



**RICHARD HUISH TRUST
BOARD MEETING**

16th July 2025 at 5.00pm

Room M4 and MS Teams, Richard Huish College

Directors Present:

Jade Renville (Chair)
Dan Maycock
Tim Duffen
Pat Flaherty – via Teams
Olivia Salaman – via Teams
John Abbott (CEO)

In attendance:

Paul Lonsdale (CFO)
Steve Chattell (CPO)
Richard Anderson (Director of IT & Facilities)
Roz Abbott (Director of MIS)
Tina Wilkes – Observer
Stuart Hill – Observer
Andrea Marshall - Observer
Mark Lawrence – Interim Headteacher, Pyrland School
Matt Kerton – Headteacher, Nerrols Primary School

Clerk:

Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

MINUTES

		Action
RHT 24/194	1. MEETING FORMALITIES 1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and introductions were made. There were apologies for absence from directors Dominic Lynch, Catherine Christie and Clare Greenslade; the meeting was quorate.	
RHT 24/195	1.2 Minutes of the last meeting The minutes of the last meetings held on 14 th May 2025 and 13 th June 2025 (strategy day) were agreed as an accurate record. The Chair agreed to her electronic signature being used to sign them off.	
RHT 24/196	1.3 Matters arising Directors discussed the matters arising paper and agreed they were either all completed or were satisfied they were in progress and had been brought forward to this meeting or a relevant committee.	
RHT 24/197	1.4 Declarations of interest Directors confirmed that the summary declarations of interest for publication on the website were accurate, no declarations of interest were made for this meeting.	

Signed:...*Jade Renville*..... Date:...10th October 2025.....

2. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 Pyrland School update

RHT 24/198 The interim headteacher gave an overview of the context of his role and the support Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP) Trust are providing.

RHT 24/199 He outlined the experience of working to support the school in the wake of the most recent Ofsted inspection, highlighting the focus on improving behaviour and the approaches being taken. This includes a focus on recognising positive behaviour and ensuring consistency of how lessons are started. Attendance is currently a key focus, particularly the high level of persistent absence for Key Stage 4 (KS4) pupils.

RHT 24/200 The quality of education is being reviewed, and a new evidence-based approach is being introduced. Learners are being supported to be proactive rather than passive learners. The curriculum is being aligned with the MNSP approach to enable greater oversight of learning and progress being made. Year 11 have had access to all the MNSP revision resources. He outlined other ways in which MNSP are supporting which includes staff training, SEND, governance and curriculum links.

RHT 24/201 **What is the situation with permanent exclusions?**

The school is significantly above the national average for permanent exclusions. Since MNSP have been involved there have been further permanent exclusions, but work is underway to reduce these, including working through strategies with the Taunton Deane Partnership College.

RHT 24/202 Directors observed the quality of support being provided by MNSP and the experience of school improvement.

What is the situation with staffing the school next year?

RHT 24/203 Staffing is generally good but there are some harder to recruit subject areas, including science and teaching assistants. The interim headteacher outlined what is being done to address this but noted that there will be some reliance upon supply agencies.

How is consistency of approach assured when using supply staff?

RHT 24/204 This achieved through their induction and how they are supported. The interim headteacher showed an example of the guidance given. He highlighted that the approaches used are very simple and easy to apply. He added that there are strategies in place to quality assure approaches used by staff and this includes supply staff.

RHT 24/205 The chair confirmed that the board remain supportive of the relationship with MNSP and acknowledged the work being done to address the challenges highlighted in the Ofsted report, she expressed her thanks on behalf of the board.

2.2 Experience of secondment

RHT 24/206 The CEO introduced the context of this item; Matt Kerton was asked to give support as an Assistant Headteacher at Pyrland School following the departure of the headteacher in January and was seconded to a role at Pyrland as a result, the secondment lasted about a term. He had previously been a governor at the school so approached the role with a grounding and awareness of some of the challenges facing the school. He gave a presentation of his experiences, key points included:

- Collaboration more closely between Nerrols and Pyrland; particularly Nerrols is a feeder school to Pyrland.
- Opportunity for professional growth with a specific focus on how leadership works in a larger school; timely as Nerrols is poised for significant growth.

RHT 24/206

Signed:....Jade Renville..... Date:....10th October 2025.....

- RHT
24/207
- Pre-conceptions were dispelled about the differences between working in primary versus secondary sectors.
 - Strong relationships were quickly established with colleagues.
 - Experience of the Ofsted inspection.
 - Complexities and pressures of communication across a larger team; strategies for approaching this were helpful.
- RHT
24/208
- Transition – the need for greater alignment between the learning at primary school and being prepared for Y7, with the consideration of starting with a Y6 approach when Y7s first join.
 - The number of young children at Pyrland that seem to have needs that do not always receive formal recognition through established mechanisms. Noted the impact this has on attendance and therefore learning and outcomes.

