

## PART ONE MINUTES

### Meeting of the Trust Board of The Learning Partnership

Held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 9:30 am

Venue – Crewe UTC, [45 Meredith Street, Crewe CW1 2PZ](#)

#### Trustees present:

Mr David Wootton CBE DL (DW)-Chair  
Mr Andrew Pear DL (AP)-joined at 10:10 am  
Mr John Clough (JC)  
Mrs Helen Ranson (HR)  
Mr Bob Armstrong OBE (BA)

Dr Martin Ashcroft (MA)-joined at 10:00 am  
Mr Robin McCluney (RMC)  
Mr Simon Kidwell (SK)  
Dame Kathy August (KA)

#### Apologies

n/a

#### In attendance

Mr Dan Thomas (DTh)-CEO  
Mr David Twambley (DTw)-DCEO-Operations  
Ms Kate Baddeley (KB)-DCEO-Education  
Dr Allan Howells (AH)-Director of Quality  
Mrs Sally Dakin (SD)-Executive Headteacher  
Castle Primary School and Dove Bank Primary  
School-item 1 only

Mrs Sue Pomeroy (SP)-Clerk

Agenda Item	Action
<p><b>1. Presentation from Sally Dakin, Executive Headteacher Castle Primary School and Dove Bank Primary School</b></p> <p>SD shared a presentation with Trustees, which was later uploaded to Governor Hub. The presentation contained the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Journey so far...</li> <li>• Demographics of Castle Primary School</li> <li>• Demographics of Dove Bank Primary School</li> <li>• The English Indices of Deprivation</li> <li>• Executive Headteacher Role</li> <li>• Strategic Priorities</li> <li>• How does the Trust continue to benefit Castle and Dove Bank?</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked SD for the insight into both schools and the challenges of the Executive Headteacher role. He invited questions from Trustees:</p> <p><b>Trustee Question: How do you structure your time across the two schools?</b> SD: My calendar is shared with the staff, and I divide my time on-site equally between both schools. It is a short journey between the two settings, and I can easily move between them if necessary. Staff know that they can always contact me. There is a clear leadership structure at both schools.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question: How confident are you that pupil numbers can be increased at CPS?</b> SD: I met with the Local Authority and looked at the data for 2-year-olds and am confident that the children are there. We want to admit 2-year-olds.</p>	

<p><i>MA arrived at 10:00 am.</i></p> <p><b>Trustee Question: Does the Trust have a good understanding of your local area and of what families need?</b></p> <p><b>SD:</b> Yes. The Director of Primary has a good understanding of both catchment areas, which are different, and she talks to pupils and parents.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question: Have you had chance to analyse the Key Stage 2 SAT's results yet? There are some interesting results, for example, CPS has the highest Writing results but the lowest Reading results. THE ES&amp;P Committee will consider the results at its first meeting in 2025-26.</b></p> <p><b>SD:</b> We are aware of the headline figures and will analyse the results in September 2025.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question: How did you manage the transition from being the Headteacher of DB to the Executive Head of both schools?</b></p> <p><b>SD:</b> The Autumn term 20254 was difficult at first. I developed a good relationship with the previous Headteacher of CPS who was still in post for the autumn term to provide continuity. I very quickly felt that I became Head of both schools.</p> <p><b>KB commented</b> that SD has been fully accepted by the staff and community at CPS.</p> <p><i>AP arrived at 10:10 am.</i></p> <p><b>Trustee Question: Who deals with any potential complaints in each school?</b></p> <p><b>SD:</b> If it is a written complaint it would come to me. SLT would deal with verbal complaints as they arise and would always contact me for advice and support.</p> <p><b>Trustee Question: How could the Trust support you further?</b></p> <p><b>SD:</b> With additional finance and staffing. There are good staff at each school and it's about being able to release them from the classroom to add capacity.</p> <p>Trustees thanked SD for her presentation.</p> <p><i>SD left the meeting at 10:15 am.</i></p> <p><b>2. Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies to receive.</p> <p><b>3. Declarations and confirmations</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made concerning the items on the agenda.</p> <p><b>4. Minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p>a. Trustees reviewed the part 1 minutes from the previous meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> Trustees approved the part 1 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>b. Trustees reviewed the part 2 minutes from the previous meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> Trustees approved the part 2 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>c. <b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>The Chair reviewed the action log. It was confirmed that actions from the previous meeting had been met or would be addressed on this agenda. There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p><b>5. Chair's report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BFPS Consultation on lowering the age range from 3-11 to 2-11.</li> </ul> <p>DW explained that he had carefully considered the consultation document and had confirmed that there was nothing in the document that would prevent the school from lowering the age range and that he had been happy for the Trust to submit the significant change application to the DFE. There had been concerns raised around</p>	

