



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held at Liskeard School & Community College on 15th July 2025 at 6:00 pm

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Mr M Aarts	Yes	Mr C Hodges	Yes
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes	Mrs L Lawson	Yes (V)
Ms Verity Campbell-Barr	Yes	Miss K Reed	Apologies
Ms J Chan-Penney	Yes	M G Simpson	Apologies
Mr J Crisp	Apologies	Mr Neill Toms	Yes

In Attendance: Mrs J Lumbard, CFO - Yes
Mrs C Askar, PA to CEO - Yes
Mr Kristien Carrington, Director of Education - Yes
Mr Mark Lloyd – prospective Trustee as visitor – Yes
Ms Sara Pike – prospective Trustee as visitor – Yes

43. Welcome and Evacuation Procedure 18:03

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The evacuation procedure was explained.

44. Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration

Paper copies were handed in by Mark, Chris, Sara, others received by email. Kate to follow up in next meeting any outstanding copies.

45. Apologies for Absence

Ms Kate Reed - accepted

Mr Gary Simpson - accepted

Mr Jamie Crisp - accepted

46. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15/01/2025 and the extraordinary meeting on 31/03/2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 31/03/2025 and on 15/01/2025, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and were signed.

The January meeting had one action point which was to set up the extraordinary meeting to agree the action plan and report from the governance review. This meeting happened in March. The report was received in January, and we couldn't agree within the usual meeting time so set up the additional one.

The meeting in March was to agree our response and action plan that Jackie Eason had proposed. There were no actions other than the action plan itself which was circulated.

47. Progress regarding the governance review action plan and matters arising

A copy of the action plan with actions RAG rated was circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed on screen for discussion of any points raised.

Review was thorough which was welcomed. Where there was no timescale to the review items still to be done were amber and those completed were green. If there was an implied timescale or if we no longer would be completing an item, it was coloured red.

Range of things were debated and discussed. Key items needed to be drawn out

- most Trust Boards across country are made up of retirees yet 0% of ours were retired so we needed to expand. This is one action which we have started successfully with 12 trustees in place or in the process of joining.
- We were advised to gain educational experience in recruitment, which we have done.
- We have now committed that all Trustees should visit one of our schools annually. We believe it will be good to do that along with governors as they are used to going to schools and have lots of practice. You will get a view of what they are doing on your behalf. We have got rid of the idea of a trustee being attached to one school so you can go to any school. We also added the view that attending a gov review a year would also be beneficial. All our meetings have a virtual option. Govs are appreciative even if we drop in.
- The review recognised the strength of our LGC committees and recognised the excellent work done. Kate was mentioned also in this for the quality of her work.
- Jackie mistakenly thought that LGCs had the power to agree rather than recommend and some of the LGC she shared this wrong perception. This has been corrected now.
- Where Heads used to do reports for LGC, they are now called reports for Trustees, so we don't fall into that trap again, LGC are there on your behalf which has been reiterated.
- We are so fortunate that most LGC take part in our panels for grievances etc. when a panel is called KW mixes the LGC from different schools so they know each other and share expertise.
- We noted after the review that we've only had one complaint that got through to TB level and it illustrated that not many TB members are likely to gain experience of panels. As we have an extended TB now, we can allow Trustees to sit not as Chair but as participants or observers on panels to gain experience.
- Another change we have already implemented: We did have a structure that if there is a safeguarding trustee then there is a safeguarding gov. We thought all safeguarding govs could meet and be chaired by a safeguarding trustee. We realised that govs were developing their expertise more quickly due to exposure, so we have removed link meetings. We have kept the chair link meeting. How do we get genuine collab between gov and TB looking to bring one chair each meeting to present at TB meeting. Tiim was going to come today but had other duties so he couldn't attend. He will attend in September. He will give a view of the journey that Saltash have been on. We will keep this under constant review. It's fair to say with survey evidence that we are fortunate to not be an us and them trust. We are one org across 6 sites. Govs are attuned to that too.
- As we have had many years of clean audit, we decided a target in finance was not appropriate.

Agreed that roles of Trustees and Committee membership would be agreed in the next meeting next academic year.

Trustee asked if the RAG'd Governance Review had been shared with members and if they had any concerns or not.

