



15/10/25

## Minutes

### Learning, Standards & Safeguarding Committee Autumn 2025

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 9.30am at central office

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies/Trust Identity Reminder

**Present:** Margaret Savage (Committee Chair), Claire Paul, Steve Tavener, Gill Shipsides, Jo Callow

**Apologies:** Graeme Barriball

**In Attendance:** Toni Martin (Governance Officer)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first committee meeting of the year. The Chair discussed Q3 'what we do' from the Trust Identity and the sense of belonging that helps children feel like they belong at school. The effects of Covid has not helped with this. Although the word 'belong' isn't in the statement, we do have a family of schools and there is no greater sense of belonging than family. CP noted a project in Cornwall to enhance belonging to improve attendance.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared relevant to this agenda.

#### 3. Elect Committee Chair

This will be done at full Board along with elections for Chair of full Board, Vice Chair and all other committees.

#### 4. Confirm minutes of previous LSS Spring (7<sup>th</sup> May 2025) and matters arising

- Need a specific plan of support for Wer and this needs to be a separate item on the next agenda (JC). *See item 8.*
- Draft Trust Improvement Plan 25-26 to be provided to full Board (JC). *Done.*
- Complete Trust Improvement plan ready for LSS October meeting (JC). *See item 7.*
- ST will email the RDD's office noting that the letter does not reflect the An Daras position and that we look forward to discussing this at the meeting (ST). *Didn't send email as considered counter-productive but had another meeting with RDD's office and the theme is now collaborating with other schools not expanding. They did raise data (but last year's) and they did agree to discuss finances. JC noted ongoing collaboration and other opportunities.*
- Repeat 'Callington Position' on this agenda (JC). *See item 9.*
- Add staff annual surveys to autumn term agenda and amend cyclical plan (TM). *Done, see item 11.*
- Action from confidential minutes: update from CEO on her work with Callington school (JC).

Committee agreed the minutes and confidential minutes, and the Chair signed a copy.

#### 5. Confidential Agenda Items

JC updated on a court case that has been resolved.

***All items below are responsibility of this committee and can be discussed by exception***

## **6. Data**

JC discussed the data. Generally, Foundation and phonics in line with national average. Combined score for reading, writing and maths is 52% and national average is 62%. Unfortunately, in most cases, a child is good at 2 subjects but not a third, and this brings overall score down. **Which subject is it?** Maths. **What is it about maths?** The basic arithmetic tests are generally fine, it is the paper that involves reasoning. The day-to-day quality first teaching is showing benefit in the younger years which will hopefully move through to year 5 and 6 in future but it hasn't reached there yet. It is also disappointing because if progress was measured, it is likely that this would be good, but the attainment figures hide a number of different circumstances, not all of which can be resolved. The financial position does not allow for extra interventions and extra teaching staff to address this. Mobility and staff absence has a huge knock-on effect in many years at many schools. Issue with combined scores is one weak subject sets them back. **It does seem nonsense to combine reading, writing and maths.**

**Last summer the predictions were inaccurate, so how do you plan to improve this?** It was agreed that this needs to be done. If we concentrate too much on top end, we don't want to let the younger age groups suffer as it will have a knock-on effect with them in future. We must do our best for all the children. **Should we re-look at our priorities?** Clearly this is a priority so we need to see if we can take funding from elsewhere, it may not be possible, but we must look at to see what is possible if we re-prioritise.

**If we have subject leaders and teachers who are experts in Maths and we have focused on it, why is it not having more of an impact?** Cornwall is generally lower than national average for Maths and the many other reasons were discussed. **Do they do mock tests?** Yes. **Perhaps we should do it more regularly?**

**Action:**

- **Add to priority number one – try to identify funds to provide maths interventions (EG/JC/FRS)**
- **Look why the good teaching is not translating into good results (JC)**

JC briefly discussed the predictions for next year so far.

## **7. Improvement**

MS challenged some areas of the improvement plan and made some suggestions to the improvement plan, including:

- **Page 3 – the context should set the scene for the strategic plan, a few finer details should go in the context so that we can see where the priorities and actions are coming from, and will help the board to monitor.**
- **Priority 1 – consistency is mentioned in other aspects of the plan but needs to be incorporated into priority 1. We need to address the consistency to teaching and learning due to staff absence.**
- **Staffing and instability needs to be closely monitored, especially as the Heads are having to do even more.**
- **Priority 1 should reference SEND.**

The committee agreed to MS' suggestions and JC will update. It will be put to the full Board in December.

## 8. Support Plan for Wer

JC, DS and NS have visited the school regularly and the school staff are doing everything they should be doing. Mobility, attendance and other issues are present but the staff deal with them effectively, the quality of the teaching is very good, the pastoral support is excellent and the school is very inclusive. Staff are having to spend time in the mornings getting children into school. JC met with the Chair of Governors who is concerned about staff welfare, including the Head teacher. The SEN % is much higher than national average.

The committee were hugely impressed with how the staff at Wer are coping and providing such excellent provision. The committee praised the hard work from the staff and wished their thanks to be passed on (JC) but they also raised concerns about staff well-being. This was discussed.

Can we find 0.4 equivalent from the budget to fund staffing to deal with family, welfare and other issues at Wer so the teaching staff can concentrate on teaching in the classroom.

