

**Minutes of the Diverse Academies Trust Board Meeting  
Wednesday 8 October 2025 at 5pm, at Diverse Education Centre, Retford**

Quorum Required:3

Trustees Present:

Trustee name	Initials	A = absence
Mrs M Blore	MB	
Mr M Quigley MBE	MQ	A
Mr J Robertson	JMR	A
Mr J Rolph	JR	
Mr D Schwarz (Chair)	DS	
Mr I Storey	IS	
Mr R Vizma	RV	

Quorum required: 3

Trustees Present: 5

**In attendance (staff or other invited persons):**

Staff name	Initials	Role	A = Absence
Mr D Cotton	DC	Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer	
Ms C Summers	CS	Chief Education Officer	
Mr N Holmes	NH	Chief Education Officer	
Mr G Corban	GC	Chief Operations Officer/Chief Finance Officer	
Mrs A Elway	AE	Head of Governance	
Mrs J Harrison Hill	JHH	Governance Professional	

Agenda item number	Item	Action by who /when
1. DAT/01/2526	<b>Tour of Thoresby Vale Academy 4.30pm till 5.00pm</b>  <b>Election of Chair</b> Mr Schwarz was unanimously re-elected as Chair of the Board, with no other nominations received. <b>Elect Vice Chair</b> Mr Storey was unanimously re-elected as Vice Chair of the Board, with no other nominations received.	
2. DAT/02/2526	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Mr Quigley and Mr Robertson.	
3. DAT/03/2526	<b>Declaration of interest and notification of any changes to declaration made</b>	

	There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The Chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. No new declarations of interests were made.													
4. DAT/04/2526	<b>Minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 09 July 2025</b> public and confidential. The minutes of the meeting held 09 July 2025 having previously been received were agreed and approved by the Chair.													
5. DAT/05/2526	<b>Matters Arising:</b> <b>DAT/153/2425 Confidential item: Hucknall Sale Update</b> <b>Action:</b> Trustees agreed that Mr Cotton would seek further legal advice on the implications should the covenant be removed post sale and circulate response to trustees. <b>Action:</b> Trustees agreed that an email would be circulated to all trustees for an agreement of sale. A Teams meeting would be convened should there be uncertainty on offer price. A majority agreement was agreed as acceptable should trustees be unavailable and on holiday for email or Teams decision. Confidential: This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes. Mr Corban left the meeting at 18.01 This item is now complete. <b>DAT/154/2425 External Review of Governance</b> Action: It was agreed that Mr Schwarz would inform the LACs on action being taken following the ERG. Mr Schwarz confirmed that the Chairs of LAC’s had been updated. This item is now complete. <b>DAT/156/2425 Board subcommittee chairs</b> <b>Action:</b> It was agreed that it would be helpful to identify any potential candidates for the subcommittee chair roles within the next few weeks to ensure a smooth transition. This item is to be discussed later in the meeting related to discussions on External review of governance. This item is now complete. <b>DAT/163/2425 Committee chairs update</b> <b>Action:</b> Governance professional to draft a letter to distribute on Chairs behalf for attendance leads to congratulate on work undertaken. A letter has been sent. This item is now complete. <b>DAT/170/2425 Reflection on revised agenda style</b> <b>Action:</b> Governance professional to arrange AI Session prior to Board meeting. This item has been postponed due to presentations and will be carried forward.													
6. DAT/06/2526	<b>Educational performance presentation</b> Ms Summers and Mr N Holmes presented to the Board of Trustees on the outcomes for 2025. Primary Outcomes 2025 <table><tr><td></td><td><b>Phonics Y1</b></td><td><b>Phonics Y2 (cumulative)</b></td><td><b>GLD</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Bracken Lane</b></td><td>88% →</td><td>90% →</td><td>84% →</td></tr><tr><td><b>Hillocks</b></td><td>54% ↓</td><td>76% ↓</td><td>69% ↑</td></tr></table>		<b>Phonics Y1</b>	<b>Phonics Y2 (cumulative)</b>	<b>GLD</b>	<b>Bracken Lane</b>	88% →	90% →	84% →	<b>Hillocks</b>	54% ↓	76% ↓	69% ↑	
	<b>Phonics Y1</b>	<b>Phonics Y2 (cumulative)</b>	<b>GLD</b>											
<b>Bracken Lane</b>	88% →	90% →	84% →											
<b>Hillocks</b>	54% ↓	76% ↓	69% ↑											