<p>space, suitability, parking, food and safety and the Chair had asked that Trustees be kept informed that the assurances provided on these matters had been acted upon.</p>	
<p><b>6. Governance Matters: Feedback from Governance Conference 14.06.25</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone who had attended the conference and those who had presented or helped to facilitate a session. He asked AH to provide feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources and feedback are available on Governor Hub.</li> <li>• The conference had been successful and constructive feedback received. Comments from the feedback had been included in the Trust newsletter.</li> <li>• Every school had been represented at the conference and some Headteachers had attended.</li> <li>• Around 17 new governors had attended, and it had been a good opportunity for them to meet other governors and Trustees and make connections across the Trust.</li> <li>• Actions had been identified from the conference, and some had already been discussed at Chair's Forum. Main actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve communications and the flow of information between layers of governance</li> <li>➤ Develop governor training</li> <li>➤ Create governor link networks</li> <li>➤ Repeat the session on pupil attainment data</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>JC commented</b> that communication had been discussed at the Governance Committee on 15.07.25 and it had been decided that each LGB would have a visit from one Member of the Governance Committee during the year.</p> <p>Trustees asked whether the Trust has a communication strategy and discussed how communication between the Trust and the LGBs needs to be more systematic and how links could be developed with the community. LGBs have the local knowledge and can feed this through to the Trust Board.</p> <p>Trustees requested that Estates and Communications be added as items to the next Trust Board agenda. <b>ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>7. Strategic Update</b></p> <p><b>a. Placed based education</b></p> <p>DTh delivered a presentation and highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the Executive and Trustee strategy morning on 6th May 2025 the executive team have been developing the strategic vision and direction for TLP. The focus has been on delivering a vision that would articulate TLP's way of working across the organisation to ensure the benefit to all pupils and communities.</li> <li>• Place -based education is a way of delivering education connecting learning to the local environmental, cultural, and historical contexts in which education itself takes place. The school is at the heart of the community.</li> </ul> <p>The presentation covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What placed based education will look like</li> <li>• Areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teaching and Learning and the Curriculum</li> <li>➤ Cradle to Career</li> <li>➤ Community Transformation Project</li> <li>➤ Provider of Appropriate Specialist Education</li> <li>➤ Inclusion at the heart of our ethos</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

