

**LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 23RD MARCH, 2026 AT 5.00PM**

**NON CONFIDENTIAL
VIRTUAL MEETING**

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

NAME		END DATE OF OFFICE	DESIGNATED ROLE	ATTENDANCE
David Maitland (DMA)	Trustee	09.02.2029	Chair	Y
Liz Warren (LWA)	Trustee	09.02.2029	Vice Chair	Y
Chris Parkinson (CPA)	Trustee		CEO	Y
John Baumber (JBA)	Trustee (Coopted)	06.07.2029		Y
Caroline Dickman (CDI)	Trustee (Coopted)	21.09.2029		Y – joined at 6.00pm
Sue Dunford (SDU)	Trustee	31.07.2026		Y
David Gordon (DGO)	Trustee	28.01.2028		Y
Rose Harvey (RHA)	Trustee	18.01.2030		N
Ja Kim (JKI)	Trustee	09.02.2029		Y
Vacancy	Trustee			
Andy Smith (ASM)	Trustee	19.09.2026		N
Monica Wallace (MWA)	Trustee (Coopted)	21.09.2029		Y
IN ATTENDANCE - STAFF				
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Executive Leader, Secondary	
Amelia Smith (ASm)			Executive Leader, Primary	
Gareth Williams (GWI)				
Paul Maddox (PMA)			Executive CFO	
Sarah Mayes (SMA)			CFO	
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Director of Governance & Admissions	

01. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all present, apologies had been received from Andy Smith and Rosie Harvey.

RESOLVED: the apologies were accepted.

02. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

The Trustees were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the Trust Board as a whole with the business to be discussed during the meeting. **Trustees were reminded that interests must be kept up to date on an ongoing basis. If there have been any changes since their last declaration, ensure these are reported promptly.** No additional declarations were made.

03. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non-confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the 8th December, 2025 were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

04. MATTERS ARISING

The Trustees reviewed and updated the action log from previous meetings.

DATE	NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATES
31.03.2025	11d	Volunteer Policy - LWA to source some policies and share with Trustees.	LWA		ONGOING see update below
Update – LWA was unclear whether this was a priority for the Trust, both the central team and schools provided the Trustees with an opportunity to attend any of their events. LWA queried whether Trustees wished to pursue, RHA agreed to take on the action and make contact with LWA. Update – RHA explained she had engaged with several school governors and trustees during a separate project and gathered insights on trustee recruitment. Key findings: recruitment success was less about formal reward or recognition policies (as previously discussed) and more about leveraging existing networks; effective strategies included Headteachers, Governors, and Trustees actively reaching out to potential candidates; persistence was highlighted as crucial—many Trustees/Governors agreed after multiple invitations rather than the first approach. LWA felt that was a positive first step to engaging with stakeholders. RHA confirmed she was happy to continue with the piece of work. Update – RHA had provided an update to DMA/LWA of her conversations with Chairs, DMA felt it would be helpful to put this on the agenda for the Chairs Group meeting in May for further discussion. ACTION: SGR to add to the Chair Group agenda.					
08.12.2025	5	DMA to write to Ann Melville to express the Trust Boards thanks and appreciation.	DMA	ASAP	COMPLETED
	5	LWA to write to Lis Stock to express the Trust Boards thanks and appreciation. Trustees also noted LWA had written to LMCD and HCO thanking them for their service.	LWA	ASAP	COMPLETED
	9	LWA and DMA to form a working group to redefine the Focus Trustee role and reallocate schools.	DMA/LWA	March meeting	ONGOING

05. GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE (SGR)

- a. Admissions 2027 – 2028, the Trustees noted and approved the outcome of the consultation during the period 15.12.2025 - 30.01.2026. SGR confirmed the policy had been published, in line with the requirements of the admissions code, on the Trust and Schools Website. The secondary schools national offer day was on the 2nd March, 2026.

Q: (DMA) How are our schools in terms of places?