RHT
24/209

Directors discussed the socio-economic profile of the school, barriers to change and how this is being approached in a supportive and planned way.

RHT
24/210

What is the impact of what you have learnt likely to be?

It is hoped that a meaningful and positive transition plan will be developed and that the curriculum is more closely aligned between Y6 and Y7.

RHT
24/211

What is the quality of data like at the school, particularly around attendance and exclusions and how good is this at informing actions?

The interim headteacher outlined that whilst the data collection was good there was greater scope to use national data metrics. The data was sufficient to help inform where to focus the greatest attention. He noted that there was mismatch between some of the datasets but that the patterns were consistent. The quality of data around assessments does need improvement and strategies are being developed to address this.

Directors thanked both attendees for the insight.
ML and MK left the meeting.

RHT
24/212

2.3 Strategy Day debrief

The CEO led this item through a presentation, the strategy day was held on 13th June and included a focus on the strategic vision and drivers, key points were:

- Themes from the SWOT analysis activity and other activities.
- Agreed on the day that the strategic vision and drivers remain fit for purpose, but action points will change to reflect the future composition of Huish.
- Refinement of the self-assessment document, aligned with the DfE high performing trust quality framework, which has been shared with the regions group.

RHT
24/213

Directors noted the importance of taking into account the full spectrum of feedback discussed on the day to inform how progress is being made. The CEO agreed it might be helpful to re-circulate the outputs from the strategy day, which will be particularly informative for new directors.

ACTION: Re-circulate the strategy day feedback and output to directors and share with incoming directors.

CEO with Clerk

RHT
24/214

The CEO presented an overview of the KS2 SATs results. Overall schools are performing well in relation to national averages. Directors discussed the results, noting highlights and areas to address that local governance boards will be expected to address.

RHT
24/215

He highlighted a cross-trust art competition and how this has been advantageous with the primary schools working together alongside the college. Directors reflected the

Signed:....Jade Renville..... Date:....10th October 2025.....

importance of supporting the arts and providing opportunities for enrichment and life chances.

RHT

24/216 3. FINANCIAL MATTERS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL

3.1 Oversight report including Management Accounts for May 2025

The CFO gave a summary of the management accounts highlights, noting that if the targets are met the trust will be very close to the 5% DfE reserves threshold. Schools are generally performing well financially, with a few well understood challenges that are being supported. Pyrland are making investments into the school to address the identified opportunities for improvement; it has impacted on its budget this year, this is being monitored closely. Directors observed that it is understandable that this approach is being taken but it needs to be balanced with the longer-term impact on the school.

RHT

24/217

To what extent is the supply teacher cost at Pyrland included in the budget?

Supply is always an issue but tends to pan out within levels that can be met through budget management, but it will need to be monitored closely to ensure it does not exceed acceptable levels. The school have recruited to its PAN. Cover supervision has improved and is now more reliable at the school which will in turn reduce the reliance on supply staff.

RHT

24/218

Is there any DfE Regional Improvement Standards for Education (RISE) funding available for Pyrland?

This is not currently being provided/accessed.

RHT

24/219

Directors discussed the history of funding of the school and the impact of the government's lagged funding model over time.

3.2 Balanced budget and forecast

The CFO outlined the balanced budget, as recently scrutinised by the F&GP Committee and recommended for approval. The forecast was noted. He highlighted that the DfE guidance on putting in place a budget for an academy that will leave a trust during an academic year has very recently changed. He noted the complexity of working through the finances as part of the transition of the school to MNSP. Contextual information for the budgets of other academies were noted and directors discussed points of detail within individual budgets.

RHT

24/220

RESOLVED: Directors approved the balanced budget and forecast.

3.3 Strategic Risk Register

Directors received the register, noting it had previously been scrutinised in detail by the Audit & Risk (A&R) Committee. The chair of the A&R Committee noted that the internal auditors undertook an exercise looking at different sources of assurance in relation to each of the strategic risks. The A&R committee then considered whether there was adequate assurance coming through and that the controls and mitigations were working effectively. They agreed that whilst there are always opportunities to seek more assurance, the additional reassurance would likely be minimal in relation to actual level of further assurance provided and the value for money as a result. He noted that a holistic view of assurance is already in place, but that if there is a need identified for additional assurance work to be undertaken that the organisation is mature enough to seek this. He highlighted that if there are gaps identified in the future these should be raised with the CFO and he welcomed the views of new directors.