<p><b>Trustees raised the following challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an ambitious strategy which reflects the philosophy of the Trust. However, Trustees need to see how it will be translated into specific, measurable objectives for each school and community.</li> <li>• When would timelines be available.</li> <li>• Does the Trust have the resources and capacity to achieve these ambitions?</li> <li>• Has the executive considered all the agencies around the child and how they are connected and can work together?</li> </ul> <p><b>b. Cradle to career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEO has been working with a variety of stakeholders to develop a ‘Cradle to Career Project’ based in one of the most deprived wards in the Crewe locality in partnership with a charity called Right to Succeed.</li> <li>• This project is an example of the vision to develop place-based education.</li> <li>• The paper outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Background to Crewe Cradle to Career</li> <li>➢ How the project works</li> <li>➢ Timescales</li> <li>➢ Conclusion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The supplementary paper 7b. “<i>Cradle to Career for Crewe May 25</i>” provides further information on the presentation delivered by DTh to the steering group.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees raised the following challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the cost to the Trust?</li> <li>• Is the project focused just on Crewe East?</li> <li>• What happens if some of the schools in Crewe do not commit to the project?</li> <li>• Is the Trust confident to secure the final funding for the project?</li> <li>• Who is accountable for the success of the project?</li> <li>• Has the work of Right to Succeed been validated?</li> </ul> <p><b>c. Trust Strategic Plan – update from 2024/5- and 5-year plan: DTh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TLP was formed in September 2023.</li> <li>• A one-year strategic plan was developed for 2024-25. Paper 7c. includes highlights from the term 3 plan from 2024-25.</li> <li>• Following on from the Trustee and Executive strategy morning on 6th May 2025, the executive team have been developing the new 5-year strategic plan.</li> <li>• The mission, vision and values have been re-defined and are set out in paper 7c.2.</li> <li>• Strategic objectives for the next five years are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Educational Excellence</li> <li>➢ Workforce strategy</li> <li>➢ Leadership and Governance</li> <li>➢ Financial Sustainability</li> <li>➢ Infrastructure and Facilities:</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Supplementary document 7c.3 outlines the key actions needed to deliver the plan, separated by objective and into action for years 1 and 2 and then years 3-5.</p> <p><b>Trustees challenged</b> on the details of how the plan would be delivered, school by school, and on how success will be measured. KPIs need to be developed along with data dashboards. DTh responded that school by school success criteria sits with the schools and is evidenced in their SDPs. KPIs will be developed once the objectives have been agreed by Trustees. They already exist in some areas and others will be developed in more complex areas. It has not been possible previously to obtain reliable, standardised</p>	
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<p>data from the schools, but the newly appointed Trust data manager is working on finalising the data dashboards. DTh stated that the purpose of his presentation today was to deliver the 5-year strategic plan requested by Trustees. He reminded them that TLP is only in its second year of operation as a Trust.</p> <p>It was agreed that the top three KPIs by area would be produced for Trustees to consider. <b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> Trustees approved the 5-year strategic plan</p> <p><b>8. Education Update</b></p> <p>KB spoke to “<i>Paper 8a), 8b), 8c)-Daven, Congelton, Sir William Stanier</i>” which provided an update on the three most vulnerable schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DPS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Despite staffing turbulence, including in leadership, the school has made good progress.</li> <li>➤ Concerns remain around phonics and early years outcomes.</li> <li>➤ SEND is a significant challenge. The Trust is in early discussions with the LA regarding a proposal for a SEND unit on site due to the significant need and the success this year of the Orange Room.</li> <li>➤ The school is eligible for RISE support but is not part of phase 1, so this is likely to start in the autumn term 2025.</li> <li>➤ The school will be taking part in the DfE PINS project next year (Partnerships for inclusion of neurodiversity in schools (PINS) programme).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>CHS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The school has faced challenging community events which have brought additional pressures for the staff and pupils.</li> <li>➤ The Headteacher has engaged positively with the Trust executives and an external coach to steer the school towards sustainable curriculum design, organisational efficiency and strengthening of the school culture.</li> <li>➤ SEND continues to be a significant challenge. Turbulence in leadership has hindered progress expected in this area. Trust support has been provided with the central SEND adviser now taking up post as their SENDCo on an interim basis until a permanent leader is appointed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>SWS:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A positive Ofsted monitoring visit took place on 08.07.25 and the report is expected in September 2025.</li> <li>➤ Improvements have been made in reading and attendance.</li> <li>➤ Leadership changes have been effective.</li> <li>➤ Pupils commented to Ofsted that they can see a change in the school.</li> <li>➤ The RISE adviser is supportive and the strategic partnership with the Laurus Trust will be maintained.</li> <li>➤ There is still a lot of work to do to embed the improvements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>d. Outcomes for primary</b></p> <p>KB spoke to “<i>Paper 8d. TLP Primary Results FINAL</i>”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results are provisional at this stage and have not been scrutinised by ES&amp;P Committee.</li> <li>• There were no surprises this year.</li> <li>• Trust-wide performance is generally above national averages.</li> <li>• Writing has been identified as a key development area across the Primary schools, in particular writing at GD.</li> </ul> <p><b>e. Anticipated outcomes for secondary</b></p>	<p>DTh/DTw/KB</p>
