

DRAFT Minutes of the general meeting of the full board of Ivy Education Trust

Tuesday, 16 December 2025 at 10:00

IET board room, Exeter Road, Teignmouth

Present
Ed Walker (EWa) - Trustee
Paul Austin (PA) - Trustee
Richard Given (RG) - Trustee
Niki Glew (NG) - Trustee (via Teams)
Lorraine Heath (LH) - Trustee (joined the meeting at item 4)
Stephen Lee (SL) - Chair of Trust Board
Gareth Regan (GR) - Trustee
Lee Sargeant (LS) - Trustee (via Teams)
In Attendance
Jon Lasker (JL) - Director of Operations
Paul Cornish (PC) - Executive Director of Education
Gaby Willis (GW) - Trust Governance Officer and Company Secretary
Emma Wood (EWo) - Director of People
Katy Quinn (KQ) - CEO
Jon Newman (JN) - Director of Finance
Simon Shadbolt (SS) – Prospective new trustee
Apologies
Paul Lilley (PL) - Trustee/Chair of FAR Committee
Chris Taylor (CT) - Trustee

The meeting opened at 10 am and was quorate.

25/2/1.1	Welcome and Apologies
	SL welcomed attendees and noted apologies from two trustees (PL and CT), explaining their reasons for absence. LH had advised she would be slightly late to join the meeting so was not present at this time.

25/2/1.2	Declarations of Interest
	No declarations received for the meeting, or in addition to those already declared.

25/2/1.3	Consideration of trustee application of Simon Shadbolt and vote on recommendation to members for appointment by ordinary resolution.
	SL welcomed Simon Shadbolt (SS) and explained that the board would consider recommending him to the members for appointment as a member-appointed trustee, which would restore the board to its statutory number of five. SS and PC left the meeting. A brief pen portrait had been shared with trustees and KQ provided a more comprehensive overview of SS's background, noting his transition from the predecessor Osprey Learning Trust through the merger

with EMAT and his significant contributions, such as sitting on panels and supporting headteachers. KQ detailed SS's professional history, which included an MBE, a military career, and work for the Ministry of Defence, noting his experience with formal processes made him well-suited for roles in panels and hearings. She added that SS had experience with Ofsted inspections, understood the governance structure, and would bring a different perspective to the board. SL outlined that the plan was for SS to become the safeguarding and SEND trustee and to sit on the People & Values Committee, a role previously held by SL. SL summarised that SS possessed extensive and varied experience.

SUPPORT

KQ expressed strong support for the appointment, noting SS's valuable contributions and his ability to bring a different perspective to the board.

Trustees unanimously indicated their support for the recommendation.

DECISIONS

To recommend to the members that Simon Shadbolt be appointed as a member-appointed trustee.

ACTIONS

To issue ordinary resolutions for appointment of Simon Shadbolt for member signature.

GW

SS and PC were welcomed back to the meeting. SS was advised of the board's unanimous support and thanked for his continuing contribution to our trust.

25/2/1.4 Approval of committee terms of reference for 2025-2026: People & Values. Quality of Education

SL presented the terms of reference for the People & Values and Quality of Education committees, confirming they had been reviewed and approved at the respective committee meetings.

DECISIONS

The board approved the committee terms of reference for 2025-2026 for the People & Values and Quality of Education committees.

25/2/2.1 Celebrations across our trust - Sharing of good news stories from all areas of our trust.

DISCUSSION

JN reported that three years after the merger, the financial processes were now settled, which was reflected in the accounts and the management letter. He also shared that he had advised the CEO of his intention to retire from education at the end of the academic year after 36 years of service. Trustees thanked JN for providing early notice of his retirement, noting that it allowed for strategic planning which KQ confirmed was already underway.

EWO celebrated the Cockwood school choir for their performance at Exeter Cathedral, noting it was a lovely event and a great opportunity for the pupils in a beautiful venue.

JL celebrated the strength of collective effort and progress on strategic changes across the Trust. He noted that courageous and challenging decisions had been made and attributed the progress to the resilience and commitment of the central team, finance team, HR team, and all school staff.

