

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 9 October 2025 at 3.00pm

Present physically:

Present virtually: A Friend, Committee member
G Abbott, Parent member – Chalk Hill (part)
J Finch, Committee member (part)
K Points, EEGT Trustee and Trustee Lead for People
M Cadman, Committee member (part)
N Kellett, EEGT Trustee and Trustee Lead for Safeguarding – **Vice Chair**
R Inman, EEGT Trustee (part)
S Daley, EEGT Trustee and Trustee Lead for Careers
S Snowdon, EEGT Trustee and Trustee Lead for SEND – **Chair**

In attendance: C Shaw, Group Sixth Form Principal
E Barneveld, Head of School – Duke of Lancaster School
E O'Hara, Head of Welfare and Safeguarding (SEMH)
G Huntington, Group Head of SEND services
L Chapman, interim Head of School – Stone Lodge Academy
N Jennings, Head of School – Chalk Hill
P Hamilton, Head of School – Sunrise Academy
R Bamford, Group Vice Principal Quality
R King, Group Head of Supported Learning
S Chesterton, Head of Welfare and Safeguarding (SEND Cluster) (part)
S Gales, Governance Professional
S-L Neesam, Group Head of Welfare and Safeguarding
S White, Head of School – Priory School

Apologies: C Broad, Parent member – Sunrise Academy
J Wakelam, EEGT Trustee
L Sutherland, Parent member – Priory School
N Savvas, CEO
S Hopkins, Head of SEND Services

Absent: A Miti, Committee member
E Newport, Parent member – Stone Lodge Academy

The agenda was discussed in this order: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20

Action

1. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair(s)**
The Committee recognised S Snowdon as the Chair and N Kellett as the Vice Chair of the EEGT SEND Educational Excellence Committee for 2025/26 as appointed by the Trust Board in July 2025.
2. **Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence**
S Daley and S Snowdon declared their roles as Governors of West Suffolk College.

Members recognised the standing declarations. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared.

Apologies were accepted from C Broad, J Wakelam, L Sutherland, N Savvas and S Hopkins.

The absence of A Miti and E Newport was **noted**.

The Governance Professional informed and members **noted** that L Bennett has resigned from the Committee.

3. **Committee Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda Planner**
Members received and considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference, Committee Skillset and Agenda Cycle provided, subject to the amendment of a typo under the policies section bullet 9 which should read as 'medical'.
4. **Minutes of the meeting on 19 June 2025**
Members reviewed and **agreed** the minutes of 19 June 2025 as an accurate record.
5. **Matters arising from the meeting on 19 June 2025**
Nine of the twelve matters arising were complete, with three scheduled to be reported at the next meeting in line with the agenda planner.

S Chesterton joined the meeting at 3.10pm

Members received and **noted** the 'lessons learned from permanent exclusions' paper. The Chair summarised the core themes arising from national exclusion data and explained that, while we continue to avoid the use of exclusions, we need to keep under review the lessons learned from any exclusions to ensure we provide the best possible support for students and that exclusions are truly an action of last resort.

Members discussed the identified 'areas of strength of school practices' and queried what evidence we have that the 'top 10' meetings are having a positive impact. S-L Neesam, E O'Hara and S Chesterton gave examples of how these meetings are helping to strengthen a whole-school safeguarding culture and explained that the format of these meetings differs for each SEND school to reflect the unique context of the school. R Bamford fed back that our top 10 meetings have also recently been recognised by external auditors, such as the Local Authority and DfE RISE colleagues (in relation to the practice at Stone Lodge Academy) and by Ofsted (in relation to the practice at Priory School), as good practice.

Members discussed the identified 'core themes arising from exclusions in our settings' and agreed that they were a fair reflection of the themes.

Members commended the proactive work underway the Local Authorities to, as part of admissions, ensure students are appropriately placed.

