Directors (i.e. trustees) meeting
Meeting held on 16th July 2026 at 5 pm,
At Brixington Primary Academy and via Teams
Draft Part I Minutes

Present:	P Walker (CEO), A Walmsley (chair), A Denner, C Bromfield, P Wimsett (online), R Shaw and R Warwick
In attendance	C Fegan (Director of School Improvement – DSI), A Jenkins (Director of Performance & Development – DPD), K Powell (Director of Inclusion – DoI), M Platten (Director of Finance – DoF), H Warren (Director of Operations – DoO) and V Dower (Governance Professional – GP), Tracey Winn for item 4.

Quorum: the meeting was quorate

Circulation: Directors and Members (through GovernorHub), Dioceses (BWDBE, EDEN and SDBE through GovernorHub), schools & public (through Trust website)

	Decision		Action due

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies	
R Warwick and P Wimsett attended remotely and R Shaw was expected to arrive later in the meeting. There were no apologies.	
2. Prayer	
Led by Paul Wimsett.	
3. Declaration of Conflict of Interests	
Declarations of conflict of interests were invited by the chair. None was made.	
4. To receive and discuss the report from the Trust safeguarding lead (T Winn)	
The summer 2026 safeguarding strategic plan 2025-26 report, July 2026 safeguarding RAG rating document and June 2026 s175 audit analysis report were circulated ahead of the meeting. ***The board queried whether the three schools that had not undertaken lockdown drills and the schools where gaps had been identified in curriculum coverage were the same schools, and whether this reflected a lack of confidence amongst school leaders.*** The Trust safeguarding lead explained that the information related to the previous academic year and was therefore historic. All Trust schools had now completed lockdown drills and compliance with this expectation was monitored through the Trust core expectations framework. Whilst she was unsure whether the same schools appeared in both categories, this could be cross-referenced. Schools had worked hard to improve lockdown arrangements, and the focus was now on refining procedures and increasing confidence. Particular challenges included communication	**Appendices 1 - 3**

across complex sites and practical arrangements around securing classrooms and buildings. Further Trust-wide support was planned, including tabletop live exercises with the partnerships during the autumn term.

The board queried whether the safeguarding audit information presented was out of date and therefore whether the board could take assurance from it.

Trust leaders explained that local authority safeguarding audit cycles meant that information frequently reflected the previous academic year. It had shifted to being ready later in the year, and had all been rounded up and analysed in March to create a succinct report. However, the reports remained useful because they identified recurring themes and informed Trust safeguarding priorities. Any immediate concerns would already have been identified and acted upon through ongoing safeguarding monitoring and school improvement activity.

The board queried references to schools not having covered issues such as sexual harassment and radicalisation sufficiently within their curriculum and sought assurance that schools were not in breach of their Prevent duties.

The Trust safeguarding lead explained that some audit questions were developed primarily for secondary settings and did not always align neatly with primary language or practice. Schools taught healthy relationships, consent and safeguarding themes through age-appropriate programmes. Radicalisation and Prevent remained embedded within Trust safeguarding training and all staff were required to complete Prevent training. This had been strengthened through improved oversight of training logs and was now much more consistent.

Trustees reviewed the schools currently rated amber.

The safeguarding lead reported that:

- Salcombe had made good progress in the Spring, particularly around early help provision, but remained amber because support was still required for the DSL around policy compliance and safeguarding processes.
- St Budeaux had not yet sustained improvements to the required level, although leadership changes were due to take place from September with a new Headteacher in place.
- Hawkchurch had made real progress in a short period of time, but leadership instability explained the continued amber status.
- ***The board sought assurance that children were not at risk within those schools.*** Trust leaders confirmed that there were no concerns regarding the day-to-day safety or welfare of children. Amber ratings reflected confidence, consistency and compliance rather than concerns regarding the quality of care provided to pupils. All amber schools continued to receive enhanced Trust safeguarding support.

Rachel Shaw joined the meeting during this item.

The board sought assurance that safeguarding culture remained strong across all schools and that systems were sufficiently embedded.

