

THE MAST ACADEMY TRUST



Meeting	Venue	Time	Date
Trust board	Scissett Middle School	5.00pm	Wednesday 8 th October 2025

DFE	10357163
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Start of meeting	17:00pm
Close of meeting	19:26pm

Attendance	88%
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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
Liz Godman	Trustee	Jason Field	CFO
Ian Lakin	Trustee	Melanie Humphreys	EL: OG
Maureen Neill	Trustee		
Ben Lunt	Trustee	Absent with Consent	
Jayne Done	Trustee	Name	Role
		Absent without Consent	
		Name	Role
		Philip Oldfield	Trustee

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1	<p>Apologies for absence and consent</p> <p>RESOLVED: Apologies were not received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philip Oldfield – Trustee (without consent) <p>Mr Marshall noted Mrs Done is running late and Mrs Humphreys and Mr Field will be joining the meeting later.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>RESOLVED: There were no declarations of interest.</p>
3	<p>Confidentiality reminder</p> <p>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.</p>
4	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Mr Marshall reported that, due to low attendance numbers, a decision was made to cancel the annual conference. As a result, the required safeguarding training for Trustees remained outstanding. It was subsequently agreed that this training would be delivered during the upcoming Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Senior presented 'Safeguarding Responsibility – Trustees refresher' presentation to Trustees.</p> <p>The following slides were presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding responsibility – Refresher Safeguarding What does good and poor culture look like? Responsibility and accountability Strategic vs operational Role of the link Trustee and safeguarding Trustee Local context Substantive changes in KCSIE 2025 Documentation to be aware of <p>Mrs Done arrived at the meeting at 5.09pm.</p> <p>Mrs Senior also presented Safeguarding data to Trustees.</p> <p>Q: What should Trustees do if they see a safeguarding concern during a school visit? A: Report to the DSL or the safeguarding team. Concerns about staff should be escalated to the Headteacher and if the concern is about the Headteacher it should be reported to the CEO.</p> <p>Q: Are safeguarding concerns increasing post-COVID? A: Yes. Domestic violence and substance abuse have risen. Financial hardship and housing instability have also increased.</p> <p>Q: Is safeguarding data broken down by area? A: Not currently, but this will be considered for future reporting.</p>

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	<p>Q: Do parents know who to contact for safeguarding concerns? A: Yes, they should do.</p> <p>Trustees suggested improving communication and adding a question into the parent survey to ensure parents know who to contact.</p> <p><u>Next steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted training is being delivered to staff to ensure consistent understanding of safeguarding thresholds and accurate categorisation of incidents. This will support more reliable data collection and appropriate escalation of concerns. • A safeguarding handbook is currently in development. It will include clear descriptors for each CPOMS category and guidance on reporting thresholds, providing staff with a practical reference tool to support decision-making and ensure consistency. <p>Q: In the current climate, are more families proactively disclosing their needs, or are schools primarily identifying them? A: There has been a noticeable improvement in parental openness regarding support needs, although further progress is required. Continued development of the Vulnerable Pupil Strategy and enhanced parental engagement initiatives are expected to strengthen this trend and improve early identification and support.</p> <p>Mrs Senior noted the safeguarding quiz will be sent out shortly to Trustees.</p>
5 Representation	<p><u>Vacancies</u></p> <p>The Trust is actively recruiting new trustees to fill current vacancies on the Board. Two candidates have been identified and are progressing through the recruitment process.</p> <p>It was noted Mrs Greenough and Mrs Humphreys met with one of the candidates. They have strong experience in health and safety and operational management and are currently a governor at a local school. It is recommended for them to be appointment and join the Trust Board.</p> <p>Mr Marshall stated that the second candidate has a HR background. The candidate isn't local to the area, but distance is not seen as a barrier by the candidate. An interview is scheduled for Friday 24th October 2025.</p> <p>The remaining vacancy is intended to be filled by someone with a background in education.</p>