PC shared three celebrations: the first-ever Trust sporting fixture, a netball match which saw pupils from three secondary schools playing together as a single Trust team; the confirmation that the RISE needs-based analysis and action plan for Teignmouth Community School had been accepted and funding would follow; and the compassion shown by the Trust and colleagues in supporting a colleague through a recent bereavement.

KQ celebrated the way the Trust's schools are acting as anchors within their communities, particularly evident in recent Christmas shows. She noted the deep involvement of school leaders with their parental communities, highlighting the positive engagement at Kenton as a particular success, especially given past challenges.

SL shared that he had attended an all-governor event with approximately 25 governors organised by GW with KQ and PC presenting the "Game Plan". He celebrated the high quality of the challenging questions asked by the local governors, which demonstrated their strategic engagement with the Trust's direction.

SUPPORT

SL congratulated the senior leadership team on their hard work, stating that he sensed a gathering pace and forward momentum within the Trust's progress.

25/2/3.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting - Matters arising from the meeting held on 14 October 2025.

The Chair noted there were two outstanding actions from the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 October 2025. It was agreed not to discuss these further as attendees were familiar with them and no comments were raised.

25/2/3.2 Minutes of Previous Meeting - Accept the minutes of the previous meetings as a true and accurate record.

DISCUSSION

SL asked for any comments or errors in the minutes of the previous meeting. KQ confirmed that she had reviewed them, that all actions had been completed or were known.

SL noted that this would be the last set of minutes produced in the old format and reminded attendees about the new AI-assisted minute-taking process. He commented that the minutes for the committees that had used this new system were of good quality and were reducing the time required for transcription.

DECISIONS

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

25/2/4.1 Report and Accounts 2024-2025 - Presentation and approval of the accounts for 2024-2025.

DISCUSSION

On behalf of the FAR Committee, PA presented the Report and Accounts, noting a good audit result from the new auditors, Griffin Accountants. He reported a final reserves figure of £510,000, representing a small in-year deficit of £66,000. A key point of debate with the auditors was the failure to meet the DfE recommended 5% reserves policy (approx. £1.4 million), but the committee was comfortable with the current level given future projections.

PA reported other positive outcomes, including the pension scheme valuation which showed a slight surplus and could lead to a drop in contributions of nearly 6% next year. He also noted there were few audit adjustments and the management letter points were considered sensible and procedural.

KQ stated that the executive team was pleased with the year-end result, noting that reserves had remained stable despite a challenging year with restructures. She highlighted that receiving only six points on the management letter, some of which were clerical, was a very positive outcome.

JN provided context on significant financial pressures faced during the year, including underfunded increases in National Insurance contributions, restructure costs, difficulties managing Devon's SEND funding, and a policy change for dual-registered pupils which resulted in funding being clawed back. He confirmed the audit report contained no 'red' findings of major concern, with two 'amber' findings relating to the reserves position and the need for a letter of assurance (which has already been received).

