

Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



10 March 2025

Trustees Present

Helen Pain (HP Chair), Andy Brock (AB), Matthew Blake (MB), Aron Whiles (APW), Andy Robinson (AR), Adeline Winshaw (AW) and John Morgan (JM)

Others Present

Jon Culpin (JC CEO), Charity Main (CM COO), Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Acceptance of Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies were accepted from Ken Murphy (KM) The Chair acknowledged KM's and AB's support at the recent Ofsted inspections.	
2.	Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items	
	There were no declarations of interest. Trustees were reminded to complete a new form during the year if there are any updates with regards pecuniary interests.	
3	Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda	
	The minutes from 16/12/24 and 29/01/25 were agreed as a true record. JC provided the Board with an update on the recent Ofsted inspections, which were notably positive, and conducted by experienced inspectors who demonstrated a willingness to engage and listen. A Section 8 inspection at Linton Heights Junior school confirmed that standards had been maintained with some areas were close to outstanding. Both pupils and parents were positive about the school and the Trust. Marleigh was rated 'Good' following a Section 5 inspection. Once the new curriculum is embedded the school could hope to achieve 'outstanding' in this area. The Chair asked the executive team to pass on the Board's congratulations to staff.	
4.	Strategy 2025-2030 (JC)	
	Associated papers: <u>AL Strategy 2030 v1.1 Master Draft</u> JC noted that the shared strategy is a draft. He explained the 3 key priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belonging by Design • Enabling Great Schools • Fostering and enacting Civic Leadership The context and details are set out in the PowerPoint.	

Chair's signature..

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Date.....20 May 2025.....

	<p>The timeline includes consultation with the Academy Governance Forum (AGF) and parent governors.</p> <p>Trustees provided feedback and comments which are recorded in a separate document. They asked the executive team to consider priorities in the current strategy that have been delivered or intentionally de prioritised, and the consequences if parts of the new strategy are not delivered.</p> <p>JC noted that growth has been removed in the new strategy. 'People' has been significantly developed but is referenced within the new strategy. He also confirmed that we are working with other local Trust CEOs to take a coordinated approach to SEND provision.</p>	
5.	Academy improvement strategy (JC)	
	This item is recorded as a confidential minute.	
6.	Safeguarding	
	<p>Associated papers: Safeguarding report March 2025 Safeguarding report March 2025</p> <p>Camilla Saunder's report had been shared.</p> <p>It was explained that where large increases in reporting are seen, these are mostly due to concerns not being recorded previously rather than an increase in safeguarding incidents.</p>	
7.	Monitoring SET financial improvement (CM)	
	This item is recorded as a confidential minute.	
8.	Financial Efficiency and 2025/26 budget update	
	<p>Associated papers: Trust Board March 2025 Financial Efficiency and Budget Setting Update</p> <p>The majority of funding statements for years R-11 have been received and provide some clarity. The small increase in income is set against pay rises and consumer price index (CPI) so the reality is a funding decrease. Post 16 funding has also been announced. There is a 0.4% decrease in pupil numbers across the Trust but with significant variations.</p> <p>Increase in NI contributions have still not been confirmed and are likely to be included in the Spring Budget. We are still awaiting the schools' cost technical note which measures affordability. CM stressed the uncertainty of the current environment.</p> <p>Budget setting is ongoing, and workshops have been held with the primary schools. There is a RAG process so those with challenges can be readily identified. The situation is bleak, with savings still needing to be found. Schools are using ICFP and are considering all options. It was stressed that all Trusts are in the same situation.</p> <p>Q Are ICFP conversations with HTs robust? A Yes, we have no choice and are reinforcing the message. Q Is there push back against the central team? A Yes, the situation is challenging and sensitive and we are very conscious of how messages need to be communicated Q What are your expectations around NI? A We have been informed that this will be met across the sector so should be cost neutral, but inevitably there will be a formula, and we cannot factor in any potential costs until this is known.</p>	

	JC thanked the Board for their support. Trustees offered to support the Executive Team in any way they can, noting the need to ensure everyone's wellbeing during this particularly pressured time.	
9.	Management Accounts Period 5	
	<p>Associated papers: AL Management Accounts P05 Jan25. AL Management Accounts 05 Jan25 v1</p> <p>The expected outturn position for the year has a reduced surplus compared with budgeted, principally due to supply costs. Trustees queried why licensing costs were not known. CM clarified that these relate to increased security with respect to cyber risk.</p> <p>Trustees noted the accounts.</p>	
10.	Stour Valley Community and Clare Community Primary update	
	Transfer in of the new schools has gone well. Progress and any challenges will be looked at in more detail at committees in due course.	
11.	Governance & Compliance updates	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee recruitment: appointment of new Trustees Trustees approved a recommendation for the Members to appoint Sabrina Ahmed as a Trustee. She has met with JC/CM/KJ and Trustees KM/JM, who all support her application. • Transfer of SVET school governors Following the transfer of Clare Primary and Stour Valley school on 1 March, their local governors need to be incorporated into our governance structure. The Board agreed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All elected positions would be transferred with existing start and end dates - Trust appointed roles will have a new start date of 1 Mar 2025 but retain their existing end dates KJ confirmed that there are no concerns with their local governance. • Companies House Trustee ID checks Changes to the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (2023) mean that all Directors (Trustees) will need to complete an ID check before being added to Companies House. There will be a 12-month transition phase from 25 March 2025 during which time existing Trustees will need to confirm their ID. By autumn 2026 it will be mandatory for new directors to complete an ID check. 	<p>KJ to arrange Member approval for appointment from 1 April.</p> <p>KJ to update Trustees with further details when available</p>
12.	Committee Reports	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and Culture The Gender Pay Gap report was approved subject to some finalisation. There has been a small reduction in the gap over 5 years. • Curriculum and Standards Jonathan Rockey will be overseeing how we are addressing concerns. • FEOC 	

	R&G meeting was cancelled due to the Ofsted inspection taking place at the same time.	
13	Admissions Policies (KJ)	
	<p>Associated papers: WIMBISH admission arrangements 2026 entry MARLEIGH admission arrangements 2026 entry</p> <p>Consultations to revise Admissions Policies for Marleigh and Wimbish primary schools have been undertaken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marleigh Primary Marleigh's oversubscription criteria have been amended in line with our model policy. This will come into effect for admissions in Sep 2026. • Wimbish Primary Wimbish Primary Admissions Policy has been amended to reinstate the priority admission area (catchment). Since the consultation was undertaken the DfE has approved a variation to admissions arrangements so that the revised policy comes into immediate effect. <p>Trustees approved the revised Admission Policies.</p>	
13.	AOB	
	The building project at Sawston VC has been granted planning permission. The first new block should be ready for Sep 2026. Trustees asked if there is sufficient capacity to manage large projects. CM confirmed that the Director of Operations is taking on a new role as Director of School Estate Re-development to provide this capacity. She will provide temporary cover for her existing role.	
14.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	The next Board meeting is on 20 May, 9am at Marleigh Primary. Meeting ended at 11.15am	

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
11	Appoint new Trustee	1/4/25	KJ
11	Update Trustees with further details for ID checks	When available	KJ