

Trust Board - Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Trustees held on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 9:30am at Academy House.

Trustees: Mrs A Firth (Chair), Mr J Dunn (Vice Chair), Mrs A George, Mr D Austin, Mr M Tucker, Mrs A Bull, Mr A Milliner, Ms A-M Sim, Ms A Hutchinson, Mr C Waldie and Mr S Spry.

Also Present: Dr J Blunden (Chief Executive), Mr S Davis (Chief Financial Officer), Mrs B Couch (Head of Corporate Governance), Mr C Gould (Director of Education), Mrs J Harvey (item 4), Mr J Woodward (item 5).

Apologies: Mr J Green.

Item	Decision	Action
1.	Governance Business	
1.1	Apologies Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Mr J Green, due to ill health.	
1.2	Declaration of business and pecuniary interests and approval of register Trustees APPROVED the previously circulated register of interests and NOTED outstanding declaration of interest forms will be followed up.	Admin Manager
1.3	Public and confidential minutes of the meeting of 8th July 2025 and 23rd September 2025 The public and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 th July 2025 were ACCEPTED as a true and accurate record of proceedings with an amendment to include Mr A Milliner's apologies. The confidential minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 rd September were ACCEPTED as a true and accurate record of proceedings.	Admin Manager
1.4	Matters arising (not otherwise covered in the agenda) None	
1.5	Chair's Business The Chair reported to the board that the professional growth meeting for the CEO had been undertaken by herself and Mr S Spry. THANKS were expressed to the CEO for her hard work this year.	

<p>1.6</p>	<p>Corporate Governance report</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED and DISCUSSED the previously circulated report with the following highlighted:</p> <p>Trustees REVIEWED the committee membership and DISCUSSED the quorum for the Education Committee. Trustees reviewed the membership of the Education Committee and discussed its quorum. Although the Education Committee is not a decision-making body and includes external experts, it was AGREED to amend the quorum to two Trustees. Mrs A George, Ms A Hutchinson, and Mrs A Bull volunteered to join the committee.</p> <p>Trustees CONSIDERED the amended Complaints Policy and NOTED the refined approach to Stage 2 complaints. Under the revised policy, rather than immediately initiating a formal investigation, the Headteacher or a senior Trust staff member will first hold a conversation with the complainant. This aims to encourage early resolution and reduce the need for lengthy investigatory work. Following discussion, Trustees APPROVED the revised policy.</p> <p>Trustees were THANKED for completing the skills, personal qualities, and diversity audit. Outstanding responses will be followed up.</p>	<p>Head of CG</p> <p>Admin Manager</p> <p>Head of CG</p>
<p>1.7</p>	<p>Report from Finance and Resources Committee</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated minutes with the following issues HIGHLIGHTED:</p> <p><u>Financial Position</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year-end (31 Aug 2025) shows £1.3m in-year deficit vs planned £600k deficit. • Main overspend drivers: agency costs (£300k), iPad funding (£300k), educational supplies (£146k), utilities (£135k). • Positive items: £230k PFI refund and a private donation. • Final reserves: just over £2m (in line with projections). • 14 schools in deficit monitoring (up from 9 projected); cumulative deficit of £2m across 11 schools, concentrated in Cape Cornwall, St Ives, Pensans. • Turnaround at Liskeard Hillfort noted positively. • Additional DfE funding for Cape Cornwall deemed extremely unlikely. • Systems: IMP Planner live for budget holders; IMP Purchasing module rollout planned to curb overspending. • Trustees approved financial position and confirmed Trust remains a going concern. <p><u>People & Strategy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce reduced by 7% overall; central team increased due to hybrid model restructure. • New recruitment system live by mid-November; HR system live by March 2026. <p><u>Operations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic IT challenges noted; £4.5m investment strategy planned. • Catering contract performance, health & safety compliance, cleaning improvements, and grounds maintenance progress all reviewed <p>Trustees THANKED the committee for their work.</p> <p><i>See confidential minutes</i></p>	

