

Alumnis Multi Academy Trust

Board of Directors Minutes



Date:	19.05.2026	Venue:	Teams - Online
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Minute Taker:	Jac Robilliard	Chair:	Sian Jenkins
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Start	17.45	End:	
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Directors in Attendance	Initials	Category	Agenda
Sian Jenkins	SJ	Foundation Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Reflection 2. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies 3. Confidentiality Reminder 4. Declaration of Business Interests 5. Minutes 6. Matters Arising 7. Educational Update 8. Policies 9. Operations Update 10. Safeguarding Update 11. Committee Reports 12. Items brought forward by the Chair 13. Date and time of next meeting
David Chaplin	DC	Foundation Director	
Leo Mackenzie	LM	Foundation Director	
Matthew Shanks	MS	Foundation Director	
Absent/Apologies			
Jo Evans	JE		
Also Present			
Mark Blackman	MB	Trust Lead	
Jac Robilliard	JR	Trust Business Manager	



Item	Minutes
1.	Opening Reflections
2.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jo Evans - absent
3.	Confidentiality Reminder
4.	Declaration of Business Interests None
5.	Minutes The Minutes from 31.3.2026 & 21.04.2026 had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Directors reviewed the Minutes from 31 March and 21 April. <div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 10px;"> Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor amendment identified: correct "rewrite ink" to "Read Write Inc." (SK) Publish on website, along with approved Minutes. (SK) </div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; padding: 10px;"> Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of 31/3/26 and 21/04/2026 approved subject to amendment. </div>
6.	Matters Arising None
7.	Educational Update MB reported a positive picture across the schools, noting that SATs had been completed without significant issues and that interim leadership arrangements were working well. Feedback from Head Teachers suggested schools were beginning to move beyond a difficult period and were increasingly focused on school improvement and preparation for September. DC reported on his recent visits to schools and highlighted improved attendance at leadership meetings, with full representation from schools, Local School Committees and Trust representatives. He noted stronger evidence of impact from support arrangements than had been visible in January.



While there were positive signs, DC cautioned that several schools remained vulnerable and that improvement capacity varied significantly depending on the strength of leadership within individual schools.

Particular concern was expressed about Combe Martin, where leadership confidence and preparedness appeared weaker than elsewhere. DC suggested that although ACE had provided high-quality curriculum training and support, the support offer was not always sufficiently tailored to the specific needs of individual schools.

MB agreed that the next stage of support needed to focus more on school-specific improvement rather than generic curriculum implementation.

DC - How do we ensure ACE provides more bespoke support to schools such as Combe Martin rather than a generic programme?

MB - ACE has focused heavily on stabilisation and curriculum implementation during the initial phase. Future discussions with ACE will need to focus on the level of day-to-day leadership support individual Head Teachers require.

DC - Who will ensure that support visits genuinely assess impact rather than simply reviewing activity?

MB - Jo Evans will be encouraged to attend future visits alongside ACE representatives to provide triangulation and assess whether support is leading to measurable improvements.

MS - What is the clear action arising from DC's observations, and how will the Board know whether concerns have been addressed?

MB - The issue will form part of discussions around future support arrangements. ACE has already submitted a proposal for ongoing support and there will be further conversations about tailoring that support more precisely to the needs of individual schools.

Decision

The Board recognised the positive impact of support to date but agreed that future support should be more targeted to individual school needs, particularly in schools where leadership capacity remains fragile. MB

Action

- Discuss bespoke support requirements with ACE. MB
- Ensure Jo Evans attends future review visits where possible. JE
- Report back to the Board on revised support arrangements. MB

ACE SLA Proposal and Future Trust Arrangements



The Board considered a proposal from ACE for approximately £30,000 of additional school improvement support covering around 55 days across the five schools.

Directors acknowledged the value of the support already provided but questioned whether the proposal represented the level of bespoke support required.

Several Directors expressed concern that schools expected to join ACE were now being charged for support that might ordinarily be provided as part of trust membership.

Discussion also focused on the risks of withdrawing support while transfer arrangements remained unresolved.

MS - If ACE intends to take these schools into the trust, why is support now being charged for rather than provided as part of the transfer process?

MB - ACE's position is that transfer arrangements remain unresolved and therefore additional support requires a separate service level agreement. The proposed cost equates to approximately 55 days of support and access to wider trust resources.