<p>JN provided perspective, suggesting that while the 5% reserve target is recommended by the DfE, it is currently challenging for many trusts to achieve. The Trust's management of challenges and their plans for building reserves were commended.</p>	
<p>It was noted that it would be beneficial to see the academy trust benchmarking data from Bishop Fleming for the current year to provide context for the Trust's financial position.</p>	
<p>QUESTION AND ANSWER</p>	
<p>A concern was raised regarding the low level of reserves at 1.7%*, which is below the DfE recommendation, and an enquiry was made about the strategy to rebuild them towards the recommended 5%. *Subsequent to the meeting it was clarified that the current reserves were 2.44% and trustees duly agreed this be amended in the final approved minutes.</p>	<p>KQ acknowledged the concern, confirming a plan was in place for the next budget year utilising the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) tool, with the process beginning in secondary schools. She highlighted the difficult balance between building reserves and current financial pressures on schools. PA added that the current position was better than the three-year forecast had predicted. KQ also noted that a leadership restructure in primary schools was complete and would be effective from 1 May 2026.</p>
<p>A question was asked whether the low level of reserves over the last three years was due to insufficient contributions or because the funds had been spent on items for which reserves are intended.</p>	<p>KQ confirmed that reserves had been deliberately spent on school improvement initiatives at Teignmouth Community School and Starcross Primary School, amounting to an investment of nearly £1 million. It was clarified that while the Trust can meet its monthly costs, it is not currently in a position to add to savings. The objective is to reach a point where school improvement is funded from the core budget rather than reserves.</p>
<p>It was asked whether the Trust should consider lowering its reserve expectations in its policy to avoid future audit points, given the challenging financial environment.</p>	<p>SL and PA clarified that the auditors' point was not that the reserves were at a risky level, but that the Trust had not met the 5% target set out in its own policy. JN added that he suspected 60-70% of trusts were currently below the 5% benchmark.</p>
<p>SUPPORT</p>	
<p>PA commended the finance team for achieving a great result, particularly given the transition to a new auditor.</p>	
<p>SL thanked JN and the finance team for their work, and the FAR Committee for its rigorous scrutiny. He noted he was impressed by the committee's knowledge and the pertinence of the auditor's report.</p>	
<p>LS, who uses the same auditors, commented that it was a very good result. He acknowledged the concerns about reserves but felt that achieving the 5% target was not currently viable for most trusts and that the Trust was doing the right things without compromising educational quality.</p>	
<p>DECISIONS</p>	
<p>The Board approved the Report and Accounts for 2024-2025.</p>	
<p>ACTIONS</p>	
<p>Pass on the Board's thanks to the finance team for their work on the accounts.</p>	<p>JN</p>
<p>Review the Bishop Fleming benchmarking report for academy trusts at the next FAR Committee meeting.</p>	<p>FAR Committee</p>

25/2/5.1 Ivy Education Trust - CEO's termly report to the Full Board.

DISCUSSION

KQ introduced her CEO's termly report, noting a change in format to align more closely with the Trust's 'Game Plan' priorities and the High Quality Trusts framework. She highlighted a deficit in central data analysis and stated that she and JL were working to appoint a data analyst in the new year.

KQ reported a year-on-year reduction of 87 suspension incidents and one fewer permanent exclusion across the Trust for the first half of the autumn term. The reduction at Dawlish College was partly attributed to the creation of a new internal isolation space, 'Room 11', which allows for a more graduated response to behaviour incidents.

Following a question received ahead of the meeting, KQ explained that she was not overly concerned by high suspension figures at Teignmouth Primary School, attributing them to the specific context of managing a number of pupils awaiting special school placements without additional funding. A plan was in place to reintroduce afternoon emotional and social support sessions to better cater for their needs.

A discussion took place regarding the philosophy of suspensions. SL suggested that the goal should not necessarily be zero suspensions, but rather achieving an 'appropriate level' for each school's specific context. GR added that the focus should be on the correct application of the behaviour policy and effective reintegration. LH noted that data on recidivism would be a useful metric to track.

KQ reported good progress on the priority of improving inclusive teaching, noting the work of the Professional Learning Community in collaboration with Windsor Academy Trust. A common language and set of five principles have been developed, which will be launched to all staff in February.

KQ presented a report showing week-on-week and year-on-year improvements in attendance at the secondary schools, with figures moving towards the new government-set targets. An attendance issue at Kenton was attributed to its small size, where a few absences had a large percentage impact.

KQ confirmed that a Trust-wide SEND strategy is being developed. A SEND Summit involving all headteachers and SENCOs is scheduled for 20 January with the SEND lead from Windsor Academy Trust to begin this work.

KQ discussed the 'Thrive Financially' priority, acknowledging that recent decisions to centralise services were causing some temporary challenges. A key project is the migration to Microsoft 365 to create a unified communication and data platform. Work has also been undertaken with CJK to develop a leaner target operating model for central services.

KQ noted that Teignmouth Community School had been awarded £183,000 for digital infrastructure through the Connecting Classrooms programme.

KQ updated the board on the school 'Health Checks'. Four schools are now receiving 'targeted support': Kenton (due to interim leadership and temporary accommodation), Starcross and Dawlish (for financial oversight), and Teignmouth Community School (for quality of education).

KQ highlighted two successes: the new in-house Attendance Improvement Partner was proving effective and more cost efficient than the previous buy-in with DCC, and Teignmouth Primary School was ranked second for attendance out of 21 contextually similar schools in a new DfE benchmarking tool.