Trust leaders confirmed that strong safeguarding systems, structures and expectations were now established across the Trust. Future work would focus on verification, validation and developing leadership ownership. Where weaknesses were identified, intensive Trust support was provided. It was confirmed that the safeguarding culture across the Trust was

considered robust and embedded, with strong processes and expectations. ***The board probed whether the improvements at Mary Deans were sufficiently embedded to be sustained.*** The Trust safeguarding lead expressed confidence that improvements would be maintained. The school had benefited from strong leadership which had made a huge difference, significant training and curriculum development and a purposeful shift in staff culture. The school had had a lot of trust support, in staff training, closing knowledge gaps and in the importance of contextual curriculum, including the nursery compliance and culture. In addition, a deputy head with significant safeguarding expertise was due to join the school from September, further strengthening leadership capacity. The board thanked the Trust safeguarding lead and safeguarding officer for their work.	
5. Minutes of the last meeting	
5.1. To approve the minutes of the 23 April 2026 meeting	
The draft minutes of the previous meeting (Part 1 & Part 2) were circulated before the meeting. These were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the chair.	
5.2. To review matters arising not otherwise on the agenda	
The list of matters arising report was circulated ahead of the meeting. The following matters arising were raised and discussed: • Governance survey and stakeholder voice work remained in progress. An update on the governance survey was expected at the next meeting. • The procurement arrangements for legal and HR support continued to progress. • Governance structure review and succession planning work remained ongoing.	**Appendix 4** **LGP**
6. To receive the verbal feedback from committee chairs	
<u>Education Committee</u> The chair of the Education Committee reported that: • The committee had reviewed available attainment information, including Key Stage 2 statutory assessment outcomes that had been available at the time of the meeting. • Particular attention had been given to the outcomes achieved by individual schools compared with their targets, including schools where outcomes had exceeded targets and schools where outcomes remained below expectations. • The committee had discussed the impact of the targeted school improvement and priority schools' approach that had been implemented during the year and how this had contributed to outcomes across the Trust. • The committee had reviewed Ofsted inspection activity during the year and reflected on the significant support provided to Charmouth during a challenging inspection period. Trustees recorded their thanks to all those who had supported the school.	

• The committee had considered school improvement priorities for the coming academic year, and the next steps required to secure further improvements in outcomes. <u>Audit & Risk Committee</u> The Audit & Risk Committee reported that: • The committee had reviewed the latest internal audit findings and associated actions and was satisfied that there were no significant concerns requiring escalation to the board. • Trustees had discussed the forthcoming procurement exercise for both internal and external audit services, recognising that retendering would be required during the next academic year. • Representatives from Bishop Fleming, the external auditor had attended the meeting to present the proposed external audit plan, which had subsequently been approved by the committee. • The committee had received an update regarding cyber security, including progress made against the Trust cyber security plan and the ongoing strengthening of arrangements in this area. • Trustees had reviewed a website compliance report, and data protection reports and were satisfied that appropriate monitoring and improvement arrangements were in place. • The committee noted the appointment of the Trust's new Head of IT and Procurement, Joe McKennan, and welcomed the additional capacity this would provide. <u>Strategic & Finance Committee</u> The chair of the Strategic & Finance Committee reported that the meeting had covered: • A review of the latest management accounts (April). The committee noted a continuing improvement in the Trust's financial position. • A first draft of the 2026/27 budget had been reviewed and approved in principle, recommended to the board for approval, subject to the funding updates and amendments expected following announcements regarding pay awards and associated Government funding. A paper was prepared by the DoF, to be presented to the board. • The committee had received an update regarding the Sidmouth rebuild project and discussed the delays reported by the DoO due to National Grid infrastructure issues. • Updates had also been received regarding other capital and estates projects, including the Rockbeare classroom project, IT connectivity and the Newton Ferrers roof replacement programme. • Through the CEO report, the committee had discussed current growth opportunities and developments relating to schools exploring joining the Trust. Matters relating to potential future joiners and sponsorship enquiries had also been discussed under Part II business.	
7. To receive and discuss the CEO report, to include key headlines for Year 6 SAT outcomes	
The CEO report was circulated ahead of the meeting. An updated version was tabled at the meeting due to the release of the Year 6 SAT outcomes by the DfE on the day of the meeting. The CEO provided the headline figures and highlighted that the published data remained provisional and subject to checking. A number of schools had already identified possible anomalies in the Y6 data, including marking errors and therefore final outcomes may improve following the completion	**Appendix 5**