Members asked the Executive to give examples of the actions taken in relation to the core themes. C Shaw informed that the Trust has adapted its processes to ensure that each Head of School works closely with the Trust's admission team and the Local Authority to review every application prior to admission; and explained that the intent is to ensure that the school can meet the needs of all the students on roll. C Shaw explained that this will reduce the risk of suspensions/exclusions. P Hamilton explained the impact of this change at Sunrise Academy, noting that his SLT have considered every prospective student's SEND need as well as their behaviours over the previous 12 months, which has enabled them to achieve a school cohort with similar profiles and for them to identify where students have a history of physical aggression/violence which would make them unsuitable for the school. P Hamilton informed that this has resulted in the school environment being less volatile and students which are more regulated and able to learn. C Shaw added was achieved whilst still increasing the number of students on roll, which is vital given the growing SEND needs locally. S-L Neesam added that the improved school environment has also enabled us to attract and retain skilled specialist staff at Sunrise Academy, which was previously very challenging due to the external perception of the school.

Gov. Prof.

Members supported the identified 'areas where schools could look to improve practices' and the 'areas where the Trust could look to improve practices' and suggested that evidence of the impact of these changes should be identifiable over time.

Members commended the report and its focus on student experience and continuous improvements.

6. **First Hand Feedback**

Members received and considered the seven feedback forms of governance member's visits to the SEND schools during June and October 2025.

Members **noted** the feedback reports and reflected that these reports are helpful and clearly document the transformation underway across the SEND schools, which are leading to stronger staffing, improved student behaviours and more appropriate placements for students.

Members discussed that these reports demonstrate transparency and evidence that governance members operate with integrity and are empowered to raise concerns and hold the Executive to account, to ensure that concerns are considered and addressed appropriately.

Members noted that the reports should be read together, as they reflect a specific moment in time within a context of rapid improvements being implemented across the SEND schools.

C Shaw summarised some of the actions taken to resolve concerns e.g. creating a cover supervisor post at Sunrise Academy, providing training to reception/support staff about changes, and communicating to relevant staff information about the school's single central record.

Members were pleased that many of the concerns identified have since been resolved and felt assured that the concerns raised did not require an action plan or additional Trust-wide resource allocation.

Members discussed the rapid improvements across the SEND schools and commended the Heads of school and their SLTs underpinned by significant support provided by the Trust.

Members recognised the impact of the leadership provided by the Group and Trust.

7. **Risk Register Extract**

Members received, considered and **noted** the Risk Register extract which included **0 Red, 8 Amber** and **4 Yellow** risks, and proposed a new risk (EEG00X relating to capacity to implement planned improvements).

[Review of Previous Year's performance](#)

8. **Student Outcomes and Destinations**

Members received and considered the paper provided which analysed each school's student outcomes and destinations. The report also identified areas of strength and areas for development to be added to the School Development Plans for 2025/26.

N Jennings summarised the outcomes at Chalk Hill and informed that, following redesignation to an SEMH school, in future years the school will deliver GCSE or comparable accredited qualifications.

Members queried what accredited qualifications Chalk Hill plans to deliver. N Jennings informed that initially the school plans to offer GCSE Maths, English

and Science, in addition to AQA unit awards, so that students can attain qualifications to support them to their next steps and further education.

N Jennings informed that the relocation of Chalk Hill to the new site in Bury St Edmunds is likely to be delayed and confirmed that the school will communicate with parents/carers once they have more information from the Local Authority.

Members queried what diagnostic tools and assessments are used to monitor academic progress and the frequency they are administered across all SEND schools. N Jennings confirmed that Chalk Hill uses National Test Style assessments each term to evaluate learning to enable student's ILPs to be adapted. N Jennings added that, depending on their SEND needs, some students will have multiple academic interventions each week to identify and address gaps in learning. E Barneveld informed that Duke of Lancaster School use White Rose as a baseline assessment tool as well as mock tests to enable student's ILPs to be adapted. S White and L Chapman explained that students ILPs at Priory School and Stone Lodge Academy are tracked using Provision Map. P Hamilton confirmed that Wide-Ranging Assessment Tests are used at Sunrise Academy to identify their base level across multiple subjects.

