

# Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



14 July 2025

## Trustees Present

Ken Murphy (KM Chair), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), Matthew Blake (MB), Andy Robinson (AR), Adeline Winshaw (AW), Annabel Curwen (AC), Sabrina Ahmed (SA), Phil Caroe (PC), Sylke Scheiner (SS) and John Morgan (JM)

## Others Present

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

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	<b>Acceptance of Apologies for Absence</b>	
	Apologies were accepted from Andy Brock (AB) The Chair welcomed SS to her first Board meeting. Trustees introduced themselves. The appointment of PC and SS from the 1 June 2025 by Members' resolution was noted. Aron Whiles has stepped down from the Trust Board effective from 7 July 2025.	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items</b>	
	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	<b>Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda</b>	
	The minutes and confidential minutes from 20 May 2025 were agreed as a true record.	
4.	<b>Strategy 2030 (JC)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Anglian Learning Strategy 2030 v2.2</a></p> <p>Trustees were presented with the final version of the strategy which has undergone extensive consultation. JC reminded them of the three priorities (which have had some wording changes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belonging by Design</li> <li>• Great Schools</li> <li>• Connected Communities</li> </ul> <p>The strategy sets out the goals and how these will be achieved. It will need to be adaptable and responsive to external changes.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Has there been any feedback on the metrics?</i>  <b>A</b> There is work to be done on the KPIs and we have started to talk with HTs about this.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Where you include Governance in Priority 3 should this specify local governance?</i>  <b>A</b> Whilst we will be focussing on the local tier, the relationship across the tiers of governance is important. The structure of governance is the responsibility of the Board and it is important to align the local tier with the strategy.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>A query was raised over the use of the phrase 'climate emergency' and how appropriate this was and how it might be received. There was</i></p>	

	<p><i>also a question over whether it was right to elevate AI and climate in particular as a priority.</i></p> <p><b>A</b> JC confirmed that inclusion was deliberate and had been debated. AI was more generic but a change could be made to the climate priority.</p> <p>The Board approved the strategy subject to a change of wording in relation to climate emergency priority.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>School Improvement Strategy: core standards</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">AL Core Standards Master v3.2</a>  <a href="#">Core Standards Guidance for Leaders v1.0.pdf</a></p> <p>Following wide consultation the 9 Core Standards have been modified. The headings of each will be shared with stakeholders whilst the detail is for headteachers, and a guidance document has been produced to support this. This currently aligns with the Ofsted framework.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Will self-evaluation map to these standards rather than the Ofsted framework?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> Yes, we already have school performance overviews linked to standards which will be developed.</p> <p>Trustees emphasised the importance of remaining vigilant to potential risks, even in schools that are meeting the standards. They highlighted the need to be aware of factors that might impact these schools. CM confirmed that we are reviewing our approach to risk.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>How is the new approach being received by headteachers?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> We believe this is a simpler system to the Blueprints but we handle any change sensitively, understanding that there may be apprehension</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged the considerable work on the standards and the strategy which they approved.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Icknield Primary Ofsted Inspection (JC)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">10345538 Final report cover letter</a>  <a href="#">10345538-The Icknield Primary -148454 - Final</a></p> <p>Following the recent Ofsted inspection The Icknield Primary school has been rated Good and Outstanding in the various categories. We are very pleased with the report and feel it is an accurate representation. In response to the previous inspection, which was Good but declining, the Trust provided additional support, including an interim academy council under the leadership of an executive headteacher.</p> <p>JC informed Trustees that Howard Primary Academy was also recently inspected. The judgements are Good with Personal Development being Outstanding. JC explained the context for the school, highlighting the RI judgment at the 2023 inspection; Anglian Learning has invested heavily to turn things around.</p> <p>All Anglian Learning primary schools are now rated Good or Outstanding. JC thanked the team especially Rachael Johnson and Laura Rawlings and this was echoed by Trustees.</p> <p>Trustees noted that the story of Howard Primary would be worth writing as an example of no school left behind.</p>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Growth update (JC)</b>	
	<p><b>Staploe Education Trust (SET)</b></p> <p>Transfer of SET is proceeding as scheduled. The Staff consultation has been completed. Duncan Cooper will be the Acting Accounting</p>	