DB confirmed that Members were happy with the report and raised no concerns.

Trustee asked about one red area related to parental feedback and wouldn't we want to continue this as OFSTED are also keen?

DB confirmed Parent forums had been added in all schools this year which was an excellent step but we haven't formalised the way parents are given feedback about these meeting. There is no structure around it. Its ad hoc in newsletter from school hence the item requesting this is coloured red.

Trustee asked if these parent forums are minuted

DB- yes, but for the use of the SLT and not as circulated copies. Heads were nervous at the start because of negativity of social media feedback. Heads are up for more structure now they have done a few but they kept them open to start with. Any guidance on making this more formalised would be great.

Chairs of Gov meetings

See bottom

Learning people committee

Minutes brought up on screen.

TB Confirmed the highly supported decision to merge Learning with People Committee.

TB agreed request from the committee to extend to 6 meeting a year from 3 now. We can do a data analysis then deep dive in turn which is more robust.

The need for accurate data from the curriculum and student survey to enable the Learning Committee to do its job was debated and understood. Also looked at for learning com to do job right.

DB pleased to confirm that Kristien has made progress with completing the proposed new Learning Committee report that contains all the required data for the first time to enable the required level of scrutiny. After feedback from Learning Committee, we will now be adding a report for sixth form and for EYFS.

Updated draft report KC

Brought up on the screen. Hasn't changed from what committee saw. Beginning part of doc was seen by committee. There are agreed milestones which have been achieved. In terms of concept understanding in vary curriculum areas have been agreed. Potential avenues for asses. Other areas of common practice. Vocab has been agreed. Work started 18-2 yrs.

KC talked through the report as the current state of self-evaluation from subject leaders.

Trustee asked if there is a common curriculum.

KC- clarified there are common concepts and common vocabulary but not common curriculum. Assessing concepts rather than curriculum.

The Trustee recognised that this was an ambitious job without aligned curriculum.

KC had to look at where there were some commonalities. When we've asked middle leaders to self-assess these are the results (see document). By next year the ambition is that every year group will have a common assessment so we can make comparisons and I can do great work with middle leaders from data.

A Trustee asked- should we have EYFS as a column and to include GLD?

KC- I haven't got that at the moment but will have as school have it. He has collected some EYFS data. This is a summary position on where our curriculum leads are at agreeing vocab and assessment. Self-evaluated scores.

A Trustee pointed out that confidence in Looe appears low.

KC One of the benefits of being in a trust is that Heads of subject meet and for example in Science where Looe's curriculum has not delivered results they have been directed to work with Liskeard to adapt their curriculum. KC showed the table illustrating current variation in how subjects are applying the agreed common vocabulary. Not all parts have been updated as not all outcomes yet achieved. Nothing for 6th form or early years in the report yet but KC reported he already had some rag rated outcomes for these. This will be benchmarked against national average per subject once I have the data.

A Trustee suggested that their reading of the primary SDPs was that they lacked ambition. Should there not be agreement on all vocabulary?

We want schools to have agency on subject, but we also want to be challenging them if the outcomes aren't there. We also need to include numbers of pupils as percentages with small numbers can be misleading. Explained all the tables in the document.

A Trustee noted it was interesting that it's the creative subjects have great outcomes.

KC- yes concern would be tech subject. Want breadth of offer but if outcomes aren't great.

DB- the goal of showing you this report in its developing stage is to check we have the right data you need being made available to you to help you form strategic decisions and justify our own responses to them. I think from these discussions I'm hearing we are on the right track and this quality of data will enable you to do that.

Trustees agreed

KC- went through all the remaining tables. Difference between estimates and outcomes will now be shared after the results in the summer.

A Trustee requested that sample size be available for all the data or otherwise indicate results that are based on small numbers.

KC- yes, I can add that. Primary schools have insight which gather data. These are statutory returns for KS1 & 2. Rag rated will be, wherever possible linked to national. News this year concerning all our primary results are positive.

DB- we are at or above national average in all measures with primaries with the exception of just three measures involving small numbers of pupils where we are 1 or 2 pupil results from national

KC- what would trustees like to see in this document.

A Trustee reiterated the sample size data to see what percentage each student is worth.