Members noted the positive outcomes though challenged that, particularly at Duke of Lancaster and Priory School, some students did not achieve. Members queried whether these poor outcomes could have been predicted and avoided and asked how the school used the diagnostic tools and assessments to ensure that students were put on the right courses to be able to achieve. E Barneveld summarised the outcomes at Duke of Lancaster School. E Barneveld explained that some Year 10s were entered into Functional Skills exams early to give them the opportunity to achieve a Level 1 or 2 qualification, so they could progress onto a GCSE qualification in Year 11. E Barneveld explained that whilst some did not achieve the accreditation, it will not hinder their progress and was used as a supportive opportunity. E Barneveld also explained the term 'fallback' and summarised how, in response to student feedback and outcomes, the school's curriculum offer has been adapted e.g. introduction of BTEC courses, and how best practice is being shared across the SEND schools e.g. working with Priory School in relation to the Trinity Arts Award.

E Barneveld summarised Duke of Lancaster School's student destination data.

S White summarised the outcomes and student destinations at Priory School and the accredited courses offered. S White explained that students undertook accreditation in PE, Food and Art in September to stagger the accreditation periods to best support students.

Members challenged that the accreditation information for Priory School does not provide sufficient detail to enable the Committee to understand the data, trends and evaluate whether students undertake appropriate assessments to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Members noted the spiky nature of SEND students' progress and the complexity of reporting on whole-school academic progress in SEND school settings where there are multiple and differentiate qualifications, though asked the Heads to consider how to report on next year's data.

Heads

Members challenged the comment within the report that 'progress against ILP targets' is not reportable, as without this information the Committee cannot sufficiently oversee the impact of the schools. L Chapman explained that where school's used Provision Map during 2024/25, there are technical difficulties impacting our ability to produce data reports. L Chapman informed of work to improve availability of reporting and R Bamford confirmed that the Trust is going to evaluate whether Provision Map is fit for our purposes to determine whether an alternative solution is required to ensure we have visibility of students

progress. R Bamford noted that we are also consulting externally with other SEND schools to evaluate what systems/processes are most effective and to share best practice.

Members recognised the importance of positive student destinations and personal development alongside student outcomes, however discussed the need for greater analysis by the Heads and visibility to this Committee, to provide assurance that we are setting sufficiently high expectations and aspirations for students, and providing sufficient stretch, challenge and opportunities to support students to achieve the best possible outcomes to prepare them for their future.

L Chapman summarised the outcomes at Stone Lodge Academy and informed that the SLT are reviewing how staff use diagnostic tools and how they approach target setting and, evaluate and recording progress; to ensure that students are appropriately stretched and supported so that they achieve the best possible outcomes. L Chapman summarised the student destination data and gave examples of how the school is creating strong links with One Sixth Form College to support student progression/transitions.

P Hamilton summarised the outcomes of Sunrise Academy and gave examples of how the school's actions to upskill staff to improve the academic support they provide to students e.g. staff training on phonics. P Hamilton explained that this resulted in improvements in primary writing outcomes. P Hamilton explained the individual cases where students did not achieve and the support given to those students. P Hamilton summarised the student destination data and gave examples of how the school is creating strong links with East Coast College to support student progression/transitions.

Members noted that while student destinations are largely positive, there were NEETs at Duke of Lancaster School and Sunrise Academy; and queried how the SEND schools are monitoring destinations and supporting NEET students. L Chapman summarised how this is done and how we are working with colleges to support students to access appropriate placements.

J Finch left the meeting at 5.01pm

9. **Attendance**

Members received and considered the paper provided which analysed the 2024/25 attendance and persistent absence data of each SEND school compared to relevant benchmarks, to identify emerging trends and concerns. The report also summarised the actions taken by school staff to work with the student and their family to improve attendance, and how the school monitors, tracks and supports attendance in line with the DfE guidance. The report also evaluated the effectiveness and/or limitations of the strategies/actions used during the previous half term and discuss plans to adapt/change approaches for the next half term.

