

THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST



Meeting	Venue	Time	Date
Trust board	Scissett Middle School	5.00pm	Wednesday 20 th May 2026

DFE	10357163
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Start of meeting	17:0pm
Close of meeting	19:21pm

Attendance	86%
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Present		In attendance	
Name	Role	Name	Role
Philip Marshall	Chair of Trustees	Sorrel Hellewell	Clerk
Tim Wade	Trustee	Natasha Greenough	CEO
Jayne Done	Trustee	Jason Field	CFO
Ian Lakin	Trustee	Gill Senior	Director of Inclusion
Maureen Neill	Trustee	Melanie Humphreys	EL:OG
Clare Slater	Trustee	Katie Prescott	Potential Trustee
		Absent with Consent	
		Name	Role
		Liz Godman	Trustee
		Absent without Consent	
		Name	Role

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55	Welcome and introductions	Welcome and introductions were made by all present in the meeting.
56	Use of Owl Technology	Mr Marshall noted the use of OWL technology and noted the following points: • The Owl will support hybrid attendance (in-person and remote participation). • It will provide an audio-visual recording of the meeting. • It will enable AI-assisted transcription to support minute production. ◦ Trustees were reminded to speak clearly to ensure accurate capture, avoid speaking over others and clearly state, decisions, actions and outcomes. • This will improve transcription accuracy and ensure audit clarity. • Recordings are processed in line with data protection requirements • Only the OWL device is permitted to record the meeting and Trustees and attendees must not use personal recording devices.
57	Apologies for absence and consent	RESOLVED: Apologies were received from: • Liz Godman – Trustee
58	Declarations of interest	RESOLVED: There were no declarations of interest. The chair reminded Trustees to inform the clerk if they had any updates that needed to be made on the register of interests.
59	Confidentiality reminder	Trustees were reminded by the Chair of Trustees that a Trustee role is confidential, and all information and documentation shared should be treated as such.
60	Representation	Mr Marshall noted the following points: • The Trust continues to seek additional Trustees, particularly individuals with an education background, due to upcoming and recent changes in Board composition as Mrs Godman's term has ended. It was confirmed that the removal of a Trustee, Mr Philip Oldfield, has been ratified by Members via written resolution and formally actioned and communicated. No response had been received following notification.

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	RESOLVED: Mr Oldfield was removed from the Trust Board effective from 16 th April 2026.													
	Mrs Katie Prescott has been appointed as a new Trustee subject to the completion of statutory checks.													
	RESOLVED: Mrs Prescott was appointed as Trustee from 20 th May 2026 to 19 th May 2030 subject to completion of statutory checks.													
61	Notifications of items to be brought up under any other business	RESOLVED: There was one item brought up under any other business. • Notification email												
62	Minutes for the meetings on 25 th March 2026	RESOLVED: All Trustees agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 25 th March 2026 are approved as a true record subject to the below amendments. • Amend behaviour data wording and remove specific figures. • Reword “areas needing improvement” to reflect embedding and complexity.												
63	Matters arising	<table><tr><th>Minute Reference</th><th>Action</th></tr><tr><td>M40_25032026</td><td>Mrs Hellewell to notify Trust Members of the Board’s recommendation to remove Mr Oldfield as a Trustee and request ratification. RESOLVED: Complete</td></tr><tr><td>M42_25032026</td><td>Mrs Hellewell to add the action regarding governance being added to the risk register in item 26 to the matter arising. RESOLVED: Complete</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Mrs Hellewell to ensure actions are distributed to relevant colleagues once minutes have been approved by the chair. RESOLVED: Complete</td></tr><tr><td>M47_25032026</td><td>The Executive Team to prepare information regarding, Market research, Growth opportunities, Viability analysis, Strategic pathways and for Board discussion at the next meeting or a dedicated strategy session. RESOLVED: Complete</td></tr><tr><td>M53_25032026</td><td>Mrs Hellewell to email Trustees with a specific week for the completion of the Trust Board self-review. RESOLVED: Complete</td></tr></table>	Minute Reference	Action	M40_25032026	Mrs Hellewell to notify Trust Members of the Board’s recommendation to remove Mr Oldfield as a Trustee and request ratification. RESOLVED: Complete	M42_25032026	Mrs Hellewell to add the action regarding governance being added to the risk register in item 26 to the matter arising. RESOLVED: Complete		Mrs Hellewell to ensure actions are distributed to relevant colleagues once minutes have been approved by the chair. RESOLVED: Complete	M47_25032026	The Executive Team to prepare information regarding, Market research, Growth opportunities, Viability analysis, Strategic pathways and for Board discussion at the next meeting or a dedicated strategy session. RESOLVED: Complete	M53_25032026	Mrs Hellewell to email Trustees with a specific week for the completion of the Trust Board self-review. RESOLVED: Complete
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64	Organisation updates from the	The following documents were provided prior to the meeting for Trustee consideration:												

