

Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee Minutes

Meeting	Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee	Date	Tuesday, 10 th June 2025
Location	Private Dining Room, The Yarrow Hotel	Time	3.00 p.m.
Membership	Peter Goldsack (Chair), Peter Troke (PT), Alan Horton (AH); Emma Wilkinson (EW)		
In attendance	Tammy Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer (CEO); Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DG), Dan Lewsey, Director of Projects, Safeguarding and Compliance (DPSC), Claire Edgeworth – Notetaker		

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed the Trustees to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest	AH advised he wished to amend his Declaration of Interest as he is no longer Chair of the local Conservative Party. There were no further additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	Clerk
3	Minutes of the Meeting held 18 th March 2025	The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 th March 2025 were considered to be an accurate record of the meeting. APPROVED – Minutes of the meeting held on the 18 th March 2025	
4	Matters Arising not covered by agenda	There were no matters not covered by the agenda. The Chair queried that at the last meeting it was agreed that actions from the external Governance Report would be reviewed in 6 months' time and added to agenda for the next Trust	

	<p>Board. The DG advised that the Action Plan is currently being finalised and will be on the July Trust Board meeting agenda. The CEO advised that although the original report spoke about demographics, it is difficult to set a target as it is challenging to get the right demographic, but the Trust is mindful when they recruit.</p>	
<p>5 Church Schools Discussion Confidential Paper</p>	<p>This item was deemed confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.</p>	
<p>6 Safeguarding Audits 2024/25</p>	<p>The DPSC shared a Safeguarding Audit 2024 paper with the Trustees prior to the meeting. The DPSC advised that there are three key areas in paper around the monitoring cycle. At the start of term 2 the DPSC launched a new monitoring cycle, and this is coming to the end of the first year and will undertake a review over the summer. The feedback from Governors and schools has felt positive and they are aware of what they need to look for, everything is in one place and is a good opportunity for monitoring. The DPSC has identified that the form needs simplifying but was a good way to bring everything into one place and make it consistent.</p> <p>Trustees queried why Sheppey Secondary was not on the form and the DPSC advised this was an omission. Aylesham and Sheppey Secondary have had a full review this year, but all the schools are still developing their work around Prevent. Prevent is a moving picture and there are changes due next year around the Prevent Strategy. This will be a development area for next year and the DPSC will keep ahead of it. The DPSC attends the external local Safeguarding Board four times a year and receives updates. Some of this will inform what is going into next year's audit. Trustees queried if this was around ideology and the DPSC confirmed it was. The DPSC advised that they found out too late about emojis and this will be a policy change over the next few months and Trustees will be updated in due course. The DPSC advised that additionally around Prevent, is the development of how right wing-ness is creating islamophobia and what that is creating. The CEO advised that our school communities are susceptible to beliefs around far-right ideologies and is prevalent in 8 or 9 school communities. Our Prevent work is around far right extremism and the political change in Kent. The senior leaders in the Trust are clear what are the Prevent issues and the local issues, but some other staff members are not there with Prevent and they are not aware of what they are looking for and seeing. Aylesham have started this work as the Headteacher is passionate about it, and he brought in people from the Channel Team, and they undertook whole</p>	<p>DPSC</p>

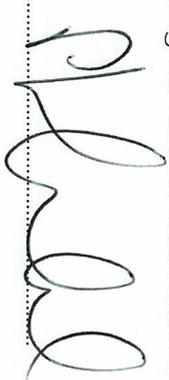
		<p>staff training. The DPSC advised the current risk on safeguarding is around the changing picture of Prevent and keeping up with it.</p> <p>The DPSC advised there is free training and support available. The Trustees felt that it would be helpful to have another session on this at the Governors Conference specifically Prevent. Trustees queried if the Diocese had someone looking at Prevent but the CEO advised she was unsure how the structure at that level works and this will need to be unpicked.</p> <p>The DPSC advised this will be on the Risk Register and will continue to be reviewed .</p> <p>The DPSC is rewriting the Safeguarding Policy but is waiting for the Keeping Children Safe in Education update. The draft comes out in June but does not come into effect until September, however there is a rumour that it will be late this year.</p> <p>Trustees queried if the Trust is aware how much funding it will receive for special needs children and the CEO advised this will be reviewed by the Finance and People Committee as part of the budget. The risks are significant. The budgets are balanced but at a resource cost and everyone has had to make structural changes. Schools will have to compete for the money. The CEO feels that what is being implemented will not fix the problem. Trustees were aware that there are a lot of independent children with SEN that are coming back to mainstream. Trustees discussed the risk and the DPSC advised this was Risk 3. The CEO advised the Trust schools have a reputation for SEN, so are not the schools of choice for affluent parents and they will drive to another school.</p> <p>Trustees queried Prevent being a separate risk and how this is scored or whether the score for safeguarding has increased. It was agreed the risk should be a 3 and then something is added for next time and this will highlight the risk to other Trustees.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: Safeguarding Audits 2024/25</p>	
7	Risk Management including Risk Register	The DPSC shared the Risk Register with Trustees prior to the meeting.	

