MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CMAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON 21ST MAY 2025 at 17.30

Name	Designated Role	Attendance
Ann Kowalska	Chair of Trustees	Present
Amanda Mellor	Vice Chair of Trustees	Apologies
Maria Stelmach	Vice Chair of Trustees	Present
Louise Gohr	Trustee & CEO	Present
Chris Bell	Trustee	Present
Ros Caulfield	Trustee	Apologies
Louise Gibson	Trustee	Apologies
Simon Varo	Trustee	Present
Kerry Hulson	Associate Member	Present
Anthony Hughes	Headteacher	Present
Katy Jodrell	Observer	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 Chair welcomed CMAT Trustees, Kerry Hulson, an Associate Member, and Katy Jodrell, who was attending the meeting as an observer. Anthony Hughes, Pikemere Headteacher, would be joining the meeting as soon as possible. The meeting was quorate and started at 17.30. Apologies received from Amanda Mellor, Ros Caulfield and Louise Gibson were accepted. Items of Part One business were requested: • Willaston Academy Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) bid
2.	**Conflicts of Interest** Directors confirmed there were no conflicts of interest with the business to be discussed in the meeting.
3.	**Chair's Action**

	The Chair reported no actions had been taken on behalf of the board since the previous meeting. Anthony Hughes was welcomed to the meeting at 17.32.
4.	**Membership** The membership of the Board was confirmed to be as shown on this document. <u>Changes to membership</u> Kerry Hulson, LGB Chair at Pikemere School, had joined the board as an Associate Member for one year. There were currently vacancies for a link trustee for Elworth Hall School and a safeguarding link trustee (statutory). A further potential trustee could attend the July meeting. From September 2025 the role of safeguarding link trustee would be to facilitate ideas, coordinate the safeguarding link governor meetings currently held termly and share best practice. No additional safeguarding knowledge was required. Trustees were requested to consider the role and contact either Jenny Whiston or the Chair as soon as possible. TASK: To contact JW or AK as soon as possible to discuss the safeguarding link trustee role. (All)
5.	**CEO Report – Part One** <u>Attendance</u> was very positive across the trust with all schools consistently at 95% and 96%. Attendance of the most disadvantaged pupils continued to be carefully monitored and the CEO was confident that the right systems and processes were place in the schools to ensure it was challenged on a regular basis. Work had been shared among schools. The trust was now aspiring for 97% attendance. <u>Data Headlines</u> Key areas were <u>Early Years Foundation Stage</u> (EYFS) which appeared low as did Key Stage 1(KS1) <u>phonics data</u> for some schools. However, schools' local context needed to be considered e.g. high levels of SEND need. Some pupils with individual needs had barriers in place but were still making progress. Data accountability meetings had confirmed the correct provision was in place for the pupils; however, further scrutiny by HTs would take place over the summer term to identify reasons and to avoid a pattern going forwards. The discrepancy in <u>pupil reading data moving from Year 1 to 2</u> was highlighted. Phonics data had been historically strong across Chancery; however, reading data in Year 2 did not match the level seen in phonics. Trustees were advised that the two measures were not the same, and action

	research was being undertaken to adapt the reading curriculum in Year 1 to bridge the gap to Year 2. Early signs were a greater fluency in reading in Year 1 and greater stamina for tests in Year 2. HTs as a group were to examine summer term summative data based on common tests from Year 1 to identify patterns and trends. Schools could learn from each other. This could form an element of the Trust Development Plan in 2025-26. Maths data appeared positive particularly at expected standard; however, further work was underway at greater depth especially in KS1. Triad work had been undertaken across the trust with positive outcomes. Peer observations had been done to identify the quality of Maths teaching and feedback on the teaching of more able pupils was to be shared. Schools would be paired up for the greatest gains. Accountability The Team Around the School (TAS) approach had been maintained, and after central team discussions and RAG rating, action plans to address all areas of vulnerability had been shared with schools, who updated information for subsequent meetings. Discussions around budgets and the setting process had taken place with two schools. This supportive mechanism had put schools in better position. **Q: Are schools and trust thinking similarly?** A: Mostly although some reminders are required. The work of the TAS formalises informal conversations to ensure schools are held to account appropriately for what is expected of them. This avoids vulnerabilities becoming a problem, and staffing had been discussed early and frankly. Trustees had no further questions. Simon Varo joined the meeting at 17.46. Impact of the Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) project Anthony Hughes, Headteacher at Pikemere School, shared an update on the RADY project (one of the MAT development strands) which was on track for the end of the year. Trustees were reminded of the 4 key strands: 1. Application of an **uplift** to disadvantaged learners attainment to ensure if all learners reached their attainment target, learning would be equalised. 2. RADY to form the **Golden Thread** in all activity through school via an 3. **Equitable** approach to teaching and learning and 4. **Proportional Representation** for disadvantaged pupils across all aspects of school life