A: (SGR) The picture is positive Bosworth is full with 72 on the waiting list, Ashby has 22 on the waiting list, Ivanhoe 9 on the waiting list and Winstanley has 22 on the waiting list. Ibstock has 145 places with 125 filled, NKO was looking at agreeing an operational capacity of 120. Countesthorpe has 224 places and currently has 197, I met with GWI and Catherine Aitcheson last week they are hoping to increase the number to 210 I've shared the waiting list from the schools so they can look at children who may live within commuting distance of the school and we will make contact with the parents to see if they are interested in Countesthorpe. National Offer Day for primary schools was the 20th April, 2026, the work to rank all applications had been completed and shared with the Admissions Team at the LA.

- b. Meeting Schedule, 2026 - 2027, the Trustees approved the schedule for 2026 – 2027. SGR provided an overview of the rationale for the dates, as Trustees were aware the new Internal Audit would now look at matters outside of the finance areas. All reports would need to be considered by the Audit & Risk committee met as the last committee before the Trust Board so any reports would be considered by the relevant committee and then to Audit & Risk who had overall responsibility for all matters relating to audits. DMA queried whether Finance and Infrastructure should be combined and agreed to speak to ASM when he returned.

06. TRUSTEES REPORT SPRING 2026

- i. The Trustees received the Trustee Report from the CPA who provided an overview, please note some matters were moved to the confidential section of the minutes –

CPA welcomed ASm to the meeting, noting this was her first attendance in her capacity as Executive Leader – Primary. The report included Primary and Secondary school updates, Chief Operating Officer (COO) report and Exec Chief Financial Officer (CFO) report with the CEO's overview to be addressed in the second half (confidential part) of the meeting. LWA confirmed that detailed discussions on school improvement had already taken place at the School Improvement Committee meeting the previous week, albeit in a different format. The committee had reviewed the overall progress across the schools so Trustees had already been provided with a general picture of school performance.

Q: (DMA) What are the key features and outcomes from the School Improvement Committee meeting?

A: (LWA) The meeting lasted two hours but reflected a significantly wider body of work and discussion, due to the depth and breadth of discussion, it's difficult to summarise succinctly without input from other committee members, the overarching theme was robust challenge alongside effective support for schools.

Q: (DMA) Where are the schools in relation to mock examination results and is progress aligning with expectations?

A: (NKO) Mock examinations were still in the process of being marked. Once marking and quality assurance were complete, a summary report would be prepared and shared with trustees.

ACTION: NKO to provide a mock examinations summary report and share with trustees.

Q: (JBA) Is it expected that improvement at Countesthorpe would be limited this year due to historic decisions on exam entries?

A: (GWI) This is correct in relation to Attainment 8 outcomes. While improvements were expected in raw outcomes and in meeting national standards, particularly in English, Mathematics and Science, the Attainment 8 measure would not fully reflect these gains this year. This was due to the number of qualifications historically entered. Recent curriculum and options changes were intended to address this, with clearer impact anticipated from the next academic year.

Q: (JBA) Where has RISE made the most significant impact?

A: (GWI) The most significant impact had been through Raising Attainment meetings, modelled on national best practice (RAP meetings). These involved: rapid data drops and turnaround within approximately 48 hours, attendance by only key staff able to effect change, a strict focus on data rather than anecdote and immediate identification of targeted interventions. Mock and live versions of these meetings had been held before and after Christmas, with further meetings planned. This process enabled more precise targeting of interventions, mentoring, and support. Overall, the approach had significantly improved the speed, quality, and impact of data-led decision-making, leading to quicker and more meaningful outcomes for pupils.