<p>1.8</p>	<p>Report from Education Committee</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated minutes with the following issues HIGHLIGHTED:</p> <p>Primary Outcomes: Trust average for Reading/Writing/Maths remains above national; writing strong due to moderation focus, reading still a priority. New data system (Insight) adopted for better reporting and consistency.</p> <p>Secondary Outcomes: Improvements in some schools. Challenges include teacher absence and disadvantaged pupil engagement. Strategies include centralised curriculum planning and targeted interventions.</p> <p>Tier 3 Schools: Trustees heard from the Hayle Academy and Nanpean School headteachers on improvement plans, interventions for disadvantaged pupils, curriculum development, and cultural change. Committee valued direct input from schools and noted positive impact of trust support. The committee reported the success of this approach, hearing directly from the Headteachers of both tier 3 schools.</p> <p>Trustees THANKED the committee for their work.</p>	
<p>1.9</p>	<p>Report from Audit and Risk Committee</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated minutes and were UPDATED on the outcomes of the Risk and Audit Committee. Trustees APPROVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Draft Annual Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st August 2025; • The Audit Completion Report (KIDD) for the year ended 31 August 2025. 	
<p>2.</p>	<p>Chief Executive report to also include risk management</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated report and DISCUSSED the following highlights:</p> <p>The refreshed Ofsted framework has been implemented; the Trust have 4 trained inspectors who will carry out inspections for schools outside of TPAT</p> <p>The government white paper on schools and SEND has been delayed to Feb 2026; the Trust are collaborating locally on Centres for Excellence and hub-based SEND support.</p> <p>The Plymouth Marjon research report on Pretty Poverty was launched this Autumn – the Trust contributed by providing contextualisation to a pupil, school and trust perspective at the parliamentary launch in November. The Government’s Child Poverty Strategy is due to be published soon.</p> <p>Trustees were provided with an evaluation of the 2024/25 Trust development plan as well as the plan for 2025/26 – with a significant focus on Key Stage 4; where Level 5 basics outcomes and Attainment 8 for all pupils and our pupils experiencing disadvantage need to improve to be in line or above national benchmarks.</p> <p>The other significant focus areas are embedding new leadership roles (Director of Inclusion, Assistant Directors) and preparing for additional capacity with Leading Edge schools joining in early 2026.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the expectation that the schools from Leading Edge Academies Partnership will join TPAT from 1st February 2026.</p>	