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6	Notifications of items to be brought up under any other business	RESOLVED: There were no items brought up under any other business.	
7	Minutes for the meetings on 16 th July 2025	RESOLVED: All Trustees agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 th July 2025 are approved as a true record.	
8	Matters arising	Minute Reference	Action
9	Updates	<p>Mrs Greenough noted that a summary report had not been provided for this meeting, as the previous meeting took place only five school weeks ago.</p> <p><u>Self-evaluation</u></p> <p>Mrs Greenough presented the 'Mast Academy Trust SEF 2025' presentation to Trustees.</p> <p>The Trust uses the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) Framework for Excellence to assess performance.</p> <p>Evaluation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CST's success criteria. • Trust's self-assessment against those criteria. • Summary of previous year's performance. • Priority areas for the current year. <p><u>Review of 2024–25 Priorities</u></p> <p>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some met (green) and other areas which are either in progress or revised (amber). <p>Amber Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes are generally in line with national averages but not consistently above. • The Growth Strategy has been revised due to national policy changes (e.g. removal of conversion funding and trust capacity grants). • There have been improvements made in financial management and safeguarding regarding compliance procedures, but work continues. • The KPI Framework has been updated to reflect national changes. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable Learners Oversight has been identified as a key area needing further development. <p><u>2025–26 Strategic Priorities</u></p> <p>The strategic priorities are drawn from Year 1–2 of the Trust’s 4-Year Strategic Plan. The strategy works alongside the Trust Improvement Plan.</p> <p><u>Priority KPIs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering strategic plan objectives. • Improving outcomes and attendance. • Strengthening inclusion and safeguarding. • Enhancing parental engagement. • Ensuring financial stability. <p><u>Risks Identified</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable pupil attendance and outcomes. • Funding pressures. • Inclusion challenges. • National changes to inspection frameworks. <p><u>Success Criteria for 2025–26</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes across all key stages will be above national average. • Clear improvement in attendance of vulnerable pupils. • School visits will confirm high educational standards. • All schools will achieve their budgeted financial position. <p><u>Four main areas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority key performance indicators • Strategic Priorities for 2025 – 26 • Rising risks • Success criteria <p>Q: Are there any Ofsted visits expected? A: Yes. Kirkburton Middle School is due for an Ofsted visit this academic year and Birdsedge First School and Scholes Junior Infant School are expected to be inspected in the next 12–18 months.</p> <p>Q: Are we still waiting to understand what Trust-level inspections will look like? A: Yes. The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) has conducted a survey on this. There is ongoing national debate about whether Multi Academy Trusts should be held to greater account than Local Authorities. The framework is still under development and discussion.</p>
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Trustees agreed the self-evaluation was accurate and reflective. There is a clear emphasis placed on the importance of vulnerable pupil strategy, parental engagement, and teaching and learning as top priorities.

Trust Improvement Plan

Mrs Greenough noted a new Trust Improvement Plan has been introduced.

The Trust Improvement Plan is structured around the key titles from the Strategic Plan, with each area organised into its own section. The plan includes:

- Overall Aims – the broad goals aligned with the Trust’s strategic direction.
- Objectives – specific targets that support the achievement of each aim.
- Actions – detailed steps to be taken to meet the objectives.

This year, the plan is being managed via a spreadsheet to ensure visibility and continuity. Each member of the leadership team is accountable for their designated areas, allowing for clearer oversight and monitoring.

Each action is assigned to a responsible lead and is scheduled by term (Autumn, Spring, Summer). Success criteria are defined for each action to measure progress and impact.

Q: How will trustees be able to monitor progress against the Trust Improvement Plan?

A: Progress will be tracked using a spreadsheet that includes:

- Termly actions (Christmas, Easter, Summer)
- Assigned leads
- RAG ratings for both task completion and impact
- Trustees will be able to filter by term and priority
- Updates will be reviewed before each term-end

Ofsted Framework

Mrs Greenough presented a presentation and the following slides were presented:

Slide one - Ofsted – operational guide

- Overview of inspection preparation.
- Introduction of planning calls between inspectors and school leaders.
- Explanation of the Nominee Role – a designated person to liaise between the headteacher and inspection team.
- Emphasis on professional conduct and inspector training in emotional literacy and wellbeing.