Q: (SDU) In relation to results and student progress, at the School Improvement meeting on the 28th January, Simon Brown had been the main contributor, with discussion focused entirely on secondary outcomes. Discussions had also taken place more recently regarding the timing of data availability. As a Trust, there was a strong interest in understanding how schools were focusing on moving pupils from Grade 4 to Grade 5 and beyond. Where mock examinations were not marked until later, this limited the Trust's ability to review the data in time for the School Improvement Committee meeting in March. I'd hoped that the data would be available by that point, but it had not been. I recall that significant work with Year 11 (and partly Year 13) took place up until Easter, after which the approach changed. It would be helpful to have better visibility of progress during that period. Is that possible?

A: (CPA) For clarification it was the second set of mock examinations that had not yet been marked. The first set of mock exam results, taken in December, had been available and scrutinised at the January School Improvement Committee meeting. The second mock examinations took place in March, and sufficient time needed to elapse between mocks to allow any interventions to have impact.

A: (GWI) I've worked closely with Simon and confirmed that Simon has adopted many of the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP) processes developed through SOP and Trust Futures Trust (TFT) collaboration. Raising Standards Leaders, particularly in secondary schools, were increasingly developing their own systems to enable near real-time data turnaround. This approach has allowed data to be used more effectively to support students in making their next steps. Over time, this should also result in data being available more quickly for Trust level scrutiny and meetings.

Q: (DMA) Were schools providing the right students with the right coaching and intervention over the Easter holidays, is this supported by robust data?

A: (GWI) Schools held the necessary data to identify pupils requiring targeted intervention. Practice varied slightly between schools, as Easter holiday intervention relied largely on staff goodwill. At Countesthorpe, there was an extensive programme of Easter revision in place. The school had also operated a Saturday School since October,

regularly attended by 30 - 40 pupils each week. Additional interventions were reviewed, adjusted and refined regularly, including through time freed up within Year 11 crew time. A comprehensive range of interventions was therefore already in place, and similar approaches were being mirrored across the Trust's other secondary schools.

Q: (DMA) The behaviour data showed a reduction in suspensions but an increase in exclusions. Is this reflected nationally specifically in relation to permanent exclusions?

A: (CPA) Yes there had been an increase related specifically to permanent exclusions.

Q: (DMA) Does the increase relate to specific individual cases, or does it indicate a general deterioration in behaviour across schools?

A: (CPA) If there had been a general deterioration in behaviour, this would have been reflected in an increase in fixed-term suspensions, which had not occurred. There were 2 key factors which were contributing to the position: a very small but increasing minority of pupils with extreme and complex needs, whose behaviour could be highly challenging. Changes in Leicestershire local authority practice regarding local area behaviour partnerships and alternative provision. The Oakfield Short Stay School, intended to function similarly to a pupil referral unit but only provided only two days per week of provision. Schools were therefore required to source provision for the remaining three days, often without viable support from the local authority. As a result, schools now had fewer options than previously when a pupil genuinely could not return full time. Historically, pupils might have accessed full time alternative provision (sometimes referred to as Tier 4), and overall numbers were broadly similar to previous years. The key difference was that this provision was no longer as readily available.

Q: (DMA) Was the Trust able to support all schools in sourcing appropriate alternative provision, was this creating budgetary pressure?

A: (CPA) There is budgetary pressure, alternative provision was expensive and rarely funded by the local authority. However, the Trust was clear that where such provision was necessary, schools would be supported to fund it. Related expenditure would be reflected as a budget variation within individual school financial management records.

JBA commented the reduction in exclusions across the Trust had been noted at the School Improvement Committee meeting and should be formally recognised and applauded. Given the size of the Trust and the number of secondary schools, the low number of permanent exclusions was extremely positive. Trustees noted that a disproportionate number of excluded pupils were disadvantaged, raising important equity considerations for the Trust. Overall, the behavioural picture was described as very positive, despite these ongoing challenges.

CPA thanked JBA and acknowledged that many of the pupils affected experienced multiple layers of disadvantage, not solely socio-economic. This remained an important area for further reflection and development. This would potentially be funded through SCA funding and delivered in an additional building. The model would initially focus on LiFE MAT pupils, providing an additional strategic option for inclusion and early intervention. LHA was leading work on the secondary inclusion strategy, with a focus on achieving greater consistency in the graduated response at an earlier stage. The Trust was committed to strengthening early intervention, rather than responding only at the point of crisis.