DB- Learning committee has enough data in that can be finessed which is huge progress. We haven't been able to analyse previously. The detail will alter over the coming meetings as we draw on the expertise in the room.

KC- common assessments will be rag rated in November.

A Trustee asked are you assessing across the range of sub in primary.

KC- Yes.

A Trustee asked if primary need to be broken down into Key stages 1 and 2?

KC- asked how the primary specialists now on the Trust Board felt about this.

Those Trustees with Primary expertise agreed that yes. You would need KS1 and KS2 so we have the data and can highlight where there are success and weaknesses.

A Trustee asked if in primaries it would just be the core subject. How would you assess the other subjects?

DB- we have all leaders in subjects to come up with a common assessment based mainly on conceptual understanding and this is moderated by a process of concept reviews involving all the primary and secondary subject leads talking to pupils of all ages in a day to evidence their discussions.

Kristien continued to Section 3 of the document and explained to new governors how the SEF was collected and showed HT self-evaluation across all OFSTED indicators. He explained that every assessment in here they must be able to back up with evidence. He explained Li was red and because he didn't have the data, it is actually now almost all green and he will update the table to reflect this. Looe are where sig concerns are still now, but the SEF analysis is a tool to allow Trustees to see where the issues are clearly.

A Trustee asked- how do you QA these judgments?

DB- explained the process of peer review and assess this. TB can direct us what to look at in Peer review. When we have had an Ofsted, they go through the SEF judgements in order and where their assessments differ Trustees can see this after the inspection.

A Trustee asked what we are doing to ensure we support the new Headteacher in Looe.

DB- we have collaborative support on hand. Working with other schools and so he has already been to spend time in the other two secondaries, and they have been over to him. We also have Kristien based on site and I am checking in weekly.

KC progressed onto section 4- Risk assessment and the Risk Register (RR)

KC explained the RR document is instinctive and designed to capture what is concerning Heads. Highlighted risks are in the table. With explanations of what's being done. DB- Trustees have access to the full raw data.

KC progressed to Section 6- SDPs. Calendar timeline. SDP1 more details have now been provided by Liskeard where this version had gaps.

DB- main purpose is that TB gets the documents but good to see process and how it's being monitored.

A Trustee asked if there could be something sharper in SDP. Felt very business as usual reiterating the earlier concern that it may lack ambition.

DB- explained that improvements in outcomes were being achieved and it is right the TB have the data they need to challenge this. The use of in depth KPIs in all areas is new this year and so may well be more cautious until established but we also now have the SEF which provides line by line assessments of where improvements are needed across all of the areas in the school and updated three times a year.

KC continued to the final tables in the new report that detail confidential Informal support and staff attendance. All data is anonymised to enable TB to hold us to account on the trends without giving any details.

Trustees thanked KC in acknowledgment of the considerable amount of work that's gone into the document.

Report from the Resources committee

Marcel as Chair of the committee gave a summary of the key points for awareness of the TB.

We talked about budget and pupil numbers. Section 106 funding making sure we get what we can from it. JL made sure that we were in sync. There was an update around long-term absence. But teams have picked up slack and rolled out programs and upheld projects. Lots of projects with 106 money. Including new classrooms being built in Saltash to accommodate the expansion of the ARB which is great.

A Trustee asked if the expanded ARB will be able to fund the additional teaching hours.

DB- explained that ARB is funded almost entirely through high needs funding and EHCPs.

JL explained the ARB is in the school. 2 classrooms beside that we can extend into. LA will then fund a new build a new build for 2 classrooms which have been taken. This is a longer-term build which is just in infancy and will complete the year after. Pupil numbers for new entries in Saltash are currently down so we have been able to accommodate the pupils early, but the new classrooms will enable any expansion back to full subscription in the rest of the school.

Other planned work over the summer includes: Boiler replacement; building management systems; light upgrades and energy efficiency.

Operations update- We now have a full TOLT team with Head of IT back. Huge amount of work being done by estates.

Discussed compliance with our suppliers such as catering cleaning which had been an area of focus in the past. Asbestos check, fire check and all other items of compliance, Trustees need to know they're in place. There was lack of system to interrogate this data before. We now have a system in place. In November a new rag rated compliance report will be provided to Trustees. Huge steps forward with full team.

