EKC Schools Trust

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Tuesday, 10th March 2026
Location	EKC Schools Trust Boardroom	Time	2.00 pm
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); Ollie Laughton (OL); Paul Sayers (PS); Alison Gray (AG); Lucy McLeod (LM)		
In Attendance	Matthew Cooper (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DG) Dan Lewsey, Director of Safeguarding and Compliance (DoSC) – Item 8 Jason Howard, Executive Headteacher (JH)		

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence.	The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting and there were no apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest	AH and PG declared a non-pecuniary interest for item 8. NOTED – AH and PG to exclude themselves from the discussion for item 8.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held 2 December 2025, including confidential minutes	The minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd December 2025 were considered to be an accurate record and will be signed after the meeting. APPROVED – Minutes from the meeting held on the 2nd December 2025	
4.	Matters arising not covered by this agenda	There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda.	

Alan P Horton

5.	Chairs Communication	The Chair thanked everyone for their input into the Governors Conference and asked that this be added to the next Strategy Event agenda.	DG
6.	CEO Mid-Year Report	The CEO shared a mid-year report prior to the meeting. Trustees discussed pupil numbers and noted that Bysing Wood would reduce their PAN in 2027 and Churchill in 2028. The CEO informed Trustees that Teynham, which is due to convert on the 1st April, is a one form entry school in a two-form entry building, with an expectation there will be a PAN of 60 for September. Schools have been informed of numbers for September 27 and Teynham is a long way from this number for first choices. Sheppey have had 149 first choices for 150 places with 330 total choices. The CEO shared Minster and Monkton contextual data for the first time. Sheppey have had 34 suspensions which Trustees acknowledged was low. For the same period last year, it was over 150. The CEO shared with Trustees that there is a risk around Bysing Wood. This is not due to leadership or quality of teaching, but due to their level of pupil need which has become extremely challenging. The school is extremely vulnerable at present and staff morale is low The CEO has contacted the Local Authority and asked them to put a team around the school. The Local Authority have been responsive, and the CEO is meeting with them on Friday afternoon. Trustees queried if the Trust could do any more to support the team at Bysing Wood, and the CEO advised a number of things have already been put in place. The CEO shared the comparative data for attendance, which is now better aligned, due to schools improving their recording of SEN. Persistent absenteeism has reduced. Trustees challenged the data and discussed how attendance impacts on the Ofsted grading. Trustees advised that they had received positive feedback from the Governor Conference and asked that this was shared with the staff who presented at the Conference. The Community of schools and high needs funding were discussed and the difficulties this will bring to the schools who must bid for the money, alongside Secondary Schools. Queenborough, East Stour and Thornden Wood received a letter from Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, congratulating them on their attainment for end of key state two. Three other	

		schools in the Trust had equally high attainment but did not have the level of disadvantaged children to meet the threshold. The Deputy Regional Director, visited Sheppey and Queenborough last week and the CEO has been advised that following this, the Trust was mentioned by one of the keynote speakers at the DfE Rise Conference for Inclusion yesterday. The Trust are the first Trust in the country to receive Silver for ParentKind and this was acknowledged by the Children's Commissioner, Rachel D'Souza. The Complaints Policy was discussed, and the procedures that are in place. Trustees discussed the impact of social media when parents are unhappy. The CEO summarised leadership development activity and CPD priorities. NOTED – CEO Mid-Year Report	
7.	Bysing Wood SRP	The CEO shared a Bysing Wood Specialist Resource Provision Application paper prior to the meeting and requested approval from the Trustees. The paper included the background and the timeline for this application. The CEO has worked with KCC on a plan for redesigning an area in the school, following the school reducing to a one form entry and shared the plan with Trustees. The quotes for the work have been sent to KCC for approval for the funding by their Asset Management Board. Trustees queried the process for agreeing the intake of pupils and whether the Trust is comfortable with the process. The CEO confirmed that until she has seen the final contract she is not agreeing to anything. The allocation process at the moment is that SRPs are consulted with in the same way and the school will have a say whether they can meet the need or not. The Trustees had a robust conversation on what approval was being required as the contract had not been seen and sought assurances that the Trust could pull out if the contract was not favourable. The CEO advised she wanted approval to move forward but would come back to Trustees for a final decision. Trustees queried what were the factors behind Bysing Wood being chosen for an SRP. The CEO confirmed they were on a shortlist because of its inclusive practices, vulnerable children are integrated as	

