MINUTES

Meeting:	Governing Board	**Date:**	25 March 2026
Trust/SAT:	**Wellacre Academy**		
Venue:	School	**Time:**	4.45 p.m.
Governance Professional:	**Trust Governor Services** Julie Lawson (Head of Service)	**Clerk:**	Trust GS

PRESENT:
Mr S Casey (Chair)
Dr K Gill
Ms L Hepple
Mrs N Mohammed
Mrs M Radhakrishnan
Mrs J Sharrock (Principal)

IN ATTENDANCE:
Miss P Bailey (Business Director- BD)
Mr H Hockin (Clerk, Trust GS)

1. MEETING MANAGEMENT

1.1 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received for Mrs L Henry, Mrs J O'Connor, Cllr S Procter, Mr S Russell and Mrs J Thirkill. Ms L Hepple was expected to join the meeting late.

Resolved:

i) That the apologies for absence for Mrs L Henry, Mrs J O'Connor, Cllr S Procter, Mr S Russell and Mrs J Thirkill be accepted.

ii) That the attendance of Miss P Bailey at this meeting be approved.

1.2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS & UPDATES TO BUSINESS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of conflict of interest, direct or indirect pecuniary interest by members of the Board in respect of any item on the agenda.

1.3 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2025**

Resolved: ***That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.***

1.4 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

i) **Attendance**

Q: A Governor asked for clarification on attendance figures. Attendance target was 92.9%, as set by DfE, and was currently at 92.6%. School was measured against similar schools and had improved in comparison. FSM attendance was a focus as there were some gaps.

Ms L Hepple joined the meeting.

1.5 **APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEE**

The Chair welcomed Mrs N Mohammed who was attending her first meeting of the Governing Board.

Mrs Mohammed introduced herself, she is a Parent Governor at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys and works as a Minute Clerk at Trust GS.

The Chair and Head felt her skillset would be valuable for the Board.

Resolved:

i) That Mrs N Mohammed be appointed as a Trustee.
ii) That Mr S Crampton be appointed as a Trustee.

2. PERFORMANCE REPORTS

2.1 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

i) **Spring Cohort Analysis**

The number of EHCP and SEN Support students was increasing, and PP remained consistent, thought there was an anomaly in Year 8 with higher FSM. The demographics of the cohort were noted, and school was 81% White/British, which is above national average.

ii) **Governance & Leadership**

Trust Strategy was noted, along with the Government White Paper and potential impact on the school and SEND provision.

iii) **IDSR**

A summary was included in the report, based on January 2025 census, so differed from current data.

Key characteristics were explained and the proportion of SEND students is increasing. Persistent absence was lower than national average and improving. The number of suspensions was around half of last year, partly due to embracing relational practice as part of the Belong Project, and a greater focus on the complexity of needs. Permanent exclusions were higher than national and the reasons were explained.

iv) **Academic Performance**

Attainment is in line with national average, and the Head explained context where there was variance.

Subject-specific performance was detailed, whilst gender differences were also noted. English progress was significantly below national and actions had been taken, with improvement expected. Maths was close to national and above at 4+ grades.

There were concerns regarding Science outcomes, although an uplift was expected as a result of leadership change. The Head of Science had recently presented at the Curriculum Committee.

v) **Stakeholder Update**

Student Voice was noted. The BeeWell survey had identified strengths and differences which could be used as areas of focus going forwards.

The Parent Questionnaire had seen a low response, but feedback had been positive, and questions were linked to the Ofsted Framework.

Parents Evening had been well attended, and most Parents had expressed a preference for the online setting.

A new website is due, and a meeting planned to progress this week.

vi) **SDP**

School had recently received a SPP peer review (led by the Head at Stretford Grammar School) with a positive report. The Review had prompted significant inclusion work, including restructure and diagnostic work. The work of Phil Pemberton was acknowledged, and he continues to be the Secondary Representative on Trafford's Families First Strategic Partnership Board and linked well with government aspirations to forge more effective partnership work around families and young people.

vii) **Attendance**

The Principal advised DfE issue comparison reports which show the School's attendance is slightly higher than national, and PA was lower than national averages. The 92.9% target may be hard to attain due to unauthorised holiday absence.

Q: Was there any other way to access lessons or additional support for those with emotion-based absence?
Individual cases and scenarios were explained, with some receiving online tutoring. It was acknowledged there were some complex cases at school. Some alternative provisions had been sourced, when school was not considered the right environment, and many received mentoring. Many issues were linked to anxiety and the School worked with external services. Details were provided of the support offered to try and get pupils into school.

viii) **Workforce**

Staffing updates were provided. There had been greater sickness absence for support staff than with Teachers and long-term sickness had presented challenges.

ix) **Finance & Operations**

Student numbers were clarified, and the roll continued to increase, with some complex needs for in-year admissions, which had placed pressure on resources.