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<p>KB referred to “<i>Paper KS4 Secondary Overview Spring 2025 FINAL</i>” which provides predicted data based on trial 2 exams. She highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The schools are using different systems to predict outcomes, and the Trust needs to validate the accuracy of the predictions and ensure that a standard system is in place for both target setting and predictions next year.</li> <li>• The RAG rating on the document is against the target. The schools are being challenged more on their targets and will be considering how success is measured for example by looking at what pupils need to be able to progress to the next level of their education, rather than just considering raw data.</li> <li>• Key Stage 4 results are expected to improve across the board. SWS is reporting a slight increase, but the Trust is remaining cautious.</li> <li>• There is no progress 8 measure this year.</li> </ul> <p><b>9. Finance Update</b></p> <p>Trustees noted the following papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>9b Management Accounts - P10 First Draft Summary</i></li> <li>• <i>9c Budget 2025-26</i></li> <li>• <i>9d TLP I&amp;E Budget - 3 Year</i></li> </ul> <p><b>DTw provided an update to address agenda items 9a. to 9d: Part 2 item</b></p> <p><b>e. Report on top slice arrangements</b></p> <p>Trustees noted Paper 9e. “<i>Report on Top Slice Arrangements</i>”</p> <p><b>10. Safeguarding-Strategic Update</b></p> <p>KB provided a verbal update:</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding visits for the upcoming academic year have been strategically aligned with school improvement visits.</li> <li>• These visits are scheduled to begin in early September and will include checks on the SCR and confirmation that staff have read and acknowledged all safeguarding policies via online forms</li> <li>• CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System) categories will be aligned with the Trust’s CPOMS handbook to ensure the accuracy and consistency of safeguarding reporting across the Trust.</li> <li>• A new three-year safeguarding strategy is being developed, modelled on the structure of the recently created disadvantaged strategy. Key focus areas will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for young carers, particularly in Cheshire</li> <li>- Reintegration of pupils with emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSA)</li> <li>- Online safety, with a targeted initiative focusing on male pupils in Years 5–11.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Trust is exploring the use of a new safeguarding data tool called Insight. This platform will provide both Trust-wide and school-level dashboards for safeguarding data, enabling more effective reporting and analysis. It is expected to support both Local Governing Body (LGB) reports and Trust-wide oversight.</li> </ul> <p><b>SEND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A shift is underway from a reactive model to a more strategic and proactive framework.</li> <li>• Key developments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and capacity building for headteachers, SENDCos, and school leaders</li> <li>• Implementation of a new SEND strategy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trust Lead for SEND and Safeguarding and the Director of Primary have been working closely the newly appointed Inclusion Coordinator at Cheshire East.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees requested</b> that this agenda item be changed to “Safeguarding and SEND Strategic Updates” on future Trust Board agendas. <b>ACTION</b></p>	Clerk
<p><b>11. Reports from Committees</b></p> <p><b>a. Chair’s report-Finance and Staffing Committee 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b></p> <p>Trustees noted the reports. BA commented that more discussion is needed on staffing and HR matters in 2025-26.</p> <p><b>b. Audit and Risk 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b></p> <p>RMC provided an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most items from the current internal audit cycle have been closed, with only a few remaining open.</li> <li>Audit items are addressed in cycles, with ongoing scrutiny across core categories such as financial controls, Estates and site security, Health and safety and Management oversight.</li> <li>Looking ahead, the internal audit programme will incorporate several new areas of focus, including Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), Disaster Recovery Planning and Safeguarding.</li> <li>Risk Register Enhancements: a trajectory indicator has been introduced for each red-rated risk item. This allows the Committee to track whether a risk is increasing or decreasing over time.</li> <li>Additionally, committee-specific RAID items (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies) will now be included on the agenda for each committee meeting. This ensures that relevant risks are actively discussed and monitored within the appropriate governance forums.</li> <li>Cyber Security Risk: RM stressed that as a large Trust, the organisation is a potential target and must take this risk seriously. He outlined the need for a data identification exercise. This step is essential to understanding the Trust’s cyber risk profile and ensuring that appropriate protections, insurance, and response capabilities are in place. RM requested that a paper be presented to the Trust Board on cyber security.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>c. Chair’s report-Governance- 15 July 2025</b></p> <p>JC provided a verbal update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External Governance Review: the majority of the recommendations from the review have been substantially completed.</li> <li>Scheme of Delegation: audited and report noted.</li> <li>Local Governing Bodies and School Profiles: A review of each school’s governance profile was undertaken, with a particular focus on vacancies within local governing bodies. There has been a net increase of 23 appointments in the current year.</li> <li>Trustee and Member Recruitment: The Committee explored various approaches to recruitment, without incurring additional costs.</li> </ul>	DTw
<p><b>12. Operational Matters</b></p> <p><b>a. Risk Register</b></p> <p><b>b. Calendar of meetings 2025-26</b></p> <p>Trustees received and noted the above documents.</p>	
<p><b>13. AOB</b></p>	

There were no items of any other business agreed for discussion at the meeting.	
<b>Dates and times of next Trust Board Meeting</b> Thursday 2nd October 2025 09:30-13:00. Location Crewe UTC Trustees were asked to reserve their diaries from 9:00 am to allow time for a presentation preceding the meeting and to block out time to 1.30pm if possible.	

**The meeting closed at 1:21 pm**