Members noted that at Duke of Lancaster School and Sunrise Academy attendance remains too low and queried whether the Heads feel confident that the interventions outlined in the report will have the intended impact in improving attendance. E Barneveld and P Hamilton explained that we expect attendance to improve and reflected on the impact of closer working with the Local Authority's educational welfare officer team, the weekly top 10 meetings, home visits and of sharing best practice between the SEND schools. Members noted that, due to the needs of their students, Sunrise Academy and Chalk Hill is best compared to the DfE PRU attendance average.

Members commended the clarity of the report.

M Cadman left the meeting at 5.29pm

Members noted that at Chalk Hill, Duke of Lancaster School and Sunrise Academy levels of persistent absence remain too high and queried the reasons for this. E Barneveld N Jennings and P Hamilton summarised the context at these schools which have higher levels of students with SEMH needs, poor prior experiences at schools and students with emotional school-based avoidance and reflected that the long travel-to-school times also continues to be a key contributing factor to poor attendance. C Shaw informed that the Trust's admissions team are working with the Local Authority to reduce travel-to-school times wherever possible.

10. **Enrichment Activities, Plans and Trips**

Members received and considered the paper provided which reports on the enrichment activities available and undertaken by students in 2024/25 and identifies areas for further development.

E Barneveld, N Jennings, L Chapman, P Hamilton and S White summarised the key points for their school from the report and their development plans for their school's 2025/26 enrichment offer.

N Jennings informed that the data in the table on page 2 is inaccurate and confirmed that there were more enrichment visits at Chalk Hill in 2024/25.

L Chapman confirmed that we are working to further develop reporting to improve impact analysis and informed that we are reviewing our mini-bus deployment to facilitate further additional trips and visits.

11. **PSHE Plans and Development**

Members received and considered the paper provided which summarised how school leaders establish a suitable and coherent programme of personal development through both the curriculum and the wider opportunities and experiences, supports pupils to develop the knowledge and skills they need for participation and success in later life, promotes pupils' wider development, character and well-being, and delivers spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) across each SEND school.

P Hamilton and N Jennings gave recent examples of how their PSHE curriculum has been adapted to emerging safeguarding concerns/priorities.

Members commended the report and supported 'next steps' identified.

12. **Early Career Teacher (ECT) Progress**

Members received and considered the paper provided which reported on the number of ECTs by school and the stage of their development, summarised the training programmes and partners that are involved in the ECT programme, and evaluated the current support given to ECTs and explained the adaptations being implemented.

G Abbott joined the meeting at 3.40pm

Members discussed the support given to the ECTs across the SEND schools and queried whether it differs to the approach of previous years. R Bamford explained that, following a change of staff, it was not possible for him to report on previous years however confirmed that the support this year is fully compliant with the statutory guidance and aligns to best practice. R Bamford also informed of plans to work with a local university to further develop teacher training courses to be able to grow and develop teaching staff.

Members queried the likely timeline for introducing the proposed teacher training courses. R Bamford explained that the plans are still forming.

Members commended the sizable cohort of ECTs across the SEND schools and the strong commitment to developing staff.

Members noted that five ECTs are due to complete in Autumn 2025 and queried whether we are tracking retention post qualification. K Points, as Trustee lead for People, noted that HR regularly analyse staff retention to consider the impact of the training they received. R Bamford agreed to add retention to future reports.

R Bamford

13. **Complaints and Compliments**

Members received and considered the paper provided which reported on the compliments, concerns and complaints received for each school, including the actions taken to resolve any complaints, analysis of any trends in the compliments and complaints received and the actions being taken to avoid future complaints.

R Bamford explained how the compliments and complaints procedure has been implemented across the SEND schools including how they are monitored, administered and analysed to identify emerging trends. Members commended the strength of the approach.

R Bamford confirmed that there have been no qualifying complaints.