	The RADY project had been in place all schools. A Chancery group of RADY leads had been formed with staff also forming part of the Cheshire East (CE) RADY group. • The focus of the work during the current year was Equity in Teaching and the milestones and success criteria were shared (see slide 4). Schools were on track to complete this by the end of the year. • Staff had worked to devise the "What does Chancery look like in Chancery Schools" document (See slide 5) which broke down the four strands into tangible and visible outcomes. • Strides forwards had been made in the proportional representation strand e.g. pupils attendance at clubs; however, data e.g. the percentage of children at age related expected and greater depth standard and the percentage of pupils at different attendance bands, was awaited. Details of specific actions to add extra support for RADY children e.g. questioning, positioning pupils in class and homework support had been devised and shared with all staff (see slide 6) • Data by school varied due to differences in the measurement of impact between schools and the number of cohorts which had been uplifted. School data would be drilled into and discussed by leaders. It was felt vital that the attainment gap did not increase and that all RADY children were making progress. Almost all RADY children across the trust were now making accelerated progress; however, successes and areas for challenge would be identified at the end of the summer term. It was stressed that RADY was a 3 to 5 year project to be effective. The support from Challenging Education had been invaluable both to Chancery and CE. There had been many successes to date on the project e.g. poverty proofing across schools, and the final piece would be the data evidence. Next steps included the sharing of good practice across schools to ensure classrooms were equitable and gaps due to absence were investigated. The aim was to ensure the expectations for RADY pupils were as high as possible and maximum use made of the growing expertise and tools available. **Q: Does this replace Pupil Premium (PP)? And how is a child selected?** A: Pupils can be those designated PP, those open to social care, previously Looked After and Looked After Children (LAC) and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). There is currently some wariness around including pupils with SEND. **Q: How do teachers balance the elements of RADY in classes?** A: Some RADY designated children also have SEN needs. Expectations of teachers are made known and clear, and the work involves tweaks rather than radical changes to ensure RADY pupils remain at the forefront of teachers' minds.

	The numbers of RADY pupils in the schools and the distribution across classes was variable and currently rising in Pikemere. Regardless of the number of RADY pupils in classes, it was important that teachers considered how their classrooms were being made equitable to challenge all pupils and give them the best chance in life. AH was thanked by trustees and the CEO and left at 17.59. The CEO confirmed that data, including the reporting of the impact of RADY, would be discussed at the Summer Chancery HTs meeting.
6.	**Management Accounts** Latest Management Accounts April 2025 The acting CFO reported that The Berkeley Academy (TB) would have a large overspend at the end of the current year; however, this was acceptable due to their previous large carry forward. There were no concerns with the Chancery Trust finances. A further meeting with Elworth Hall School was scheduled in Summer 2 to confirm a balanced budget. Excalibur School was expected to have a balanced budget. A deficit of approximately £50k had been envisaged at Pikemere School; however, after discussion a position with a small positive carry forward had been achieved. Willaston Academy had no issues, and a balanced budget would be presented. **Q: Is the Pikemere situation staffing related?** A: Yes. Schools are finding budget setting challenging due to areas such as SEND. All savings at the school are being made through natural wastage, and staff have stepped forward without any pressure.
7.	**Finance Matters** Letters received by the Accounting Officer (19.03.25) The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had closed on 31st March 2025 and functions had moved to the DfE. There would be no impact on the trust.
8.	**GDPR Report** Annual report from the Data Protection Officer The rag rated checklist in the meeting pack showed a summary view of what needed to be in place. A meeting with the newly appointed Data Protection Champion in each school was to take place to ensure processes aligned in all schools. There were no concerns to report. A follow up meeting with Apex was scheduled in July when work would take place on the required cyber security standards which would be rag rated. This would lead to clear assurance to the trust that it was fully compliant.
9.	**Trust Governance** Feedback from link meetings held since the last Board meeting