The Trustees noted that during the term, there had been discussion about two Headteachers directly providing intervention work. Consideration had been given to whether this was the best use of their time. It had been agreed that, while the input was limited, it provided leaders with valuable insight into pupil gaps and direct teaching practice. This was therefore considered both constructive and informative for school improvement.

Q: (DMA) Are the planned major works at Ibstock likely to affect the day to day running of the school?

A: (NKO) Any building work inevitably causes some disruption to school operations. However, a clear and detailed plan was in place to minimise impact. Adjustments had been made so that the first phase of the nursery rebuild would be accessed from the rear of the school site, rather than the front. This meant that much of the initial work would not affect daily school operations. The first phase was not expected to begin until May half term. Major disruption to the main school building was therefore not anticipated until the following year. Close working arrangements were in place with the Estates team to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum.

CPA confirmed that this agenda item included both the COO and CFO reports and invited any questions for Paul and Sarah.

Q: (DMA) Can we look at the COO report, particularly regarding progress on fire alarm works. The risk register indicated that some projects were still at the stage of obtaining quotes. This is something we will review at the Infrastructure Committee in more detail?

A: (CPA) I believe progress was beyond the quotation stage and yes, an update would be provided to the Infrastructure Committee. Gareth do you have any further information regarding fire alarm works at Countesthorpe.

A: (GWI) A detailed timescale had not yet been shared with me, installation was understood to be imminent. The work would involve two different fire alarm systems. The project would also include linking all outbuildings, which had not been completed during the original new build following DfE advice at that time.

ii. To note the CEO's overview incl. operations and finance report and KPI's to be discussed in the confidential part of the meeting, copy available in the confidential folder Trustee only.

07. COMMITTEE & LGB ASSURANCES

a. The Trustees received the assurance reports from the following committees, for confidential assurance reports please see separate folder and confidential agenda –

- i. School Improvement 03.12.2025
- ii. School Improvement 28.01.2026

The Trustees noted that the School Improvement item had largely been covered through the preceding discussions. SDU expressed her thanks to LHA/ASMI/SBR who had been subject to rigorous and detailed challenge by Trustees and had responded clearly and confidently, with strong explanations supported by data. Safeguarding had remained at the forefront of discussions, and appreciation was extended for the clarity and assurance provided by all three.

LWA as Committee Chair reported that as the Trust was partway through the academic year, planning had already begun on a revised agenda structure for the following year. The intention was to move away from lightly covering all areas at every meeting, and instead to focus in depth on specific themes at different points in the year.

Q: (DMA) Has the recent approach of splitting agenda responsibility between trustees, enabled deeper focus on specific areas, has this been effective?

A: (LWA) I believe the approach has worked for Trustees but it would be helpful to hear the staff perspective.

A: (ASMI) From a staff perspective, the approach had been effective, the allocation of focus areas had enabled trustees to ask more detailed and considered questions and this had strengthened the quality of discussion, I'm happy and she felt the questions had been addressed effectively.

JBA also commented that the approach had required Trustees to prepare thoroughly, which he felt had been beneficial.

- iv. Infrastructure 10.02.2026
- v. Finance 10.02.2026

DMA reported that he had stepped in as Chair of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee in ASM's absence and confirmed that there were no significant matters arising that had not already been captured within the circulated summaries.

- vi. Audit & Risk 05.03.2026

JKI reported there were no major issues to highlight, a wide range of matters had been covered. Both internal and external auditors were working effectively. All relevant information was included within the written documentation. At this stage, the update was primarily for noting only.

- vii. Pay & People 17.03.2026 to follow

DMA reported, in the absence of RHA, Committee Chair, the minutes and summary report from the Pay and People Committee would be shared in due course.

