

EDUCATION SOUTH WEST TRUST BOARD

Part 1 minutes of the meeting of the **Education South West Trust Board** held at Teign School and virtually at **6.00pm** on **Wednesday 20th May 2026**.

Name	Role	Present/Absent
Graham Austin GA	Trustee, Chair	Present via Teams
Bethany Brooks BB	Trustee	Present
Gail Brown GB	Trustee	Absent
Annelie Fearon AF	Trustee	Absent
Tamsin Frances TF	Trustee	Absent
Adrian Hines AH	Trustee, Vice-Chair	Present
David Potter DP	Trustee	Present via Teams
Paul Sampson PS	Trustee	Present
Matthew Shanks MS	Executive Principal and Trust Leader	Present
Jenny Sutton JS	Trustee	Absent
Executive Board		
Rob Coles RCO	Deputy CEO	Present
Jayne Keller JKE	Director of Education	Present via Teams
Suzannah Wharf SLW	Director of Education	Present
Stuart White SW	Chief Financial and Operating Officer	Present
Invitees		
Jackie Ridding	Governance Professional	Present via Teams

1	<u>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
1.1	Apologies for absence were received from Gail Brown, Annelie Fearon and Jenny Sutton. Tamsin Frances was not present.	
1.2	Trustees consented to the absences.	
2	<u>PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS</u>	
2.1	No declarations of pecuniary or other interests regarding items on the agenda were made.	
2.2	No declarations of gifts or hospitality had been received or given since the last meeting.	
3	<u>CHAIR'S UPDATE</u>	
	There was no update from the chair which was not included in the agenda.	
4	<u>ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</u>	
	There was no other urgent business.	
5	<u>MINUTES</u>	
5.1	The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 26th March 2026 (copy shared on GovernorHub), having previously been circulated, were confirmed and would be signed by the Chair.	

6	<u>CEO Report</u>	
	The CEO report was shared on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. Other documents shared were the Devon Research School report, West Hill Primary School due diligence report, Wynstream Ofsted report, South Devon UTC Ofsted report and the compare your good level of development data report. Trustees noted the changes happening with the SWIFT Teacher Training were positive for the trust. MS said he had included a document which would start the consultation. He said strategically, this was the right thing to do. MS reported the DfE had announced they would fund the NPQH, NPQSL and NPQSENDSCO as well as funding for any NPQ if schools met certain criteria. He said they had also released information about the early career teacher provision and the National Institute of Teaching were discussing how to move forward. Trustees asked if any information had been released about the Ofsted inspections for MATs. MS explained a programme for MAT inspections was being written but was not yet law. He said as a MAT they inspected themselves and the framework was being reviewed. Trustees asked if there was a plan for aspiring Ofsted inspectors within the trust. MS explained his report included information about a pilot Ofsted inspection training. He said instead of inspectors being paid by Ofsted and the MAT, trusts would come together, train inspectors and use them within the area. MS said ESW had put forward 15 places across the trust and the schools they supported. Trustees asked about the potential of growth of the trust. MS explained they were a trust who could grow primaries and Budehaven had wanted to continue working with the trust but not join immediately. He said Braunton Academy had worked with ESW for a number of years and had submitted a formal expression of interest to join a MAT to ESW and 2 other trusts. MS said they had received the due diligence paper from Braunton Academy and had a meeting on 12th June 2026. He said West Hill Primary had also shown interest, due diligence had been completed and they wanted further conversations. Trustees asked about the reviews that were happening and if they were standalone or partnership. MS explained ESW had carried out reviews with the Riviera Trust for the last few years. He said they did not want to join a trust but the headteachers had enjoyed working with ESW. MS reported Exeter Learning Academy Trust had asked ESW to carry out a review of their 4 schools.	
7	<u>TRUST IMPROVEMENT</u>	
7.1	<u>Feedback from the Performance and Standards Committee held on 11th May 2026</u>	
	BB reported the Chair of Governors and Headteachers from the South Hub schools joined the committee and explained the South Hub LGB was working very well but they felt they did not have enough time in meetings to discuss each school in detail. BB said the committee received lots of data and lots of the primary data was above national average. She said the reading strategies and direct instruction were having an impact. BB said there was lots of positive data for the secondary schools but there were still gaps for the SEND and disadvantaged students.	

	BB reported they had discussed KPIs and data visualisation. RCO explained he had discussed the data with SLW and Andy Goodwin and they had agreed the committee needed sharp impact analysis. BB said attendance was slowly improving but there were still concerns with persistent absence and SEND attendance. She said the primary suspensions had increased which were linked to SEND and the secondary suspensions had decreased but were still higher than they wanted them to be. BB explained Andy Goodwin was reviewing the safeguarding reporting. She said with the school improvement quality assurance framework there were some concerns with Blackawton and East Allington. Trustees asked how they could ensure the data they were presented with enabled them to review and analyse the trends effectively. RCO explained the data shared did include trends back to 2019 and the pattern at KS4 showed a stable pattern which was a strength. He said the progress did not always show a stable trend which could be due to the qualifications being offered by the schools. RCO said SLW had reviewed the pattern of prediction to the final outcome which showed there was a percentage they could add. He said the committee had discussed reducing the amount of data and having key areas to focus on where the trend was not what they wanted it to be. Trustees agreed it was sensible to select key areas because context was important in schools. RCO noted with large cohorts the data could be variable. A discussion was held which was recorded in the part 2 minutes.	
7.2	<u>Deputy CEO Report</u>	
	The Deputy CEO report was shared on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. RCO referred to a letter MS had received from the DfE notifying him they wanted to discuss the trust's good level of development (GLD). He said JKE had collated evidence they were moving in the right direction and they were predicting the data would increase significantly. Trustees asked if the GLD average had gone down. RCO said it had but it was due to the data at Wynstream dropping. He said the cohort had entered the school with very low starting points and this impacted the overall trust outcomes. RCO said the current cohort had higher starting points and would achieve higher outcomes. He said in future they would carry out their own baseline measurements using Development Matters. RCO said the gaps between the disadvantaged students and the non-disadvantaged students at KS4 were too wide and they had strategies to address this. Trustees asked how many secondary schools in the trust had compulsory period 6 lessons. SLW said Coombeshead was the only school with compulsory period 6 because lots of students in the other schools travelled by bus so transport was an issue. RCO reported ESW had been nominated for an award for developing people. He said the Leading Great Lives Foundation was still at the Charities Commission but the website was live.	