A Trustee asked if police would help with activities around protection for IT. Risk assessments and offered a contact if needed.

DB- we use Sophos highest level of cyber security and have done so for a number of years.

Audit and risk

Neill as Chair gave a summary of the key points that had been covered.

In the meeting Bishop Fleming's representative had talked through the key points of the annual audit.

They praised the Trust for the audit and explained that the items they were raising for the Board were just those that were standard and common to schools but had to be included. Jo and the team were praised specifically for balancing the books with pressurised budgets.

Neill drew the TB attention to the ICLFP and reassured that the 3-year forecast always looks more negative as we have limited information and our policy is to be precautionary.

In the meeting we had discussed risks around the high average pay due more than national average age in general. Although we might like more graduate entries the turnover from older staff is not large enough for this to be happening quickly.

A Trustee stated that 45% of people who went through a Devon teacher training SKITT still did not have a job for September.

A Trustee asked if we get additional funding for more experienced teachers.

DB- no we don't, and our funding received pr pupil is one of the lowest in the country.

A Trustee asked if with every year that goes by won't this become a bigger problem.

DB- The age profile is not new for Cornwall, and we have an attractive reputation so are recruiting well and our outcomes are improving so we are managing numerous factors strategically

JL- gave a specific example that in the future years calculation we always make informed assumptions on inflation and that staff will be successful and move through pay scales.

Budgets

Jo talked through the ICLFP rag rated sheet that had been previously circulated allowing for questions. She explained finance teams work closely with heads. She drew attention to the following items in particular:

- Look at budget projections and the drop in pupil numbers, even though the figures are worsening we are expected to produce a balanced budget by making the required changes as the year progresses.
- Drew attention to teacher ratios.
- Explained the first four columns.
- We were awarded grants for increases in teacher salaries and teacher pensions. The gov was slow in the detail and what that would cover. We were cautious in the spending as we didn't know what we would need for this year. That's helped to build reserve.
- Very pleased that not only are we balanced, but we have ended the year with a surplus of 53K.
- What we do well is tight monthly procedures, processes good communication on new info as soon as we know anything its put into action. 26/27 onwards doesn't look nice. But we have made staffing assumptions with benchmarks we need to meet. These are currently being met. Moving forward, we make assumptions on inflationary increases. Info on income is unknown.

A Trustee present in the meeting pointed out the discussion about how getting grants rather than funding agreed beforehand can't be planned for.

JL- we have found the grants are worth more to us than based on known factors at this point in time.

The Trustees and CEO congratulated Jo and the whole team for all the great results. Congratulations also on achieving a clean audit and balancing all the budgets.

Trustees agreed all of the budgets for all schools that had been recommended by Resources Committee.

CEO- EOY report

Due to limited time remaining in the meeting Dan asked for any items the Board wanted to raise in relation to his report that he had previously released to them.

Section 1 – the list of achievements from last year. No additions were suggested.

Section 2 – the progress on the SDPs so far. No challenges were raised.

Section 3 – our agreed objectives for the coming year in the new whole Trust SDP in the 5-year plan.

Any changes or challenges to be raised by the next meeting as this is the one in which these are signed off because some of the KPIs require the results in August and the increased end of year preparations
Listed achievements in document.

The more detailed use of KPI is being stepped up this year so any feedback to get this right is encouraged.

A Trustee commented that they initially felt the primary SDPs to be lacking ambition, but the additional information and result improvements may mean they need to reassess this, and the situation is more positive.

Safeguarding update

LA held their latest Safeguarding review in Looe having been invited by the Head. Kristien was present in the feedback and reported they were pleased with our approach.

Kristien shared how we are holding the hands of Looe taking new SLT leader through process. All schools in the Trust have had OSFTED have had the approval of OFSTED on their safeguarding practices with no serious concerns having been raised. LA were pleased with what they saw and read in the school. No report yet. We will forward when received

RR n SEF

Only surprise is that the SEF for looe has been downgraded as it's now been assessed by new head. RR we have committed to meeting in autumn term to look at the risks we are tracking. Internal audit said they were being tracked well but are they correct risks? Do we need to look at how risks attach together? Autumn term meeting date to be arranged.