of review processes. The board noted that the release of national data had been affected by technical issues and delays. *Early Years Good Level of Development (GLD:)* The CEO reported that Early Years outcomes continued to demonstrate significant improvement. The percentage of pupils achieving a GLD had increased to 78.6%, exceeding both the Trust target and the previous national average and well above the regions group ambition. This represented an increase of 5.8 percentage points from the previous year and placed the Trust significantly above national benchmarks. Trustees noted that several schools had achieved particularly strong outcomes and that the increase represented the continuation of an improving trend. *Year 1 Phonics:* The Trust achieved an outcome of 84.9%, exceeding both the Trust target and the previous year's outcome. This represented an increase of over eight percentage points from the previous year. Trustees welcomed the continued improvement and noted that disadvantaged pupils had also performed strongly against disadvantaged national figures from the previous year. *Multiplication Tables Check:* The CEO reported that the Trust average score had increased to 22, representing an improvement of one point compared with the previous year and remaining one point above the previous national average. Trustees noted the continued strength of outcomes in this area. *Year 6:* The CEO explained that the most significant headline measure remained the Reading, Writing and Maths combined attainment. Reading, Writing and Maths combined outcomes currently stood at 61%, compared with a national figure of approximately 63%. This represented an improvement of around seven percentage points from the previous year, GLD increased by 3% which was a pleasing result. Disadvantaged pupils remained below national, but the gap had closed. Trustees noted that whilst the Trust remained slightly below national outcomes, the gap had reduced considerably and overall progress was encouraging. The CEO highlighted that nine schools, including Bere Alston, Lady Seawood's, Loders, Mrs. Ethelston's, Musbury, Sidmouth, Thorncombe and Willowbank. had achieved combined outcomes above 70%, with several schools recording particularly strong performance. Trustees also noted that outcomes at a number of schools previously identified for targeted support had improved substantially. A number of schools were below national for combined scores, these were disappointing, but looking at the tracking data at Brixington, Charmouth, Gatehouse and Westcliff they were not surprising. There were however some really good individual results. ***The board queried whether any schools had produced outcomes that were significantly different from expectations and whether these aligned with in-year assessment information.*** Trust leaders reported that most outcomes aligned broadly with expectations established through assessment and school improvement work, there were no major surprises. There had been positive outcomes at Sidmouth and Mary Deans, whilst some schools remained below	

expectations despite demonstrating improvement from spring assessment points.

The board queried whether these schools had already been identified through Trust monitoring arrangements and were receiving appropriate challenge and support.

The CEO confirmed that this was the case, although progress measures from baseline suggested that improvement work was beginning to have a positive impact. Schools with weaker outcomes had already been identified through standards meetings, school improvement activity and Trust monitoring. Additional support and challenge would continue during 2026/27.

Reading:

The CEO reported that Reading outcomes were currently just below national benchmarks at 74.5%. Trustees heard that Reading appeared to be the area most affected by marking concerns nationally and that several schools were seeking reviews and remarks. Trust leaders were cautiously optimistic that outcomes would improve slightly once review processes had concluded. Scaled scores had improved compared with previous years and disadvantaged pupils continued to perform in line with previous national comparators.

Writing:

Trust-wide Writing outcomes were particularly encouraging. Outcomes at 74% were above the previous national average of 73%, and demonstrated significant improvement compared with the previous year. Greater Depth and disadvantaged outcomes had also improved and were above national. Trustees welcomed the progress made in Writing and recognised the contribution of teaching and curriculum development work undertaken across the Trust.

