MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CMAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD VIRTUALLY ON 27TH NOVEMBER 2024 at 17.30

Name	Designated Role	Attendance
Ann Kowalska	Chair	Present
Amanda Mellor	Vice Chair	Present
Maria Stelmach	Vice Chair	Apologies
Louise Gohr	CEO	Present
Chris Bell		Present
Ros Caulfield		Present
Louise Gibson		Apologies
Juan Zhou		Present
Anna Russell		Apologies
Simon Varo		Present
Julie Richardson	CFO	Present
Jenny Whiston	Governance & Compliance Lead	Present
Sue Lambeth	Clerk	Present

PART ONE – NON-CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

	Item
1.	**Welcome, Apologies and Any Other Business** The Vice Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting which was quorate and started at 17.34. Apologies received from Anna Russell, Maria Stelmach and Louise Gibson were accepted. No other items of Part One business were requested.
2.	**Declarations of Interest** There were no potential pecuniary interests or conflicts of interest between an individual and the governing board as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting. Trustees were requested to complete tasks on GVO, particularly outstanding cyber security and safeguarding training where required.
3.	**Chair's Action** The Vice Chair reported no actions since the previous meeting.

4.	**Membership** The membership of the Board was confirmed as shown on this document. The appointment of Ann Kowalska with effect from 25th October 2024 for a term of office of four years and as Chair of Chancery Trust Board for a period of 12 months initially was confirmed. Ann Kowalska took over the meeting from this point and introductions were made. Ann shared her considerable expertise and involvement in governance and local schools and confirmed she was looking forward to putting in place strong foundations for the growth and future of the trust. There had been no resignations since the previous meeting. Anna Russell's term of office was due to expire on 21st March 2025. Discussion of the appointment of a Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee for 2024/25 would take place in Part 2 of the meeting. Confirmation was received that membership recorded on GIAS, Chancery Trust website and the NGA would be updated by Jenny Whiston. All records were currently up to date.
5.	**CEO Report to Directors – Part One** The CEO highlighted the following aspects of her report available on GVO: 1. Context • Attendance was extremely positive across the trust despite seasonal illness at all schools. Attendance checks formed part of categorisation meetings and discussions with the Local Authority (LA) also took place. • Some suspensions had been necessary, all of which were known cases and the CEO was confident that the correct course of action had been taken in each one. The CEO was contacted before any suspension happened. A very positive change had been seen in the use of physical restraint at The Berkeley following training. • The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) continued to increase in line with the national picture. SEND training was ongoing and the Special Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) were working across the trust to ensure training was the most appropriate and was making a difference. In the previous year the trust had joined with Adelaide School for training, and this year the impact and the correct dissemination of training to all was a focus. Based on data, further work was to be done. 2. The Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) which listed the main headlines for all schools had been shared and had been referenced to how the Trust Development Plan (TDP) had been formed. 3. The TDP (updated November 2024) not only included Key Stage 2 (K2) data but was also based on output from internal data systems e.g. more

	able pupils across all year groups. The work on the Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) project was ongoing. All schools had signed up to the Computing Hub framework which offered many free resources and materials. The trust was working towards a quality mark. **Q: Does the SEND training include the building up of pupil resilience?** A: Different nurture groups are in place, and all schools have a trained senior mental health lead which linked to SEND provision, staff wellbeing and resilience. Resilience features in all work with all children through both the trust values and behaviour curriculum work. As part of the Behaviour Hub work, the trust have reviewed the key behaviour principles about behaviour in order to teach resilience and build self-esteem and self-confidence. **Q: Is there a time scale for the plan?** A: The work is ongoing, and the TDP has 3 milestones over the year. The plan is updated in November, March and at the end of year in order to show development against key strands. JZ joined the meeting at 17.44.
6.	**MAT Development Plan** The **MAT Development plan had been formally approved** at the previous meeting.
7.	**Finance Matters** The latest management accounts had been shared on GVO, and the October documents would be added and shared week commencing 2nd December following the update of the finance system. Financial Statements and Trustees Report The accountants had presented documents to the Audit & Risk (A&R) Committee in the previous week, and the committee had referred the reports to this meeting for formal approval. Trustees thanked the team for their excellent work as evidenced in the report. The A&R Committee had discussed the question of the recording of the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) loan at Excalibur and Pikemere and had recommended these be shown on the balance sheet as a monthly loan cost. **The Trust Board concurred and approved the Financial Statements and Trustees Report.** **Trustees approved the teacher pay scales from September 2024** and the CFO confirmed that amounts including backpay had been built into the budget. The latest Teacher Pay Policy was awaited from Cheshire East for comparison, and any necessary updates would be made to the trust document. **Support staff pay scales from September 2024 were approved by trustees.**