	<p>Trustees NOTED there was, at the time of the meeting, no further update on the new Perranporth School.</p> <p>Trustees DISCUSSED falling rolls in some schools across the Trust; resulting in the need for a number of schools to consult on lowering their Published Admission Number (PAN) – any PAN reductions would take effect in September 2027.</p> <p>Trustees DISCUSSED the proposed 2 week half term for both 2026-27 and 2027-28 and APPROVED the 2 week Autumn half term, to include the week of the LA October half term and the week before.</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated risk register and NOTED the progress on the professional services operating model and implementation.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the changes to leadership at both Goonhavern and Cardinham Primary Schools.</p>	Deputy CEO
3.	<p>Chief Financial Officer Report</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated reports and NOTED that reporting is now focused on the 6th working day of each month which allows for accurate and timely reporting.</p> <p>Trustees were REMINDED that monthly accounts are uploaded onto the intranet group areas.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that budgets are being carefully managed with a focus on the Financial Improvement Requirement (FIR) for each budget – this is having a positive impact with a significant reduction in the in-year savings target.</p> <p>Trustees APPROVED the position for the period ending 31st October 2025 as set out in reports shared with them and confirm the Trust is a going concern based on the projections provided.</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated vision and strategies for both Estates and IT.</p> <p><i>10.50am – Jeremy Dunn joined the meeting</i></p> <p>Trustees QUESTIONED the investment needed in both the estates and IT areas and DISCUSSED the complexities of funding and the aging conditions of Trust buildings.</p> <p>Following DISCUSSION, Trustees APPROVED the vision and strategy for both estates and IT.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED supporting delivery plans will be prepared for Spring 2026.</p> <p>Trustees DISCUSSED the 2026/27 Resource Allocation Method and Policy, following discussion, Trustees APPROVED the Draft Resource Allocation Policy to inform preparations for the budget setting round.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that a Final Resource Allocation Policy will be prepared to align with the finalisation of the 2026/27 Budget.</p> <p><i>See confidential minutes</i></p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Safeguarding Lead Report</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated report and NOTED the audit work undertaken looking at the single central record – minor errors were identified in some schools; support is in place to address these.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the dissemination of training and the policy review work that has been undertaken this term.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the systems and process work taking place in Spring 1 looking at the Alternative Provision checks and reviews.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the safeguarding data and QUESTIONED the decline in reporting from 24-25 to 25-26 – this was DISCUSSED and consideration was given to the communication with the Local Authority and the interpretation of cases that meet the threshold for MARU referrals.</p> <p>Trustees DISCUSSED the LA statutory duty for permanently excluded children and sought understanding of the processes involved.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Director of Education report</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED the previously circulated report and NOTED a thorough discussion had taken place at the Education Committee.</p> <p><u>Inclusion</u></p> <p>Trustees welcomed Mr J Woodward, Director of Inclusion, to the meeting and NOTED the information in the previously circulated report. Trustees NOTED the following:</p> <p>Permanent exclusion and suspension data was shared, providing an oversight of the Trust rates with a comparison from the Autumn 2024 to Autumn 2025; showing a significant decline in the numbers of both permanent exclusion and suspensions in that time.</p> <p>The inclusion team focus this term has been to significantly reduce the number of permanent exclusions and number of suspensions in the primary phase and make reasonable reductions in both permanent exclusion and suspension rates in secondary phase. All of which needed to be done whilst maintaining a calm, safe, orderly environment within all schools.</p> <p>Trustees DISCUSSED and NOTED the information within the report regarding SEND and attendance; including the lack of specialist settings available for those children who need it.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the work done to improve attendance across the Trust and DISCUSSED the challenge for schools in this particularly tricky area.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the actions outlined within the report for all areas across the inclusion team.</p> <p>Trustees THANKED the Director of Inclusion for the significant difference he has made since starting in post earlier this year.</p> <p><u>Anti-racism</u></p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED and DISCUSSED the Trust Anti-racism roadmap and NOTED the reviewed equality policy will reflect the aims and values of the anti-racism framework.</p>	

	<p>Date of next meetings:</p> <p>Education – Friday 16th January Finance and Resources – Wednesday 28th January Audit and Risk Committee – Wednesday 20th May Full Board – Tuesday 17th March Remuneration – TBC</p>	

Pending	In progress	Complete	Outstanding		
Number	Action			Who	By When
Minutes 21.03.24					
Number from minutes					
Minutes of 08.07.25					
1.6	A letter of thanks to LMC panel members			BC	
1.6	Amendments to SODA and LMC TORs			BC	
1.6	Succession planning for Chair and Vice Chair			BC	
1.6	Identity Checks for Trustees			BC	
1.6	Policy updates – Behaviour and Executive/ Leadership Pay			EB	
4.0	Report a full evaluation and trust development plan for 25-26 in Autumn Term			JB	
Minutes of 10.12.25					
1.2	Outstanding declaration forms to be followed up			EB	
1.3	Amendment to previous public and confidential minutes			EB	
1.6	Amendment of quorum for Education committee			BC	
1.6	Publication and circulation of complaints policy			EB	
1.6	Follow up outstanding skills and diversity audit responses			BC	
2.0	Implement 2 week October half term for 26-27 and 27/28			CG	