

Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



25 September 2025

Trustees Present

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

Others Present

Charity Main (CM COO), Camilla Saunders (CS Director of Inclusion), Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Acceptance of Apologies for Absence	
	Apologies were accepted from John Morgan (JM)	
2.	Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items	
	There were no declarations of interest. Trustees were reminded to complete a new pecuniary interests form for 2025-26 and to update this during the year if there are any changes. The Chair reminded Trustees to disclose any relevant associations and the need for confidentiality.	
3	Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda	
	The minutes and confidential minutes from 14 July 2025 were agreed as a true record. Actions had been completed. Howard Ofsted inspection report is no longer confidential so can be incorporated into the main minutes.	
4.	Annual Safeguarding Training (CS)	
	CS delivered annual safeguarding training as the first item of the meeting. She explained Trustee responsibilities and prompted discussion around how and what Trustees want reporting to them to provide assurance. It was noted that a Trustee Safeguarding Link is to be appointed who will have a role in monitoring and assurance. It was confirmed that whilst LGBs currently monitor Safeguarding locally there is no consistent mechanism for this to feed in centrally.	
5.	Policy Approvals	
	Associated papers: AL safeguarding policy - Central Team (002) AL Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy v3.0 AUTUMN 24-25 Keeping children safe in education from 1 Sep 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Safeguarding Adults at Risk 	

	<p>Q Trustees asked whether the adult safeguarding policy should include online safety?</p> <p>A This is aimed at Anglian Leisure and Adult Learning. CS will consider some wording that could be added. KJ clarified that the policy is adapted by the Anglian Leisure General Manager but CS will consider whether a separate bespoke policy should be created for Anglian Leisure.</p> <p>Q Trustees also noted that as a charity we should be considering safeguarding of all adults not just those considered at risk.</p> <p>A CS confirmed that she will consider this when undertaking the next review.</p> <p>Q Why is mental health not included as a risk in itself rather than just as an indicator?</p> <p>A It is not captured in this way in KCSIE but would be picked up in mental health policies.</p> <p>The Trust Board approved the policies</p> <p>[09:50 CS left]</p>	
6.	<p>A Level and GCSE: outcomes and emerging priorities (JC)</p> <p>Associated papers: Trust Board 250925 GCSE & A Level outcomes</p> <p>KM invited Trustees to attend the next Education Standards Committee meeting (4pm 20 October at Marleigh) where items 6 and 7 will be discussed in more depth.</p> <p>JC presented the headline figures for each school. All but two of our schools are above the national average of 46% for English and Maths GCSE 5+. However, overall performance is generally below where we would expect schools to be. It was noted that progress measures are not available but overall attainment has stalled or declined and the gap for disadvantaged pupils is widening.</p> <p>Improving outcomes and overall quality of education is a key priority. JC shared some of the actions being implemented which will be discussed in detail by the Education Standards Committee.</p> <p>Q Trustees asked which pupils are included in the group 'disadvantaged'?</p> <p>A JC explained that this includes SEND, Pupil premium, free school meals (FSM), looked after children and service children. The group may need redefining to ensure a collective understanding</p>	
7.	<p>KS1 and KS2 Assessments: outcomes and priorities (JC)</p> <p>Associated papers: Trust Board 250925 Primary outcomes</p> <p>Overall the quality of education in our primary schools is strong, with significant improvement in writing. Reading is also a strength. Outcomes are in line with or exceeding national averages.</p> <p>JC shared some of the actions being implemented, including a focus on attendance and disadvantaged pupil performance. These will be discussed in detail by the Education Standards Committee.</p>	
8.	<p>Strategy 2030 (JC)</p> <p>Associated papers: Strategic priorities 2030</p> <p>Some minor changes to wording of the Strategy 2030 have been made. JC highlighted that in Priority 3, Connected Communities, the phrase 'climate emergency' has been retained. ELT has looked at</p>	

