

Alumnis Multi Academy Trust

Board of Directors Minutes

Date:	07.10.2025	Venue:	Teams - Online
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Minute Taker:	Jac Robilliard	Chair:	Sian Jenkins
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Start	17.45	End:	18:45
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Directors in Attendance	Initials	Category	Agenda
David Chaplin	DC	Foundation Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Reflections 2. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies 3. Confidentiality Reminder 4. Declaration of Business / Pecuniary Business Interests 5. Receive and approve Minutes 6. Matters arising from Minutes 7. Policies 8. Trust Update 9. Audit 10. Safeguarding Update 11. Committee and Link Director Update 12. Items brought forward at the discretion of the Chair 13. Date and time of next meeting
Sian Jenkins	SJ	Foundation Director	
Amanda Lewry	AL	Foundation Director	
Leo Mackenzie	LM	Foundation Director	
Apologies			
Ignacio Gonzalez-Paramo	IG	Co-Opted Director	
Matthew Shanks	MS	Foundation Director	
Also Present			
Mark Blackman	MB	Trust Support	
Jac Robilliard	JR	Trust Business Manager	

Item	Minutes
1.	<p>Opening Reflections</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the Directors.</p>
2.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Apologies from Ignacio Gonzalez-Paramo and Matthew Shanks. Accepted.</p> <p>Action</p> <p>Update Attendance record</p>
3.	<p>Confidentiality Reminder</p> <p>All in attendance were reminded that any information provided and/or discussions undertaken / advice given in the course of part 2 must remain strictly confidential.</p>
4.	<p>Declaration of Business / Pecuniary Business Interests</p> <p>Action</p> <p>SJ and IGP to return their completed declaration forms.</p> <p>Decisions:</p> <p>The Board reviewed and agreed the register of business and pecuniary interests register.</p>
5.	<p>Minutes of the last meetings</p> <p>The Minutes of the last meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Decisions:</p> <p>The Board unanimously agreed the Minutes as a true and accurate record.</p>
6.	<p>Matters arising from previous Board minutes above</p> <p>Action Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM offboarding - JR - Complete Declaration forms - all SJ and PGP to return



- CEO and CFO appointment forms to DFE - On Agenda
- Housekeeping forms - Directors to return
- Include Cyber attack risk on RR - MB

MB - Sick leave within the IT Department. Interim IT support has been arranged through LAP, who have extended their existing outsourced IT contract to include our schools. The agreement, costing approximately £2,500 per month, provides regular on-site support for larger schools and reactive and maintenance support for smaller schools.

This arrangement enhances IT resilience and ensures professional oversight of cybersecurity and systems management. The contract operates on a monthly rolling basis as an extension of our existing SLA with LAP and will adjust as schools transfer to ACE.

- Safeguarding on websites - JR to follow up with James Creek

Decisions:

The Board unanimously agreed and approved the Computeam contract.

7. Policies

[Leo's queries and responses](#)

- [Equality Aims](#)
- [PP Strategies](#)
- [PE Strategies](#)
- [SEND Policy](#)
- [CiC Attendance Policy](#)
- [Carers Policy](#)
- [Children with Health Needs that Cannot attend school](#)
- [Children in Care Policy](#)
- [Attendance Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policies](#)
- [Resolution Policy \(replacing Grievance\)](#)
- [Pay Policy](#)

[Summary of updates for Safeguarding Policies 25-26](#)

Admissions Policies with amendments 2025-26 and 2026-27

[Schools Admissions policies changes](#)

[Admissions Policies 25-26](#)

[Admissions Policies 26-27](#)

- [Bampton](#)
- [Burlescombe](#)
- [Clawton](#)
- [Combe Martin](#)
- [Dolton](#)
- [St Helen's](#)



- [The Clinton](#)
- [Webbers](#)
- [Woolacombe](#)

[Whistleblowing Policy](#)

The above Policies had been circulated prior to the meeting. LM had submitted queries which are noted together with responses. Clarifications were provided regarding the Resolution and Safeguarding Policies, with minor amendments made following review with JR.

Regarding the Pay Policy, Directors queried whether all teachers receive regular performance feedback as outlined. It was confirmed that this is covered under the existing service level agreement with partner trusts and is being implemented. A typographical error in the pay range date (September 2024) will be corrected to September 2025 to align with published ranges.