Q: Exclusion rates were half of previous year. How did staff feel about the different approach?
It could be challenging for staff and was a factor in joining the Belong Project, one of two projects the school was involved in. The Head reported this had been a steep learning curve for some. The main staff training day would take place on 20 April, an Inset Day, and would be led by two clinical psychologists.

The reasons behind moving away from detentions was explained, and objectives behind discussions with pupils.

Q: The Behaviour Policy changed in 2025. Had there been training?
Yes. Pupil Passports were useful in describing the needs of the child, and very prescriptive. The judicial use of in-class support was noted and had worked with children who felt like they did not belong.

The Principal also clarified some variances in data for the Chair from the Report, and would check data on children not in education, which had dropped since 2022, and may be linked to the availability of Apprenticeships.

Resolved: That the Principal's Report be received and noted.

2.2 **FINANCE UPDATE**

i) **Budget**

The BD presented the latest picture and made Governors aware of changes to the Finance Manual for approval levels, with details uploaded to GovernorHub.

As a result, approval was sought for a change of financial levels of delegation:

Up to £1K – Budget Holder approval.
£1K - £9,999 – Business Director approval.
£10K - £19,999 – Principal approval.
Above £20K – Resources Committee approval.
Above £40K – Trust Board approval.

Additionally, there was a higher figure for tenders, (rarely utilised).

BD explained the change of levels was due to rising costs, and a discussion followed. The BD reported expenditure to the Resources Committee, and the levels proposed were standard, and retaining the old criteria could delay purchases, with Committees only meeting three times a year.

Resolved: That the new proposed approval levels be approved.

The Budget had been received from the DfE and was included in the pack, along with the BD's own Budget, with an overview provided, including grants received.

The BD clarified key figures from the Budget. The £-91937 was a carry-forward figure from the previous year, and there was an in-year surplus balance of £58336 held in a separate cost centre.

Q: Budget for pupil needs and alternative provisions. Was there room in the Budget?
Yes, there was some flexibility. This was the first Budget based on pupil numbers. High Needs funding was explained, and £50k was spent on alternative provisions before any work was done on-site, and alterations were regularly made due to movements. The BD would continue to work on the Budget, and the final version would be brought to the July meeting for approval before it went to the DfE.

The BD noted that it was difficult to predict a five-year Budget, as projections were based on current staff, but the reality would see many arrivals and departures, but school did not budget for attrition.

Resolved: The Board approved the current version of the Budget.

iii) **Approval of Quotes**

MS Windows 10 was now defunct, though there was three-year grace period. School had undertaken review of equipment and obtained quotes for PCs, monitors and accessories, and the BD outlined the plans for classrooms. Of the three quotes, Dataspire was the lowest. There was an additional cost of £8750 for the upgrade of Windows 10 devices and deployment of Windows 11. The IT1 schedule had been deferred until September.

Resolved: That the Dataspire quote for equipment and Windows 11 upgrade be approved.

A second round of quotes had been obtained for 32 x Elite book 840 laptops, refurbished with a 2-year warranty. These laptops had already been ordered due to necessity, with prices rising. The preferred quote was once more from Dataspire. The school did not yet have money to purchase the PCs, and leasing would be £5K more expensive.

Resolved: That the Dataspire quote for laptops be approved.

iv) **Utilities**

Gas prices had been negotiated, with a three-year deal from April 2027, at lower than the current price per kw, though the standing charge was slightly higher, so school was secure for four years.

v) **Lockdown**

School had researched a provider, with its system capabilities explained. A quote had been received for £17,415, and a separate quote from another company was over £32K. Another quote would be required, and it was felt necessary for security.

Resolved: ***That the Board approve proceeding with the tender process, with assumption that school would go with lowest quote.***

vi) **Cyber Security**

There had been no incidents, and school continued to strive to meet DfE standards. We're working towards shutting down SIMS and remote servers, and item remained on Resources Committee agendas. School took out cyber insurance via DfE.

2.3 **LAND UPDATE**

Discussions were ongoing and the School had met with developers and an architect.

Details of a new feasibility option were distributed, including map of the affected areas, with a proposal received to sell different section of land. School preferences were detailed, and Trafford were involved in process due to the paucity of 5G pitches in borough.

The proposal to sell more land was detailed, and the Principal was seeking approval from Board to proceed with investigation stage for sale of land that was additional to original proposal.

This would raise funds for school and capital builds. Potential issues were discussed, including the community response, and there was agreement to collate more information. The loss of a pitch as result of any sale would cause issues with Flixton Football Club, who used multiple pitches.