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	<p><u>Slide two – Areas Evaluated</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation framework has been refined. • Inclusion and Leadership & Governance are now heavily weighted across all inspection categories. <p><u>Slide three – How are they evaluated?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools will receive a report card with individual ratings for each area. • Ratings include - <i>Needs Attention</i>, <i>Expected Standard</i>, and <i>Strong Standard</i>. <p><u>Slide four – Safeguarding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding expectations are now much clearer. • A defined list of criteria must be met to achieve a “Met” judgement. • Trustees were briefed on the safeguarding criteria. <p>Q: Is there work to be done to ensure parents know who to contact with safeguarding concerns? A: Yes. Current communication includes weekly newsletters and website updates. Further improvements will be explored through the parental engagement strategy.</p> <p>ACTION: Include a question in the upcoming parent survey to assess whether parents know who to contact regarding safeguarding concerns.</p> <p><u>Slide five – inclusion – Expected</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for achieving the Expected Standard. <p><u>Slide six – inclusion – Strong</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for achieving the Strong Standard. <p><u>Slide seven – curriculum and teaching – Expected</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for curriculum delivery and teaching quality. <p><u>Slide eight – curriculum and teaching – Strong</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for achieving a strong rating in teaching and learning. <p><u>Slide nine – Challenges</u></p> <p>Discussion of challenges such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion vs. accountability pressures.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of inspection changes on vulnerable pupil strategies. • Balancing high expectations with resource limitations. <p><u>Grading Terminology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous grades were <i>Causing Concern, Attention Needed, Secure, Strong, Exemplary</i>. • New grades: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Needs Attention (equivalent to Requires Improvement). ○ Expected Standard. ○ Strong Standard. • Urgent Improvement and Exceptional are now listed separately and less prominently. • Judgements are now based on a secure fit (must meet all criteria), not a best fit. <p>We have had a visit from one of our local MPs in relation to SEND provision. The MP is now part of the Government's education team following the recent cabinet reshuffle. The MP went to Birdsedge First School and to Kirkburton Middle School. Issues have been raised to the MP, including concerns relating to the new Ofsted framework.</p> <p><u>Vulnerable Pupils strategy</u></p> <p>Mrs Senior discussed the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust has launched a new Vulnerable Pupils Strategy to address the increasing complexity of pupil needs and the limitations of external support services. The strategy aligns with national changes and Ofsted expectations, particularly around inclusion and safeguarding. • The strategy is in its early implementation phase (5 weeks in). • Six strategic priorities are outlined in the full document. • All schools are actively engaging with the strategy. <p>Key actions taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Groups Established • Tracking Systems Developed • Internal Provision Development • Pathway Planning • Parental Engagement • One-Page Profiles <p>Challenges Identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Services • Funding and Capacity • Data Collection
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminology <p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise safeguarding handbook with descriptors for CPOMS categories. • Continue staff training on reporting thresholds. • Include safeguarding awareness questions in the parent survey. • Explore data breakdown by local area to better understand deprivation and need. • Monitor impact of internal hubs and parental engagement initiatives. <p>Q: Do we need to evidence that there is sharing of information for the 13 weeks when pupils are not in school?</p> <p>A: Yes. This was raised in the context of the closure of the local hub, which previously supported families during school holidays. The Trust acknowledged the gap and discussed the importance of signposting and maintaining support links during non-term time.</p> <p>Q: What is the strategy called? There is some inconsistency in naming (e.g. "inclusion strategy" vs "Vulnerable Pupils strategy").</p> <p>A: The Trust will rebrand to the Vulnerable Pupils Strategy to ensure clarity and consistency across the Trust.</p> <p><u>Parental engagement</u></p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the following points:</p> <p>Stakeholders Engagement Foundation presentation was presented on screen to Trustees. The following slides were presented and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slide 1 – who are the stakeholders • Slide 2 – 2024 Parentkind research • Slide 3 – 2025 Parentkind research – Complaints • Slide 4 – what parents told us in 2025 • Slide 5 – safety at school • Slide 6 – bullying in school • Slide 7 – assessments for special educational needs support • Slide 8 – parents' opinions on AI • Slide 9 – development groups • Slide 10 - Session 1 – aims and objectives • Slide 11 – session 2 – aims and objective <p>Q: Do we know the situation in the Trusts schools regarding WhatsApp groups and their impact?</p> <p>A: Yes. One school has experienced significant issues last year. The Trust is working to understand the full picture across all schools.</p> <p>Q: Do governors know what's being said in WhatsApp groups?</p> <p>A: Not always</p>
