



**Standards Committee Meeting**  
**Monday 23 February 2026 at 17:00 – 19:00**  
**via MS Teams**

<b>Those Present:</b>		
Naomi Cooper	Chair	NC
Colin Bradley	Director	CB
Rachel Potts	Director	RP
Phil Bradley	Director	PB
James Hutchinson	Director	JH
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Jacky Tattershall	Executive Director – Quality Assurance & Improvement	JT
Michelle Smith	HR Manager	MS
Lyndsay Foster	Governance Clerk	LF
Richard Webster	Strategic Transitions Lead	RW
<b>Apologies:</b>		
<b>No Apologies:</b>		

<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>1.1. To receive apologies for absence</p> <p>No apologies were received.</p>	
<p>1.2. To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>No apologies to accept.</p>	
<b>2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
<p>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
<p>3.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or business interest received.</p>	
<b>4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MINUTES</b>	
<p>4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <p>The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 4 November 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.2. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the action tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	
<p>4.3. Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment, and it was noted that sickness absence (item 5.3) had been added to the tracker for ongoing monitoring.</p>	
<b>5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</b>	
<p>5.1. Standards Committee Report</p> <p>JT explained that the Trust now comprised nineteen academies across forty-one sites, with pupil numbers continuing to increase steadily across both special and primary phases. JT highlighted several operational challenges emerging from the large number of new national frameworks and guidance documents expected later in the year and into early 2026. Some schools particularly Bents Green, Craggs, West Riding, Lotus and Endeavour had required additional assistance due to staffing absences. Despite these pressures, the Trust had</p>	

continued to support schools with Ofsted readiness through headteacher development days and shared learning from recent inspections.

A discussion followed regarding Enterprise Learning Institute. JT confirmed that although the programme had been initiated primarily in response to internal staff training needs, there had also been efforts to market short courses externally. Apprenticeships at Levels 3 and 5 remained the most successful element of the offer, whereas short course uptake had been modest. A review at the end of Spring Term 2 would determine whether the short course model remained viable. The Committee also considered the Trust's systems for communicating policy and toolkit updates.

JT confirmed that regular bulletins and practitioner networks were used to ensure colleagues stayed informed on fast moving policy changes, and Headteacher training days with the new Ofsted framework.

**CB asked 1.3 of the report about Enterprise Learning Institute - is it only internal Nexus staff who access?**

JT confirmed they do work externally but mainly with short courses. The Level 3 and Level 5 Apprenticeships were really successful.

**PB asked about the toolkits discussed in 1.4 of the policy updates.**

JT explained they used flyers in all schools across the trust to address the changes and it goes through the practitioner network and they then feed down to staff also.

JT discussed in detail the new statutory guidance on restrictive physical intervention, due to take effect in April. Members recognised the complexity of balancing the requirement to notify parents after every incident with the risk of overwhelming families in settings where interventions might occur daily. JT confirmed that the executive assurance partners were working on a Trust-wide protocol that would remain compliant while still being sensitive to parental expectations and school workloads.

Turning to commissioned work, JT provided an update on Education Other Than at School (EOTAS). Two young people were currently receiving support, with a third referred and awaiting confirmation. Engagement levels were higher than anticipated, despite the complex needs of the learners involved. Recruitment to practitioner roles, however, had proven challenging. Sheffield Council had recently expressed interest in commissioning packages following positive feedback from Rotherham Council, suggesting potential growth in the service, although JT and the CEO emphasised the need to remain cautious about capacity.

A positive update was also shared regarding the commissioned therapeutic services, now in their third year of delivery. Improved operating procedures had greatly strengthened this area of work, and feedback from pupils, therapists and schools had been consistently strong. Art therapy placements, developed in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, had expanded and were generating meaningful outcomes.

JT then summarised progress within the Collaborative School Improvement Framework. Digital and EdTech initiatives had been particularly successful: the e-sports room was now full, with several Lotus students aspiring to progress to Level 3 study, and a Hyflex pilot had begun to help mentally unwell or school-avoidant young people to access lessons from home. Additionally, a Nexus MAT branded technology space had opened at Barnsley College to strengthen progression pathways for older students. Work on expanding qualifications continued, including the Trust's first A-Level cohort at Kenwood.

**NC asked who the first research grant was with?**

JT informed it was through Mixed Economy Group.

RW discussed destination tracking had improved significantly, enabling the Trust to identify patterns such as the 2.8% NEET rate and to strengthen apprenticeship signposting.

JT explained the Waterton apprenticeship partnership was working well. 11 out of the 12 passed Level 3 and the other one on a merit pass.

JT went on to discuss the Assessment and Quality report, noting self-assessment activity was described as collaborative, involving the headteacher, SLT, regional director and assurance partner, with the latter providing robust challenge. Concern was raised regarding Doncaster LA's early-help processes, which directors agreed were overly bureaucratic and out of step with neighbouring authorities.

