



## **EDUCATION SOUTH WEST TRUST BOARD**

Part 1 Minutes of the meeting of the Trust Board of Education South West held at South Devon UTC at 6.30pm on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Absent / Present</b>
Graham Austin GA	Trustee, Chair	<b>Present</b>
Beth Brooks BB	Trustee	<b>Present</b>
Gail Brown GB	Trustee	Absent
Annelie Fearon AF	Trustee	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Jennifer Gibbs JG	Trustee	Absent
Adrian Hines AH	Trustee, Vice-Chair	<b>Present</b>
David Potter DP	Trustee	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Matthew Shanks MS	Executive Principal and Trust Leader	<b>Present</b>
Jenny Sutton JS	Trustee	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Barrie Taylor BT	Trustee	Absent
<b>Executive Board</b>		
Rob Coles RC	Deputy CEO	<b>Present</b>
Andy Goodwin AG	Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Lead	Absent
Jayne Keller JK	Director of Education	<b>Present via Teams</b>
Suzannah Wharf SLW	Director of Education	<b>Present</b>
Stuart White SW	Chief Financial and Operating Officer	<b>Present</b>
<b>Invitees</b>		
Debra Wilson	Chair of Governors, Homelands Primary School	<b>Present</b>
Angela Urquhart	Headteacher, Homelands Primary School	<b>Present</b>
Jackie Ridding	Governor Services Clerk	<b>Present via Teams</b>

1	<u>WELCOME</u>					
	GA welcomed everyone to the meeting.					
2	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>					
2.1	Apologies for absence were received from Gail Brown, Jennifer Gibbs and Barrie Taylor.					
2.2	Trustees consented to these absences.					
3	<u>DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND BUSINESS INTERESTS</u>					
3.1	No declarations of pecuniary or other interests regarding items on the agenda were made.					
3.2	No declarations of gifts or hospitality had been received or given since the last meeting.					
4	<u>MINUTES</u>					
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on <b>Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b> were <b>approved</b> and would be signed by the chair.					
4.2	Matters arising from the minutes					
	Action Point	Agenda Item	Action	By Whom	By When	Status



	AP1	8	MS to amend the LGB terms of reference to allow for more parent governors.	MS	ASAP	Completed	
5	<b><u>FINANCE</u></b>						
	<u>Shared Services Verbal Report</u>						
	<p>SW reported the trust's budget had a positive variance of £290,000 against the original budget. He said there had been a new grant which had been front loaded into the academic year. SW said the projected reserves were £2.3M. He said they had started the financial planning for 2025-2026 with the headteachers.</p> <p>SW reported they still needed to make savings but the assumptions had changed. He said they had allowed 2% for the pay award and the extra 0.8% would equate to approximately £300,000 which would be included in the plans.</p> <p>SW said they had relaunched catering in the primary schools with a new menu which was popular and some schools were reporting an increase in sales. He said they were finalising the condition planning to allocate the capital but noted they were only expecting approximately £650,000.</p> <p>SW reported they were in the process of a vendor review for the HR system. He said they wanted to enable headteachers and leaders to better manage the strategic talent management and to have a properly interactive staff portal.</p> <p>SW reported some other projects included data warehouse development, changing the network infrastructure for physical software resilience, school website platform updates and to develop the data information around the energy use spend.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked how staff were involved with the new HR system.</b> SW explained the staff who would mainly use it had been consulted and involved.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked about the condition improvements and if they would go into the next academic year.</b> SW explained they could easily spend more than £650,000 but the operation team identified the projects and prioritised. He said they wanted to be proactive and not just react to health and safety risks.</p>						
6	<b><u>PERFORMANCE AND STANDARDS</u></b>						
6.1	<u>Performance and Standards Committee Report from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025</u>						
	<p>RC reported the Performance and Standards Committee had reports from the school improvement team, the trust safeguarding lead and the trust leader for maths.</p> <p>RC said the safeguarding lead was completing the compliance checks and was working with the headteachers. He reported the safeguarding audits were nearly complete which demonstrated the trust had strong safeguarding practices. RC said the committee had discussed the trend around the wide range of mental health issues which had also been discussed at the LGB meetings.</p> <p>RC reported the safeguarding lead was reviewing training and carrying out single central record checks. He said the attendance policy was being reviewed and they were seeing an improvement in attendance.</p>						



**Trustees asked about the number of authorised absences across the trust.** RC said it had been identified schools were over-authorising intermittent absence which was being addressed with the attendance leads.

RC reported JK and SLW shared the outcomes data and noted the outcomes were lower in KS2 and KS4 which could be due to staff being cautious. He said some of the newer schools to the trust still had lower attainment.

7.05pm AF left the meeting

RC reported in the primary schools they were looking at the reading curriculum and were focusing on reading and writing. He said in the secondary schools they had completed the KS3 common curriculum and were working on the KS4 curriculum looking at continued sequencing. RC said they were committed to continued development of the common curriculum.

RC reported they had completed the first wave of the trust review and were seeing the impact of the pace of change.