ACTION: SGR to add to the July agenda

b. Assurances from the LGB's covering matters included in the agenda planner. (SGR), to receive an update on progress. The Trustees noted the Chairs' Group had reviewed a set of key questions for local governing boards to consider during the next academic year. Each local governing board was expected to consider at least one or two of these questions during the summer term. Feedback would then be provided to the Trust as part of the wider assurance process.

08. FOCUS TRUSTEE UPDATES

The Trustees received an update from DMA, he was working with LWA to produce a more detailed briefing setting out the minimum expectations of the Focus Trustee role. It was recognised that Trustees had varying levels of availability to attend meetings and school based activity. The briefing would clarify baseline expectations while allowing flexibility where trustees were able to contribute more. The document would be available for Trustees at the board session in April.

9. POLICIES

- a. Acceptable Use Policy. SGR explained that the policy had not yet been received, as a result, the item would need to be deferred until after Easter. SGR proposed that, once available, the document would be shared via the google drive for Trustees to review and provide comments. CPA agreed to follow this up with the relevant staff as to why there had been this delay.

ACTION: CPA to follow up with relevant staff, SGR to share the final draft with Trustees for approval and comment via email.

10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

- a. The Trustees noted the date and time of the next Board meeting on the 6th July, 2026 which would be held in person.
- b. The Trustees reviewed and approved the meeting schedule for 2026 - 2027.

DATE	MEETING	START TIME	ONLINE/IN PERSON
AUTUMN TERM STARTS - 25.08.2026			
Mon 7 Sep 2026	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Thu 17 Sep 2026	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Mon 21 Sep 2026	Trust Board	5.00pm	Online
Tue 29 Sep 2026	Infrastructure	5.00pm	Online
Wed 7 Oct 2026	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
Tues 13 Oct 2026	Finance	5.00pm	Online
AUTUMN HALF TERM - 19.10.2026 - 23.10.2026			
Thu 29 Oct 2026	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Mon 2 Nov 2026	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Tue 10 Nov 2026	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online
Thu 26 Nov 2026	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Wed 2 Dec 2026	School Improvement	5.00pm	
Mon 7 Dec 2026	LiFE MAT Services Board	4.15 pm	Online
Mon 7 Dec 2026	Trust Board	5.00 pm	Online
CHRISTMAS - 21.12.2026 - 01.01.2027			
Mon 11 Jan 2027	CEO call with Trustees	4.00pm	Online - googlemeet
Thurs 14 Jan 2027	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online

Mon 18 Jan 2027	Members - AGM	5.30 pm	Online
Tue 26 Jan 2027	Infrastructure	5.00pm	Online
Wed 3 Feb 2027	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
Tues 9 Feb 2027	Finance	5.00 pm	Online
SPRING HALF TERM - 15.02.2027 - 19.02.2027			
Thu 25 Feb 2027	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Mon 1 Mar 2027	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Tues 2 Mar 2027	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online
Thu 4 Mar 2027	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Mon 15 Mar 2027	Trust Board	5.00pm	Online
Wed 18 Mar 2026	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
EASTER - 22.03.2027 - 02.04.2027			
Wed 14 April 2027	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
Thurs 22 April 2027	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Mon 26 Apr 2027	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY 03.05.2027			
Tues 4 May 2027	Infrastructure	5.00pm	Online
HALF TERM 31.05.2027 - 04.06.2027			
w/b 07/06/2027	Trust Strategy Day	All Day	In person
Tue 15 Jun 2027	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online
Wed 16 Jun 2027	School Improvement	5.00pm	Online
Tues 22 Jun 2027	Finance	5.00pm	Online
Thurs 1 Jul 2027	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Mon 5 Jul 2027	Trust Board	5.00 pm	In person
SUMMER - 12.07.2027			

The meeting closed at 6.47pm following the conclusion of the confidential business.