	<p>Officer for SET in the autumn term, and we will be providing executive services, aligning the trust ready for transfer on 1 Jan 2026.</p> <p><b>Pippins Nursery</b></p> <p>The Pippins nursery at Icknield Primary School is transferring into Anglian Learning on 1 Sep 2025. The TUPE process has ended and there just remain some legalities to complete.</p> <p>The remainder of this item is recorded as a confidential minute</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Approval of 2024/25 budgets and 3-year financial forecast (CM)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Budget Setting Report 2025-26 V2.0</a></p> <p>A balanced budget has been set for 2025-26, though the challenges to achieve this should be noted, including the collective consultation that has taken place with HR support.</p> <p>There are still uncertainties around pay awards, pension contributions and additional school budget support grants. Continuing challenges include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sawston Village College rebuild.</li> <li>• Growth – SET schools reflected in central budget</li> <li>• Pupil numbers declining</li> </ul> <p>There will be a particular focus on some schools in the autumn.</p> <p>Reserves are below our own policy and DfE best practice. FEOC has requested management to model what a faster recovery would look like.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the enormous challenge and thanked CM and the team for the comprehensive report and all their hard work.</p> <p>Trustees commented that it might be useful to look ahead to see what it would take to make 2027-28 and 28-29 balanced.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>What causes the significant budget changes in later years?</i>  <b>A</b> We are required to submit a 3-year outline to the DfE. Years 4 and 5 always look challenging as assumptions retain current staff who progress up the pay spines. It is also difficult to predict SEND funding.</p>	<p>SET school budgets to be brought back in the Autumn.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Management Accounts P9 (CM)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">P09 Management Accounts 2024-25</a>  <a href="#">P09 IMP forecast reports combined</a></p> <p>The Trust Board noted the management accounts which had been discussed at FEOC. The expected outturn is a deficit against a budgeted surplus. Alternative Provision (AP) and supply costs have caused the greatest variances</p> <p>Actions implemented include financial regulations revisions with regard to AP and supply, additional monitoring and flags in the finance system. There will be a greater focus for everyone and those headteachers with significant budget overspends will need to attend FEOC.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Has there been any change in headteacher responsibility?</i>  <b>A</b> No, but this responsibility has diminished over time. We must ensure that headteachers are equipped with the relevant skills.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Have you considered internal supply?</i>  <b>A</b> This presents some geographical challenges, but we are looking at how other trusts manage this and are considering. There may need to</p>	