		much as possible and Bysing Wood also has space, which means little capital money being needed by KCC. The Trust has been approached to open more than one SRP, but the CEO is still considering these. Trustees raised concerns that the CEO had previously advised she was concerned about Bysing Wood and queried the impact of the SRP on the school. The CEO advised the Headteacher would not be involved with running any of the programmes and highlighted the positives for the school. Trustees approved that they were in favour of moving forward with the SRP subject to the contract. APPROVED – CEO to move forward with the SRP Application for Bysing Wood	
8.	Capital Estates Project	The Director of Safeguarding and Compliance shared a paper prior to the meeting on the Trust Estates Improvement Funding (TEIF) together with the individual schools TEIF Panel Responses, for Trustees approval. The paper highlighted the bids submitted and the Panel's response. The DoSC joined the meeting to explain the process. The Board considered the bids and the Panel's assessment. The previous CFO had produced some indicative calculations and estimated the Trust would receive £480,000 in its first year. The total of the bids is £427,287 which is within the projected income. Trustees questioned what contingencies existed should costs escalate and were reassured by the DoSC. Schools will be informed of the decision after the Trust Board Meeting, but schools will be advised this is provisional pending the final figure being received. Leaders confirmed phased approaches and risk monitoring. APPROVED – Capital Estates Project	
9.	Report on Trust Teaching and Learning Priority: The Precision Project	JH shared a paper prior to the meeting on the Precision Project. JH explained the project and the results of a self-assessment. The project is set across four strands, which run in parallel throughout the year, each aimed at a different group of staff. The first strand focuses on Headteacher and TLA Leaders; the second strand is to enhance the strongest teachers in supporting others; the third stand is working directly with teachers who have been identified as requiring some additional support; the fourth strand is for support staff.	

		The Board reviewed progress and early impact and asked for assurance that in the CEO Report, some of the year 6 predictions are lower than last year, and whether there is cause for concern. JH advised that teaching continues to be strong and it is cohort specific. Mobility in schools was discussed as to why the predictions can fluctuate. Trustees asked for case studies evidencing measurable influence on classroom practice. The CEO will bring examples to next meeting. Trustees asked JH to thank the team for their work on the project. ACTION – The CEO to bring examples of case studies evidencing measurable influence on classroom practice. NOTED – The Precision Project.	
10.	Director of Governance Report	The DG shared her Governance Report prior to the meeting. The paper included a membership update including predicted changes in April 2026 and September 2026. The DG shared the updated Scheme of Delegation to account for the new Church of England schools joining the Trust. An overview document has been shared with the new schools, and they felt it was clear. The DG asked for Trustees to approve the changes. Trustees queried that not all the policies listed were on the website, and the wording will be changed to reflect this. There have been e-resolutions since the last meeting. One was for all Trustees, which concerned changes to the Admissions Policy, and this has been signed off and is on the agenda today for formal noting. The second e-resolution was for the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee which was to engage the Trust external auditors to perform an audit on the first half of this year's transactions ahead of the year end. This was approved and again is on the agenda for formal noting and for information. The provisional calendar of dates for meetings 2026/2027 were shared prior to the meeting. The DG highlighted that due to the Group changing to 35 weeks, there might be apologies for the last meeting of the year in July, but this cannot be changed due to the data not being ready from the primary schools. Trustee Feedback Forms were shared from Trustee visits to Bysing Wood and Palm Bay. A visit was undertaken to Thornden Wood, but the form is still with the Headteacher for checking, so Trustees received verbal feedback. The high proportion of Looked after Children in the schools was discussed and the work this entails, as they come from out of area.	DG

		NOTED – Director of Governance Report APPROVED – Scheme of Delegation (pending changes to the word around policies)	
11.	School Resource Management Self-Assessment Return 2025-26	The School Resource Management Self-Assessment Return 2025-2026 (SRMSA) was shared prior to the meeting. The SRMSA is an annual submission. Changes had been highlighted in red. The DG was seeking Trustee approval to enable them to submit the return today. Trustees scrutinised value-for-money assurances and benchmarking. APPROVED – School Resource Management Self-Assessment Return 2025-26	
12.	December Management Accounts includes Q1 re-forecast.	The CFO presented the December Management Accounts and Q1 re-forecast and highlighted the key areas to the Trustees. There is a new Head of Financial Planning and Analysis starting next week. Trustees queried how staffing proposals influenced the year-end and recurrent position. The CFO is committed to providing a sensitivity analysis within two weeks. NOTED – December Management Accounts including Q1 re-forecast.	CFO
13.	13i Minutes from Finance & People (F&P) Committee Meeting 20/01/26 13ii Reserves Policy 13iii Restricted Paper – Finance and People	The Minutes from the Finance and People Committee (20th January 2026) were shared prior to the meeting for assurance. The Chair from the Finance and People Committee highlighted key areas. The Reserves Policy was shared with Trustees highlighting a change to the Central Trust reserve target from 2% of total turnover to it being capped at £450,000. The revised policy was discussed in relation to sustainable growth and approved. Confidential minutes from the Finance and People Committee (20th January 2026) were shared. The CFO and Trust staff were not in attendance.	

14.	Any other business	This item was deemed confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.	
15.	Matters considered confidential.	Item 14 was deemed confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.	
16.	Date and time of next Meeting	Date and time of next meeting: 14th July 2026	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.00 pm.

Signed Print: A HORTON Dated: 14/7/26