	<p>The Risk Register has been covered in other items on the agenda. The only risk that has changed is risk 7 and there is some context is provided in the paper.</p> <p>The DPSC provided commentary for each risk in his paper and asked for any questions.</p> <p>In risk 4, Trustees queried in terms of financial risk, whether this was around Trust or if a school was in trouble would this be seen in risk 4 as an individual school. The CEO advised the schools cannot spend what they have not got due to checks and balances. The Trust is aware when problems are coming, and it is managed. The risk is minimal as the Trust can afford to support a school in financial difficulty, but the reserves do not necessarily belong to that school. In terms of our Management Accounts the Trust is healthy but it is the internal finances for individual schools, where there are risks at school level but not at Trust level. The CEO confirmed it was important that the school's money is for the children at that school and the Trust does not want to take money from another school's children. Trustees queried if there was a tipping point and the CEO advised Finance and People Committee look at this but effectively last year the Trust had a school that would have gone into deficit this year, but they made savings in year. Due to forward planning the CEO and Headteachers know how much in year savings each school must make. All schools will be ahead of budget by July.</p> <p>Trustees queried risk 6 as it has a probability of 3 and want to achieve a 2, but there was a query how this would be managed. The CEO advised the risk is looking at how well we will respond. This was high, but training has been undertaken so this has reduced the risk. Trustees queried if the workshops were effective should the probability now be a 2 and this was discussed and the DPSC will amend. The CEO advised that if the target is achieved this will come off the register and whether Trustees would be comfortable with this. It was agreed that there needed to be a watching brief and have an annual check.</p> <p>The CEO advised that one of her targets is to start succession planning for every role in the Trust and every senior lead role has a succession plan. In terms of the CEO succession plan it is for the Trustees and Diocese to decide what the succession plan would be. The suggestions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake an external recruitment. 	<p>DPSC</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a merger. • Jason Howard and Emma Law are being exposed to central Trust work and the CEO is probably only a year away from recruiting a deputy CEO or a Chief Education Officer. <p>The other two risks have been discussed during the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees queried Trustee workload, and the CEO advised that there had previously been discussions around having a separate Education Committee.</p> <p>ACTION - The Risk Register to be sent to RAC Committee for feedback in September before the November RAC Committee meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: Risk Management including Risk Register</p>	
8	<p>RAC Committee self-assessment</p> <p>The RAC Committee Self-Assessment was shared prior to the meeting. The Chair of the RAC Committee and the DG have been through and made track changes which were self-explanatory.</p> <p>DG advised that in 3.14 there is a note about assurance audit and reflects the assurance review completed in-year at Sheppey College.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that there had been a good healthy debate today and felt the RAC Committee undertook a good job holding everyone to account. The CEO advised that when the structure of Trust committees were set up it was agreed to separate Finance and People and RAC and the Trust was the only one to separate out these roles, so the level of review and scrutiny is important, and the CEO finds it supportive.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>	
9	<p>Any other business</p> <p>AGREED – RAC Committee Self-Assessment.</p> <p>The Trustees discussed the Trustee visits to the school and every Trustee should complete a visit. The DG advised that in the Scheme of Delegation there is accountability for the LGBs. Trustees do</p>	

		not need to attend every school as Governors undertake monitoring visits. The Trustees discussed that the schools value the visits and it was important for Trustees to understand the demographics of each school. It was agreed this needs to be reviewed as part of the External Board Review Action Plan. Trustees discussed whether Trustees needed to be allocated a school, but it was felt that this would make the Trustee a champion for that school whereas the visit is to make sure the CEO is doing a good job at the schools and hold her to account.	
10	Matters Considered Confidential	Item 5 was considered confidential and will form Part A of the Minutes.	
11	Date and time of next Meeting	The next meeting is Tuesday, 25 November 2025, 2.30pm	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.45 pm.

Signed:  Print: P Goldsack Date: 25/11/25