Updates were provided to the Resolution, Whistleblowing, Attendance, and Children with Healthcare Needs Policies, incorporating comments from relevant staff and officers. Directors agreed that the Attendance Policy should be updated to reflect current practice and ensure clear communication routes through school offices.

It was noted that HR-related policies have been consulted on through trade unions and cannot be amended locally, whereas school-based policies can be adapted as appropriate.

The Whistleblowing Policy wording was reviewed, and governors agreed to strengthen paragraph 4.1 to provide clearer signposting, allowing staff to raise concerns with any board member if they feel uncomfortable following the normal route. Email addresses for all directors are confirmed as being available on the trust website.

Safeguarding policies and updates were reviewed and approved with no further comments.

Admissions Policies

JR outlined updates recommended by Devon County Council following determinations by the Office of the Schools Adjudicator. These relate to the timing and processing of in-year applications. Governors agreed to adopt the proposed wording and for the revised policies to be sent to the Diocese for confirmation.

Draft admissions policies for 2027–28 were also approved for consultation, with final versions to return to the board in January for ratification following stakeholder feedback.

Decisions:

- The Board unanimously approved all reviewed and amended policies, subject to agreed amendments.

Action

- Pay Policy - Update Teacher pay grades.
- Attendance Policy - Update to reflect current practice and ensure clear communication routes through school offices.
- Whistleblowing - paragraph 4.1 to provide clearer signposting, allowing staff to raise concerns with any board member if they feel uncomfortable following the normal route



8.	<p>Trust Update</p> <p>The Risk Register had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>MB provided an update on trust matters. The trust’s transfer proposals are scheduled for consideration at the forthcoming Advisory Board meeting, and the publication of this agenda has been shared with school communities. Stakeholders have been invited to submit their views to the DfE through the usual channels.</p> <p>Interim headship arrangements have been secured at Clawton School through colleagues in LAP. The trust will contribute a proportionate salary cost for the individual’s part-time support, with no additional charge, in full compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p>The Board noted the importance of conducting exit interviews to capture learning from recent leadership changes. MB confirmed that this would be implemented.</p> <p>[Retract from public view It was noted with regret that Carys Barnett, Headteacher of Webbers and Burlescombe Schools, has tendered her resignation with effect from the end of the autumn term. Discussions are ongoing with ACE regarding leadership arrangements following her departure. Directors supported the proposal to delay communication to parents until a clear plan for interim leadership has been agreed.]</p> <p>Significant leadership challenges remain across several schools, including ongoing long-term staff absences. Jo Evans continues to provide valuable liaison with LAP and support for leadership capacity across the trust.</p> <p>The Board expressed their thanks to both for their ongoing leadership and to Jo Evans for her support in managing complex staffing circumstances.</p> <p>Applications have been submitted to appoint Mark as Accounting Officer and Kevin as Chief Financial Officer.</p> <p>Appointment of CFO - Sent to DfE</p> <p>Appointment of AO - Sent to DfE</p>
9.	<p>Audit</p> <p>The Internal Audit Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>MB presented the Internal Audit Report, noting that the majority of areas received positive (“green”) ratings. The report includes a number of recommendations and actions, reflecting ongoing improvements in processes and demonstrating that the trust is in a stronger position than previously. Governors were assured that all recommendations will be addressed, with Kevin, CFO, overseeing their implementation.</p> <p>The External Audit Planning Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The External Audit Planning Report and associated Letter of Engagement were also presented by MB. No issues were identified, and the proposed audit approach was consistent with prior years.</p>



A notional rent charge of 3% for land provided by the church was discussed. This is a standard accounting practice with no actual payment required. Governors approved the notional charge, the External Audit Planning Report, and the Letter of Engagement.

The Board noted the reports and confirmed approval of the actions presented.

[Letter of engagement](#) - sign off request

[Standard instructions](#) - sign off request

Decisions:

- Letter of Engagement and standard instructions were unanimously agreed by the Board. SJ to sign paperwork.

10. Safeguarding Update

MB provided a brief update on safeguarding. No substantial changes were reported since the last meeting. Directors noted a previous query regarding how safeguarding concerns can be raised, particularly following the departure of the former Safeguarding Lead. It was confirmed that concerns should be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL at the relevant school. In addition, members of the public may raise concerns with the MASH in Devon. An action was noted to ensure that this information is clearly displayed on all school websites, with an update to be provided at the next meeting.