Mathematics:

The CEO highlighted that Maths remained the weakest of the three core subjects but continued to improve. Outcomes had increased significantly compared with the previous year and represented one of the strongest areas of improvement across the Trust, going from 67% to 72% this year. Greater depth had risen, but disadvantaged pupils remined below national. Whilst national averages had not yet been fully matched, leaders were pleased with the rate of progress and planned to continue focused support. Trustees noted that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils had improved across several measures and that the attainment gap continued to reduce.

The board challenged leaders on what would be done differently during 2026/27 to accelerate improvement further, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and schools whose outcomes remained below national averages.

The CEO outlined a programme of support for 2026/27, including:

- a coasting schools support programme (Aveton Gifford, Chudleigh Knighton and Newton Ferres);
- a disadvantaged pupils improvement programme;
- targeted Year 6 support;
- support programmes for new Reception, Year 4 and Year 6 teachers;
- an induction programme for new headteachers;
- leadership development programmes;
- "Aiming High" groups for schools capable of achieving exceptional outcomes and supporting lower performing schools;

• formal standards meetings for schools requiring additional challenge and support. Trust leaders further explained that several schools would be invited to formal standards meetings during the first week of the autumn term to review outcomes and agree improvement actions. These actions could include rapid improvement plans, raising attainment plans and targeted support packages. The board congratulated and thanked school leaders, teachers and Trust staff on the improvements achieved during the year and recognised the significant work undertaken to raise standards. Trustees noted that improving outcomes remained a key strategic priority and looked forward to receiving a fuller data set during the autumn term, for more detailed review by the Education Committee and Hub Boards. <u>Strategic Plan 2027-2030</u> The CEO reminded trustees that the current 3-year strategic plan would enter its final year from September 2026. Trustees heard that preparations for the next strategic planning cycle would begin during the coming academic year. A timeline for development of the new strategic plan would be presented at the September board meeting. Extra meetings will be arranged to support this. <u>Sidmouth Build</u> The CEO and DoO updated trustees regarding progress on the Sidmouth rebuild project. The DoO explained that the build had been a challenge. Trustees heard that delays caused by National Grid continued to create challenges and had removed all remaining contingency from the construction programme. Whilst completion by the end of August remained possible, leaders were planning on the basis that additional time may be required. Parents and the diocese had been informed accordingly. ***The board queried whether a temporary school closure would be required in order to facilitate occupation of the new building.*** Trust leaders confirmed that a closure day during the autumn term remained a possibility in order to allow equipment and resources to be moved safely into the new building. <u>Trust Growth</u> The CEO updated trustees regarding Trust growth opportunities. Exeter Road had received a positive RISE review, and due diligence discussions had commenced. The board noted that Exeter Road could potentially join the Trust during the spring term, subject to completion of the required processes. The meeting went into Part II to discuss further updates on trust growth. The meeting went back into Part I. <u>Other matters</u> The CEO briefed trustees on local government reorganisation proposals and the potential implications for the Trust operating across potentially five local authority boundaries in future. R Warwick left the meeting at approximately 6.03 pm.	
8. To receive and discuss the DoF report, and agree the Trust proposed three-year budget for 2026-27 onwards	
The DoF report, including the three-year budget and May 2026 management accounts, was circulated ahead of the meeting.	**Appendices 6 - 7**