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	<p>Q: How can governors challenge misinformation or inappropriate comments without escalating conflict?</p> <p>A: Trustees discussed the importance of “disagreeing agreeably” and supporting governors with training on how to respond constructively.</p> <p>Q: Are there legal implications for governors who don’t challenge harassment in WhatsApp groups?</p> <p>A: Yes. Under the Employment Rights Bill (coming into effect January 2026), failure to challenge harassment could expose the Trust to legal risk. Training for governors is needed.</p> <p><u>Financial Update</u></p> <p>Mr Field noted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Budget Forecast Return was submitted on time and in line with trustee approval. • Budgets have been distributed to all headteachers. • The new finance partner has taken over forecasting responsibilities following the previous finance partner’s departure. • The Trust is in a strong financial position. • Draft outturn for the year is £204,200. • Forecasted surplus is approximately £300,000 after capital adjustments. • Carry forward from last year is £800,000. • Total reserves are estimated at £1.1 million. <p>The DfE queried the Trust’s strong financial performance during a recent meeting. The Trust explained its collaborative leadership, forward planning, and cost controls. Effective staff redeployment across schools has helped avoid redundancies and reduce costs.</p> <p><u>Capital Investments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two major Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) projects are planned: One at Kirkburton Middle School (jointly funded with the football club). One at Scissett Middle School. • The estimated cost is just over £100,000 each. • A contractor has offered a 5% discount if both projects are commissioned together. <p>RESOLVED: Trustees agreed in principle to proceed, pending full business case approval.</p> <p><u>IT and AI Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools are now Windows 11 compliant. • A draft AI policy has been developed as part of the strategic plan. The policy will be reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust has completed DfE IT Standards self-assessments across all schools. • Results will be presented to FARC to identify areas for improvement before the accuracy deadline. <p><u>Grange Moor Primary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Authority gave the Trust a conversion date of 28th February. The Trust have asked for this to be pushed back to April. The Trust are currently changing payroll providers etc. There will be more details provided to the Education & People Committee.
10 Operational update	<p><u>Procurement exercise update</u></p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the following points:</p> <p>Payroll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract awarded to Access Group. • The value is just under £50,000 over three years. • The procurement is within the CEO's delegated authority. • Access Group also provides the Trust's finance system, enabling better integration with HR and MIS systems. <p>External Audit Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contract has been awarded to BHP. • Evaluation was led by Mr Lakin and Mr Marshall. • BHP was the lowest cost and scored highest on service quality. • Appointment to be confirmed by Members at the AGM. <p>Upcoming procurements</p> <p><u>MUGA Carpets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant capital spend across two sites. • Business case being finalised by the Head of Estates. • Will be submitted to Trustees for approval. <p><u>Multifunctional Devices (MFDs)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lease value, this is likely to exceed £75,000 and will require Trustee approval. <p>Trust policies are compliant with the new procurement regulations coming into effect in 2026.</p> <p>Procurement training has been undertaken, though the new framework is still complex.</p> <p><u>Health & Safety update</u></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several health and safety audit reports were included in the meeting folder. The reports were positive and had included high scoring. • There were some actions and areas for focus which the estates team will focus on. <p>Trustees noted their thanks to the Head of Estates and to the CFO for all their hard work.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the other health and safety reports will be shared with Trustees once they are received.</p> <p><u>Operating risks</u></p> <p>Catering Contract Issues</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the Trust's catering contract and current issues that have arisen.</p> <p>Mrs Humphreys noted the food quality has improved, pupils are enjoying meals and feedback is being collected via a token system in middle schools. Portion sizes and menu layers are being reviewed.</p>
11 Safeguarding	<p>Mrs Senior noted the safeguarding data was discussed in item 4.</p>
12 Trustee updates	<p>Mrs Hellewell noted the following points:</p> <p><u>Link Trustee role and responsibilities</u></p> <p>FARC link trustee roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates Management and Health and Safety – Mr Wade • Financial oversight including procurement – Mr Lakin • Governance and legal/standards compliance including scrutiny – Mr Marshall (tbc) <p>Education & People Committee link Trustee roles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding – Mrs Godman • SEND – Mrs Done • Careers for the Middle Schools – Mrs Godman <p>School Link Trustees:</p> <p>Middle Schools – Mrs Godman Shelley First School – Mrs Neill Birdsedge First School / Grange Moor Primary School – Mr Lunt Scholes Junior & Infant School - Mrs Done</p>