Signed:....*Jade Renville*..... Date:....10th October 2025.....

RHT 24/221 **3.4 Audit update**
Directors received the internal audit report which they noted was positive with a number of items resolved and only two minor recommendations. Directors noted the updated audit tracker which included the output from the recent internal audit report.

4. GOVERNANCE

RHT 24/222 **4.1 Safeguarding monitoring report**
The CPO gave an overview of the process for monitoring safeguarding which is led at a local level by a link governor, using a standardised approach based on best practice from the National Governance Association (NGA). The summary shared with directors is a summary of the monitoring reports from the academies.

RHT 24/223 Directors received the report, they noted that there are no substantial areas for concern arising and took assurance that the procedures are effective.

RHT 24/224 **There was a mention of a safeguarding allegation, is there assurance that this has been dealt with effectively?**

The low-level concern approach is working well to identify whether an issue should be reported. This feeds into a monitoring framework that gives an overview of the issue, and helps build a broader picture of the concerns.

RHT 24/225 **What happens in the case of dealing with an unfounded allegation?**
Details are gathered and there is close, confidential communication between the school, the central trust team and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and support/guidance/action is given/taken to the member of staff involved. Guidance is clear and followed rigorously for how the trust works with staff should an allegation be made.

RHT 24/226 **4.2 SEND monitoring report**
The CPO gave an overview of the cross-organisation SEND monitoring which has been introduced this year as a consistent trust-led approach. Director Pat Flaharty had previously led on this project to understand the approach that was in place and an action plan that resulted in a renewed SEND Policy and monitoring approach to seek assurance for directors. He described how the process works via a SEND link governor (with the exception of the college who instead commissioned an external consultant who led on the monitoring) at the local board who conduct a monitoring visit with the SENCo locally, with visits three times a year with feedback to the LGB and directors.

RHT 24/227 Directors received the monitoring reports for the academies noting that they felt assured that the SEND Code of Practice is being met consistently well. They praised the quality of the reports and the approach taken by the college in approaching this through an external perspective due to their slightly different context and needs within the statutory guidance.

RHT 24/228 **The recommendation about CPD in one of the schools, has that been actioned?**
The actions will be picked up and closed off, this is already underway.

RHT 24/229 **The importance of peer-to-peer support is important, are we sure that our SENCo's are enabled to have time to engage in this?**

The specific network it refers to in the report is a supplemental network to the one they are already involved in directly through Huish, this peer-to-peer support is something that is consistently engaged with.

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RHT 24/230	Are there lead directors for SEND and Safeguarding? A standardised process is now in place and working well, to achieve and monitor this directors have been working together to seek that assurance. The Governance Specialist confirmed that it is a requirement for the board to have both a safeguarding and SEND lead director, with the processes now in place for both it is timely to ensure this requirement is fulfilled. ACTION: Ensure the board appoint directors to lead on safeguarding and SEND early on in 2025/2026.	Directors with Clerk
RHT 24/231	4.3 LGB appointments and updates Directors reviewed the updates and recommendations for appointment of local governors and approved the nominees listed. RESOLVED: Directors approved the appointment of the new governor listed on the related report.	
RHT 24/232	4.4 Chairing and committee arrangements for 2025/2026 Directors noted the recommendations for committee chairs made by the individual committees and agreed they were supportive of the proposals. They also noted that there may be further changes in directors pending shortly, with new directors joining, a director possibly stepping down and that further appointments to vice chair positions for example may need to be reviewed as a result. RESOLVED: Committee chair and vice chair appointments approved as listed on the related report for 2025/2026, to be kept under review. <i>Jade Renville left the meeting</i>	
RHT 24/233	Directors discussed the nominees for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board roles. RESOLVED: Jade Renville was reappointed as Chair and Catherine Christie as Vice Chair for 2025-2026 until the end of her term of office in February 2026. <i>Jade Renville re-entered the meeting</i>	
RHT 24/234	The Governance Specialist highlighted the need to seek a new Vice Chair and that any directors interested in this role would have the opportunity for an extended handover from September.	
5. MINUTES		
RHT 24/235	5.1 Written resolutions Directors noted the written resolutions since the last meeting.	
RHT 24/236	5.2 Minutes from recent Trust Board Committees Directors noted the recent minutes from the Trust Board Committees.	
RHT 24/237	5.3 Minutes from recent Local Governing Boards (LGB) Directors noted the minutes from recent LGB meetings.	
RHT 24/238	6. POLICIES AND OTHER MATTERS OF NOTE 6.1 Director attendance at meetings Directors noted the attendance for 2024/2025.	

