MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CMAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON MICROSOFT TEAMS
ON 20TH MAY 2026 at 17.30

Name	Designated Role	Attendance
Ann Kowalska	Chair of Trustees	Present
Maria Stelmach	Vice Chair of Trustees	Present
Louise Gohr	Trustee & CEO	Present
Chris Bell	Trustee	Present
Ros Caulfield	Trustee	Apologies
Karen Fuller	Trustee	Present
Louise Gibson	Trustee	Apologies
Amanda Mellor	Trustee	Present
Simon Varo	Trustee	Present
Adrian Veale	Trustee	Present
Katy Jodrell	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 meeting was quorate and started at 17.32. Trustees approved the use of Scriba to record notes of the meeting. The Chair welcomed CMAT Trustees to the meeting, and apologies received from Ros Caulfield and Louise Gibson were accepted. No other items of Part One business were requested.
2.	**Conflicts of Interest** Trustees confirmed there were no conflicts of interest with the business to be discussed in the meeting.
3.	**Chair's Action** The Chair reported a meeting with the Chair of The Berkeley Academy LGB and approval of the clerking arrangements for 2026/27.
4.	**Membership** The membership of the Board was confirmed to be as shown on this document. The Vice Chair was considering her position due to pressure of work and other commitments.

5.	**CEO Report – Part One** Attendance would continue to be a high priority and monitored closely across the trust to ensure pupils were in school on a daily basis. Improvements had been seen, and all schools could case study specific examples with reasons for lack of improvement. Trustees were assured that although some pupils remained in the persistently absent category, individual children were making incremental improvements as evidenced by school visits and discussion with school leaders. LGB conversations were taking place around attendance, and schools continued to be challenged. The aim in Early Years (EYFS) was to ensure the moderation process quality assured the Good Level of Development (GLD) judgements at the end of EYFS and addressed variances in teacher assessment judgement. Quality assurance would be undertaken by staff involved. **Q: How accurate is the Elworth Hall and Excalibur data in terms of teacher judgement?** A: Excalibur School does tend to achieve higher results, although 87% is exceptionally high for an Early Years outcome. The national target for Greater Level of Development (GLD) for 2028 stands at 75%. Whilst there was no reason to believe data is inaccurate, Chancery needs to be assured that it is accurate. The monitoring of practice in EYFS across the trust has been found to be fairly consistent although the range has been found to be different. Phonics data looked positive with interventions in place for pupils making slower progress. Positive feedback on pupils' willingness to do their best in Year 6 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) had been received from all Headteachers (HTs). Many interventions had been in place based on data captured at Assessment Point 2 (AP2) in the spring term. Pupil progress accountability meetings had all taken place and schools had been clear about the pupils targeted. There were vulnerabilities which were noted in the report. The RAG rating on page 8 of the report now showed the progress from AP1 to AP2. However, trustees had been alerted in the narrative that a percentage of those in the amber zone, whilst on track, had not yet achieved the required level. For reasons unknown, the grammar score for EH was not visible; however, the data was on the school system and a separate report would be shared. Simon Varo joined the meeting at 17.50. In terms of progress data, RADY (Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters) pupils were doing particularly well across the trust. An increase in attendance had also been noted in schools acrss the trust. TASK: To share GPS data with board. (LG)

6.	**Management Accounts** Latest Management Accounts March 2026 The March accounts summary highlighted the need for monitoring at Elworth Hall. Uptake and income for the Nursery had not been as high as originally forecast and one pupil on the school roll was attending alternative provision but remained on roll. School was being invoiced; however, funding from CE was not always promptly received. The document showed the worst case scenario. The accounts for Excalibur were slightly down due to the cost of the maternity cover. Figures for March at Pikemere were not in line with the original budget which had predicted a considerable surplus over the year. Governors had approved investment in an IT refresh and furniture. There would be no concern at the end of the year. **Q: Last year and currently The Berkeley Academy had a large surplus over budget. What will the building costs over the summer amount to? And is money being spent where it should be? Is this a consistent underspend?** A: The central team has had discussion on this with the governors. The planned building improvements include the conversion over the summer of one of the mobiles back to one classroom, roof work on the Year 6 mobile and refurbishment of an area of the playground and the addition of new equipment. The school manages to avoid supply costs by being a two-form entry school and staff change their working days to accommodate need. Economies of scale and flexibility come from being two form entry and the supply budget is not used as much as other schools. Some projects will not be possible in view of their size and cost e.g. conversion of the wet area into a useable space. A rolling programme of flooring replacement and decoration is in place. The surplus will decrease and governors are to consider other areas such as changes to the heating system which could pay off in the long term. Maria Stelmach joined the meeting at 18.01 **Q: Is any of the building improvement capital spend?** A: It will be capitalised. The replacement roof will extend the life of the structure and will add value. The only capital received by school is the Devolved Formula Capital Grant received in June which amounts to maximum of £8k. School will be required to make the balance of payment either from in year surplus or from reserves. **Q: Does the amount in reserves impact the budget from the DfE or councils?** A: Not the annual grant (provided based on pupil numbers and deprivation). However, it could affect schools when they apply for capital grants e.g.