KQ provided a detailed update on the RISE programme, a £200,000 grant awarded over two years to support improvement at Teignmouth Community School in partnership with Windsor Academy Trust. The cross-regional collaboration was noted as a trailblazing approach for the Department for Education.

The RISE funding will be used to increase leadership capacity at TCS, fund a new attendance officer post, and create a new data analyst post. The Trust will match-fund the data analyst role to make it a Trust-wide position, with the appointee to be mentored by their counterpart at Windsor.

Support from Windsor Academy Trust as part of the RISE programme will include creating a teaching and learning handbook, curriculum support for non-specialist science teaching, mentoring for the new data role and senior leaders, and running summits on attendance and SEND.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

<p>A query was raised regarding how the success of the new high-quality inclusive teaching principles would be measured.</p>	<p>It was explained that StepLab would be used to monitor the implementation of the principles, but the ultimate measure of success would be an improvement in examination results.</p>
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<p>A question was asked concerning the significant difference in deprivation and special educational needs indicators between Teignmouth Primary School and Teignmouth Community School, despite their geographical proximity.</p>	<p>It was clarified that the secondary school serves a much wider catchment area which includes more affluent localities, whereas the primary school's catchment is concentrated in one of the most deprived areas.</p>
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<p>An observation was made about the comparatively low proportion of pupils with identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) at Teignmouth Community School, and an explanation was sought.</p>	<p>It was explained that this was likely a historical issue resulting from periods where the school lacked a SENCO to progress needs assessments. It was confirmed that many cases are now in the pipeline and that the forthcoming Trust-wide SEND strategy would address inconsistencies in need identification between schools.</p>
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<p>A query was raised as to whether the expenditure for the RISE programme was fully covered by the grant funding, aside from the planned match-funding for one post.</p>	<p>It was confirmed that the costings were fully covered by the grant, with approximately £150,000 allocated to the school and Trust and £50,000 to Windsor Academy Trust. The match-funding for the data analyst post was a strategic decision to attract a high-calibre candidate for a Trust-wide role.</p>
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QUESTIONS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING AND ANSWERS

<p>A question was asked about Teignmouth Primary suspensions which appeared to remain high and consistent year-on-year. Understanding was sought around what was driving this, how many are repeat suspensions and, in leaders' view, what impact were these suspensions having.</p>	<p>This view was not shared by the CEO, stating that TPS have averaged around 7 suspensions per half term historically, any higher suspensions would have not allowed them to be awarded as a centre of excellence for the inclusion mark.</p> <p>A peak in suspensions at TPS in HT1 had been seen, which totally goes against their approach to inclusion. The current numbers reflect a small number of children receiving suspensions who are either awaiting special school placements, for which special schools are saying they can't meet need, or they are waiting for final EHCP sign off for additional support and funding to be finalised. After every suspension, school leaders hold reintegration meetings with the child and their family and agree what will be different – amendment to</p>
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	<p>timetables, groupings, playtimes for example. The reintroduction of a “nurture group” provision in the afternoons to support these children has been discussed at a senior trust level and will be put into place with additional staffing once the Section F has been agreed by the local authority.</p>
<p>Acknowledging the significant drop in suspensions at Dawlish College from HT1, a query was raised as to what has contributed to this reduction, and how can leaders sustain this trend?</p>	<p>The creation of an internal isolation space has allowed school leaders to have an additional graduation in their suspensions response. Essentially meaning, they have another rung on the ladder before moving to external suspension.</p>
<p>Noting that the Trust is developing a trust-wide procedure to ensure compliant and consistent decision-making in the use of alternative provision, assurance was sought that the Trust is currently compliant for pupils attending alternative provision and, if not, what urgent actions are required and by when will these be completed?</p>	<p>It was confirmed that the Trust is compliant and has a robust process to place, monitor and review alternative placements. There are, however, growing concerns around when the local authority is deciding to place into alternative provisions which our Trust wouldn't use. The Trust has a high bar on which alternative placements it uses but the local authority does not share this view.</p>
<p>A request was made to share the timeline for how Trust Leaders intend to integrate the ICFP process into budget planning?</p>	<p>The executive team currently meet with each school leader every month for a 'team around the school' meeting where all aspects of the school are discussed, much like the health checks. The ICFP is discussed at this meeting with our three secondary schools.</p> <p>November - Current year's curriculum loaded onto the software and headline metrics reviewed.</p> <p>January - School leaders will be asked to load next year's curriculum. School budget share assumptions will be loaded by the DoF and capacity will be reviewed.</p> <p>There is still some discussion around standard class size and the work with WAT will support this area.</p>
<p>A question was raised as to whether primaries have completed a Year 6 mock assessment and if a summary could be provided of the indicative forecast data either to the full board or the appropriate committee. Assurance was sought as to how leaders are identifying gaps against targets and prioritising support accordingly if mock assessments have not been completed.</p>	<p>Primary Leaders will complete these by the end of this term and these will be reviewed by the CEO and EDE at the January health checks in line with the usual cycle. This will also be the case for the secondary PPEs.</p>