Attendance data was then reviewed. Although Trust wide attendance had improved slightly, it remained below national averages. Heatherwood and Craggs faced notable challenges, but proactive work was under way.

CEO informed Ofsted had taken a more positive view of Kenwood's attendance, praising the progress pupils had made relative to their extremely low starting points rather than against national norms.

Safeguarding information was presented by JT, including a substantial rise in children in care cohort due to the Nest provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children at Nottm HOPE. A decline in child protection plans was attributed to increasingly high statutory thresholds. Members revisited ongoing concerns regarding Lotus Academy, where high rates of suspension, exclusion and serious incidents were closely linked to weaknesses in curriculum and teaching.

**RP, PB and NC all wanted to know more information regarding the suspensions and exclusions at Lotus.**

CEO outlined the timeline of leadership instability and the measures now in place, including the appointment of a supernumerary deputy headteacher to drive curriculum improvement. They were candid that progress had not been as rapid as expected but expressed

<p>confidence that the new leadership structure would enable improvements by summer and autumn 2026.</p> <p><b>NC asked if there were any national figures for exclusions and suspensions?</b> JT informed that there will be and she will get these figures for the boards next meeting.</p> <p><b>ACTION: JT to collect national data figures for exclusions and suspensions.</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION: JT 15/6/26</b></p>
<p>5.1.1 Qualifications and Destinations Report</p> <p>Discussed as part of 5.1.0</p>	
<p>5.1.2 CSIF Delivery Plan</p> <p>Discussed as part of 5.1.0</p>	
<p>5.2. School Performance Dashboard</p> <p>CEO explained Bents Green and Nottingham HOPE are now on the dashboard for the first time and require significant support from the Trust, although traction is already seen from Bents Green, and intervention is required at Lotus.</p> <p>CEO then introduced the new Ofsted aligned performance dashboard. He explained that the cautious grading approach resulting in many indicators being marked as “needs attention” reflected both the newness of the framework and the Trust’s preference for prudence over optimism.</p> <p><b>RP queried the distinctions between schools requiring enhanced support and those given amber gradings due to self-critical or cautious headteacher assessments?</b></p> <p>CEO stated that the schools in enhanced support, as per the report, as the ones Directors need to be focused on, and those school that look concerning with their grades but are not in enhanced support will likely improve by the next dashboard review, as these Heads (e.g. Hilltop and Kelford) are likely being over cautious.</p> <p>CEO stated they moderated judgements and shared with the scrutiny board.</p>	
<p>5.3 HR Scorecard</p> <p>MS presented the HR Scorecard, noting that staff absence had risen in most schools during autumn 2025–26. Lotus had the highest rate at 16.57%, with four staff members (8% of its workforce) absent for mental-health-related reasons.</p> <p>MS pointed out that two of those individuals had since left the Trust and attendance was already improving. A viral outbreak late in the term had also significantly affected several schools.</p>	

<p><b>RP asked about the general trends?</b> MS reassured directors that no Trust-wide pattern of work-related stress had been identified and summarised efforts to strengthen wellbeing support, including improved communication around the Employee Assistance Programme and involvement of mental health first aiders.</p>	
<p>5.4. Employee Opinion Survey  MS discussed that recruitment and retention data showed a healthy turnover position, and the CEO noted progress on the employee opinion survey, including new question structures and confirmation that anonymity was fully protected through Microsoft Forms.<b>NC asked how often the employee survey goes out?</b> MS confirmed they go out every 2 years but last year there was a wellbeing survey as well.</p>	
<p>5.5. Parental leave and sickness absence data correlation analysis  MS reported on a possible but limited correlation between parental-leave requests and subsequent sickness absence at Kelford and Hilltop, noting the complexity created by differing regional HR policies inherited through TUPE.  NC agreed that it would be sensible to monitor this over the next year. <b>ACTION: MS to continue regular monitor parental correlation as 5.3 of previous action tracker.</b></p>	<p><b>ACTION: MS 15/6/26</b></p>
<p>5.6. Happiness Plan  MS informed of updates on wellbeing initiatives, including the revival of the “Feel Better” newsletter and continuing work on menopause support, which now included specialist training, peer networks and development of a menopause action plan, a requirement across all employers by 2027. Work on digital HR systems, including recruitment automation and a new RMS, was progressing well.</p>	
<p>5.7. Risk Register  CEO reviewed the risk register, which showed no major changes, and confirmed that the register would next be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and the full Board. CEO and MS discussed AI, looking to streamline and pilot a tracking recruitment management system with Lana Stoyles at the Trust.</p>	
<p>5.8. Minutes of the Schools Performance Scrutiny Board meetings  For information.</p>	
<p><b>6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b></p>	
<p>6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair  None.</p>	

<b>7. CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting	
All discussed.	
7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed in the meeting	
None.	
<b>8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</b>	

Tuesday 15 June 2026	5 – 7 pm	MS Teams
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**Minutes approved by Trust Board of Directors**

<b>CHAIR</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>