SJ - Is the proposed support sufficiently tailored to the different needs of the schools?

MB - The current proposal is largely generic. A request can be made for a more bespoke offer which reflects the differing levels of need across the schools.

SJ - What happens if the transfer does not proceed?

MB - The trust may need to consider alternative providers of school improvement support. Informal discussions have already begun regarding possible contingency arrangements.

Decision:

The Board agreed that support should continue but requested a revised proposal demonstrating a more tailored approach to school improvement.

Action:

- Request a bespoke support plan from ACE - MB
- Continue discussions with Regions Group and DFE regarding funding support - MB/SJ
- Explore contingency trust and support arrangements if required - Leadership Team

8. Policies



The Board considered four policies presented for approval, which had been circulated prior to the meeting :

- [Early Years Foundation Stage](#)
- [LSC School Visits](#)
- [Uniform](#)
- [Curriculum teaching and learning](#)

Whilst Directors acknowledged the work undertaken in preparing the policies, concerns were raised regarding whether several of the documents accurately reflected current practice across the Trust's schools.

DC noted that elements of the Early Years Policy referred to approaches and methodologies that were not currently evident within the Trust's schools. Whilst not necessarily incorrect, he questioned whether the policy accurately reflected operational reality.

The LSC School Visits Policy was generally supported, although it was noted that the visit report template still contained references to historic Ofsted grading terminology and named individuals rather than roles.

The most significant discussion centred on the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy. Members questioned whether the policy reflected the actual educational position of schools across the Trust. References to concepts such as a "Changemakers Curriculum", entrepreneurial learning and consistently excellent teaching were viewed as aspirational rather than representative of current practice in a number of schools.

MC expressed concern that the policy described a position that did not exist in reality and therefore risked creating a disconnect between governance documentation and operational practice.

MB observed that the Trust is currently operating in a unique position, with schools receiving support from different trusts and operating increasingly at school level rather than under a unified Trust-wide educational model. As a result, Trust-level policies were becoming increasingly difficult to justify where schools were not all following the same curriculum approach or educational framework.

Discussion moved to whether it remained appropriate to maintain a large number of Trust-level operational policies at all. Members noted that many policies would be better owned and maintained at school level, aligned with the school improvement partner or trust supporting the school.

The Board recognised the importance of avoiding unnecessary workload for school leaders and agreed that any future policy arrangements should minimise duplication and administrative burden.



The Chair thanked JR and Sukkeena King for the significant work undertaken in maintaining the policy framework during a period of organisational uncertainty.

LM - Does the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy genuinely reflect what is happening within schools?

DC - Significant sections do not reflect current practice. Whilst the principles may be aspirational, references to excellent teaching and specific curriculum models do not accurately describe the position in several schools.

DC - Should policies continue to sit at Trust level when schools are increasingly operating through their respective improvement partnerships?

MB - Many of these policies no longer operate meaningfully at Trust level. Schools would be better served by having policies that reflect the practices and expectations of the trust or organisation supporting them directly.

SJ - Could the Trust instead maintain a very high-level policy framework and allow schools to adopt operational policies locally?

MB - That would be possible, but schools would still require detailed operational policies for inspection and compliance purposes. It may therefore be more practical to support schools in adopting and adapting policies from their partner trusts.

LM - How can the Board avoid creating additional workload for school leaders through policy changes?

MB - The central team can support schools by sourcing and adapting policies from partner trusts, reducing the burden on individual schools and ensuring policies remain current and relevant.

Decisions:

The Board agreed that the four policies would not be approved as Trust-level policies in their current form.

The Board further agreed that:

- Operational policies should increasingly sit at school level rather than Trust level.
- Schools should be supported to adopt policies aligned to the trust or school improvement partner supporting them.
- Only those policies required for Trust-wide governance, statutory compliance or employer responsibilities should remain at Trust level.
- A review of the current policy framework should be undertaken to identify which policies should be devolved to schools.



Actions

- Produce a schedule identifying policies that should remain at Trust level and those to be devolved to schools - MB
- Support schools in adopting appropriate policies from partner trusts where required - Central team
- Update the LSC School Visits Policy to remove named individuals and replace with role titled - SK
- Review references to the outdated Ofsted terminology within policy documentation - JR
- Bring a revised policy framework proposal to next Board meeting - SK to share with MB

The Board formally recorded its thanks to JR and Sukkeena for their work in maintaining and reviewing the Trust's policy framework during a period of significant organisational transition.

