



Board of Trustees/Directors
MINUTES
Monday 31st March 2025
4.00pm

Held in person at Landscope School House and online via Microsoft 'Teams'

Attended: Cheryl Mathieson (Chair)
 Nicky Dunford (CEO)
 Paul Waterworth (PW)
 Dominic Course (DC)
 Ben Thorne (BT)
 Christine Cottle (CC)

In attendance: Matt Matthew (DCEO)
 Charlotte Roe (GP)
 Julia Simpson (Westcott's Auditor)

Minutes: Clerk to the Trust- Nicol Bush

No	Item	ACTIONS
1.	Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting with a warm welcome. Apologies were received and accepted from Kate Evans and Graeme Scott. The Chair welcomed Julia Simpson (Westcotts auditors) to the meeting.	
2.	Declarations of interest There were no new declarations brought forward	
3.	Any other business A letter addressed to the Trustees had been received from a school, and this would be discussed under Item 8, along with the recently circulated report from the CEO.	
4.	Approval of meeting minutes from 10th February 2025 for approval: The meeting approved the minutes from 10 th February 2025 as a true record and these were signed accordingly by the Chair. The meeting asked for the Governance Professional to circulate the Part II minutes via email.	GP/CLERK
5.	Matters arising from 10th February 2025 - not on the agenda The Trustees asked about identifying a staff member to monitor home schooling. The CEO said that this was in hand and once the administrators staffing structure had been finalised, one of the senior administrators would take on the role.	
6.	Trust Risk Register	

	<p>6.1 Update on risk register review The CEO said that a full review of the risk register was planned in the Easter holidays. The CEO added that the DoE would also be supporting this review to ensure the school improvement aspect of the register provided a clear picture.</p> <p>6.2 The meeting considered the risk categories highlighted for Board review. There were 6 areas, and it was agreed that they would be discussed throughout the meeting. As had been agreed at the committee meetings, it was noted that the meeting would return to the risk register at the end of the meeting to ensure that following discussion the RAG ratings shown were accurate.</p> <p>6.3 Meeting to consider any risk register issues from committee meetings No issues were brought forward</p>	CEO/DCEO
7.	<p>Chief Executive Officer's Report Trustees to consider the CEO's report and questions to be taken The CEO was invited to address the meeting. The CEO said that there were no significant updates since her last report apart from the DRP which would be discussed in the next item. <i>The Trustees asked for an update around one of the schools.</i> The CEO said this was still a work in progress, but that necessary changes were being made. The EIT had carried out another learn support challenge day and had put in place additional actions. There had been some recent staff changes and training for all staff was also being implemented. Following a recent visit, the Diocese had commented on the positive impact that the Trust had had so far. The local Vicar had expressed an interest in being involved with the school. He was also involved with local community groups which would be a useful connection for the Trust. <i>The Trustees asked about the specialist unit.</i> The Trust had recently appointed someone with strong experience and qualifications to run the unit, who was due to start after Easter. The CEO said that currently there were 6 pupils on roll. The LA's plan was to increase the roll to 12 children carefully picking pupils who fit best from other schools in the area. <i>Following a question from the Trustees,</i> the CEO said the unit was separate, however the plan was to give opportunities for the pupils to integrate with the mainstream part of the school. It was also confirmed that the pupils would be full time and be under the Trust umbrella. <i>Following a question from the Trustees regarding health and safety,</i> the CEO updated the meeting on a recent major accident but added that the Trust was not liable as they were contractors with their own insurance. <i>The Trustees asked for an update regarding the challenging children across the Trust.</i> The CEO explained that these children needed specialist support. <i>The Trustees asked questions around keeping the staff safe and meeting the children's needs as well as looking after the other children.</i> The CEO said that LA support was low, and that permanent exclusion was not an option as the Trust aimed to be inclusive. <i>Following questions from the Trustees,</i> the CEO confirmed that the Trust accessed MAST, CAMHS and alternative provisions.</p>	
8.	<p>Deficit Recovery Plan The CEO had circulated the report before the meeting. Part II was taken</p>	
9.	<p>Trust Growth 9.1 The CEO informed the Trustees that although the Diocese was in support of conversion, following discussion with the Regions Group, it was proposed that the Trust enter into a Management Partnership with Woodbury prior to any further discussion regarding conversion.</p>	

	<p>The Trustees asked questions around the suitability of Woodbury joining the Trust and for clarification on the financial impact. The CEO said it was an excellent fit – the school was at full PAN with healthy finances. In due course, if Woodbury were to convert to the Trust, it was envisaged that the existing Head at Woodbury would become Executive Head over Woodbury and Woodbury Salterton so that the two schools could work closely together.</p> <p>The Trustees approved plans to enter into a Management Partnership with Woodbury with effect from 1st September 2025.</p> <p>The Trustees asked about a recent announcement of Government policies that might impact the expansion of trusts. The CEO responded that local authorities had tried to reorganise their approach but had less influence now due to a decrease in their power. She pointed out that in Devon, with over 80% of schools now in trusts, the local authority was struggling because it lacked the expertise it once had. This reduction in expertise had significantly impacted their ability to manage and support schools effectively.</p> <p>9.2 Due diligence update for any potential new schools – there was no outstanding due diligence. Due diligence on Woodbury would be carried out during the period of the Management Partnership.</p>	
10.	<p>Audit Committee Minutes from 6th March 2025 The Chair of Committee said there were no significant updates and commented that the Health and Safety report provided was excellent.</p>	
11.	<p>Finance & General Purposes Committee Minutes from 21st March 2025 The Chair of Committee noted that the main points raised in the F&GP meeting had already been discussed at this meeting.</p>	
12.	<p>Remuneration Committee Minutes from 21st March 2025 The Chair of Committee gave a verbal update on the Remuneration meeting. CEO succession had been discussed but also succession of other staff. It had been acknowledged that there was a process by which the Trust identified “talent” but it had been agreed that there needed to be more development of training and/or leadership programmes to help better develop staff. It has also been agreed that the CEO would formulate a structured plan regarding succession of staff that would be available going forward. The Chair also noted that the meeting had discussed the admin salary structure as the CEO had raised a concern about the process by which admin staff salaries increased upon satisfactory completion of probation and then again a year later. The Chair had agreed to discuss this further with the DCEO.</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>Chair/DCEO</p>
13.	<p>Standards & Curriculum Committee 13.1 Minutes from 25th March 2025 The Chair of Committee gave a verbal update and noted that the LACs had raised concerns around the current staffing review. It was noted that Governors were passionate about their schools and concerned that they had not been made aware of the changes planned. They felt there was a lack of transparency. It was discussed at length how and if the message had been shared across the Trust and who in particular should be responsible for informing LAC Governors of any changes within the Trust. It was noted that communication was key. It was acknowledged that it had previously been agreed that matters of a more sensitive nature should be communicated by the CEO or DCEO. The CEO agreed to write to the Governors with an update following the meeting.</p>	<p>CEO</p>