<b>Samuel Barlow</b>	78% ↑	61% ↓	68% →
<b>Thrumpton</b>	90% ↓	100% ↑	73% →
<b>Tuxford</b>	85% →	86% ↓	65% ↓
<b>Wainwright</b>	58% ↓	73% ↓	68% ↑

#### Key Stage Two outcomes 2025

	Reading (75)		Writing (72)		Maths (74)		Combined (62)	
	EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS	EXS+	GDS
<b>Bracken Lane</b>	86 ↑	38	79 →	34	86 →	17	72	14
<b>Hillocks</b>	53 →	15	58 →	6	43 →	11	32	6
<b>Samuel Barlow</b>	41 →	16	44 ↓	3	38 ↓	13	31	3
<b>Thrumpton</b>	75 →	21	71 →	7	96 ↑	21	61	4
<b>Tuxford</b>	88 ↑	55	79 ↑	33	79 ↑	33	73	15
<b>Wainwright</b>	54 →	10	61 →	2	71 →	24	49	0

#### Key Stage 4 Outcomes 2025

<b>Result</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>WA</b>	<b>ELA</b>	<b>QEA</b>	<b>ROA</b>	<b>THA</b>	<b>TA</b>
<b>Number of Pupils</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>250</b>
	2024	175	174	150	202	234	246
<b>A8</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>41.79</b>	<b>50.13</b>	<b>33.16</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>33.94</b>	<b>46.06</b>
	2024	38.45	47.48	31.51	34.33	39.14	45.92

<b>Eng &amp; Maths Strong Pass</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>41</b>
	2024	27	43	17	15	27	45
<b>Eng &amp; Maths Standard Pass</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>64</b>
	2024	49	69	29	37	49	70

#### Key Stage 5 Outcomes

	<b>WA</b>	<b>ELA</b>	<b>QEA</b>	<b>ROA</b>	<b>THA</b>	<b>TA</b>
<b>Context</b>						
<b>Cohort size 2025</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Cohort size 2024</b>	58	72	3	40	49	121
<b>Prior KS4 Average point score 2025</b>	<b>6.04</b>	<b>6.33</b>	<b>3.89</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>5.35</b>	<b>5.95</b>
<b>Prior KS4 Average point score 2024</b>	6.11	6.26	4.88	5.50	5.19	6.21
<b>Results</b>						
<b>Average A-Level Grade 2025</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Average A-Level Grade 2024</b>	C	C	E	C	C	C
<b>A-Level Value Added 2025</b>	<b>-0.29</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>-0.09</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>0.22</b>
<b>Applied General Grade 2025</b>	<b>Dis</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Mer</b>	<b>Mer</b>	<b>Dis</b>	<b>Dis</b>
<b>Applied General Grade 2024</b>	Mer	Mer	Mer	Mer	Mer	Dis
<b>Applied General Value Added 2025</b>	0.16	N/A	0.21	0.19	0.51	0.25