	Four meetings had taken place and notes were available in the Chancery Key information folder on GVO. <u>Safeguarding</u> *06.02.25* The meeting had been useful with resources shared and discussion around safeguarding governors going into schools. Checklists and details of training on filtering and monitoring had been shared. <u>SEND</u> *27.03.25* Training had been discussed and checklists shared. School governors had expressed concerns around SEND and the impact on budget and finances. <u>Health & Safety (H&S)</u> *25.04.25* The H&S governors had shared and discussed the audits for their school together with the key points to be taken away for the trust. Following audits, schools had asked if it would be possible for the trust to align some of the documentation. However, schools were required to own the documents to ensure they were fit for the premises and the sites e.g. whilst an asbestos management plan will have a general template but it needed to be personalised by the school to give it ownership. Work on template documents would be undertaken at trust level where possible, however ownership remained with the schools. <u>Chairs</u> *02.05.25* The meeting had received an update from the CEO, and Chairs had been requested to speak to their LGBs about link meetings and the Chancery Governance Forum in June. <u>Link meetings 25/26</u> To avoid having three link meetings per year, a Teams meeting would take place in the autumn for governors to hear from the CEO on the action plan for the year with time inbuilt for link groups. A further online meeting could be scheduled in the spring term and the governance forum in the summer term would allow networking. Feedback from LGBs on the focus points for the upcoming governance morning had centred on SEND and inclusion, including the challenges faced and positives to be celebrated. The agenda was yet to be finalised, and trustees were requested to attend if possible. <u>Arrangements for annual trustee reviews</u> Times had been arranged for meetings and a document for pre-reading had been circulated. The aim of the meeting was to pull together the board

	knowledge base and identify areas of weakness to allow for training and development for growth.
10.	**Clerking Arrangements for Next Year** It was agreed the current clerking arrangements would continue for 2025-26.
11.	**Policies** The following trust policies were to be approved on GVO: • Teacher Capability (amended to include flow chart) • Support Staff Capability (amended to include flow chart) • Prevent TASK: To review and approve the Teacher Capability, Support Staff Capability and Prevent Policies by Wednesday 28th May.
12.	**Cheshire East (CE) Director of Children's Services Report** The Summer 2025 report and helpful summary would be shared once available.
13.	**Minutes of the previous meetings / matters arising and actions** The meeting **confirmed** that the Part One minutes of the meeting on 19th March 2025 on GVO were an accurate account. There were no matters arising. Any trustees with outstanding tasks from previous meetings would receive reminders via GVO. The Chair requested all trustees check tasks allocated to them prior to meetings.
14.	**Board Impact** To summarise the Board impact on pupils and staff across the trust since the last meeting: • The meeting discussed the low-cost RADY initiative led by the Head of Pikemere School which was now showing a positive impact. Thanks to the work of the schools, families were successfully travelling the journey with their children based on positive home school relationships. The impact on poverty proofing was known and schools were aware of the impact on families. More families now engaged with schools and parents came into assemblies and reading sessions. • The meeting had analysed the data presented in the HT report and discussed the alerts raised by the CEO • Progress on school budgets had been shared by the interim CFO. • Governors commended the proactive approach and significant impact of the Team Around the Schools which enabled work with schools before any areas of vulnerability emerged.

15.	**Any Other Business** Willaston Condition Improvement Funding Bid Willaston Academy had considered a Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid to replace their boilers with heat pumps. Quotes had now been obtained and school wished to proceed with an application at a cost of £1.3m to £1.5m with new heat pumps and heating system. School was required to contribute between 0% and 5% and planned to contribute no more than £50k. This amount had been built into the budget. Board approval was required as this was above £30k. **Q: Does leaving the work until winter 2026 leave the school vulnerable?** A: The bid would be submitted December 2025 with an outcome in May 2026. Work would be undertaken over summer 2026. Intermediate repairs would have to be paid for by school. Trustees questioned the need to replace the whole system if the boiler alone was the issue and were advised that conversations had taken place with E3Cube and option of like for like replacement had been discussed. Replacing the boiler alone would result in an upfront cost of similar amount to the CIF contribution repayable over a 10-year period. The proposal would future proof the school heating system. **Q: Could the replacement of the boiler at Pikemere be considered alongside this project?** A: The Pikemere boiler is approaching the end of its life. However, reserves are being built as a cushion and Pikemere already has two CIF loans. Trustees questioned whether there was any redundancy in the plant and equipment in view of the critical nature of the system and requested assurance that the proposal was correct. SV offered his expertise to verify the proposal which trustees welcomed. **Trustees agreed the details of the proposal for the replacement of the heating system at Willaston Academy be shared with Simon Varo for scrutiny. Contact details for E3Cube would also be shared.** Task: To verify the proposal for the replacement of the heating system at Willaston Academy. (SV) Task: To confirm approval of the proposal for the replacement of the heating system at Willaston Academy by email by mid-June. (All) The CEO introduced Katy Jodrell, the newly appointed Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who was to take up her post on 23rd June 2025. Katy would bring vast experience and would work over summer to be prepared for the autumn term. Ideas for reporting finance to the trustees would be shared and feedback would be welcomed. Huge thanks were expressed to Julie Richardson for maintaining the trust in the interim.

16.	**Date of Next meeting** The dates of the next meetings of the Trust board were confirmed as: • 9th July 2025 • 24th September 2025 • 10th December 2025 • 28th January 2026 • 11th March 2026 • 20th May 2026 • 8th July 2026 Trustees were requested to apologise if unable to attend.

Part One of the meeting finished at 18.39.