THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST

Meeting	Venue	Time	Date
Trust board	Scissett Middle School	5.00pm	Wednesday 25th March 2026

DFE	10357163

Start of meeting	17:02pm
Close of meeting	19:29pm

Attendance	88%

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

Item		Minutes
37	Apologies for absence and consent	RESOLVED: Apologies were not received from: • Philip Oldfield – Trustee
38	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.
39	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.
40	Representation	Resignation Mr Marshall noted receipt of Mr Lunt's resignation on 16th March 2026. Mr Lunt's resignation is due to increased work and family commitments. Trustees noted their thanks for Mr Lunt's service and contributions. RESOLVED: Mr Lunt resigned as a Trustee on 16th March 2026. Removal of Trustees Mr Marshall summarised concerns regarding Mr Oldfield's persistent non-attendance and lack of response to Trust communications. It was noted Mr Oldfield contacted Mrs Hellewell with the intention to resign but has not made contact since. Mr Marshall has also tried to make contact with Mr Oldfield but unfortunately has had no response. It was noted that even though Mr Oldfield hasn't attended recent Board meetings, he has been involved in other Trustee activity during the past 12 months. Efforts have been made over several months to try and re-engage Mr Oldfield. RESOLVED: Trustees approve the removal of Mr Oldfield as a Trustee. ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to notify Trust Members of the Board's recommendation to remove Mr Oldfield as a Trustee and request ratification. Trustee vacancies and recruitment • There are two ongoing vacancies previously identified (HR and education specialist). • Mrs Godman is stepping down in May from her Trustee role, due to her term of office ending. This will create an additional education-linked vacancy.

Item	Minutes
	• Mr Marshall has spoken with two potential candidates: - The first candidate has over 20 years HR background, charity sector, safeguarding experience (special guardianship & vulnerable families). Mrs Greenough and a Member has also met with the first candidate to conduct a formal interview and are both happy to proceed. Mrs Hellewell noted references are being collected, once these are received the next steps will be to complete a DBS check. - The second candidate has experience in Governor/Trustee roles in Roman Catholic schools. They are also known to the CFO. Trustees acknowledged additional gaps in legal, health, business, and education. Q: Given Mr Lunt's resignation, are we then looking for someone from an IT background as well? A: Possibly but this is not essential. Mr Lunt was not recruited for his IT skillset. IT experience is helpful but not a required priority.
41 Notifications of items to be brought up under any other business	RESOLVED: There were no items brought up under any other business.
42 Minutes for the meetings on 10th December 2025	RESOLVED: All Trustees agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2025 are approved as a true record subject to the below amendment. Amendment: Wording in item 21 around "parental perception" to be adjusted to reflect balanced percentages rather than suggesting broadly negative parent views. ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to add the action regarding governance being added to the risk register in item 26 to the matter arising. ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to ensure actions are distributed to relevant colleagues once minutes have been approved by the chair.
43 Matters arising	(see table below)

Minute Reference	Action
M25_10122026	The executive team to add governance capacity risk to the risk register. RESOLVED: This action is ongoing.
	The Executive Lead for Operations & Governance to provide an explanation regarding fire safety, including why it appears frequently in health & safety reports across schools, and whether it represents a material concern. RESOLVED: Complete

Item	Minutes

		M29_10122026	Mrs Hellewell to resend the Trustee visit schedule to all Trustees for completion. RESOLVED: Complete
44	Organisation updates from the collaborative team		

The following documents were provided prior to the meeting for Trustee consideration:

- ELOG update – Spring 2026 FARC
- Finance and IT report 260304
- March 2026 – Executive report
- 10432761 – Kirkburton Middle School – 143791 Draft

Mrs Greenough noted the following points;

<u>Executive summary</u>

Ofsted Pilot

- The Trust was contacted by Ofsted and invited to nominate colleagues to become inspectors from a middle school perspective. Two colleagues were nominated, and both have since attended the required training.
- This is seen as a valuable development despite no reimbursement for time.

SENCO Recruitment

- A new SENCO has been appointed at Shelley First School and they will start after Easter.
- A second candidate has been appointed across the middle schools to strengthen SEND and resource-base capability.

Grange Moor Conversion

- A new conversion date of the 1st May has been suggested. A risk has been identified due to land boundary issues, which is the reason why the conversion date has been pushed back.

Birth Rates & Pupil Numbers

- Grange Moor Primary School first choices are currently between 12 & 13.
- Birdsedge First School first choices are currently between 13 & 15.
- Shelley First School first choices are currently at 25.
- Kirkburton Middle School first choices are at 152 (15 below PAN).
- Scissett Middle School first choices are currently 161 (39 below PAN).