	RCO said they had applied to the Reach Foundation for £300,000 over 3 years which would be used to kickstart the work at the Kingsbridge Community Hub. He said the work would include helping to improve reading and autism support. MS said he was due to meet with Best Start about doing some work with parents to help them support their children. He said people were keen to see the work happening at KEVICC with the Bothy. Trustees asked about the progress with the impact assessment model for professional development. RCO explained they were trying to understand the impact of the coaching work and how to quantify the work. SLW explained it was important leaders were able to identify what teachers needed to do to improve and not just give positive feedback. She said there was mixed data across the schools with some schools achieving between 80-100% every coaching cycle but most schools were achieving 60%. SLW said they needed to carry out teacher perceptions and staff voice.	
8	<u>FINANCE REPORTS AND SHARED SERVICES UPDATE</u>	
8.1	<u>Feedback from the Finance Committee and Audit and Risk Committee held on 30th April 2026</u>	
	GA reported in the current year they would improve on the set budget and SW was managing the falling roll. He said the roll of approximately 6,600 would drop by approximately 400 over the next 4 years. DP explained the Audit and Risk Committee reviewed 3 dashboards – assurance framework, health and safety and information security. He said the internal scrutiny work had started with Keystone and they would be reviewing safeguarding and theft and fraud in the summer term. DP explained with the assurance framework they looked at the top 10 risks which included education, digital technology and human resources. He said they were looking at the frequency of monitoring the assurance framework and would discuss this with Keystone.	
8.2	<u>Shared services verbal report</u>	
	The management accounts were shared each month on GovernorHub. The shared services headlines were shared on GovernorHub prior to the meeting. SW reported they were in a good position with the budgets and the reserves were running below the optimal target but in a managed way. Trustees asked about the KEVICC land sale noting because of the community value designation, the town council would need to be able to decide whether to bid for the land. They asked if the town council did bid, would the trust be able to accept the highest bid. SW said ESW were obligated by the DfE to maximise the value. Trustees asked how long the process would take for the land to be sold. SW said it would take approximately 5 years and described the stages in the process. Trustees asked when the trust would decide if the Wynstream nursery was viable following the launch events. MS said 10 families had expressed an interest. RCO explained they were considering 2 possible models – one with a teacher in the nursery	

	and another with a level 3 member of staff. SW said they needed to have the commitment from parents which sessions they wanted.	
9	<u>SAFEGUARDING</u>	
	A discussion was held which was recorded in the part 2 minutes.	
10	<u>GOVERNANCE</u>	
10.1	Trustees approved the local governing body appointments of new governors, reappointments and chairs.	
10.2	Trustees noted the feedback from the local governing body meetings. KCC had asked about benchmarking the numbers involved in part-time timetables. JKE said there were considerations with the reviews around part-time timetables and the validity of them. Kingsbridge Primary asked if there was a template for advertising for new governors because they needed support. MS said they would create a template for an advert.	
10.3	RCO reported the governor training programme had been refreshed for the next academic year. He said the numbers had been lower at the training but some governors had already completed the training and there had not been a large turnover of governors. RCO said they usually had between 6-10 governors per session.	
11	<u>POLICIES</u>	
	Trustees reviewed and approved the following policies: • Capability of Staff Policy • Complaints Policy • Data Protection Policy • DBS Policy • Financial Administration Policy • Information Security Policy • Support Staff Probation Policy • Theft and Fraud Policy Trustees asked if they needed a policy around the use of artificial intelligence (AI). SLW explained it was currently included in the acceptable use policy.	
12	<u>MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR OR CEO</u>	
	GA reported Tamsin Frances had questioned if all policies needed to go to the board. He said following a discussion with MS, they agreed it was good for the trust board to have oversight of all policies. Trustees asked with AI becoming more prevalent, what was the trust's attitude and were they using it enough. MS said they were looking to exploit it the best they could and was invited to the Swedish Embassy to discuss AI with a company developing the use of AI in education. SLW said in the strategic IT meetings they used the DfE auditing tool to ensure they were following the recommendations and in relation to safeguarding they used a systematic approach.	

	Trustees discussed the use of AI in parental complaints. 7.27pm RCO, JKE, SLW and SW left the meeting. A discussion was held which was recorded in the part 2 minutes.	
13	<u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u>	
	Trustees confirmed that the next meeting would be held at 6.00pm on Thursday 9th July 2026 .	

The meeting closed at 7.57pm.

Signed

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Dated

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