Minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting
Thursday 30 April 2026
Held on Teams

Present:	Sheila Boniface (Chair) Jane Britton Peter Cooper Marion Hawkins Katie Jackson Peter Jackson (Chair for the meeting) Tim Newsholme Shirley Tully
In attendance:	Catherine Brearey (Deputy CEO and Principal HSFC) Sallyanne Griffiths (Chief Financial Officer) Andrea Marshall (Director of Strategy and Improvement) Linda Watkins (Director of Governance)

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting explaining that he would chair the meeting as the Chair had covid; the reason the meeting had been moved online thanking everyone for their flexibility. The meeting would take a different format allowing time to consider key aspects for the next strategic plan.

Action

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Craig Holden. Daniel Pearce-Higgins.

2. **Opening standing items**
   I. No declarations of interests were declared.
   II. Some discussion was deemed to be confidential during the meeting with a separate minute recorded.
   III. There was no urgent business to be transacted at the meeting.

3. **Chair's Report**
   The Chair referred to the MAT-PN North conference she attended with the Director of Governance, noting it had been helpful in raising questions about how technology and central services could be better used to release staff capacity to support students. There would be merit in further discussion at a future meeting.

   The Chair had attended excellent student performances in the schools – Beauty and the Beast at The Chantry along with the Chair of Members, and Sister Act at JKHS along with Shirley Tully. JKHS had expressed their appreciation to Trust the support in funding a new sound system.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**
   The Board agreed to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025. There was only once action which had been addressed regarding a progress

report to the Board against the Strategic operating plan which was on the agenda. There were no matters arising.

The resolution dated 10 April 2026 had been approved by the Board and passed to submit capital bids for KEI and WSFC.

5. CEO's Report

The CEO took the report as read but highlighted three key issues for discussion and/or decision.

I. The CEO reiterated concerns about the widening gap between funding increases (notably a 0.5% rise for post-16) and anticipated pay awards, particularly in settings where staffing costs were already high.

II. Key themes from the recent White Paper, including expectations around Trust capacity, inclusion (particularly SEND), collaboration, civic responsibility, parental engagement and forthcoming Trust-level inspections were highlighted. The White paper signals an expectation that all schools will belong to strong Trusts, creating opportunities but also increased scrutiny.

6. Finance report to March 2026

The CFO summarised the finance report to March 2026. The Trust was operating broadly at break-even when assessed on an EBITDA basis, despite a challenging funding settlement for sixth-form colleges of 0.5% meaning any pay award for 2026-27 would need to be funded by the Trust. Additional pension and National Insurance grant funding would provide approximately £1m to March 2027, with a further £30k per month saving from reduced LGPS contributions. School Condition Allocation funding had been confirmed at c£2.8m to fund capital improvements at the academies during the summer 2026.

Intensive financial oversight was in place at John Kyrle High School, with a focus on significantly reducing the pay as a percentage of income ratio; realistically, this would be implemented over a 3-5 year period.

Directors agreed that it was crucial to maintain financial discipline and avoid complacency around Trust reserves.

7. Summary from Committees: 19 March 2026

The summary of key points from the meetings was received with the following key items approved at the recommendation of the Committees:

I. Audit & Risk Committee (including confidential minute)
   a. Risk management policy

II. Finance & Resources Committee

III. Curriculum & Quality Committee:
   a. Admissions policy
   b. Safeguarding supervision policy

IV. Search & Governance Committee: no meeting, however, there were recommendations for Governor appointments from LGBs:
   a. Appointed Jamie Willmore, Association Student Governor at WSFC's LGB for a 1-year term in office

b. Appointed Lucy Bolton, Ian Marriott and Katie Nikolov as Independent Governors at KEVI for 4-year terms in office

8. Strategic plan 2024-2027 operating plan progress

The Director of Strategy and Improvement reminded Directors that the current strategic plan would end in 2027. Planning had commenced to prepare the new strategic plan. A portal will be developed to monitor live progress of the plan in future.

The purpose of the strategic plan was debated which would be prepared as a tool for external audiences and also aligned with the DfE quality descriptors.

9. Strategic planning round table feedback

Directors worked in small groups to discuss strategic priorities informed by the White Paper and priorities identified at the MAT conference in February. These would feed into the new strategy.

Each group gave feedback on one priority from their discussions with a separate document to be prepared incorporating all discussion:

- Develop stable, purposeful, values-aligned growth and partnerships at a measured pace, supported by strong due diligence encompassing the Trust's ethos.
- Identify high-level strategic risks over the next 3 years include finance, partnerships, Ofsted and capacity.
- Define success measures beyond statutory outcomes, particularly around professional development of teachers, inclusion and SEND.

The Chair proposed a further focused strategic discussion session be convened on Teams ahead of the July Board meeting. Feedback will be shared in advance. LJW

10. Committee items for information

The following items had been discussed by the Committee and were presented for information and assurance.

I. Audit & Risk Committee:
   a. Risk Register
   b. Cyber security data protection and fraud report
   c. DfE schools resource management self assessment checklist

II. Finance & Resources Committee:
   a. Accommodation report (health and safety, estates and accommodation strategy)
   b. HR report

III. Curriculum & Quality Committee:
   a. Data pack, student performance headline data
   b. Gatsby Standards audit
   c. Safeguarding report
   d. Quality report

11. Summary from LGB meetings

I. WSFC 4 March 2026
II. JKHS 23 March 2026
III. The Chantry 16 March 2026
IV. HSFC 19 March 2026

V. KEVI 25 March 2026
VI. JKHS 24 November 2025

12. Any other business
There were no items

13. Date of Next Meeting
Trust Board: **Thursday 9 July 2026** commencing at 6.00pm at KEVI (venue TBC).
Dates of meetings for 2026/17 had been issued with Board papers.