Members queried the context surrounding the staff conduct complaint at Duke of Lancaster School. S-L Neesam summarised the case which resulted in referrals to LADO and the Teaching Regulation Agency. S-L Neesam informed that, to safeguard against a similar incident in the future, the Trust provided whole-school staff training on professional standards, introduced new and/or strengthened student and staff policies, and school leaders clarified their expectations of staff.

14. **Quality Assurance and Improvement**

Members received and considered the paper provided which reported on the quality assurance/improvement activities, that have taken place across the SEND schools and those that are planned to occur from September 2025. The report also detailed Stone Lodge Academy's progress against its 2024/25 action plan (arising from the Ofsted inspection in January 2025) and how the school is working with the DfE's RISE programme, the DfE School Improvement team, Suffolk County Council's education team and the impact of the support being received from across the Trust.

R Bamford and S-L Neesam summarised the support activities since the last meeting provided to Stone Lodge Academy and gave examples of the impact of the support.

R Bamford provided feedback from monitoring and support visits from the Local Authority and DfE and informed that we are working to produce a detailed improvement action plan for RISE.

R Bamford summarised how best practice is being shared across the SEND schools, with Trust Primary school colleagues, as well as with external special school leaders and consultants; and reflected that the impact of this is evident by the continued improvement in standards of reporting and analysis.

R Bamford explained that, following a joint evaluation of assessment software options, the Trust has invested in Earwig as a single, robust system to enable consistent tracking of student progress and planning next steps across the SEND schools.

Members queried whether Earwig is visible to parents. R Bamford confirmed that it is visible, which will support parent's understanding of their child's progress and will link into the annual ECHP reviews.

15. Ofsted Preparedness

Members received and considered the paper provided which informed of the activities taking place to ensure that the SEND schools are appropriately prepared for an Ofsted inspection – including developing their Self-Evaluation Framework and School Development Plans, regular Single Central Record checks, and training on the new Ofsted framework for staff and governance members.

R Bamford informed that we have engaged an education consultant to work with the Heads of School to prepare for Ofsted and clarified that the Self-Evaluation Framework will use the old Ofsted framework, whereas the School Development Plans will use the new Ofsted framework.

R Bamford explained how we conduct regular Single Central Record checks and reflected that this process has been proven to be robust and highly effective in our recent Ofsted inspections.

R Bamford confirmed that training is being rolled out to staff and governance members to ensure everyone understands the new Ofsted framework.

16. Residential Provision Update

Members received and considered the report provided on the residential provisions at Chalk Hill and Priory School and their Statements of Purpose and Standard 3 visits in summer 2.

S White fed back on the school's recent residential inspection and R Bamford informed of plans to share lessons learned and best practice with Chalk Hill following on from Priory School's recent residential inspection. Members congratulated Priory School on its successful residential inspection.

N Jennings informed that Chalk Hill had a Standard 3 visit last week with a new inspector, and so the report will be available soon.

Members **noted** the Chalk Hill and Priory School's Statements of Purpose and Priory School's Standard 3 report from Summer 2025.

17. School Website Compliance

Members received and considered the report provided which reported on website compliance with DfE, Ofsted and/or employment law requirements.

R Bamford summarised the outcome of the statutory compliance audit and confirmed that the named policies are written and will escalate into Committees this term.

18. Wraparound Childcare Support

Members received, considered and **noted** the report provided which reported on the wraparound childcare offered at the schools in line with DfE guidance.

19. Policies

- i. **Safeguarding Policy – Chalk Hill**
- ii. **Safeguarding Policy – Duke of Lancaster School**
- iii. **Safeguarding Policy – Priory School**
- iv. **Safeguarding Policy – Stone Lodge Academy**
- v. **Safeguarding Policy – Sunrise Academy**

Members **approved** the above policies and **agreed to recommend them to the Trust Board.**

20. **Any Other Business**

i. **Review of the meeting**

The Governance Professional invited governance members to contact her to provide feedback on the efficacy of the Committee meeting and papers, to support continuous improvement.

The meeting closed at 6.12pm