<p>Commenting that it is positive to see progress on codifying the teaching strategy, confirmation was sought around the expected entitlement for teacher coaching/CPD linked to this. For example, will each teacher have a key action step aligned with the framework, or will schools prioritise specific areas based on their evaluations?</p>	<p>The 'Ivy Way' launch is planned for the Trust wide development day in February with all staff. Incremental coaching will be a key part of the implementation of this strategy and will be the main quality assurance mechanism. Currently all teaching staff receive one hour per fortnight of coaching in all our schools. Many of these aspects already exist across our schools, so the work will be to develop a shared language across our staff body. The intention will be to phase in the changes as a Trust from the Summer 2026.</p>
<p>A question was raised around how leaders will track both anecdotal and measurable impact of the Magma Maths initiative and avoid relying solely on end-of-year outcomes.</p>	<p>This initiative will start with two schools and two classes, one single form year group at Teignmouth Primary and one mixed age class at Cockwood. The intention is for this to 'add to' the current provision and a big driver is to support reducing teacher workload, especially in mixed age classes. Measurable impact will be through end of teaching sequence assessments with the two classes, which is already done across the Trust. Anecdotal impact will come through pupil voice and conferencing by the two schools.</p>
<p>SUPPORT</p>	
<p>SL expressed confidence in the partnership with Windsor Academy Trust, praising their collaborative mindset and noting the project's potential as a case study for the DfE on cross-regional school improvement.</p>	
<p>SL stated that it was good to see secondary school attendance figures moving towards the government-produced benchmarks.</p>	
<p>RG commented that the collaboration with Windsor Academy Trust had been really positive.</p>	
<p>When emailing advance questions to the CEO, CT stated it was pleasing to see the launch of the Magma Maths Initiative, and the significant reduction in suspensions at Dawlish College compared to the previous half term.</p>	
<p>ACTIONS</p>	
<p>Circulate the PowerPoint presentation detailing the RISE programme improvement plan to the board members.</p>	<p>KQ, GW</p>

25/2/5.2 Ivy Education Trust - Part II Item.

This item was discussed under Part II.

25/2/6.1 Committee Reports - FAR Committee meeting held on 25 November 2025

DISCUSSION

PA noted that whilst most of the FAR Committee meeting was focused on accounts, there were other items to discuss. He highlighted the recent catering tender process and invited JL to provide further details.

JL explained that a competitive tender for catering services across the Trust had been conducted. The previous arrangement was a hybrid model with three schools outsourced to Innovate and five schools managed in-house. The tender included options for a fully managed outsourced service and an in-house provision. Following an evaluation, the decision was made to appoint Fresha to deliver a fully outsourced catering model across the Trust. JL stated that whilst catering is important, it is not central to the Trust's core mission, and outsourcing would allow for focus on other priority areas.

JL highlighted that the tender process had a significant focus on sustainability, which accounted for 40% of the quality criteria, and utilised a robust approach to the financial model. It was positioned as a zero-cost model, providing an upside opportunity for the contractor. The contract also stipulated that the food offer must be accessible to all students eligible for Free School Meals.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

A query was raised regarding the status of the teacher Upper Pay Scale (UPS) threshold applications.

It was confirmed that the process had been completed for the year.

DECISIONS

The appointment of Fresha to deliver a fully outsourced catering model across the Trust was approved.