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RESOLVED: Directors approved the continuing membership of named directors in relation to the stipulation of the Articles and attendance at board meetings.

RHT 24/239 **6.2 Terms of reference 2025/2026**
Directors noted there were some minor amendments proposed to the terms of reference as reviewed and recommended for approval by the respective committees as relevant.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the terms of reference for committees for 2025/2026.

RHT 24/240 **6.3 School Resource Management Self Assessment Checklist (SRMSAC)**
Directors noted the SRMSAC had been reviewed by the F&GP Committee and was recommended for approval.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the SRMSAC.

RHT 24/241 **6.4 Risk Management Policy**
Directors noted the Risk Management Policy had been reviewed by the A&R Committee and was recommended for approval.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the Risk Management Policy.

RHT 24/242 **6.5 Financial Regulations**
Directors noted the Financial Regulations had been reviewed by the F&GP Committee and was recommended for approval.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the Financial Regulations.

RHT 24/243 **6.6 Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**
Directors noted that the policy had been reviewed by the F&GP Committee and recommended for approval subject to related actions being responded to satisfactorily. The points were not concluded ahead of the full board meeting. The Director for IT & Facilities highlighted this and it was agreed that the F&GP Committee members would be consulted about the updates. Directors were happy to approve the policy subject to this being concluded outside of the meeting.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the AUP subject to the F&GP Committee confirming they agreed with the most recent amendments.

ACTION: Consult the F&GP Committee members regarding further updates to the Acceptable Use Policy, if they consent to the updates then the policy can be recorded as approved and published.

Clerk

RHT 24/244 **6.7 Health & Safety Policy**
Directors noted the Health & Safety Policy had been reviewed by the F&GP Committee and was recommended for approval.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the Health & Safety Policy.

RHT 24/245 **6.8 Minibus and Vehicle Policy & Procedure**
Directors noted that the policy had been reviewed by the F&GP Committee and recommended for approval subject to related actions being responded to satisfactorily. The points were not concluded ahead of the full board meeting. The Director for IT & Facilities highlighted this and it was agreed that the F&GP Committee members would be consulted about the updates. Directors were happy to approve the policy subject to this being concluded outside of the meeting.
RESOLVED: Directors approved the Minibus and Vehicle Policy & Procedure subject to the F&GP Committee confirming they agreed with the most recent amendments.

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ACTION: Consult the F&GP Committee members regarding further updates to the Minibus Policy & Procedure, if they consent to the updates then the policy can be recorded as approved and published. Clerk

- RHT 24/246 6.9 Health & Safety monitoring report**
Directors noted the report which had previously been reviewed by the F&GP Committee.
- RHT 24/247 6.10 Critical incident Management & Business Continuity Plan**
Directors noted the plan which had previously been reviewed by the A&R Committee.
- RHT 24/248 6.11 Estates and Condition strategy**
Directors noted the strategy which had previously been reviewed by the F&GP Committee.
- RHT 24/249 6.12 Asbestos management plan**
Directors noted the plan which had previously been reviewed by the F&GP Committee.
- RHT 24/250 6.13 Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) Letters**
Directors noted the most recent DAO letters, which were also circulated to them at the time, from the DfE dated 19th March and 25th June 2025.
- RHT 24/251 6.14 Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) September 2025 - updates and implications**
Directors noted the summary overview of updates and implications from the recently released ATH for September 2025.
- RHT 24/252 6.15 Training and CPD schedule for directors**
Directors noted the scheduled approved by the G&P Committee.
- RHT 24/253 6.16 Appraisal Policy (Teachers)**
Directors noted the policy approved by the G&P Committee.
- RHT 24/254 6.17 People Update**
Directors noted the update as reviewed by the G&P Committee.
- RHT 24/255 6.18 Huish Music Plan**
Directors noted the plan as shared by the primary school headteachers.
- 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- RHT 24/256 7.1 Any other business**
The chair expressed her gratitude to Dan Maycock for his contribution as a director and chair of the A&R Committee. He noted the support from the executive team and directors and thanked them in return.
- RHT 24/257 7.2 Consideration of confidential content of the minutes**
Directors agreed that confidential papers will remain so but that there were no confidential items for the minutes.
- RHT 24/258 7.3 Agenda for next meeting**
Directors noted the agenda.
- RHT 24/259 7.4 Next meeting dates**
Directors noted the next meeting dates pending any further changes.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7.30pm

Signed:....Jade Renville..... Date:....10th October 2025.....