The Trust are considering a PAN reduction consultation with the Middle Schools Local Governing Committee.

Item	Minutes
	Funding • GAG allocations are lower than expected. • Only around £50/pupil of new SEND funding is confirmed nationally. • High Needs block frozen for 2026–27, creating uncertainty. Q: What were the Trust expecting in terms of SEND new money? A: About £50 per pupil initially expected; actual figure equates to about 3 TAs worth trust-wide. Q: Is that £50 per pupil or £50 per SEN pupil? A: £50 per all pupils, not targeted per SEN pupil. Q: Do they freeze the EHCP top-up rates as well if the High Needs Block is frozen?” A: It is currently unclear. It is likely that LA funding pressures will limit any uplift. The government position is unclear and contradictory. Q: Do we expect an impact on next year’s budget or this year?” A: The new SEND fund applies next year. **School Standards** Significant discussion on Scholes Junior & Infant School • Clear improvement from Requires Improvement to broadly “expected standard” but still embedding consistency. • External review was slightly disappointing but has driven improvement. • Behaviour incidents have reduced significantly from last year to this year, which is due to internal AP/woodland provision and staffing changes. • Attendance now at national average. Mrs Done noted she attended a meeting with Mrs Senior as link Trustee to look at Scholes J&I School focus action plan and we will be meeting again in four weeks to look at what actions have taken place and the impact of these. The focus action plan is reviewed weekly. Q: Is the school getting better and improving? Can we as trustees be reassured that this will happen? A: Yes, improvements are clear, but consistency is still embedding. It's a two-phase journey: 1. Big improvement over last 12 months 2. Now focusing on precision and consistency Q: The areas needing improvement, are these relatively easy to fix? A: Yes, it is about embedding initiatives. Q: Is the new teacher in Year 5?

Item	Minutes
	A: Yes, new staffing group: 2 ECTs, a new Y6 teacher, a new Assistant Headteacher. Q: At what point will the school be self-sufficient again? A: This isn't yet. Multiple leaders are still deployed weekly from across the Trust. The school needs sustained embedding before reducing support. Q: Is the additional support discretionary (unpaid hours etc.)? A: No, it is structured internal deployment. CEO provided clear assurances and explained ongoing support. **Kirkburton Middle School – Ofsted outcome** • The report was very positive. • There was one area for improvement: adaptations for SEND pupils without EHCPs not consistent in classrooms. <u>Estates</u> Mrs Humphreys noted her report is in the meeting folder and asked Trustees if they had any questions regarding the report. There were no questions asked regarding the report. <u>Finance</u> **Current Financial Position** • Forecasting a small revenue surplus. • A £200,000 contribution to capital projects planned. • After capital needs, Trust likely to post a £190k deficit for 2025/26, leaving £900,000 reserves, which is acceptable and stable. • A round of Finance & Operation meetings have taken place over the last few weeks. • The Trust are putting together plans for future years, including new structures for the middle schools. • A discussion took place at the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee meeting regarding the set of budget setting assumptions for next 3 years and the cost position. **Upcoming Pressures** • Support staff pay rise offer is at 3.3%, which overall will cost £80,000. • Teachers pay rise is projected at 6.5% over 3 years. 2% for the first 2 years and 2.5% on the third year. **AI Deployment** • All teachers now have TeachMate AI licences. • ChatGPT restricted for safeguarding/data compliance. • Middle schools to receive training on 1st June inset day.

Item	Minutes
	• Usage is being monitored. • There are early signs of workload reduction. There were no further questions from Trustees. It was noted Mrs Humphreys procurement work has saved the Trust around £75,000. <u>LGC summaries</u> It was noted the minutes were in the meeting folder. <u>Updates from Link Trustees</u> Mrs Done provided detail of her involvement at two schools; other Trustees had no updates at this time. <u>Committee Resolutions</u> Update from Mrs Godman for the Education & People Committee. The following points was discussed in the committee meeting: • Leadership capacity issues across several schools • Increased parental engagement/safeguarding demands • HR updates and probationary period changes • Vulnerable pupil strategy – highlighted as sector-leading • Academic data provided • Visits from Trustees have taken place Update from Mr Wade for the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee: The following points was discussed in the committee meeting: • A lot of the main discussion points have been covered by Mr Fields update in this meeting. • Finances are being managed well by the finance team. • There are several risks going forward financially, but the Trust are still in a positive position. • Mrs Humphreys has saved a large amount of money through procurements.
45 Safeguarding	<u>Safeguarding</u> Mrs Senior noted the following points: The ‘Inclusion data March 2026’ document was presented on screen. • TAF (Team Around the Family) • CIN (Child In Need) • CP (Child Protection)