Trustee responsibilities

In our next meeting in the autumn term, we will have a clear discussion as to the Trustee roles everyone is happy with including Chair, Vice Chair and which Trustees are on which committees.

All agreed it is better to do this in the autumn term when everyone is here, and new trustees are in. all committees can be formulated at next meeting. If you have a requirement or suggestion, then please let Kate know. With a larger TB we can meet more flexible on how many cover the same area.

CEO appraisal committee is also to be agreed at theist time.

Chair/ Vice char

Massive skill base in TB and we can debate this in first meeting back. It would be a shame to have to appoint externally but we will if we need to.

T- could look at rotating chair

Policies

- None
- Expect policies to be coming via email soon

In future meeting we will discuss visits.

Dates of next meeting – see caendar

48. **AOB:**

- CEO appraisal – Committee groups

- Request for Kirsty gray and Sam day- European and world finals- pickleball and Cold Water Swimming respectively. (Cold water swimming international finals.)
- **Staff absence we want tight control but also need to be fair. Hence an unusual case such as this, it is appropriate to hand it to the Trust Board to give a specific ruling.**
- **In the case of Sam, we enabled paid absence, and she went on to get a silver medal. Lots of publicity and inspires children. Shes in finals again and went on to win teacher of the year.**
- **Pickleball European finals I am arguing we should do the same and grant paid leave with the expectation of positive inputs in favour of the school and pupils.**
- **With Sam, we have already set a precedent we should agree. Is it paid or unpaid. Sam was paid as long as trust was in publicity.**
- **Both requests for 2 days paid leave were agreed by the Trustees.**
- **Jo announced she is leaving for early retirement in January. There was lots of praise given to Jo by all those that work with her as Trustees and Staff. We are all sad at her leaving.**
 - o **Decision is to advertise for September 23rd interview date to allow for notice periods.**
 - o **Marcel agreed in the meeting to be the member of the Trust Board who will sit on the interview panel – Jody offered reserve.**

- Discussion about how hard it was predicted we would find it to recruit so may be more rounds
- Jo offered to come back in for paid pieces of consultancy work if we had not filled the post but these would be for task specific short spaces of time.

Liskeard LGC wished to raise the following for the attention of Trust Board-

- a- Budget for 2024-25- the school is anticipating being able to set a balanced budget by not recruiting to vacant roles and restructuring the curriculum model. Rises in national insurance and teachers pay have significantly impacted the budget and it is hoped that the government will provide some additional funding.
- b- Governors noted the school has had a very positive experience of an Ofsted inspection. They were delighted that the school received a Good grading and Ofsted found that the school was inclusive to all students and safeguarding was robust
- c- The S175 form will be shared with governors prior to it being submitted at the end of June.
- d- The Risk Register was reviewed and there is a small increase in risk around funding for the school.

Dobwalls- no minutes yet – these will be circulated when ready

- a- **Budget recommended to the TB for approval**

Landulph- no minutes yet – these will be circulated when ready

- a- **Budget recommended to the TB for approval**

Trewidland

- b- **Budget recommended to the TB for approval**
- c- **The numbers confirmed for September continue to be of concern, and the financial risks are being managed by the executive head and finance manager to the best of their ability.** Db- exec head across 2 schools. Balanced budget in tre which is amazing and in dob. Flexible staff so all staff operate in both schools and the head of school joins leadership team at dobs. Joint experiences for pupils
- d- **All look forward to the changes to front door security over the summer holidays. This has been noted on the risk register.** DB- you have to go in the door to get to reception. This will be addressed in the summer. Route for children around the back of school.

Saltash

- a- **Budget recommended to the TB for approval**
- b- **Governors want to alert Trustees to the high number of social care cases in Saltash recently. But they want to reassure you that the referrals went well.** Db- spike in cases. Govs have checked

Looe

- a- **Budget – A balanced budget was presented to governors and governors recommended to the Trust Board that this should be approved.**
- b- **Trust Board should consider the metric of “percentage of children living within the catchment” as a future measure of successful school recruitment.**
- c- **A Trustee asked how big a risk is pupil numbers and what is the minimum we need for devolved capital**
 - a. Jo informed us that devolved capital comes to us when we are over 3000 pupils and this was £400K but has recently been increased to over £800K. We currently have approximately 3100 pupils so there is a considerable risk.
 - b. Trustees requested data on changes and percentage in catchment are going to Secondaries so they can best mitigate this risk. Corestats from the LA which we buy into, is predicting pupil number decreases year on year for around 5 years.
 - i. Increases from former private school attendees was discussed. DB- as chair in CACE. Rep of independent schools says numbers haven't massively changed. Parents have accommodated the costs. Collaboration worsened at one point due to underlying competition for numbers. Now collaborating much better.

