academic year.	

9.	**Deficit Recovery Plan** **Part II was taken** *Trustees asked whether marketing and pupil recruitment was delivered through a coordinated Trust wide approach or led individually by Academy Heads.* It was confirmed that responsibility for marketing and pupil recruitment rested with individual schools, reflecting their understanding of local context, with central oversight to monitor activity and provide support where needed, including with materials and promotion. • *Trustees queried whether there were any potential opportunities arising from changes in the private school sector that could support pupil recruitment, recognising the additional challenges posed by the Trust's rural context.* The DCEO noted that only a limited increase in pupil numbers had been seen from the private sector. It was emphasised that early year's provision remained a key area for growth, with a need to strengthen links with pre-school settings and ensure that the Trust's offer was sufficiently strong to attract pupils from the earliest stages.	
10.	**Trust Growth** **Part II was taken**	
11.	**Audit Committee** No meeting for summer 1 - the next meeting will be 2nd July 2026 The Chair of Committee noted that there were no matters requiring attention. It was reported that internal audits had been deferred until after half term and would take place later in the term. He also noted that the external audit planning meeting was scheduled for June.	
12.	**Finance & General Purposes Committee** As the meeting had been held on 15 May 2026, the minutes were not yet available. However, the Chair of Committee noted that matters discussed by the Committee had already been considered during this meeting and there was nothing further to raise.	
13.	**Remuneration and People Committee** No meeting for summer 1 The Chair of the Committee noted that the Remuneration and People Committee had not met since the last Board meeting, with the next meeting scheduled for July. However, she wished to raise a matter relating to staff wellbeing. **13.1 Central Team Restructuring**- It was noted that the CEO had provided a report on the impact and monitoring of the Central Team restructuring in response to concerns raised by LAC Governors regarding staff wellbeing. The report, which had been circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting, had been well received and had provided reassurance to Governors. The Committee would continue to monitor staff wellbeing as part of its responsibilities.	
14.	**Standards & Curriculum Committee** 14.1 The Chair of the Committee noted that meetings were progressing well, with the revised format enabling reports to be circulated in advance and discussions focused on questions, which was considered a more effective use of time and supported more constructive engagement. The Chair summarised the key matters considered at the meeting, including EYFS provision, analysis of pupil outcomes, and the quality of teaching and support for Early Career Teachers (ECTs). Attendance had also been reviewed. 14.2 **Local Advisory Committees** There were no issues to note	
15.	**Governance** **15.1** The Chair noted that Isabel Cherrett would be stepping down as an independent member at the end of May. Trustees formally recorded their thanks for Isabel's significant contribution to the Trust over a period of ten years, including her roles as foundation director and Chair of the Board and more recently as a member, and acknowledged the impact of her leadership, knowledge and guidance. The Chair raised that, following the recent changes, there was a need to recruit additional members. It was reported that initial discussions had taken place with the Diocese and external partners regarding potential candidates, and a number of possible contacts had been identified. Trustees were invited to put forward any further suggestions for consideration. **15.2 LAC Committee structure update-** The Governance Professional reported that, while the current structure was effective, the content of reports required some refinement. It was noted that further discussion would take place, including input from the Chair of the S&C Committee, to review this. The GP also noted that upcoming	

	changes to data drop timings would require adjustments to the Standards and Curriculum reporting schedule, and this would be reviewed with a view to making appropriate amendments. **15.3 Update on Governance Action Plan**- The Chair considered the draft Governance Action Plan and noted that no comments had yet been received. It was acknowledged that, following recent discussions with the CEO, the plan would require further refinement, including the addition of actions and clearer allocation of responsibilities. Trustees were invited to provide feedback to support this process. The CEO also highlighted the Trust's involvement in the Exeter Flourishing Partnership and the importance of ensuring that Christian distinctiveness was embedded across all activity. It was confirmed that the CEO would take a lead role on Christian Distinctiveness at a strategic level going forward, with operational delivery supported by others. The Chair noted that further discussion, including input from the diocese, would help to strengthen and align the Governance Action Plan. The CEO sought initial views from trustees on a proposal to hold a Governance Day in September, potentially on a Saturday, to bring together trustees, members and local governors. The purpose would be to strengthen shared understanding of governance within the Trust, reinforce the Trust's vision and support a stronger sense of collective identity. Trustees were invited to provide feedback. Trustees expressed support for the proposal to hold a Governance Day, noting that a Saturday would likely encourage better attendance. It was suggested that the session should be limited to half a day rather than a full day to maximise engagement. Trustees agreed that the event would be a positive opportunity to strengthen understanding, promote a sense of belonging and support the Trust's vision, with further details to be developed.	
16.	**External Inspections** **16.1 Ofsted:** The Chair noted that there had been no recent Ofsted inspections, although a number remained due after half term. **16.2 SIAMS: Morchard Bishop C of E Primary School**- the final report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair noted that the inspection was positive with a number of strengths identified, particularly in relation to culture and pupil experience. It was noted that this concluded the SIAMS inspections for the current academic year, with further inspections anticipated next year. Overall performance had been strong.	
17.	**Safeguarding** **17.1 GS to update the meeting on any strategic Safeguarding issues-** GS reported that updates remained concise, with emerging trends identified, particularly an increase in digital safeguarding concerns affecting younger pupils. He acknowledged the growing importance of this area and the development of a digital safeguarding response and noted that reporting now enabled clearer tracking of trends over time. **17.2 CEO to highlight any specific matters to note-** The CEO reported that a complaint had been received regarding part time timetabling and the pace of reintegration into full time education. Following investigation, the matter had been resolved and would not be taken further. However, Trustees noted that this had highlighted an area for development, particularly in relation to tracking and reviewing part time timetables to ensure timely increases in provision. This work was being progressed, with support from the Trust inclusion partner, and it was noted that the new management information system would support improved monitoring in this area.	
18.	**Health and Safety** The DCEO said there were no specific issues to note.	
19.	**Sustainability** The DCEO noted that he would give an update along with the digital strategy update at the next Full Board meeting.	
20.	**Policies for approval** The following policies had been reviewed by the Committees and updated and were presented for approval: 20.1 **Standards & Curriculum Committee** • **School uniform policy-** This policy was reviewed and **approved** by the Trustees. 20.2 **Admissions Committee** • There were no policies for approval	

	20.3 **Finance & General Purposes Committee** • Financial Procedures Manual- This policy was reviewed and **approved** by the Trustees. 20.4 **Remuneration and People Committee** • There were no policies for approval 20.5 **Audit Committee** • There were no policies for approval 20.6 **Full Board Policies** • There were no policies for approval	
21.	**Review of RAG ratings** The Board agreed to amend the finance risk rating from red to amber, recognising the progress made, while noting that it would continue to be monitored closely. It was confirmed that pupil numbers remained a separate red risk. Trustees also noted that the assessment and data systems risk would require updates to reflect the implementation of the new system, and that this would be reviewed as part of ongoing work on the risk register. The DCEO suggested that the risk owner (HROM) review and update the workforce risk relating to a consistent appraisal process, incorporating the latest staff survey results to strengthen oversight and clarity.	
22.	**Evaluation of governance impact** The Trustees reviewed the impact of governance, noting that there had been constructive and collaborative discussion, with clear focus on outcomes for children and value for money. Trustees agreed that it had been a positive and effective meeting. The Chair thanked the Trustees for their time and closed the meeting.	

The meeting ended at 5.55pm

Signed by the Chair of the Board...on 13th July 2026