	Willaston, Elworth and Excalibur at which point reserves could be taken into account.
7.	**Finance Matters** Approval of set of budget assumptions for 2026/27 The document set out the assumptions for the 26/27 budget which would be used at the next finance meeting to finalise school budgets. Calculations had been based on the assumptions provided by the Institute of School Leadership with pupil numbers based on nursery numbers and local authority planning. The per pupil income for 2026/27 would be a minimum of £5150 due to additional grants for budget support and the increase in National Insurance. In future years a prudent 1.6% increase funding was assumed. Increases in pupil income in the current year had been. The other DfE forecast grant income was based on known fact and included Sports Premium, universal free school meals and an increase reflecting the content of the new white paper / SEND reform. Other income / expenditure was not forecast to vary unless there were large changes in pupil numbers or charges. Assumptions around the cost of staffing were based on the Teachers' Pay Review Board suggestion of 6.5% over next 3 years weighted towards the end of the period. Support staff increases had been assumed at 3.3%. Inflation assumptions had varied upwards and downwards recently due to the ongoing war situation. Catering and waste contracts were currently locked in, and known increases such as the Schools Risk Protection Agreement due to increase from £27 to £29 pupil had been incorporated. For utilities, Chancery was locked into a contract with West Mercia through CE until March 2027 as it had greater buying power than the trust. Current indications were a 3% increase for electricity and a slight reduction in the cost of gas. It was agreed that sensible assumptions had been made based on known information. The CFO confirmed there were no major concerns; nevertheless, energy costs would be closely monitored. Trustees thanked the CFO for her work.
8.	**GDPR Report** The annual summary document noted updated documentation. Two subject access requests had been dealt with and phishing simulations had taken place. Further work would be undertaken with schools.
9.	**Trust Governance** Feedback from link meetings held since the last Board meeting

	Neither SEND or Health & Safety (H&S) link governors had met. The safeguarding group had met with Louise Gibson (safeguarding link trustee) in March and would be meeting again in June. Training was ongoing. Trustees were not required to activate Smartlog currently. Policies were to be read and approved through GVO rather than Every. Details of the relevant GVO page for cyber training would be shared with the Chair. The 2026 Governance Forum was to take place on Friday 10th July at Wychwood Park Hotel. The morning session would comprise input from Rob Johnstone, HMI, at the request of LGB Chairs. It would also provide a networking opportunity for local governors and trustees. Annual trustee reviews were to become bi-annual going forwards. Meetings for an informal chat would be arranged with new trustees. TASK: To arrange trustee reviews with Karen Fuller and Adrian Veale. (Chair)
10.	**Clerking Arrangements for 2026/27** As the current clerk was retiring from the end of the current academic year, trustees agreed to use clerking service from Cheshire East for one year. This would be carefully monitored. The CEO thanked the clerk for her work.
11.	**Policies** The GCL confirmed that a summary of changes was listed on the document. The following trust policies were to be approved on GVO: • Physical Intervention Policy **Q: Have all relevant staff across the trust had training about physical intervention and restraint?** A: Many schools have already completed training and Willaston School have offered out their session as a refresher to anyone requiring it. • Mobile Phone Policy Statement **Q: How is the policy implemented for visitors to schools? Is it clear? And is use of mobile phones challenged?** A: As primary schools, it is necessary to be cautious. For class assemblies and similar events, visitors are requested to turn mobile phones off. However, permission is given for photographs to be taken but not posted on social media. No reports of breaches have been received by the CEO, and all Headteachers deliver the same safeguarding message. Keeping children safe is high on the trust agenda and great vigilance takes place. The trust is keeping abreast of developments. • Cyber Security • Records Management

	• Data Protection Complaints **Q: In light of complaints having to go to a school before the ICO gave credence to a complaint, should this be made more explicit at the start of the policy?** A: The policy will be amended and uploaded to GVO for approval • Attendance Management policy and procedures • Parental Leave **Q: Do foster parents have any rights?** A: An answer from Cooks Lawyers will be sought. The following policies were ratified (changes made in light of the Employment Act 2025): • Paternity Pay and Leave • Leave and Time Off TASK: To read and approve policies on GVO by Wednesday 27th May or submit comments / questions to Jenny Whiston. (all)
12.	**Cheshire East (CE) Director of Children's Services Report** The Summer 2026 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 4th March 2026 on GVO were an accurate account. There were no matters arising and no outstanding tasks from previous meetings.
14.	**Any Other Business** There was no further business to discuss.
15.	**Date of Next meetings** • The date of the next meeting of the Trust board would be on Wednesday 8th July 2026. • The next Finance & Audit Committee meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 1st July. • The Governance Forum was to take place on Friday 10th July in person at Wychwood Park Hotel. • The Brill Kids Fest, a 150 Chancery pupils getting together at Wychwood Park Hotel to see and celebrate 'No Outsiders' with sessions on growth mindset, would take place on Monday 13th July. The event would be an opportunity to see pupils of Chancery schools working together.

Part One of the meeting finished at 18.36.