25/2/6.2 Committee Reports - Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 11 November 2025

DISCUSSION

The Committee had received a detailed verbal report from the headteacher of Dawlish College. It was noted that the headteacher had presented new initiatives to improve attendance and reduce suspensions, including a new room for internal isolations which had shown positive changes and significant progress in a short period. The committee had discussed actions from the previous Trust Board meeting, including the monitoring of safe systems and the development of a Power BI dashboard, which would be reviewed at the next meeting. Executive leaders would be tasked with setting changing targets for schools to facilitate monitoring. Other discussion points included risks around capacity and the new Ofsted framework, a focus on Pupil Premium and SEND pupils through the 'Game Plan', and the 'RISE' intervention programme. A concern about phonics in primary schools, prompted by a call from KQ, was noted, with assurances of future improvement given based on QA visits from Connect Academy Trust.

SUPPORT

Positive feedback was given on the significant improvement in the quality of data being presented to the Quality of Education Committee, which now enables more meaningful and informed discussions.

25/2/6.3 Committee Reports - People & Values Committee meeting held on 13 November 2025.

DISCUSSION

GR reported on the recent People & Values Committee meeting. He highlighted that an effective HR system, being built by EWo, was making progress and would provide useful data for analysis and policy discussions. While not yet at the stage of having comprehensive year-on-year data, they were now able to identify what information was needed and could start requesting relevant data.

The committee focused on staff absence management, discussing its impact on both finances and education quality. They examined data on different types of absences, the processes for managing them, and how to support or address staff appropriately.

GR emphasised the importance of talent development within the organisation. The committee discussed a system for categorising staff performance across nine boxes, aiming to identify and retain high performers while supporting those who could improve.

The committee addressed the use of AI in job applications. They reviewed a document outlining expectations for applicants using AI, emphasising the need for authentic submissions while acknowledging AI's growing role in professional life.

EWo mentioned the early stages of development work for Ivy Futures, a Trust-wide skills development programme that would link with their talent management efforts.

SUPPORT

The Committee expressed that the discussion on talent management was very good and that they approved of the approach to AI in applications.

25/2/7.1 LGBs - Cockwood, Kenn and Kenton.

Although there was nothing formally to report for this item, it was requested that the Kenn, Kenton and Cockwood local governing body be asked to report against the five foundations, as they had amended one from 'curriculum' to 'coaching'.

ACTIONS

Ask the Kenn/Kenton and Cockwood local governing body to report against their five foundations, including the change from curriculum to coaching.

GW

25/2/7.2 LGBs - Dawlish College
DISCUSSION

SL introduced the appointment of Matthew Blackwell as the new staff governor (teaching) for Dawlish College, noting that he was the raising standards leader for maths, his pen portrait was available on GovernorHub, and that a nomination process and staff ballot had been successfully completed the previous Friday.

SL then moved to the appointments of the Chair and Vice Chair. GW clarified that these appointments were necessary today as the previous LGB meeting had not been quorate for voting.

From the LGB meeting minutes and comms sheet, KQ noted that the work of the Dawlish governors demonstrated the triangulation of governance across the Trust. She highlighted their deep dive into reducing suspensions, which linked to questions previously raised by CT, and improving attendance. KQ added that the governors report against the five foundations, which links to the Trust's Game Plan, and she acknowledged the work of GW in supporting them. It was noted that this demonstrated good governance and alignment with the Trust's strategic objectives.

SUPPORT

SL agreed with KQ's point regarding the visibility of governance work throughout the Trust.

DECISIONS

The Board approved the appointment of Matthew Blackwell as the staff governor (teaching) for Dawlish College.

The Board approved the appointment of Lisa Johnson as Chair of the Dawlish College Local Governing Body.

The Board approved the appointment of Hannah Grant as Vice Chair of the Dawlish College Local Governing Body.

25/2/7.3 LGBs - Newton Abbot College.

There were no items to discuss regarding Newton Abbot College's Local Governing Body at this meeting.

25/2/7.4 LGBs - Starcross Primary & Teignmouth Primary.
DISCUSSION

Further to CT's submitted query around the number of suspensions at TPS, it was noted that the local governing body had discussed attendance and pupil suspensions at length. They also discussed a nurture provision, previously known as 'Kingfishers', which aimed to better meet pupils' needs and potentially reduce suspensions.