	<p>13.2 Local Advisory Committees</p> <p>The DCEO commented that he had attended the last Totnes LAC meeting, which he had found very professional. He was planning to attend all LAC meetings in future to provide a Trust voice and respond to any questions raised.</p>	
14.	<p>Governance</p> <p>14.1 Update</p> <p>The GP updated the meeting on Paul Waterworth's reappointment as a Foundation Director for a second term. She confirmed that the paperwork had been completed and it was just up to date references that were now awaited.</p> <p>The Chair informed the meeting that Chris Norman had stepped down as a Trustee with immediate effect due to personal reasons. On behalf of the Board, thanks were expressed for all the support Chris had provided, in particular for the considerable amount of work he had undertaken on the Estate side of the Trust. The Board wished him well for the future.</p> <p>The Chair advised the meeting that the Trust were looking to recruit more Trustees with a variety of skills and would be placing an advert on MyNewTerm, the new recruitment portal that the Trust was now using.</p> <p>14.2 Update on East Devon LAC - the GP explained the East Devon LAC had been facing challenges, the GP highlighted that the Clerk had been working hard, and the Chair was being proactive in trying to bring Governors on board.</p> <p>14.3 Trustee Surveys</p> <p>A summary of the results of the Trustee Survey had been circulated by the GP prior to the meeting. The Chair noted that, whilst overall the results had been largely positive, there were some areas on the strategic side where members of the Board did not feel so confident. The Chair suggested that once the new CEO was on board, an away day could be organised to tackle strategic issues. This would provide an opportunity for team building, open discussions, and the development of action plans to address the flagged concerns.</p>	
15.	<p>External Inspections</p> <p>The SIAMS report for Farway had been circulated prior to the meeting. The CEO highlighted that the inspector had commented that the Trust served as a beacon for small schools. He had admitted that he initially had reservations about the effectiveness of trusts, having mostly inspected standalone schools. However, after observing the Trust's impact, he was impressed by the positive changes it had brought to the school and described the results as "amazing".</p> <p>The Chair noted that Ofsted would be visiting Landscope the following day for a one day ungraded inspection.</p>	
16.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>16.1 GS to update the meeting on any strategic Safeguarding issues</p> <p>16.2 CEO to highlight any issues that the meeting needs to note</p> <p>The CEO report had highlighted that the new CPOMS system had been embedded in every school. In the absence of GS, the CEO noted that the latest Safeguarding newsletter on Disguise compliance had just been released.</p> <p>There were no other issues brought forward.</p>	

17.	Health and Safety It was noted that H&S matters had been discussed earlier in the meeting.	
18.	Strategic Plan 18.1 Trustees to update on their designated areas: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Strategy Group – Cheryl Mathieson The Chair acknowledged that there hadn't been much progress with the workforce strategy group due to other pressing matters. They had recognised the need to focus on training and the people strategy, which had been discussed previously. The Chair highlighted that the upcoming year, with the new CEO on board, would be an opportunity to advance these areas and address the backlog of tasks.	
19.	Policies for approval The following policies have been reviewed and updated and are presented for approval: 19.1 Audit Committee No policies for approval 19.2 Standards & Curriculum Committee Suspension and Exclusion policy - the Trustees approved the policy. 19.3 Finance & General Purposes Committee Discretions Policy 2025 - the Trustees approved the policy Link Academy Trust Discretions - the Trustees approved the policy 19.4 Remuneration Committee Staff Code of Conduct - the Trustees approved the policy Redundancy - the Trustees approved the policy Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff - the Trustees approved the policy 19.5 Full Board Policies No policies for approval	
20.	Risk Register RAG Rating Review The meeting revisited the risk register and after consideration of the discussions during the meeting, the following RAG ratings were agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance - the meeting that Finance should remain red rated. • Reputation and Competition - the meeting agreed this should move to amber rating. • Governance - the meeting agreed for Governance to move to amber rating. • Strategic Risks - the meeting agreed for Strategic risks to move to amber rating. 	
21.	Evaluation of governance impact Review performance and value of meeting The Trustees highlighted that the impact of the meeting had been significant. The decision to revisit the risk register at the end of the agenda following discussions was considered a positive one.	
22.	Succession Planning Meeting CEO and DCEO to withdraw from the meeting.	

The meeting ended at 6pm

Signed by the Chair of the Committee.....