	<p>alternatives to using the word ‘emergency’ but has decided this best conveys its importance.</p> <p>Trustees discussed this, noting that the issue is around addressing sectors of our community who may not agree. It is important that the Trust can articulate why this has been included and ensure appropriate communications. Athene Communications will support with this.</p> <p>A majority (8:1) of Trustees agreed that the wording be retained</p> <p>JC shared 5 headline KPIs and sought feedback on these from Trustees. He explained how we would develop more granular KPIs to be considered by Board committees.</p> <p>Q <i>Might schools avoid exclusions to meet KPI 2 rather than achieving a change in behaviours?</i></p> <p>A We are putting mechanisms in place to prevent this. It is important that HTs don’t feel pressurised to meet the KPIs but we do want alignment of our schools. We understand that fixed term exclusion is sometimes appropriate.</p> <p>JC noted that KPI 2 was a ‘hard’ measure whilst most of the others are ‘soft’.</p> <p>Trustees discussed in small groups and some feedback was taken. Further feedback will be made directly to JC/KJ (within a week).</p>	Trustees to feedback on KPIs
9.	National Landscape (JC)	
	<p>Associated papers: <u>Trust Board 250925 Updates and National Landscape</u></p> <p>Trust Updates</p> <p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Headteachers, including those at Staploe schools • Name change from central team to Shared Services. • Introduction of Core standards • New Online Single Central Record • New financial controls • Head of Governance change to role • AL@10: highlighted Pippins nursery joining, Sawston VC rebuild, Staploe joining <p>National Updates</p> <p>Already announced or later this term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government curriculum review. • Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill • SEND white paper • RISE advisers for underperforming schools • New Ofsted framework <p>Some of these will impact significantly on staff workload.</p> <p>A number of other national changes will have implications for us such as the Employment Rights Bill and Martyn’s Law</p> <p>Some of our local communities have seen a rise in flying of flags. It is important for Trustees to consider how they want the Trust to respond to these developments in our communities and in the wider local and national political narrative. Some schools have seen an</p>	

	increase in racist language. It was stressed that we have a duty of care for our staff and pupils from a range of backgrounds.	
10.	Finance (CM)	
	<p>Associated papers: Revised budget 2025-26 P11 Management Accounts July 2025 P11 IMP forecast reports combined AL Board Committee Summary FEOC Sep 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management accounts P11 • End of Year position • Re-approval of 2025-26 budget • FEOC committee report <p>Alternative Provision and supply costs have been significant pressures and remain a focus this year.</p> <p>Trustees approved the net gain from the NJC pay award assumption be transferred to reserves as agreed at FEOC on 11 Sep 2025.</p> <p>Staploe Education Trust budgets will come to the Board for approval in December.</p> <p>Q <i>Can you explain the anticipated increase in surplus for Anglian Leisure in future years?</i> A This is due to reopening of facilities at Sawston VC. There will be no additional costs incurred during the period of the building work. CM also noted that FEOC had discussed the pool leak at Sawston VC and the potential cost implications.</p> <p>Q <i>Is there an overarching KPI re finance for all schools?</i> A The management accounts pack has KPIs around certain things. Everyone has clear instruction regarding achieving budget and it is also part of HT performance management.</p> <p>Q <i>Given that supply costs can't be anticipated are we comfortable that the risk is reflected in the risk register and are there other steps we can take?</i> A The risk is reflected in STR1 Finance. Whilst supply costs cannot be anticipated it should be noted that during the last year the supply issue was related to a particular incident. In more general terms HR are focusing on absence management and have identified preferred supply agencies which schools should use. Schools are also advised that supply is not the only option.</p> <p>The remainder of this item is recorded as a confidential minute.</p>	Staploe budgets – next Board meeting
11	Review of Risk Appetite	
	<p>Associated papers: Review of the Risk Appetite Statement</p> <p>The risk appetite statement has been developed. Following discussion at the last meeting regarding the Governance risk, ELT feel we are happy with being open to exploring all possibilities, noting that we are looking to remodel local governance this year.</p> <p>Q <i>Trustees asked about what the risk appetite document is used for?</i> A It is about empowering people to take appropriate risks whereas the risk register is about reducing risk. It identifies where we might be operating outside of our appetite for risk.</p> <p>Q <i>School improvement – wouldn't we want this more open so we can be aspirational?</i></p>	

	<p>A This was originally quality of education so it maybe a question of considering the language used. We should be open with regard to aspiration but we would not be radical about our approach.</p> <p>Any further comments to be sent to CM or KJ</p>	Comments re risk appetite to CM/KJ
12.	Statutory updates & compliance	
	<p>Associated papers: Regulatory and compliance updates ATH&ATGG - Schedule of Musts Sep 2025</p> <p>The Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) and Academy Trust Governance guide (ATGG) have been updated. A schedule of 'musts' and our compliance with them had been shared. We will also look at sourcing a schedule of 'shoulds'</p> <p>Q Trustees asked why external audit doesn't cover ATGG 'musts'?</p> <p>A The external auditor's focus is on the annual accounts and the regulatory audit checks against the ATH. The ATGG is broader, and compliance is captured elsewhere.</p>	
13.	AOB	
	JC advised Trustees that Anglian Learning has attracted media attention regarding the sale of the Netherhall bungalow. We have responded to a journalist's request for information and an article has now been published. He noted that the Trust has complied with all statutory requirements regarding the sale of this and other properties in the Trust.	
14.	Date time and venue of next meeting	
	<p>The next Board meeting is on 16 Dec 2025</p> <p>Meeting ended at 11.30am</p>	

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
Trust Board 16 Dec 2025	Approve Staploe budgets

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
8	Feedback on KPIs	2 Oct 2025	All
11	Feedback on risk appetite	2 Oct 2025	All