SL observed that it was positive that governors were asking the same questions as trustees, ensuring challenge and

seeking of evidence was happening at the appropriate level. It was also confirmed that ensuring this level of scrutiny from local governing bodies was part of the TGO's governance health checks.

SUPPORT

SL expressed approval that the local governing bodies were providing the appropriate level of scrutiny and asking the same questions as the trustees.

25/2/7.5 LGBs - TCS Exeter Road.

Trustees noted the resignation of parent governor, Cath Merrick, from TCS Exeter Road. It was confirmed that a letter of thanks had already been sent by the chair of governors.

25/2/8.1 Neonatal Care Leave Policy

DISCUSSION

EWo presented updates to the Neonatal Care Leave Policy following feedback from unions. She proposed two key amendments: 1) Adding reassurance about confidentiality in the opening section, acknowledging that staff experiencing traumatic situations regarding a child might not want the school community to know, and 2) Enhancing pension provisions for Local Government Pension Scheme members. For paid leave, the Trust would pay pension contributions based on what employees would have received had they been at work, with service counting as normal for pensionable purposes. For unpaid leave, if employees elect to buy lost pension within 30 days of returning to work, the Trust would pay two-thirds of the total cost, with employees covering the remaining third, mirroring Devon County terms. EWo noted that such situations would likely be infrequent and that the proposed terms aligned with the Trust's values regarding children and young people.

SL noted that the initial draft had been examined in detail by the People & Values Committee and that these were additional amendments.

GR commented that the amendments seemed reasonable and recalled previous discussions acknowledging that this policy would hopefully not need to be used frequently. He added that this kind of generosity was appropriate.

SL agreed that the policy aligned with the organisation's values.

DECISIONS

The Neonatal Care Leave Policy was approved with the amendments proposed by EWo regarding confidentiality assurances and enhanced pension provisions for staff.

ACTIONS

Action agreed amendments and upload policy to Trust website.

GW

25/2/8.2 Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy – For information only.

The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure Policy was presented for information only, following a light-touch review as part of the policy review cycle. The Board noted that only minor admin updates had been made and therefore no formal adoption was required.

25/2/8.3 Lettings Policy

JL presented the proposed changes to the Lettings Policy, explaining that a more robust cancellation policy was required. This was prompted by a large customer who regularly cancelled at short notice, resulting in lost revenue and incurred staff costs. The updated policy would require a greater lead time for cancellations, which would allow

the Trust to re-let the facilities or adjust staffing arrangements.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

A query was raised regarding the financial scale of charges for late cancellations.

It was clarified that a full refund is available for cancellations made 30 or more working days in advance, a 25% refund for cancellations between 15 and 30 working days, and no refund for cancellations made with less than 15 working days' notice, with the full cost being incurred by the user.

DECISIONS

The Board approved the changes to the Lettings Policy, including the new cancellation process.

ACTIONS

Upload updated policy to Trust website.

GW

25/2/9.1 Training and Visits - Details of any training undertaken by Trustees for this period.

DISCUSSION

SL reported that he and LS had both completed Ofsted team inspector training during the term. SL added that he was scheduled to undertake approximately five team inspection roles during February and March, after which he would be able to provide feedback to the Board regarding what the framework means in practice.

GR reported that he had attended a high-quality CST trustee link training session focused on careers. He explained that the training highlighted how careers education can increase aspiration and support social mobility for pupils. GR noted that the work of careers leads in schools can often feel thankless but has a genuine impact. The training also advertised free resources and systems to measure careers engagement, which a Cambridge-area trust had successfully embedded. GR informed the Board that he and GW were arranging for GR to meet with careers leads across the Trust to hear about their strategy and provide encouragement.

SL acknowledged that careers work was a challenging area, particularly in relation to raising aspirations in coastal towns, and expressed interest in hearing more about the careers initiative in the future.

25/2/9.2 Training and Visits - Feedback on any recent school visits and notice of any that are planned.

The board received positive feedback on recent school visits, including PL's visit to Starcross Primary School and EWa's attendance at the Teignmouth Primary nativity performance. The visits were well-received and described in positive terms by the attendees.

The chair closed the meeting at 11.52 am, thanking everyone for their contribution and wishing them a merry Christmas.