**Action: Look at whether money can be found from somewhere, even if decision needs to be made to cut something else (FRS)**

## 9. Callington Position

A position statement and two exceptions reports were provided to the committee. The Co-head has taken on attendance. AF is there 5 days a week and is excellent at the pastoral support and ensuring good behaviour; children are in the classrooms learning and a lot of that is down to AF. Attendance is below average but this is due to some children being on part time timetables. There are a lot of positives at Callington now and the results are ok, it is the quality first teaching that still needs some more work and adapting the provision for SEN children. **Do we need to closely monitor the school further?** It was agreed that it can be taken off the agenda as a specific item for now and the good work to continue with support from the trust.

## 10. Curriculum & Learning

### a. MAT Vision & Ethos (including Christian ethos)

No need to change the vision. Flourishing schools programme is in place.

### b. MAT EYFS Statutory Framework (including policies & procedures)

Latest guidance provided to committee for information. All compliant.

### c. Visible Learning

Ongoing, best practice is shared. Nothing further to report.

### d. Christian character and distinctiveness/RE & Collective Worship Compliance

Foundation Director will visit both SC and LT over the next few months, especially with Christmas activities forthcoming. LT is due SIAMS this term.

## 11. Parents, Pupils & Staff

### a. Numbers on roll - implications

JC updated on current reception numbers which are woefully lower than the PAN. Total of 452 pupils less than we can take. This will entail around £310K income next year. **At one point do we close a school?** JC reported that it is quite difficult to close a school and the DfE have been asked to make the process easier. **It looks like we need to do some modelling of new school or class structures to identify options?** JC is already looking at this and possible reductions in teaching staff and this was discussed. **Future staffing will be discussed at FRS.**

### b. Discuss survey feedback (parental, staff & pupil as appropriate). Action to discuss staff.

All staff feedback were positive, but the Chair noted that staff feedback from SSCA was slightly less positive and suggested investigation. JC will look at this.

**c. Discipline, Exclusions & Behaviour**

There have been exclusions this year due to behaviour, figures will be given to full Board.

**d. MAT Pupil attendance**

Short term absences due to colds etc in the autumn and winter. Persistent absences are closely monitored and addressed. CP explained that the approach to attendance seems to be different across different agencies, and we seem to be doing all the measures that are being suggested at various training/briefings attended. Pressure to fine parents but this isn't always appropriate and doesn't improve attendance anyway. Our attendance levels are broadly ok, our attendance policy is in place and Heads apply as required. The policy will be reviewed in 2026.

**e. MAT Best Endeavour Expectations for Teachers**

Provided for the committee and nothing to report.

**f. MAT Best Endeavour Expectations for Learning Support Assistants**

Provided to the committee and nothing to report.

**12. Staff Absence, Retention & Recruitment**

At the start of term, 3-4 off sick. Long term some are off sick with serious illness. It is genuine illness. There are costs involved with providing cover. Insurance scheme in place, but doesn't cover anyone who is not in work on the first day of term and certain other conditions. Supply costs are still an issue, although less than before. There is a knock-on effect on the workload for other staff. **If someone has no intention of coming back to work, what can be done?** Solicitors advice is sought but it is very complicated. The committee recognises the difficulties and options will be discussed in the FRS as part of the staffing discussion.

**13. Learning Related Staff CPD/Training/Qualifications**

EG passed the Accredited Schools Management Advisor qualification. Nothing further to report.

**14. Safeguarding**

- a. Latest KCSiE and re-assurance that it is being applied across the MAT – all implemented.
- b. Safeguarding guidance and policy changes (dependent on when LA policy is issued) – not too many at this time. Policy approved.
- c. MAT Single Central Record compliance – nothing to report.

**15. Safety**

Nothing to report. There is a spring term audit of H&S that will be available for the summer term meeting. To be discussed next year. No safety incidents involving children to report.

**16. Compliance**

**a. Cyber Security**

Cyber security response plan has been updated. **To be approved at full Board**

**b. GDPR**

Nothing to report. **It was noted there were some pictures on linked-in from a staff member, have they permission to have photos of children?** Yes and measures are in place to ensure permissions for this are sought in advance. JC reported that there was a break-in at the pre-school, they accessed a cabinet with forms in that has personal information on. They were not taken but we still need to declare.

**c. Website Compliance of MAT schools**

Nothing to report.

**17. Policy Review**

- a. Racial Equality (LH) – 2 *minor amendments, approved.*
- b. Child Protection & Safeguarding (CP) – *approved by Directors and issued on 26 Sep 2025.*
- c. PPG (LH) – *one line removed, no other changes, approved.*
- d. Allegations of Abuse against Staff (JC) – *one minor change, approved.*
- e. Child on Child Abuse (CP) – *awaiting new policy from LA, carried forward to spring term.*
- f. Volunteers (JC/CP) – *minor amendments, approved.*
- g. EYFS (JC) – *some amendments throughout, approved.*
- h. Feedback (DS) – *substantial amendments. Approved.*

**18. AOB**

JC noted a networking meeting she would like to attend but clashes with LSS meetings, so requested the dates be tweaked – they have been delayed by one week in the spring and summer term. ST noted a charity called EDUKID and what they do.

**19. DONM**

Date of next meeting will be Weds 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Meeting closed at 11.45am

TJH Martin

ADMAT Governance Officer

**Distribution List:**

J. Callow – CEO Director M. Savage – Director (Chair) C. Paul – Director (Committee Vice) S. Tavener – Director (Board Chair)	G. Barriball – Director G. Shipsides - Director
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