Governors discussed mechanisms for assuring themselves that safeguarding arrangements are effective across the trust. It was confirmed that Jo Evans will provide a briefing paper for each board meeting summarising safeguarding oversight, including the monitoring of schools supported under Service Level Agreements (SLAs). This will ensure statutory duties are maintained and triangulated with reports from Local School Committees (LSCs) and headteachers.

Directors noted that safeguarding practices are subject to external audit by Devon Safeguarding Services, and that the trust routinely participates in these audits. Matthew Shanks was confirmed as the safeguarding link Director and will be able to visit schools to review safeguarding practices and processes.

The Board noted the update and confirmed the arrangements for ongoing oversight of safeguarding.

Action

- Social Inclusion Officer to ensure that safeguarding information is clearly displayed on all school websites, with an update to be provided at the next meeting.
- Matthew Shanks to arrange safeguarding visit



11.	<p>Committee and Link Director Update</p> <p>David Chaplin - Learning and Standards</p> <p>Mandy Lewry - Christian Distinctiveness/SIAMS</p> <p>Matthew Shanks - Safeguarding and SEND</p> <p>Resignation from SB - Coastal</p> <p>Resignation from JH - Coastal, now Torridge</p> <p>Resignation from CCH - Tritons now Torridge</p> <p>DC provided an update on the committee and link director activities. He confirmed that a written report, summarising school visits and key discussion points, will be circulated to Directors after the meeting:</p> <p>Ethos, Learning and Standards Report</p> <p>The visits focused on three main areas: pupil outcomes, SIAMS inspections, and leadership, including engagement with incoming trusts.</p> <p>Pupil Outcomes:</p> <p>Some schools demonstrated strong outcomes, including Bampton, Burlescombe, Clawton, and Woolacombe, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, a few schools have consistently weak performance, such as phonics outcomes at St Helen's, with limited evidence of challenge from the Trust in previous years. Headteachers have streamlined school improvement plans, prioritising key objectives to improve manageability and focus. Vulnerable schools were noted as lacking strategic planning.</p> <p>SIAMS:</p> <p>AL reported that no SIAMS inspections are expected in the next 12 months. Schools are returning to focusing on values and distinctiveness rather than character education frameworks previously emphasised by the trust. Ethos teams have been established to support schools in developing and maintaining these aspects, with collaboration encouraged where possible.</p> <p>Leadership:</p> <p>DC highlighted challenges regarding leadership capacity across the trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some headteachers are carrying significant teaching loads alongside leadership responsibilities, limiting time for strategic planning. • Certain schools lack clear HR support and guidance, which will be clarified and communicated. • Leadership support from incoming trusts varies: ACE-supported schools have clear, structured support with a focus on curriculum development and professional challenge, whereas LAP-supported schools have experienced slower engagement and limited communication, leaving some staff feeling unsupported. <p>Three key implications for the board were identified:</p>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vulnerable Schools: Clawton and Clinton require focused attention due to gaps in leadership and support. Interim leadership arrangements are being considered where necessary. 2. Headteacher Workload: Some headteachers, such as at St. Helens, are teaching extensively, impacting strategic oversight. The board acknowledged the need to support them appropriately. 3. Budgetary and Staffing Challenges: Headteachers have been empowered to make staffing decisions within tight budgets, but this may increase pressure on leadership and operational capacity. <p>DC and AL emphasised the importance of clear communication with schools during the transition to new trusts. The board discussed the need to provide staff with an overview of the process and steps involved, even if exact timelines are uncertain.</p> <p>Directors recognised the value of link director visits in providing insight into school operations, and thanked DC and AL for their commitment.</p> <p>The board acknowledged the ongoing challenges within schools and the importance of supporting headteachers and staff during the transition period.</p> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"> <p>Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on each school's progress and action plans should be included in future board meetings. • Safeguarding reports should be brought to the next board meeting by the safeguarding-linked director, MS. • Consideration should be given to communicating with the wider school community about supporting schools and engaging with Local School Committees (LSCs) during the transition period. • The number of pupils per school should be reviewed to inform next year's funding considerations. </div>
12.	<p>Items brought forward at the discretion of the Chair</p> <p>Communication record</p>
13.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Calendar</p> <p>18/11/25 - 5.45pm - LM unable to attend. Apologies given.</p>