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	<p><u>Trustees catch ups – Chair</u></p> <p>Mr Marshall noted Trustee catch ups have taken place. Mr Marshall met with Mrs Greenough over the summer to discuss feedback and suggestions taken from the catch-up meetings.</p> <p>It was noted Trustee catch-ups take place each year.</p>
13 Statutory and non-statutory requirements completion	<p>Mrs Hellewell noted there are two governors and one Trustee whose forms are outstanding. Reminders have been sent to these governors and trustees.</p>
14 Important documents to note	<p>Mrs Hellewell noted the following documents were uploaded prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping children safe in Education (Previously shared) • Academies handbook 2025 (previously shared) • DfE Estates standards framework for schools • DfE IT standards framework for schools • Ofsted framework
15 Any other business	<p>RESOLVED: There were two items brought up under any other business.</p> <p><u>Feedback</u></p> <p>Mr Marshall noted that the layout of the Trust Board meeting papers has been revised following recent feedback. Trustees were invited to share any further comments or suggestions regarding the new format with Mrs Hellewell.</p> <p><u>Appraisals</u></p> <p>Mr Marshall also reminded Trustees that Executive appraisal meetings are currently underway and requested that they inform Mrs Hellewell of their availability in relation to Mrs Greenough's appraisal as soon as possible.</p>
16 Future dates for meetings of the Trust Board	<p>RESOLVED: That the future dates for Trust Board, training and committees are as follows:</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 6th November 2025 at 4pm - CST governing a school programme (check when we get an invite) • Thursday 13th November 2025 at 4pm - CST governing a school programme • Tuesday 18th November 2025 at 5pm – Trust Wide Development Session • Thursday 20th November 2025 at 4pm - CST governing a school programme

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thursday 27th November 2025 at 4pm - CST governing a school programme</i> • <i>Tuesday 16th June 2026 at 5pm – Trust Wide Development Session</i> <p>Trustees were reminded to check for communications from CST regarding session links and confirmations.</p> <p><u>Meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 5pm – Trust Board</i> • <i>Wednesday 17th December 2025 at 3pm – AGM</i> • <i>Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board</i> • <i>Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board</i> • <i>Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 5pm – Trust Board</i> <p><u>Committees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wednesday 22nd October 2025 at 5pm – Education & People Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 19th November 2025 at 5pm – Finance, Audit & Risk Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 5pm – FARC (Accounts Meeting)</i> • <i>Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 5pm – Education & People Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 5pm – Finance, Audit & Risk Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 10th June 2026 at 5pm – Education & People Committee</i> • <i>Wednesday 1st July 2026 at 5pm – Finance, Audit & Risk Committee</i>
17 Agenda, minutes, and related papers to be excluded from published version	<p>RESOLVED: Matters discussed in item 10 have been excluded from the minutes for confidentiality reasons.</p>

Summary of Actions

Minute Reference	Action
M9_08102025	Include a question in the upcoming parent survey to assess whether parents know who to contact regarding safeguarding concerns.