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collaborative team	• May 2026 – Executive report • Presentation to English and PE colleagues • LGC summaries • Management accounts Mrs Greenough noted the following points; • Strategic priorities • School standards • Inclusion and attendance Behaviour • Staffing and structural changes <u>Strategic priorities</u> • There is falling birth rates across HD8/HD9 impacting pupil numbers • Financial pressures are increasing across the Trust • Ongoing strategy review is taking place including growth and sustainability. <u>School Standards</u> An external review has taken place at Birdsedge First School and the draft report has been received. The strengths that came out from the review were inclusion provision and support for vulnerable pupils. A development area was teaching capacity due to inexperienced staff. Q: Are inexperience teachers posing a risk? A: No there is no immediate risk to standards. It was identified as the least embedded improvement area. Q: What support has been put in place? A: Targeted coaching by the Trusts school improvement partner, along with ongoing professional development. <u>Scholes Junior & Infant School</u> • Improvements have been made in EYFS, KS1 writing, teaching quality and stronger pupil engagement and behaviour. • There are still some remaining issues relating to inconsistency in KS2 routines and lesson focus and teaching quality. • A monitoring approach is taking place where a review meeting is held every 4 to 6 weeks and an impact-based evaluation improvement plan has been created. • There has been significant improvement in lunchtime provision as all pupils are engaged. <u>Attendance & Inclusion</u> Mrs Senior noted the following points:
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	• Attendance has been identified as main risk area, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and SEND pupils. • Overall attendance is In line with or above national (depending on measure) • Free School Meal pupils' attendance has improved to above national average at 87.8%. • SEND attendance has improved but is still below the previous year. • Attendance is now treated as "Everyone's responsibility" and there has been a cultural shift required. Q: What has driven recent improvement? A: The introduction of Vulnerable 360 meetings and a whole-school accountability approach. Form tutors focus on green pupils, middle leaders focus on amber pupils and senior leaders focus on red. There has also been an increase with multi-agency involvement, family support and alternative provision access. <u>Behaviour & Suspensions</u> • The headline data shows significant concentration of suspensions in year 8. • Trends show an increase in female suspensions and a reduction in suspensions for SEND support pupils Q: Why do you think suspensions are so high in year 8? A: They are linked to a small number of complex pupils, some late admissions and escalation from Year 7 behaviour. Q: What actions will follow? A: A further analysis of repeat suspensions and root causes. A report will be provided at the Education & People Committee upcoming meeting. <u>National Policy & Reform Context</u> Mrs Greenough noted the following points: • Schools White Paper developments: ○ Increased SEND accountability ○ Legal requirement for individual plans ○ Inclusion statements required Q: Are there significant changes from proposals relating to the employment bill? A: No, there are currently no major unexpected changes. Changes have already been implemented locally. <u>Staffing and Structural Changes</u> • Falling pupil numbers which mean there is funding reduction. • For example, if the schools receive £5,000 per pupil and the falling role of 50 pupils that would make a loss of £250,000.
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	• In the middle school's initial redundancy discussions were held redundancies avoided. This was achieved through natural turnover and flexible working redeployment. • The Trust are looking into increased staff flexibility and cross-school deployment. Q: Will staff be shared across schools? A: Yes. All Trust contracts have flexibility which allows all colleagues to work across all schools within the Trust. Q: Are back-office functions being reviewed? A: Yes, they are. The Trust are looking to increase centralisation and efficiency focus. <u>Future Curriculum & Structure Planning</u> The current areas under review are: • School day structure • Curriculum delivery models • Pastoral models • Staffing structures The aim design provision aligned to modern pupil needs and sustainability. Q: Are staff exploring alternative roles and structures? A: Yes, these include non-teaching pastoral roles and more flexible staffing models. <u>Finance Update</u> Current Position • Revenue position is improving with a forecast surplus. • The overall likely position is a £100k deficit (due to capital investment). • Reserves are currently approximately 10% of income which is within recommended range. • Key pressures currently are agency staffing costs, reduced pupil numbers and increasing costs vs funding. <u>Funding Challenges</u> • A new change is that all pupils whose parents receive universal credits will be entitled to a free school meal. • Free school meals cost exceeds funding by 30p per meal. Q: Will increased Free School Meals demand affect capacity in the kitchens? A: No, it won't. The schools' kitchens can accommodate to feed all pupils within each school. The issue relates to funding deficit.
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	<u>LGC Summaries</u> Mr Marshall noted the LGC summaries were uploaded to the folder prior to the meeting.
65 Safeguarding	<u>Safeguarding</u> Mrs Senior noted the following points: • The safeguarding data presented in the report remains unchanged from the previous reporting cycle. • This is because data is collected and reported on a termly basis. • There has been no new safeguarding incidents or trends emerge since the last report. • All Trust safeguarding reviews have been complete and follow up visits have been undertaken. • All schools confirmed as fully compliant with safeguarding requirements. • Local Authority safeguarding reviews are currently in progress across the Trust. Most are expected to be completed by Summer 2026, expect for Shelley First School and is expected to take place early September 2026. • Annual safeguarding policy updates are underway. Updates will align to the latest national guidance. • All safeguarding training records are fully up to date. • Single Central Record (SCR) checks have been completed and can confirmed all statutory training requirements met. • Safeguarding training for Trustees and Governors is up to date. Q: How are new staff inducted into safeguarding procedures? A: This is through Trust-wide induction, school-specific safeguarding guidance and clear processes for reporting and escalation.
66 Governance Model	<u>Chair and Vice-Chair elections</u> Mrs Hellewell reported that a letter had been sent out to all Trustees requesting nominations for the Chair and Vice-Chair. Articles 82 states that Trustees will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair each school year from its number. Nominations on the day will only be accepted where no written nominations have been received prior to the meeting. The term period for the Chair and Vice-Chair elected this school year will be in place until the Trust Board meeting in July 2027. A nomination had been received by Mr Marshall to be Chair of Trustees.