Budget monitoring for the current year: The DoF confirmed the May management accounts show a year-to-date surplus of £216k, which is keeping the Trust on track to end the year with reserves as a percentage of income of just under 5%, as required by the DfE. It was noted that this was encouraging given the financial challenges confronting the Trust. Budget for 2025-26: The DoF explained the key factors impacting the budget for 2026/27 and confirmed the impact of the recent pay awards and DfE grants have meant that the 2026/27 budget is now presented with a surplus of £92k. The DfE updates around the grants have confirmed that they will support some of the support staff increase and consequently there has been a further improvement from the breakeven expectation set at the SFC meeting. The figure of £92k would restore next year's reserves to be at the 5% mark. This allows a platform to plan for breakeven budgets in 2027/28 and 2028/29 of £8k and £10k respectively. It was noted that any opportunities above the 5% reserves mark would be added to a 'capacity fund' to allow for targeted future improvement with the security of the funding being available. The DoF drew the attention of the board to the assumptions in the budget report. ***The board queried whether the proposed budget assumptions were sufficient given uncertainty around pupil numbers, future funding announcements and inflationary pressures.*** The DoF confirmed that assumptions reflected the most up-to-date information available and that sensitivity analysis had been undertaken. Trustees noted the continuing challenge presented by declining pupil numbers. The board discussed the Trust's longer-term ambition to develop a capacity or opportunity fund once the target reserve level had been secured. Trustees heard that any future surpluses above the desired reserve threshold could be reinvested in school improvement, targeted intervention and additional capacity across the Trust, rather than simply increasing reserves. Trustees reflected that, despite the improving Trust financial position, many schools continued to report significant financial pressures and concerns regarding the affordability of staffing and provision. Trust leaders acknowledged these challenges and noted that they reflected wider national funding pressures across the sector. Trustees noted that future funding announcements and adjustments to national grant arrangements could create additional opportunities to strengthen the Trust's financial position. It was confirmed that no such opportunities had been assumed within the three-year budget. The board discussed the financial and operational risks arising from increasing levels of SEND need and the continued pressures within the wider SEND system.	

The board sought assurance that schools would continue to receive the support required to raise standards whilst maintaining financial sustainability. Trust leaders acknowledged that schools continued to experience significant financial pressures. However, the strengthening financial position provided greater stability than in previous years and created opportunities to develop future improvement capacity. There was now a lot more fairness and equity in the budget setting process. The Strategic and Finance Committee recommended this adjusted budget to the board for approval. After due consideration of the underlying assumptions, risks and sensitivities, the board resolved to approve the presented budgets for 2026/27 (£92k surplus), 2027/28 (£8k surplus) and 2028/29 (£10k surplus). The board thanked the DoF and wider finance team for their work.	
9. To receive and agree the recommendation from the DoO to award the PPM tender	
The recommendation from the DoO and the Planned, Preventative Maintenance (PPM) tender outcome summary were circulated ahead of the meeting, together with supporting tender documentation. The DoO reported that a thorough procurement exercise had been undertaken with external support from PHP and that three tenders had been received and evaluated. A series of post-tender clarifications had been undertaken to ensure all bidders had access to the same information and that submissions could be assessed on a like-for-like basis. Following evaluation of quality and price submissions, Sherwoods, the current incumbent, achieved the highest overall score and was therefore recommended as the preferred bidder. The DoO explained that the proposed contract would be for an initial three-year period with the option of extending for a further two years. The board heard that whilst all three providers had submitted credible bids, Sherwoods provided the strongest overall combination of quality, service delivery and value for money. ***The board sought assurance that a robust and compliant procurement process had been undertaken and that the recommended bidder represented best value for money.*** The DoO confirmed that the process had been undertaken in accordance with procurement requirements and that all bids had been evaluated consistently. Extensive measures had been taken to ensure transparency and fairness. ***The board queried how the successful contractor's performance and value for money would be monitored throughout the contract period.*** The DoO explained that the purpose of the PPM contract was to ensure estate assets were monitored, maintained and repaired proactively, for example fixing a leaking gutter. The specification included clear performance expectations and regular monitoring arrangements. This approach would support the strategic management of Trust assets and reduce the risk of more significant maintenance costs arising in future. The board agreed that the process had been thorough and represented good value for money.	**Appendices 8-10**