Item	Minutes

	• There is a rise in pastoral incidents due mostly to one group of pupils discussing harmful online narratives. Work has been completed with pupils and parents were informed.
	• Attendance analysis:
	• Birdsedge First School and Scholes Junior & Infant School are broadly in line with national average.
	• Scissett Middle School is a slight concern:
	  - Disadvantaged & SEND < 90%
	  - 8 EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance) pupils
	  - Rise Hub programme has started
	• Internal Alternative Provision usage has doubled (8 to 16), which is mostly EBSA pupils.
	• Trust safeguarding audits from January are fully completed.
	• LA safeguarding reviews are underway and early feedback positive.
	
	Q: Do you see a corresponding attainment gap where attendance gaps exist?
	A: Yes, national data clearly correlates low attendance to lower outcomes. Trust performance shows the same pattern.
	
	Q: Are all Trustees clear on what AP is?
	A: AP (Alternative Provision) is Internal alternative provision ("Hubs" in each school). These are mandatory for secondaries under new reforms.
	
	Mrs Senior noted the Inclusion report which has been included in the meeting folder has more detailed points in it.
	
	<u>Safeguarding</u>
	
	• There are no major updates to provide.
	• SCR training with colleague has taken place.
	• Everything is compliant across all schools.

45 Grange Moor due diligence	The document 'DD high_medium risks – GMPS' was presented on screen. <u>High risks</u> **Outcomes** • These are historically low (22% in KS2), though the cohorts are small and has complex SEND profile. • Data has been looked at in detail. • The school hasn't been chosen for the rise programme, the Trust are trying to contact rise for some insight. **Land Boundary Issues** • There is confusion over two land pockets • An updated LA plan was received at 17:34pm today, which resolves the main risk by carving out conflicting areas. The plan was shared on screen for Trustees.

Item	Minutes
	Q: What does the land issue mean for us as a Trust? A: The Local Authority are adjusting boundaries so Trust will no longer take responsibility for the disputed land. Updated map confirms risk is significantly reduced. Q: Is the legal advice that this updated boundary is, ok? A: Yes, based on updated plan, the key risk is removed. Only residual access issue remains, which the Local Authority will manage. Q: Is there any reason not to proceed with conversion? A: No, risks are manageable. There is a greater risk in not converting. <u>Medium Risks</u> • Long-term sickness absence • One maternity case extended protection under new legislation • Poor-value contracts inherited (notably Multi-Functional Device lease) • Training records are incomplete pre-conversion • Financial planning weak under LA systems (annual budgeting only) It was noted the school currently has no risk register and any training colleagues are completing isn't being recorded. Mr Field confirmed all colleagues have completed the Cyber Security training, as they all have Mast email addresses. <u>Trustee Discussion</u> Trustees considered the following: • Benefits to Birdsedge Frist School through paired leadership model • Wellbeing risks for the Executive Head • Financial efficiencies of consolidation • Risks of not converting Q: Can the Trust give additional support to the Executive Headteacher at Birdsedge First School / Grange Moor due to workload? A: Yes, meeting have been arranged with HR post-conversion to redesign leadership structure and reduce operational burden. <u>Next steps</u> • A DfE meeting is taking place on Friday with the Local Authority and the Trust. • Ensure all land issues are resolved.

Item	Minutes
	• Commercial transfer agreement, sentimental funding agreement and the lease will need signing by the Chair of Trustees. Q: Are schools exempt from stamp duty land tax on the lease? A: Yes, as they are not a commercial transaction. There has been no cost raised by legal advisers. RESOLVED: Trustees approve the proceeding with the conversion of Grange Moor Primary School subject to completion of legal processes and land confirmation.

46 Focus item	National update of recent guidance and changes
	
	The 'Trust Board strategy review' document was presented on screen for Trustees.
	
	Trustees undertook a structured workshop reviewing:
	
	• White Paper
	• School Costs guidance
	• Estates standards
	• Trust Strategic Plan
	
	Key themes emerging
	
	1. **Growth Strategy requires revision**, considering:
	  ○ Declining birth rates in HD8/HD9
	  ○ Possible cross-border opportunities
	  ○ Expansion of traded services
	  ○ Small-school viability risks
	  ○ Options for partnerships/associates, not only full academy conversion
	2. **SEND Objective (Objective 3)** now requires updated context given national reforms.
	3. **Long-term financial sustainability** flagged as a strategic priority.
	4. **Estate requirements** under new standards to be mapped onto current asset plan.
	