RC reported they were creating a trust-wide behaviour policy which would include the ESW culture and ethos to support the schools' behaviour policies. He said it would incorporate the culture and ethos statements and would focus on a relational approach.

**Trustees noted the primary suspensions were high in Dartmouth.** RC explained there were some challenging issues with Dartmouth having primary and secondary. He said secondary schools were more likely to suspend than primary. RC said 8 of the 12 primary suspensions were 2 children and the principal was working with the primary lead to support.

RC reported the SEND strategy was launching the week of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and was a 3-year strategy to develop and embed. He said there were increasing numbers of children with SEND in the schools and they needed to be equipped.

RC explained they were in partnership with the Special Partnership Trust which had specialist schools and area resource bases. He said ESW had funding for outreach work and they were working with the Special Partnership Trust to see what could be offered. RC said there was a possibility they could have funding for an area resource base at KEVICC.

RC said they were working with the Reach Foundation and hoped to have community hubs at all the primary schools in the trust with the core purpose of supporting the families. He reported the trust would receive £25,000 funding from the Reach Foundation. RC said they needed to get to know the families, particularly those with SEND to offer early intervention and support.

**Trustees noted the data shared might be cautious and asked if this would be reviewed to improve the accuracy.** RC explained at KS2 the children had completed mock SATs which fed into the data drops. He said the leaders were cautious, particularly with English and they were not too sure how much they could push the maths data. SLW said the teachers were cautious and not too optimistic and they did not give the total assessments on which the grades were predicted.



	<p><b>Trustees asked how they ensured the pupils had support where it was needed.</b> RC explained all schools had raising standards meetings where they identified the children who needed more support. JK explained in the primary schools, the year 6 teachers were often over-cautious. She said the teachers currently put the data straight into Bromcom but said the data should go through the headteacher or JK first to ensure the data was accurate. JK said they would identify those just below expected. RC noted it was important the pupil progress meetings happened for all year groups.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked how the community hubs would be staffed.</b> RC explained they had met with groups including early help and community groups to build connections. He said they wanted to build family support systems and had only recently found out about the £25,000 funding.</p> <p>Trustees suggested the data could have other markers and not just red and green which could demonstrate borderline data.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked if there were any surprises with the trust reviews.</b> RC said all schools had improvement plans so there were no surprises but there were some difficult conversations. He said the challenge could be getting the leadership in the school to engage with the findings and with what needed to happen next. JK said the reviews supported what they already thought and the school improvement themes were consistent with the work they were doing.</p> <p>Trustees <b>approved</b> the minutes of the Performance and Standards Committee meeting held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024.</p>	
6.2	<u>Deputy CEO Report</u>	
	The DCEO report was included in item 6.1.	
<b>7</b>	<b><u>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</u></b>	
7.1	<u>Strategic Plan Overview</u>	
	The strategic plan had been shared in the AGM meeting on Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025.	
7.2	<u>CEO Verbal Report</u>	
	The CEO report was shared with trustees in the AGM on Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025.	
<b>8</b>	<b><u>GOVERNANCE</u></b>	
	<p>Trustees received feedback from the LGBs.</p> <p>Trustees approved the LGB governors appointed or reappointed as listed in the meeting documents.</p> <p><b>Trustees noted Paul Sampson had agreed to remain as chair of Coombeshead LGB until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 and asked if there was a succession plan in place.</b> MS explained Paul had agreed to remain on the governing body to support the next chair.</p>	



<b>9</b>	<b><u>POLICIES FOR REVIEW</u></b>	
	<p>Trustees noted the following policies had been <b>approved</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct for Employees</li> <li>• Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment Policy</li> <li>• E-Safety Policy</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity Policy</li> <li>• Financial Administration Policy</li> <li>• Managing Sickness Absence Policy</li> <li>• Pay Policy</li> <li>• Prevent Policy</li> <li>• Volunteers in Schools Policy – approved pending amendments</li> </ul> <p>Trustees noted the Managing Sickness Absence Policy was approved but was undergoing a review and a new policy would be shared once legal advice had been sought.</p> <p>MS explained the Transgender Policy was not published because they were waiting for further government advice.</p> <p>Trustees noted there was an error in the numbering on page 7 of the Curriculum, Teaching and Assessment Policy. The clerk agreed to correct this.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<b><u>MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR OR CEO</u></b>	
	<p>GA proposed each trustee having an area of responsibility where they would meet with the member of staff twice per year and report back to the trust board. MS noted this supported the executive team giving them someone to talk to and allowed the trustees to be more involved.</p> <p>A discussion was held which was recorded in the Part 2 minutes.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b><u>PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR 2024/2025 AT 6.00PM</u></b>	
	<p>Trustees confirmed that the next meeting of the Trust Board would be held at <b>6.00pm on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.</b></p> <p>Trustees noted the change of date for the May meeting.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the programme of meeting dates for the 2024/2025 academic year as follows (locations to be confirmed):</p> <p>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 6.00pm Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 6.00pm</p>	

The meeting closed at 7.44pm.

Signed

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Dated

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