Resolved: ***That the Land update be received and noted, with approval to continue researching information.***

2.4 FACILITIES TIME

School was one of a number of schools who did not pay into the scheme. Facilities Time was explained, and involved payments for local Trade Union Reps, in order to help them fulfil their duties. School had received Reps on site that year, and two staff members shared leadership duties. Governors would further consider.

Resolved: ***That the Facilities Time update be received and noted, with no decision to be yet made.***

2.5 COMMITTEE REPORTS

It was noted a report on a recent Complaints Appeal Panel would be given as part of the Chair's Report.

Resolved:

i) ***That the minutes of the Behaviour, Attitudes & Personal Development Committee meeting held 21/01/2026 be received and noted.***

ii) ***That the minutes of the meeting of the Members held 10/12/2025 be received and noted***

The minutes of the Curriculum & Standards Committee meeting held 25/02/2026 be added to the next agenda.

2.6 CHAIR'S REPORT

i) Complaint Appeal Panel (10/3/2026) feedback

The Chair provided an update on a recent complaint appeal. The Chair reported the meeting had reached a positive conclusion and the Principal is working with the family on reintegration.

The Chair acknowledged dealing with the volume of correspondence and approach had been a long and challenging process. The Principal was commended for her work and conciliatory approach dealing with a difficult situation. Governors were assured that the welfare of the child had been at the heart of all decisions. The Chair advised a number of Policies were recommended for review as part of the process although no deficiencies were identified.

ii) **Letter from DfE**

A letter had been received regarding work completed on a flat roof in 2022, with letter claiming more work than necessary was carried out, resulting in a financial issue, with a request for £23k to be repaid. School had drafted a response, queried various aspects of the claim, contacted the builders and taken advice.

School had acted in good faith and Trustees may wish to seek money from the builders. It would be questioned why concerns had taken four years to be sent, with no concerns raised at time of subsequent assurance visit, and the school had submitted accounts for the project with no challenge. A meeting had been requested before any money was taken off GAG funding.

Resolved: That the Chair's Report be received and noted.

3. COMPLIANCE

3.1 RISK REGISTER & RISK MANAGEMENT

BD advised of an additional risk of the conflict in the Middle East.

Resolved: That the Risk Register be received and noted.

3.2 STRATEGIC ESTATE MANAGEMENT

The school was encouraged to meet standards as part of new DfE guidance, including the strategy that the BD had undertaken, and complied with the three-year Asset Management Plan. This would be reviewed annually.

Resolved: That the Strategic Estate Management update be received and noted.

3.3 SRMSAC (SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST)

Resolved: That the SRMSA submission be approved and submitted to DfE by 15 March 2026.

3.4 CYBER SECURITY REPORTS

Resolved: That the Cyber Security Reports be received and noted.

3.5 **TRUST POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**

As a result of the complaint appeal panel, it was felt important for Governors to review a number of Policies.

The Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy now includes a section on seclusion.

Resolved: ***That the following Policies be approved:***
Behaviour for Learning Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Attendance & Punctuality Policy
Parent & Visitor Code of Conduct 2026
Procurement Policy
Finance Manual
Working in Partnership Agreement
Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy
Information Security Policy
Investment Policy
Charging & Remissions Policy
Admissions Appeals Process
Trustee & Governor Allowances
Restrictive Physical Interventions Policy
Careers, Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Policy

3.6 **SKILLS ANALYSIS**

The document listed the skills of Governors, who should check for any anomalies. Mrs Mohammed would send her information to the BM.

Resolved: ***That the Skills Analysis be received and noted.***

3.7 **NOTICES FROM TRUSTGS (CLERKING SERVICE)**

Resolved:

i) ***That the Trust GS Governance Newsletter Spring 2026 & Training be received and noted.***
ii) ***That the format update to the Academy trusts: governance guide - GOV.UK (19-Nov 2025) be noted.***
iii) ***That the Protocol for Appointment of Temporary Additional Governors (TAGs) be noted and adopted.***

3.8 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Q: How did numbers for Year 7 for 2026 look?
Looked OK at 155, having projected in Budget for 150.

3.9 **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: ***That the following items be placed on the agenda for the next Trust Board meeting:***

- ***i) Facilities Time***
- ***ii) Land Update***
- ***iii) Curriculum & Standards Committee minutes 25/02/2026***

3.10 **ACTION SUMMARY**

Resolved: ***That the following Actions arising from the meeting be noted.***

- ***i) Mrs Mohammed to send skills analysis to BM.***
- ***ii) Principal to check Pupil Destination data for school leavers.***

3.11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: ***That the next meeting of the Trust Board be held at the school on 15 July 2026 at 4.45 p.m.***

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chair of Trust Board ……………………………………