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	RESOLVED: Mr Marshall is elected as Chair of Trustees for the Mast Academy Trust from 20^h May 2026 until the Trust Board meeting in July 2027 Mr Marshall took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting and the election of the Vice-Chair process. A nomination was received by Mr Wade to be Vice-Chair of Trustees in the meeting. RESOLVED: Mr Wade is elected as Vice-Chair of Trustees for the Mast Academy Trust from 20th May 2026 until the Trust Board meeting in July 2027. until the end of the academic year 2027. Mr Marshall noted Mr Wade has been supporting him within his Vice-Chair role on several occasions where either the Chair or Vice-Chair needs to be present. <u>Proposed governance model</u> The Executive Team proposed a shift from a “one-size-fits-all” governance model to a risk-based model, where governance intensity is aligned to school performance. Key Features include • Schools categorised as: ○ Secure (low risk) ○ Strengthening (medium risk) ○ Supported (high risk) • Governance response tailored to risk level: ○ Increased meeting frequency for high-risk schools ○ Greater Trustee involvement in supported schools ○ Reduced governance burden on secure schools • Underpinned by: ○ KPI framework ○ Risk scoring methodology aligned to Trust risk registers Rationale for Change The Board was advised that the current model applies equal governance oversight regardless of need, does not maximise limited Trustee capacity and does not sufficiently prioritise high-risk areas. Key Objectives • Improve efficiency of Trustee time • Strengthen targeted oversight and challenge • Increase speed of response to emerging risks A detailed discussion took place between Trustees and the executive team.
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	Q: Could the Trust support all schools if they all became high risk? A: No, as both governance and executive capacity would be insufficient. Such a scenario would require wider structural intervention. Q: Will this increase Trustee workload? A: Overall it will help with the reduction in the workload expected as the focus shifts to less time on secure schools and more targeted involvement where needed. Q: Is there a risk of discouraging local governors if governance becomes more intensive? A: The model is already being informally trialled and evidence shows meetings are more focused and efficient and there is less generic discussion, more impact-driven dialogue Q: Will Trustees need to spend more time in schools? A: For supported schools, potentially yes. Trustees would attend focused monitoring meetings and engage more directly with evidence. Q: Could one issue trigger escalation to “supported”? A: Yes, depending on severity (e.g. safeguarding). Q: Who determines classification? A: The executive team by using defined KPI measures and risk scoring (probability and impact). Q: How will Trustees be informed of changes quickly? A: Immediate communication would be given outside of meetings where needed and formal reporting through committee and Board meetings. Q: Will secure schools lose support? A: No, support remains available. The model ensures early warning through KPI data and rapid escalation if risk emerges. The Chair of the Education and People Committee will have oversight of secure schools on behalf of the Board. Agreed Approach • September 2026: Begin trial implementation • January 2027: Formal rollout aligned with: ○ KPI refinement ○ Strategy alignment • A full review of the model’s effectiveness will take place after 12 months. RESOLVED: The Trust Board approved the introduction of the risk-based governance model, with a trial phase from September 2026, formal implementation from January 2027 and ongoing review and refinement.
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	ACTION: The executive team to develop and deliver the formal rollout, including KPI refinement and alignment with organisational strategy. <u>Consent Agenda Proposal</u> Proposal • Introduce a consent agenda to group low-risk or routine items. • The purpose is to reduce meeting time spent on routine approvals and increase time for strategic discussion. • Papers must still be read in advance. RESOLVED: The Trust Board approved the consent agenda approach. <u>“Read by Default” Reporting Approach</u> Proposal • Reports assumed to be read in advance. • Meeting discussion focused only on exceptions, key risks and decisions. Trustees noted concern regarding the volume of papers for meetings. It was agreed that there should be a minimum of 7 days circulation time for meeting documents. RESOLVED: The Trust Board approved proposed Read by Default reporting approach. <u>Notification email</u> Mrs Humphreys noted options have been explored to improve the awareness of late papers. Some options are: • SharePoint notifications • Email alerts • “Late papers” folder Trustees agreed for the introduction of a Late Papers folder on Teams and to clearly identify documents added post deadline. ACTION: Mrs Humphreys to speak with IT to see if SharePoint notifications can be specific to the Late papers folder and to provide outcome feedback to Trustees. <u>Board Self-Evaluation</u> Mrs Hellewell noted the following areas were identified from the self-review meeting as high priority development areas: 1. Strengthen Local Governance Integration
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	2. Formalise Trustee Induction 3. Chair and Leadership Development Beyond the Board Mr Marshall noted the next step is to develop an action plan. <u>Committee and Role Allocation</u> It was agreed to defer the Board committee chair roles and committee allocations to the next meeting. Mr Marshall reminded Trustees to let Mrs Hellewell know which Board committee they would like to be on for the next academic year. ACTION: Defer committee and role allocation to the next board meeting which is taking place on 15th July 2026.
67 Trustee updates	Mrs Slater and Mrs Neill confirmed they have completed their cyber security training.
68 Service Level Agreement	Mr Field noted the Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been put into the meeting folder for approval, which outlines the services provided by the Trust to its schools. • The SLA sets out, the services included within the standard Trust offer (5% top-slice) • Additional services that may be charged separately and delivered on an additional basis. • The SLA defines the scope of central services and expectations between the Trust and individual schools. • Trustees were advised that the SLA is currently reviewed annually; however content changes are typically minimal and the SLA only tends to change significantly where there are structural changes within the Trust or if new services or delivery models are introduced. Mr Field noted the proposal to move the review cycle from annual review to a three-year review cycle. Q: Could the SLA still be reviewed earlier if required? A: Yes, the proposed approach allows for review at any time if changes occur and flexibility retained. RESOLVED: The Trust Board approved the Service Level Agreement and agreed for the cycle to change from annual review and three-year review cycle.
69 Important documents to note	Mrs Field noted the 2023/2024 MAT SARA (Sector Annual Report & Accounts) Academies Consolidated annual report and accounts was an important document to note. The purpose of the report was to provide a national overview