	The board formally approved the new <u>catering contract</u> with Aspens across the five schools with effect from January 2025 for 3 years with an option to extend. A full tender process using a consultant had taken place with support from the RPJ Group. **Q: What is the impact on schools?** A: The changes will be for the better and staff will remain the same. It will be better value for parents.
8.	**Compliance** <u>Headlines from school compliance checks</u> Most actions from compliance checks during the year were progressing well as evidenced in the meeting pack. The Governance and Compliance Lead confirmed there were no concerns
9.	**Risk Listing** One high risk, Cyber Security, had been identified by the Audit Committee who had agreed after discussion that the risk level should remain at red due to the nature and potential of cyber-attacks. Trustees were required to complete Cyber Security training as soon as possible. TASK: To complete Cyber Security training asap. (AR, LGi, MS and RC)
10.	**Board Reports** <u>Standards Committee</u> The re-scheduled meeting had discussed the formulation of the Trust Development Plan (TDP) based on detailed data including that from KS2 and phonics, and also the approach to school categorisation for the year which had built capacity at leadership by attaching school leaders to sections of Priority 2 of the TDP namely: • Anthony Hughes (Pikemere) RADY, • LG (The Berkeley Academy) SEND, • Juliet Jones (Excalibur) more able pupils. • Joanna Wright (Willaston Academy) and Emma Clark (Elworth Hall) the Computing Hub. Vulnerabilities included Elworth Hall and The Berkeley, both due for Inspection in the current year. Although significant progress had been made in both schools, external validation was awaited. Systems and processes around quality assurance e.g. external SIP reports showed the schools to be in a much stronger position and ready for inspection. <u>Finance and Resources</u>

	The committee had approved the CIF loan for the roof at Excalibur School who had forecast and confirmed that the impact on their budget based on worst case scenario was affordable. Audit & Risk The positive accounts had been examined in detail. The threat of cyber-attacks had been discussed and the board received confirmation that good processes and procedures were in place for major risks. The one action from the external audit relating to the schools' use of credit cards had been immediately addressed and new documentation was to be introduced in order to alleviate the risk. **The meeting accepted the reports from the committees.**
11.	**Board Impact** Impact of the board on pupils and staff across the trust since the last meeting • Trustees' challenge on the actions taken by the trust to ensure the best outcomes for SEND pupils and leadership priorities resulted in assurances around the ongoing implementation of the RADY project and SEND profiles. • The support and challenge of the CFO had ensured continued financial planning and management. • The proactive challenge raised at the Audit and Risk Committee had resulted in the Chancery CFO support ascertaining a swift response thereby allowing the finalisation of audit documents without delay. The board were requested to use the comment facility on GVO to question and challenge information shared both in the meeting pack and between meetings. Comments would be monitored by JW and responses would be prepared for meetings.
12.	**Local Governance** Feedback from LGB Link Trustees • Excalibur Autumn 1 LGB meeting had discussed steps to enhance the resilience of teachers and how to help pupils to become resilient to life events. The Head was well supported. • The link trustee had been unable to attend The Berkeley Academy Autumn 1 LGB meeting. • The Pikemere Autumn 1 meeting had been attended and the Link Trustee had also been involved in the HT's Performance Management with Helen Gorst (Halliard Trust Deputy CEO) and the Pikemere Chair. • No feedback was available from Link Trustees at Elworth Hall and Willaston Academy. **Link trustees for Elworth Hall and The Berkeley were urgently requested to attend the next LGB meeting to ensure these LGBs feel valued by the Trust, especially as these schools are in an inspection window.**

	ACTION: To make contact with link schools before the next meeting (MS, JZ) The following new LGB appointments were noted: • Elworth Hall – new Parent Governors Nigel Leese and Sally Dakin with effect from 8th November 2024 • Pikemere – New Parent Governor James Cope with effect from 27th September 2024
13.	**Policies** Trustees had ratified the Dignity at Work Policy on GVO. Looked After Children Policy (new) JW confirmed that actions were on Every for schools to check their statutory website compliance. RC had attended training in which it was made clear that every school should have a person responsible for LAC pupils and that paperwork should be in school. The presentation had been shared with school links via GVO as would school documentation. A meeting would be set up for link governors to agree the best way forward to check processes and documentation in use at their schools. TASK: To share documents from LAC training with JW. (RC). TASK: To set up a meeting for PP/vulnerable children link governors with RC and LG. (JW) TASK: To check who takes responsibility for ensuring individual schools complete their information on the LAC Policy. (LG) TASK: To investigate at the next Chairs' meeting whether LGBs wished to have a governor with responsibility for checking the accuracy of information on the website. (LG) SEND Policy (no changes) Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy (no changes) ECT Policy (no changes) **Trustees approved the Looked After Children Policy, the SEND Policy, the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and the ECT Policy.**
14.	**Cheshire East (CE) Director of Children's Services Report** The Autumn 2024 report and helpful summary had been shared on GVO and the attention of trustees was brought to the importance of training.

15.	**Minutes of the previous meetings / matters arising and actions** The meeting confirmed that the Part One minutes of the meeting on 25th September 2024 on GVO were an accurate account. There were no matters arising. The tasks allocated from the previous meeting were reviewed and trustees were requested to comment / complete them as soon as possible.
16.	**Any Other Business** The meeting discussed a supportive and well-worded letter recently circulated by Willaston Academy to their parents on the subject of mobile phone usage. This requested parental support around controls for their children. The board felt this was a good approach and one which could be replicated across schools in the trust. The CEO confirmed that schools were encouraged to share such documents. TASK: To obtain a copy of the Willaston parental mobile phone letter with a view to sharing. (JW)
17.	**Date of Next meeting** The date of the next meeting of the Chancery Trust Directors was confirmed as 19th March 2025.

JZ left and Part One of the meeting finished at 18.20.