The recommendation to award the contract to Sherwoods was approved. The board thanked the DoO for her work on the contract and through the year.	
10. Governance matters	
10.1. To note current appointments, vacancies, forthcoming vacancies and plans to fill vacancies	
A summary report of governance appointments and vacancies report was circulated ahead of the meeting. Trustees noted the current composition of the Trust board and its committees and reviewed current and forthcoming vacancies. The board noted that there remained a vacancy for a Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) foundation trustee/director and that trustee recruitment and succession planning activity continued. Trustees also noted the vacancy created following the end of Mike Williams' term of office and the need to appoint a new Audit & Risk Committee chair in time for the first committee meeting of the autumn term. The board also received an update regarding recruitment challenges across local governance structures and ongoing work around succession planning.	**Appendix 11**
10.2. To agree to recommend the appointment of a candidate to fill one SDBE foundation trustee/director vacancy (and the audit & risk committee chair vacancy), subject to the candidate being interviewed successfully	
The recommendation was circulated ahead of the meeting for decision. The trustee recruitment tasks and procedure checklist, blank trustee application form and trustee recruitment pack were also circulated ahead of the meeting for information. The recommendation was for trustees to agree to recommend the internal candidate to SDBE for appointment as a foundation trustee/director, subject to a successful interview by a panel of trustees, as the Trust is unlikely to attract other strong candidates who meet the SDBE criteria in time for them to be appointed by the first week of October 2026. The chair reported that, as delegated by the board, the Trustee Recruitment and Succession Planning Committee had undertaken recruitment activity to identify a candidate capable of fulfilling both the SDBE foundation trustee requirement and the forthcoming Audit & Risk Committee chair vacancy. Two expressions of interest had been received. However, only one candidate met the SDBE eligibility requirements for appointment as a foundation trustee/director, this was Dom Makemson, the current chair of the East Devon/West Dorset Hub. Trustees heard that the internal candidate had significant experience in governance, strategic leadership and risk management and had already contributed effectively within Trust governance arrangements. Trustees noted that the candidate had not yet completed the formal interview stage. ***The board queried whether the recruitment process had generated a sufficiently broad pool of candidates and whether additional recruitment activity would still be required.***	**Appendices 12-13**

Trust leaders explained that the SDBE appointment requirements significantly limited the pool of eligible candidates. The board agreed that the candidate represented a particularly strong applicant and that further recruitment activity would continue as part of wider succession planning arrangements. ***The board discussed the skills and experience required of the future Audit & Risk Committee chair and sought assurance that the recommended candidate would strengthen governance capacity in this area.*** The board was satisfied that the candidate's professional experience aligned strongly with the requirements of the role. The board agreed to recommend the internal candidate to SDBE for appointment as a foundation trustee/director and chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, subject to a successful trustee interview and completion of the diocesan appointment process.	
10.3. To agree the governance meeting calendar for 2026-27	
The proposed 2026-27 governance meeting calendar was circulated ahead of the meeting. The board approved the proposed 2026-27 governance meeting calendar. Trustees requested that calendar invitations be circulated as soon as possible to assist planning commitments for the year ahead. **Action:** Lead Governance Professional to arrange circulation of calendar invites as soon as possible.	**Appendix 14** **LGP**
11. To receive and discuss KPIs for complaints and suspensions	
The KPI reports for complaints and suspensions were circulated ahead of the meeting. <u>Complaint report</u> The board discussed the increasing complexity of complaints and the impact of complaint investigations and panels on governors, staff and Trust leaders. Trustees recognised that, whilst the number of complaints remained relatively low for a Trust of FFT's size, many complaints involved SEND-related matters, tribunal proceedings, Subject Access Requests, FOI requests and more were now using AI. Trustees also discussed the increasing difficulty of recruiting governors and trustees to participate in complaint hearings and recognised the importance of strengthening early resolution processes to reduce escalation to formal complaints. The CEO stressed the need for schools to address low level parental concerns to seek to resolve them, to avoid escalation of concerns to stage 3 complaints. ***The board reflected on whether common themes were emerging from complaints received during the year.*** Trust leaders reported that many complaints continued to relate to SEND provision, parental communication and the wider frustrations experienced by families accessing support through education, housing and social care systems. Notwithstanding this, the Trust remained committed to identifying learning from complaints and using this to strengthen practice. ***The board challenged whether there were opportunities to resolve concerns earlier, before they escalated into formal complaints.***	**Appendices 15-16**