9. Operations Update

Circulated prior to the meeting:

- [Finance Report March](#)
- [Cash Flow Monitoring April](#)

MB presented the operations and finance update and reported that the Trust remained in a positive cash position despite the significant financial challenges experienced over the previous year.

The Board noted that budget planning for the forthcoming financial year was underway, with schools working alongside JR and the finance team to prepare draft budgets. These budgets would subsequently be reviewed and signed off by the Chief Financial Officer before being presented to the Board for approval.

MB advised that the Trust remained above the financial threshold established by the Department for Education (DfE) and that, compared with previous reporting periods, the financial position was considerably more stable.

Discussion focused on the reported reserves position and whether the available cash represented genuinely expendable reserves. MB explained that a significant proportion of the Trust's cash position was linked to DfE support funding and future liabilities, including redundancy and pension strain costs associated with organisational restructuring.

Directors discussed the distinction between cash held in the bank and the Trust's underlying financial commitments. It was noted that while headline figures appeared healthy, future obligations meant that caution remained necessary when considering expenditure.



The Board also discussed the need for greater visibility of future financial commitments and the importance of understanding projected cash flow beyond the current reporting period.

In addition, the Board considered proposed term dates for the next academic year and the draft governance calendar. Given ongoing uncertainty regarding school transfers, members agreed that governance arrangements should remain in place until future organisational structures were confirmed.

- [Term Dates 2027-28](#)
- [Draft calendar 2026 - 27](#)

SJ - Given the current reserves position, should the Trust now be investing more heavily in school buildings and estates?

MB - Whilst the reported cash position appears positive, a significant proportion of the funds relate to DfE support funding and future liabilities. The Trust must therefore remain cautious about committing expenditure until longer-term financial commitments are fully understood.

LM - If a significant portion of the reported reserves is effectively committed or linked to debt, should this be reflected differently within financial reporting?

MB - There is a distinction between cash available in the bank and the Trust's overall financial position. Although the cash exists, liabilities and future commitments must also be considered. The finance team can explore ways of presenting this more clearly in future reports.

LM - Can the Board receive a forward financial forecast showing expected liabilities, assumptions and future cash positions?

MB - Yes. This information will form part of the forthcoming budget-setting process and will include key assumptions around staffing costs, pay awards and other known liabilities.

LM - Do future pay awards represent a significant risk to the Trust's financial position?

MB - At present there remains uncertainty regarding the level of future teacher and support staff pay awards and the extent to which these will be funded. Appropriate assumptions will be incorporated into budget planning.

DC - What should happen with governance meetings and ELS arrangements if school transfer dates change?

JR - Current arrangements should remain in place for the time being, with provisional dates established to ensure governance continuity should transfer timescales change.

Decisions

The Board noted the current financial position and welcomed the improved stability of the Trust's finances. The Board agreed that:

- A cautious approach to expenditure should continue.
- More detailed financial forecasting should be presented alongside future budget reports.
- Proposed term dates be approved.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance and ELS meeting arrangements should remain in place pending further clarity on school transfer arrangements. <div> Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare detailed financial forecasts showing future liabilities, assumptions and projected cash positions - CFO Present draft budgets for Board approval at the next budget-setting meeting - CFO Confirm governance calendar and provisional ELS meeting dates - JR Consider whether future financial reports should separately identify DFE supported funding and associated liabilities - CFO </div>
10.	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>MB presented the safeguarding update and confirmed that there had been no serious safeguarding incidents, significant concerns or reportable matters since the previous Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board was advised that routine safeguarding arrangements remained in place across schools and that positive working relationships continued with local authority safeguarding partners.</p> <p>MS, in his role as safeguarding Director, confirmed that no additional concerns had been raised through governance channels.</p> <p>Directors welcomed the continued absence of significant safeguarding issues whilst recognising the importance of maintaining vigilance and strong safeguarding oversight across all schools.</p>
11.	<p>Committee Reports</p> <p>The ELS update from DC had been provided earlier in the meeting. DC's notes had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Summary of outcomes</p>
12.	<p>Items brought forward by the Chair</p> <p>Covered in earlier discussion.</p> <p>Email From ACE</p> <p>Meeting with Regions</p>
13.	<p>Date and time of next meetings</p> <p>23/06/2026 - 17:45</p>



