

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Tuesday, 2 nd December 2025
Location	EKC Schools Trust Boardroom	Time	9.15 am
Membership	Tammy Mitchell (CEO), Bernadette Lax - Chair (Chair), Alan Horton – Vice Chair (AH); Peter Troke (PT), Peter Goldsack (PG), Barbara Conroy (BC), Emma Wilkinson (EW); <i>Ollie Laughton (OL); Paul Sayers (PS); Alison Gray (AG); Lucy McLeod (LM)</i>		
In Attendance	Matthew Cooper (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DG) Minute Clerk - Claire Edgeworth (CE)		

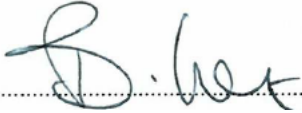
	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from OL and Paul Sayers.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations declared other than those standing.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held 16 September 2025, including confidential minutes	The minutes from the meeting held on the 16 th September 2025 were considered to be an accurate record. APPROVED – Minutes from the meeting held on the 16th September 2025.	
4.	Matters arising not covered by this agenda:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted Health & Safety compliance on lettings policy was completed. AH advised that Ed Murphy, Governor at Holywell, attended a farewell school assembly as part of his retirement from the Board. 	

5.	Chairs Update	<p>The Chair confirmed the new model of working with the CEO was effective. The Chair has met with the Chairs of the Finance and People Committee and the RAC Committee. OL had raised caution regarding changes with the new CFO but felt it was working well. Risk discussion raised by PG on pupil attainment monitoring.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED: Chair Update</p>	
6.	CEO Termly Update	<p>The CEO shared a Termly Update with the Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted pupil numbers and confirmed Thornden Wood has increased by 60 pupils. Churchill and Bysing Wood remain vulnerable. This is being monitored, and consideration is being given as to whether these schools reduce to one form entry. Leaders are reluctant to reduce their PAN, but this will be the Governors decision, and the CEO confirmed Scheme of Delegation gives local boards authority but has requested a financial paper for assurance. Trustees queried whether the reluctance was due to possible staff reductions and it was acknowledged this will be the case regardless due to the loss of £100k. The CEO advised that the schools are not in deficit and do have reserves, so a decision does not have to be made immediately. Trustees queried marketing and it was advised that Churchill have strong marketing but there are not enough children in the area and other local schools are under PAN.</p> <p>The CEO shared contextual data including Minster, Monkton and Teynham. The CEO highlighted challenges around SEND. Queenborough, East Stour, Churchill and Palm Bay have had low numbers on the SEN register, as they are meeting the children's needs in the classroom. Due to new DfE metrics around attendance and outcome, schools now receive a report comparing them to 20 other schools with a similar proportion of SEN. The CEO has had challenging conversations around increasing the children on the register. The Trustees discussed SEND register accuracy and demographic comparability and highlighted that the registers must be accurate as this affects finance.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Monkton have a very small cohort maximum year group is 15, so one child can alter the data significantly. Trustees queried the data for Sheppey Secondary and the CEO advised that their non-FSM is as deprived as the FSM children that attend Bysing Wood. There is a lot of support on Sheppey from charitable organisations.</p> <p>The national challenges are covered in the paper. Persistent absence remains a key priority.</p> <p>The CEO advised the Trust is putting on training for the new Ofsted Toolkit and there will be training at the Governor Conference on this, which Trustees are welcome to attend. Discussion on the new Ofsted</p>	

		<p>inspections and the risk to leadership wellbeing. These started on the 1st December. AH and PT had undertaken some training on the new Framework and advised that they understood a timetable would be produced..</p> <p>Quality of teaching is consistently strong across the Trust. Teynham are a one form entry school and have two ECTs. The CEO will continue to judge quality of teaching. It was highlighted it is hard to make predictions at this time of the year, particularly as mobility is high in some schools.</p> <p>The CEO is meeting with the Headteacher at Bysing Wood next week as phonics outcomes are too low. The CEO had expected Teynham to be higher, also.</p> <p>Year 6 data was shared, and the CEO was pleased with the results. The mobility challenges at East Stour were discussed.</p> <p>The CEO shared the updates to the Strategic Plan and advised it was too early for it to have had an impact.</p> <p>Complaints remain low for stages 3 and 4 but the CEO highlighted a national trend of complaints going straight to Ofsted and not going through the correct complaints process, and the Trust have had two parents go straight to Ofsted. The CEO explained the route for these complaints and the Trustees fully discussed this and felt Ofsted needed to send these back to go through the correct procedure. The CEO would like the Ofsted form to state parents must share the final stage outcome letter, as this will force parents to go through the correct process.</p> <p>The data dashboard was shared, and it is important that Heads benchmark themselves.</p> <p>The Trustees queried marketing, and the CEO advised the COO is leading on Parent Kind which has a big focus on marketing and she runs a workshop every year. The COO has supported Churchill and has completed all the marketing for Sheppey Secondary, including Facebook and Instagram. Work is being undertaken with the Apprenticeship Team in the College Group to get marketing places, so there can be people in the schools who are learning on the job.</p> <p>Trustees advised the Lisa Hogan (LH) joining the Trust was very positive and the CEO confirmed LH would be part time. The Trust will remain working with the CFO and his team.</p> <p>NOTED – CEO Termly Update</p>	
--	--	--	--

9.	Feedback from Committee Meeting's	<p>Finance & People – 25/11/25</p> <p>The Finance and People Committee had discussed a change to the Reserves Policy and recommended that the Trust Board approved a level of £450,000 instead of 2%. The CEO discussed the reason for the amendment and that it would enable her to add capacity to the central team.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RECOMMEND – The Reserves Policy to be amended.</p> <p>RAC – 25/11/25</p> <p>The RAC Committee met with the Auditors with and without officers present. In line with previous years, it is a clean report with just a couple of recommendations, which have been responded to accordingly.</p> <p>The Risk Register was discussed, and Trustees were confident it was robust ready for the Diocese joining the Trust.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED – Verbal feedback from Finance and People Committee and RAC Committee</p>	
10.	Any other business	There was no other business.	
11.	Matters considered confidential.	There were no matters considered confidential.	
12.	Date and time of next Meeting	Date and time of next meeting: 10 th March 2026	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.35 pm.

Signed 

Print: Bernadette Lax Dated: 10th March 2026