	<p>Ms Summers and Mr Holmes discussed the results giving a detailed breakdown of the outcomes, achievements and areas for concern.</p> <p><b>Trustees queried</b> if the current system of BSquared is suitable for the monitoring and tracking of SEND pupils.</p> <p>Ms Summers explained that current systems were not aspirational or accurate enough, work is underway to strengthen how to capture this through review meetings with children, to understand the rigour.</p> <p>Adaptation is needed to ensure a deep knowledge of child's needs are understood.</p> <p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p> <p>Ms Summers and Mr Holmes left the meeting at 17.45</p>	
<p>7. DAT/07/2526</p> <p>DAT/08/2526</p>	<p><b>Trustee questions/discussion on pre-reading pack</b></p> <p>Document: <a href="#">Pre-reading pack</a> was previously received by the Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee minute reports questions/discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Availability and expectations of Trustee attendance at Local Academy Committee Discussion</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Trustees discussed</b> the impact of Trustees attending LAC meetings considering sustainability and purpose of continuation given the reduced number of trustees.</p> <p>Consideration was given to how to address continued relationship building.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed</b> that discussion at the Chair and Vice Chair Governance meeting planned for 25 November 2025 would be the best approach, to ask governors their view on the impact and approaches to continue developing relationships with LACs .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scheme of Delegation review (including terms of office)</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Elway updated the Board on the tracked changes made to the Scheme of Delegation and work to ensure this is reflective of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) requirements and guidance from Confederation of Schools Trust (CST) and Stone King Solicitors whilst also incorporating the recommendations from the recent external review of governance and Governors conference discussions.</p> <p><b>Trustees discussed</b> the changes to terms of office, noting that the only requirement for annual reappointment was for the Chair of the Board.</p> <p>Removing the limit to the terms of office was considered, it was agreed that the AIR meetings, ERM meetings and code of conduct ensures that there is not a 'cosy' relationship in place and allowing terms of office to be renewed without limits protects against loss of knowledge within governance and supports retention of governors and trustees.</p> <p><b>Trustees noted</b> that the code of conduct had in fact been utilised in the past to remove a governor.</p> <p><b>Trustees discussed</b> the addition of succession planning into the Scheme of Delegation to strengthen this area.</p> <p>Executive Pay had been a change in the academy trust handbook; it was confirmed that only the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer/Chief Financial Officer were not on the School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD) framework which is a nationally agreed framework with national benchmarking.</p> <p>Currently performance management trustees make recommendations for CEO to Board for pay proposal.</p> <p>The COO/CFO is reviewed in line with the STPCD by the CEO.</p> <p><b>Trustees commented</b> that trustees should be reviewing where executives are on the STPCD scale, and for the CEO and COO/CFO agreeing pay at Board.</p> <p>Mr Cotton explained that Finance and Resources Committee had seen benchmarking for leaders and agreed the levelling framework undertaken</p>	

	<p>last academic year aligned to the school scoring system and criteria, to agree ranges up to CEO. Mr Rolph had undertaken benchmarking for the CEO pay.</p> <p>Mrs Elway highlighted the changes made to the scheme of delegation related to executive pay, noting the inclusion of appeal route and option for both trustees and CEO to request external advice should they require it. Trustees agreed amendments to the scheme of delegation and for continuation to consultation with Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors on 25 November 2025 before final approval at Board meeting on 10 December 2025.</p> <p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	
DAT/09/2526	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Governance action plan and strategy document</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Elway referred to the Governance action plan and Strategy document linked in the pre-reading pack.</p> <p>The action plan was derived from the External review of Governance recommendations, discussions at the last Governors conference and Academy Trust Handbook changes.</p> <p>The summary action plan is intended to be reviewed each term.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed</b> the action plan.</p>	
DAT/10/2526	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Elway discussed the draft agenda for the Chairs and Vice Chairs Governance meeting on 25 November 2025 being held at Thoresby Vale Primary Academy, informing the board of the numbers attending so far.</p> <p><b>Confidential</b> this item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p> <p>An external recruiter has been engaged for the recruitment of trustees.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed</b> the Chair and Vice Chair governance agenda.</p> <p>Mrs Elway left the meeting at 18.50</p>	
DAT/11/2526	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO Report and appendices questions/discussion</li> </ul> <p>Mr Cotton noted the official opening of Thoresby Vale Primary Academy had taken place and positive feedback had been received.</p>	
DAT/12/2526	<p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p> <p>The CEO report detailed a proposed consultation process, to reduce PAN in reception, at Hillocks Primary Academy. The reduction will be from 46 to 30 from 2027-2028 admissions year, due to declining primary numbers. This also supports the decommission of the buildings at the end of their life on the site.</p> <p><b>Trustees approved</b> the consultation process to be undertaken for reduction of PAN in reception from 46 to 30 from 2027 admissions at Hillocks Primary Academy.</p>	
DAT/13/2526	<p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	
DAT/14/2526	<p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	
DAT/15/2526	<p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</p>	
DAT/16/2526	<p><b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes. Mr Cotton confirmed that it was a separate process and would not have an impact on FSM.</p>	
DAT/17/2526	<p>Committee chairs provided brief summaries of the committee discussions, minutes of each committee meeting had previously been received by the Board in the pre reading pack including the financial performance report and pay update. No further questions were raised.</p>	