Trust leaders explained that work was underway to strengthen a more resolution-focused approach. Greater emphasis was being placed on identifying and recording lower-level concerns, enabling schools and Trust leaders to address issues earlier. Additional consideration was also being given to how complaint outcomes could be reviewed more systematically in order to identify any lessons learned. A folder for complaint outcome letters was requested as an action point (for access by senior leaders). Trustees discussed the impact of complaint work and reflected on the need to support governors and staff involved in complaint investigations and hearings, as well as the need to increase the number of trained panel members within the governance structure. Currently there was a very limited pool of trustees available to sit on formal panels. <u>Suspension Report</u> The board received the suspension dashboard and supporting analysis. Trustees noted that comparisons between years were affected by changes in pupil numbers and Trust growth. The reports showed that suspensions continued to be disproportionately associated with pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, reflecting both Trust and national trends. ***The board queried whether the increase in suspensions reflected a change in pupil behaviour, changes in school practice or wider societal factors.*** The Director of Inclusion (DoI) reported that a combination of factors had contributed. These included increasingly complex pupil needs, higher levels of in-year admissions, wider societal challenges and actions taken by some schools to reset behavioural expectations. In some schools, suspensions had formed part of a broader strategy to establish clear expectations and improve behaviour culture, and this had been very successful in some schools in reducing suspensions, for example at Axminster. ***The board sought assurance that all appropriate alternatives to suspension continued to be explored and that inclusion remained central to the Trust's approach.*** The DoI and CEO confirmed that a wide range of interventions continued to be used, including alternative provision, off-site direction, targeted inclusion support and earlier collaboration with external agencies. Permanent exclusion remained extremely rare and school leaders continued to seek alternative solutions wherever possible. ***The board enquired whether any individual schools represented a particular concern and how suspension data was informing future strategy.*** Trust leaders explained that no individual school represented a major concern beyond those already receiving targeted support. Inclusion priorities for the coming year would focus on supporting schools dealing with increasingly complex pupils and strengthening preventative support before crisis points were reached. Schools were working far more closely with Local Authorities in this area.	**LGP**

The board noted the positive work undertaken across the Trust to support pupils with additional needs and thanked leaders for their continued commitment to inclusion.	
12. Policies and compliance (to include a review of the Trust risk register)	
The policies and compliance report was circulated ahead of the meeting along with the proposed policies. Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy Trustees noted that the policy had been updated to reflect changes within the Trust central team structure and role titles. No substantive policy changes were proposed. The board approved the updated Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Policy. Future policy updates Trustees noted that a number of policies would be presented to the September board meeting to reflect recently published statutory guidance and regulatory changes, including: • Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (KCSIE 2026). • Suspensions and Exclusions Policy. • Mobile Phones Policy. • Allergy Safety Policy following implementation of Benedict's Law. National reforms and compliance update The board received an update regarding wider national reforms relating to curriculum, assessment, SEND, attendance, accountability, workforce and funding. Trustees heard that executive leaders were continuing to assess the implications of these reforms for the Trust and that executive leaders had identified the key statutory changes due to come into effect during 2026-27. Trustees confirmed that reform implementation has been incorporated into strategic planning, risk management, workforce planning, and budgeting. Trust risk register ***The board discussed whether any emerging risks identified through safeguarding, complaints, attendance, SEND, funding or wider sector reform activity should result in changes to the Trust risk register.*** The board agreed that no amendments were required at this stage but requested that these matters continue to be monitored through routine reporting and future reviews of the register. For information The new academies handbook had come out too late to reflect on the changes. The Chair noted some significant changes, for example the broadening of responsibilities of executives and trustees out of purely finance areas and the delayed starting point to 1st October.	**Appendix 17**
The chair thanked trustees, executive leaders, local governors, staff and governance professionals for their work and commitment throughout the year and wished everyone a restful summer break.	

Meeting start: 5 pm; meeting close: 7 pm

Date of the next meetings: see approved 2026-27 governance calendar

These minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.

Signed:…… **Date:……..**

Chair of Directors

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