- ii. A Trustee gave the example of Ted Wragg Trust having teamed up with the university and football teams for sponsorship. Is this something we could explore as partnerships with sports clubs.
- iii. A Trustee noted that anecdotally it seems sports at Callywith College is drawing them there for sixth form. Big competitor of ours also Trustees shared there are people coming from Plymouth side to Callywith also.
- c. A Trustee asked if we have talked about expansion of the Trust as this would be good for the Trust but also in the case of numbers. Now that we are 'good' surely we now can. DB- RG agenda has been to attract larger trusts to area and support existing large trusts. As we were double RI with Saltash, we were prevented from expanding. Now we are all 'good' I have gone back to them about lack of consultation regarding school allocation in Burraton Primary to argue we should be on the list for consideration. Their reply cited our outcomes in Looe suggesting this was now the reason we would not be permitted. DB will be challenging this [and others are welcome to also.] Hence we are now focusing on results in looe.
- d. A Trustee asked about the place of nurseries in this 3100 figure.
DB- sadly their numbers can't be added in the figure. We enormously support having nurseries in our Trust for many reasons but one certainly is the hope that it could make future recruitment to reception higher.
DB- vocational courses are in place. We are looking at what we can provide/ offer.
- e. A Trustee asked if we can share with duchy?
- f. DB- we should keep all options open but our last look into this one resulted in it being unviable. We will continue to review and look for more robust models
- g. There is a new head of 6th form in each one and having them share their vision would be good DB will explore further.
- h. A Trustee asked, have you approached students to ask which courses they would like?
DB- yes regularly and we also look at expertise then offer what we can.
T- digital hybrid?
DB- research has suggested that if you have strong mentor for child then external courses and online courses can work well but you need expert mentoring on site and we haven't managed to use that model as yet. Hard to get the mentoring skills. We could look at running a strong pilot in the future- we can debate each year..
T so this is the priority.
Db- yes. Students are more likely to choose organisation before their subjects. Our strategy is to make sure that at y6 we are talking about their journey and sixth form.
T- maybe engaging with university? We could do the same thing, so the mentoring doesn't sit on our shoulders. This can become part of a package.
DB- covid allowed us to experiment with online tutoring but none of schools have continued this as feedback and results from this weren't good.
DB- callywith- its college and more adult. Some students just want a new environment.
T- how often do we discuss this. When we put the agenda out, you can add to this. 5-year strategic plan will be renewed in 1 years' time.
T- what are we focused on as a board?
DB- in nov last year was the first time the TB looked at the data and agreed a strategic direction to look at disadvantage. We took that to the tslt to modify and take it to the learning committee who took it to SLTF and further.
T- was that about one key intent?
Db- we restrict schools to 3. Disadvantage is large.
T- we ask critical questions, but we were lacking in asking for evidence. We are data rich now and we should get more reports next year and can have a deeper dive. We're moving in the right direction. The focus was to get all schools to good.
Db- now all schools are good we can.

- d- **Chair and vice chair of Looe appointed. Chair was agreed as Steve Pinnell, Vice chair as Steve Guffick**
- e- **New Headteacher- Approach and plans are very much supported by the governing body.**
- f- **SDP 2024/25 and SDP 2025/26- some of the plans during the 2024/2025 transitions in leadership no longer apply and so governors signed off this approach and accepted some unmet or revised milestones. SDP 2025/2026- areas agreed and milestones will be agreed in time for the Trust Board meeting.** DB- Looe has had a change in head. KC as interim. Now a new head. The nature of driving a school means SDP needs to be set by leadership team. Govs have assumed that we would be happy for them to be signed off. They will now set a new plan/ agenda for the coming year. agreed