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	of: • Academy Trust performance • Financial position across the sector • Growth of multi-academy trusts • Key risks and trends affecting the sector It was noted during the meeting that the report had not yet been included in the board papers folder. ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to circulate the '2023/2024 MAT SARA (Sector Annual Report & Accounts) Academies Consolidated annual report and accounts' document to Trustees via email after the meeting.
70 Any other business	RESOLVED: There were no items brought up under any other business.
71 Future dates for meetings of the Trust Board	RESOLVED: That the future dates for Trust Board, training and committees are as follows: <u>Training</u> • <i>Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 5pm – Trust Wide Development Session (set the strategy of what parental strategy will look like)</i> <u>Meetings</u> • <i>Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board</i> <u>Committees</u> • <i>Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 5pm – Education & People Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 1st July 2026 at 5pm – Finance, Audit & Risk Committee</i>
72 Agenda, minutes, and related papers to be excluded from published version	RESOLVED: Matters discussed in item 66 have been excluded from the minutes for confidentiality reasons.

Summary of Actions

Minute Reference	Action
M66_20052026	The executive team to develop and deliver the formal rollout, including KPI refinement and alignment with organisational strategy.
	Mrs Humphreys to speak with IT to see if SharePoint notifications can be specific to the late papers folder and to provide outcome feedback to Trustees.
	Defer committee and role allocation to the next board meeting which is taking place on 15 th July 2026.
M69_20052026	Mrs Hellewell to circulate the '2023/2024 MAT SARA (Sector Annual Report & Accounts) Academies Consolidated annual report and accounts' document to Trustees via email after the meeting.