	Next steps
	
	• Review the growth strategy
	• Market research on demand and opportunities
	• Identify different options – would consider and wouldn't consider.
	
	ACTION: 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.

Item	Minutes
48 Trustee updates	Mr Marshall noted he attended a governance scrutiny meeting with Mrs Humphreys and Mrs Hellewell. <u>Link Trustee roles</u> Mrs Greenough noted that there is turnover within the Trustee body, which affects capacity for Link Trustee work particularly with: • Mrs Godman stepping down from the Board (safeguarding & careers link trustee roles) • Mr Lunt's resignation (small schools link role) A question was raised, does the current Link Trustee model still work as intended, or does it need review and adjustment? It was suggested the Board revisit the Link Trustee role's structure, because: • Some Trustees are holding multiple roles simultaneously. • Some schools have lost their link due to Trustee resignations. Highlighted two specific considerations: 1. Is the current Link Trustee model still appropriate and are time and capacity being used correctly? 2. Should struggling schools (e.g., "securing" or "supported" schools) have different governance arrangements, such as: - Smaller, more frequent monitoring groups - Modified schemes of delegation - Models similar to what is in place for Skelmanthorpe (e.g., focused standards meetings) It was emphasised this should be explored before planning the 2026/27 governance cycle. Trustees shared concerns that: • Some Link Trustee roles overlap heavily with Trust-appointed Governor responsibilities. • This can stretch individuals and compromise independence. <u>Local Governing Committees (LGCs)</u> • Concern raised about capacity issues within some LGCs. Q: Does the Trust legally need local governors? A: No, they are not legally required, but it is strongly recommended because they support workload, provide community perspective and are essential for the growth strategy (schools want to retain some governance layer).

Item	Minutes
	Mr Marshall asked Trustees to think about their personal areas of interest and their available capacity and to consider moving roles rather than holding to their existing links. It was proposed for the clerk to circulate a request for preferences and for a full discussion and reallocation at the May Trust Board meeting, rather than waiting until July's meeting.
49 Risk Register	The 'Mast_ RiskRegister_Spring_ 25_26' was shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for review and discussion. • Risk ID 21 is tolerated and has maintained level. Mitigations and planned stakeholder strategy development noted. All other risks were discussed in the Education & People Committee and the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.
49 Scheme of Delegation	The 'Mast Academy Trust SoD Academic Year 25_26' was shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for review and discussion. Mrs Humphreys noted the scheme of delegation document is in the meeting folder. Any wording with red text is either new text or amended text, but it all relates to finance. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee have reviewed this is their committee have recommended approval.
50 Policy update	The following policies were noted as approved and ratified at the Board Committees: • Colleague Capability Policy • Health & Safety Policy • Investment Policy • LGPS discretions Policy • Risk Management Policy • SEND Policy RESOLVED: The policies listed above were noted by the Trust Board.
51 Important documents to note	Mrs Hellewell noted the following documents were uploaded prior to the meeting: • School's white paper summary 230226 • Education Estates Strategy print ready version • Working together to safeguard children 2026 (summary of changes) • Working together to safeguard children 2026 • Working together to safeguard children statutory framework

	Mr Field noted the 'Schools Management Self-Assessment' document has been submitted.
52 Any other business	RESOLVED: There were no items brought up under any other business.
53 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>** • *Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 5pm – Trust Wide Development Session* **<u>Meetings</u>** • *Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board* • *Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board* **<u>Committees</u>** • *Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 5pm – Education & People Committee* • *Wednesday 1st July 2026 at 5pm – Finance, Audit & Risk Committee* <u>Trustee Self-Review Session</u> Mrs Hellewell noted she had sent an email to Trustees regarding the Trustee self-review. An email will be sent out to Trustees with a more specific week. She asked for all Trustees to reply with which day and time would be best, to allow the meeting to be put in everyone's calendars. This session will be a Teams meeting where all Trustees complete the self-review as a team. Mrs Greenough or Mrs Humphreys will also be attending the meeting. ACTION: Mrs Hellewell to email Trustees with a specific week for the completion of the Trust Board self-review.
54 Agenda, minutes, and related papers to be excluded from published version	RESOLVED: Matters discussed in items 44 and 45 have been excluded from the minutes for confidentiality reasons.

Summary of Actions

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.
M42_25032026	Mrs Hellewell to add the action regarding governance being added to the risk register in item 26 to the matter arising.
	Mrs Hellewell to ensure actions are distributed to relevant colleagues once minutes have been approved by the chair.
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.
M53_25032026	Mrs Hellewell to email Trustees with a specific week for the completion of the Trust Board self-review.