	<p>be a bespoke arrangement for each school. There are some informal arrangements currently.</p> <p><b>Q</b> Is there an appetite for restricting supply where there is an overspend?</p> <p><b>A</b> Yes, this will be managed with the additional capacity provided by the Deputy Directors of Education so that those challenging conversations can be had.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Is there evidence of the impact of supply teaching on educational outcomes?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> Only anecdotal but the quality of supply is variable.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Given the low pupil numbers, will Wimbish be sustainable?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> We are developing plans to bring to the Board in the autumn.</p>																
<b>10.</b>	<b>Risk Management (CM)</b>																
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Annual report on Risk Management July 2025</a></p> <p>CM presented the annual risk report which has been considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p> <p>Key points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have refocused strategic risks to align with Strategy 2030. Will revise causes and effects to be more relevant</li> <li>• Risk appetite – have split out where there were 2 levels. Change to Quality of Education to move to more cautious.</li> <li>• Schools are struggling to engage so pausing use of 4Risk. We know risk management is happening, but we need to consider how they record this in an effective way.</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that the LGB planner still includes risk reviews. It is important that meaningful discussions are taking place but 4Risk may not be the best tool for schools.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>How important is it externally, say for Ofsted?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> It is not relevant not for Ofsted but is most important internally for internal audit activity and for the Board to drive priorities.</p> <p>Trustees expressed some concerns around wording in relation to the new Governance risk as whilst we would be open in terms of remodelling this would not be the case for compliance. Additionally, they cautioned about taking risks with culture. It was agreed that further discussions by the Board are needed in the autumn term.</p>																
<b>11.</b>	<b>Committee Reports</b>																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FEOC</b></li> <li>• <b>ARA</b></li> </ul> <p>Summary reports from the two recent committee meetings had been shared.</p>																
<b>12.</b>	<b>Governance (KJ)</b>																
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Committee membership and Chairs</b> Membership of the committees was approved with the following Chairs and Vice Chairs:</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Committee</th><th>Chair</th><th>Vice Chair</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FEOC</td><td>JM</td><td>AR</td></tr> <tr> <td>Audit &amp; Risk Assurance</td><td>AB</td><td>PC</td></tr> <tr> <td>People &amp; Culture</td><td>MB</td><td>AC</td></tr> <tr> <td>Education Standards</td><td>AR</td><td>AW</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Committee	Chair	Vice Chair	FEOC	JM	AR	Audit & Risk Assurance	AB	PC	People & Culture	MB	AC	Education Standards	AR	AW	
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	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Governance &amp; Nominations</td><td>KM</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>Previously committee Chairs have been nominated at the first committee meetings of the year and then require Board approval. It was agreed that this process whereby Chairs and Vice Chair are approved at the last Board meeting of the year is a more sensible approach and will be incorporated in the Terms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letter to Accounting Officer</b> The letter confirmed that the Academy Trust Handbook has been updated for 2025.</li> </ul>	Governance & Nominations	KM		KJ to update committee ToR as part of the autumn review
Governance & Nominations	KM				
<b>13.</b>	<b>Whistleblowing and Complaints (KJ)</b>				
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">AL Whistleblowing and Complaints report 24-25</a></p> <p>A table showing complaints over the last three years had been added to the report. This does not indicate any particular trends. Trustees noted a low number of escalated complaints which may reflect an improved approach to resolving complaints early on.</p> <p>KJ confirmed that whilst we are not necessarily seeing the increase in complaints as reported nationally, there is an increase in the complexity of complaints, sometimes AI generated, and accompanied by time consuming subject access requests.</p> <p>In response to questions, KJ confirmed that an email retention policy will be rolled out from October, and that staff data protection training includes advice on being mindful of wording in emails.</p> <p>It was noted that a cyber incident previously reported had not been included as a critical incident. Management confirmed that how and where incidents are reported will be considered to ensure consistent reporting.</p>				
<b>13.</b>	<b>AOB</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JC reported that a fire had broken out last week at Icknield Primary School. A debrief will take place today with the Central Leadership Team. A high-level summary with recommendations will be taken to FEOC in the Autumn term.</li> <li>• JC shared a high-level overview of outcomes for KS1 phonics and KS2 SATS at KS2. He noted that schools with small pupil numbers often distort the data.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair of Trustees thanked JC, CM and the Leadership Team for their exceptional handling of very challenging circumstances and events, often at short notice. They consistently find solutions while managing all other responsibilities. He noted in particular implementation of the new Payroll, onboarding of former SVET schools, 5 Ofsted judgements and the collective consultation.</p> <p>He also thanked KJ for her support with governance and expressed appreciation to all Trustees for their willingness to give up their time and engage meaningfully.</p>	JC to share with the team			
<b>14.</b>	<b>Date time and venue of next meeting</b>				
	<p>The next Trust Board meeting is on 25 September.</p> <p>2025-25 meeting dates had been circulated.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 11.10am</p>				

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
FEOC	SET school budgets

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
12	Update committee ToR to reflect change in appointing chair and VC	Autumn term ToR review	KJ
13	Pass on Board thanks to staff	End of term	JC