<p>8. DAT/18/2526</p> <p>DAT/19/2526</p> <p>DAT/20/2526</p> <p>DAT/21/2526</p> <p>DAT/22/2526</p> <p>DAT/22/2526</p> <p>DAT/23/2526</p> <p>DAT/24/2526</p> <p>DAT/25/2526</p> <p>DAT/26/2526</p> <p>DAT/27/2526</p> <p>DAT/28/2526</p>	<p><b>Approvals required by Board:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Safeguarding &amp; low-level concerns policy having previously been received in the pre reading pack was <b>approved</b> by the Board. .</li> <li>◦ Pay &amp; Reward policy having previously been received in the pre reading pack was <b>approved</b> by the Board.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hucknall Sale update – approval was previously discussed in agenda item 5.</li> <li>• Standards and Outcomes Committee recommended to the board that in the interim of appointing new Safeguarding and Career link trustees due to resignations, the responsibilities were undertaken by the committee through reporting from strategic leads in these areas. The <b>board agreed</b> that this approach was reasonable and proportionate.</li> <li>• Hillocks Primary Academy consultation on PAN approval was discussed and minuted in agenda item 7.</li> <li>• External auditor extension for 2025/2026 <b>approved</b> for recommendation to Members. Mr Rolph explained that it was the last year in the cycle of current auditors, inline with the ATH a tender exercise for 26/27 is being progressed by procurement.</li> <li>• Trade Union Facilities Time report was discussed and <b>approved</b> by the Board.</li> <li>• Apprenticeship Levy report was discussed and <b>approved</b> by the Board.</li> <li>• Governance action plan was discussed and minuted in agenda item 7.</li> <li>• Risk register, Mr Storey discussed the risk register format change, and approach for coming year for review. The Board <b>approved</b> the risk register.</li> <li>• <b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</li> <li>• <b>Confidential:</b> This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</li> </ul>	
<p>9. DAT/29/2526</p>	<p><b>Statutory Updates, Changes to legal documents and Companies House filing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P Simpson and J Mordue removed from Companies House and GIAS as Trustee</li> <li>• Deadline approaching for Trustees to complete ID verification with Companies House 18 November 2025</li> <li>• External Auditor appointment approval and recommendation to Members</li> </ul>	
<p>10. DAT/30/2526</p> <p>DAT/31/2526</p>	<p><b>Annual Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions policy: the Board were informed that there were no changes to Trust policy or academy admissions appendixes, other than the request to undertake a consultation to reduce PAN at Hillocks Primary Academy, the Board <b>approved</b> the admissions policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Chairs item</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Pay</li> </ul> <p>All executive staff have been processed under the nationally agreed 4% increase in line with the Teachers' Pay and Conditions. The next step involves reviewing individual placement on pay scales and the rationale for each. This discussion was deferred to the next meeting.</p>	

	<p>It was proposed that executive pay matters be reviewed at an annual pay and remuneration committee meeting separate from Finance and Resources Committee meeting to oversee executive-level salaries. This committee would meet annually with a defined agenda.</p> <p>Suggested membership includes three trustees: the Chair of Finance and Resources, the Chair of the Board, and one trustee to be confirmed.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The remit of the proposed Remuneration and Pay Committee will be revisited at the next Board meeting to finalise its scope and confirm trustee membership.</p>	Agenda
11. DAT/32/2526	<p><b>Determination of Confidentiality</b></p> <p>Trustees considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Documents: Financial Performance and FR Pay update in the pre reading pack would remain confidential. Submission free school bid</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 5 DAT/05/2526 will remain confidential until complete.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 6 DAT/06/2526 will remain confidential until decision made and published</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/08/2526 will remain confidential until resolved.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/10/2526 will remain confidential until decision made.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/12/2526 will remain confidential until decision made and published.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/14/2526 will remain confidential until a decision made and published.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/15/2526 will remain confidential until complete.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/16/2526 will remain confidential until complete.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 7 DAT/17/2526 will remain confidential until published.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 8 DAT/27/2526 will remain confidential until decision made and published.</li> <li>○ An item discussed in agenda item 8 DAT/28/2526 will remain confidential until decision made and published.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equalities Act consideration</b></p> <p>Trustees confirmed that the Equality Act was considered and complied with throughout discussions, where relevant</p> <p><b>Have decisions been made according to the 7 Nolan Principles</b></p> <p>Trustees held the meeting and discussions in accordance with the 7 Nolan principles.</p> <p><b>Consider any item to be referred to Charities Commission.</b></p> <p>No items were required for reporting to the charities commission.</p>	
12. DAT	<p>Date and time of next meeting: <b>Wednesday 10 December 2025, 5.00pm</b> at Retford Education Centre, Retford.</p>	

The meeting closed at: 17.20

Minutes agreed by Chair: