



**Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday 29 April 2026  
5.00 pm – 7.30 pm Nexus HQ – Coleman Suite**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Initials:</b>
Rachel Potts	Director/Member & Chair of Trust Board of Directors	Chair
Sue Shelley	Director & Vice Chair of Trust Board of Directors	SS
Gillian Askew	Director	GA
Colin Bradley	Director	CB
Phil Bradley	Director	PB
Naomi Cooper	Director	NC
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG
Tina Havenhand	Director	TH
James Hutchinson	Director	JHc
Javid Mahdavi	Director	JM
Ray Palmer	Director	RPa
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Executive Director – Corporate Affairs	JH
Rebecca Horne	Governance Clerk	Clerk
Karen Smith	Chief Finance Officer	CFO
Michelle Smith	Head of Human Resources	MS
Lana Stoyles	Executive Director – Business Transformation	LS
<b>Apologies:</b>		

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	ACTIONS
<p>1.1 Welcome &amp; receive apologies for absence</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>1.2 To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>None.</p>	
2. ITEMS FOR AOB	
<p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered.</p> <p>The CEO reminded Directors of the forthcoming TES Awards and advised that travel and overnight accommodation costs would be covered for those wishing to attend. Attendance is optional, and Directors were asked to confirm their availability by the end of the week.</p> <p>The Chair agreed to vary the running order of the agenda to bring forward the Executive Pay Report.</p>	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>Individual Directors to declare any personal, business/governance interests on any item on the agenda.</p> <p>The CEO noted that the Executive Pay Report related to executive leaders' pay ranges (including the CEO, CFO, Executive Directors s, EAPs, and "Heads of") and some of those officers were in attendance, but he did not feel this created a conflict in receiving this report Directors agreed this did not constitute a conflict requiring withdrawal. It was also noted that the mid-year review item related to the CFO and CEO; appropriate withdrawals would take place when those items were reached.</p>	
4. NEXUS MAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES	
<p>4.1 To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust Board Meeting held on Wednesday 25 March 2026.</li> </ul> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.2 Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The action tracker was reviewed and updated as appropriate with all actions complete.</p> <p>Directors received an update on advice from Stone King re: recent directions and a potential section 496 referral. It was reported there were limited grounds to challenge the Local Authority decision on legal process; however, the CEO's intent had been to establish clearer expectations for partnership working. Directors noted acknowledgement from the Local Authority regarding the review process and a commitment to work more collaboratively going forward.</p>	

<p>Directors noted the importance of consistent use of the Trust’s standard wording when responding to Local Authority consultation, to avoid inadvertently increasing the likelihood of directed placements.</p> <p><b>Independent school proposal/lease confirmation:</b> Doncaster Independent Special School Proposal - <b>Action: JH and LS to submit proposal following lease confirmation Independent school proposal/lease confirmation:</b> Directors noted progress remained dependent on lease confirmation and that formal process steps had not yet commenced; the update would be brought back to the June Board meeting. <b>Action: Clerking Services to amend completion date to June.</b></p>	<p><b>Action: Clerking Services 30/04/26 Completed</b></p>
<p>4.3 Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>No matters arising were reported.</p>	
<p><b>5. STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE REPORT</b></p>	
<p>The CEO gave an overview of the Strategic Plan Update.</p> <p>It was noted that the Seven Hills conversion had been delayed, with officers highlighting the financial planning impact resulting from reduced central income. Escalation with the Diocese and the DfE was ongoing, with an indicative target conversion date of 1 June. The CEO remain very frustrated with this matter.</p> <p>New leadership appointments were noted, with Kirsty Binks appointed as Headteacher at Bader and Ben Norman starting as Headteacher at Fountaindale. The CEO advised that Chris Evans (CE) has resigned from the role of Headteacher at Lotus Academy as he is taking early retirement. The acting Headteacher has agreed to take on the role permanently. The CEO added that CE has worked for Nexus MAT for nine years and has been a loyal, humble, and hard-working member of the Trust, and that his contribution will be formally acknowledged at the CSIF awayday.</p> <p>The Trust is working with the Department for Education to ensure that schools transferring in from T.E.A.M do not bring financial deficits.</p> <p>Developments in Local Authority partnerships were noted, including exploratory discussions regarding a potential satellite model and an invitation to interview on 22 May for a new special school in Calderdale.</p> <p><b>RP asked: will the employee opinion survey summary come to the Trust Board or the Standards Committee?</b></p> <p>The CEO explained it was agreed the summary should be presented to the full Board, with referral to committee for deeper discussion as required.</p> <p><b>RP asked: has the planned spring 2026 review of the Enterprise Learning Institute (ELI) business model taken place and what is the outcome?</b></p> <p>The CEO stated the review meeting had been rescheduled; operational discussions had taken place and a business plan update would be presented. Early indications suggested improved viability and “green shoots” towards commercial sustainability.</p>	

<p><b>6. SCHOOL RESOURCE BUSINESS PARTNER IMPACT REPORT</b></p>	
<p>LS provided an overview to Directors on the SRBP model introduced to address single points of failure in school business management roles, improve compliance (including safer recruitment, HR and finance controls), and provide a two-way bridge between central requirements and school operational capacity. Early impact included identification of operational risks requiring sustained support and more specific impacts such as improved purchase order compliance.</p> <p><b>RP asked: is SRBP deployment fluid, varying by need over time?</b></p> <p>LS responded in the affirmative. Officers confirmed that deployment is agreed with headteachers and central teams and is informed by evidence drawn from operational reviews and risk assessments. Allocation is planned on an annual cycle; however, arrangements remain sufficiently flexible to respond to emerging issues and to allow time for effective embedding where required.</p> <p><b>TH asked: what happens if central services identify a need for SRBP support but the school does not agree?</b></p> <p>The CEO explained that this matter would be addressed through discussion with the headteacher, supported by evidence from the operational review framework and audit data. It was noted that decisions remain delegated to individual schools; however, the evidence base enables constructive challenge, clear articulation of risk and agreement on the support required.</p> <p><b>SS asked: have any outcomes from the SRBP project surprised officers so far?</b></p> <p>LS explained that one benefit has been the identification of previously unrecognised talent across school operations teams. This has enabled clearer succession planning and the development of professional pathways, including links with leadership development and ELI. It was also noted that the model has already supported the retention of an individual who had been considering leaving due to a lack of clarity around progression opportunities.</p> <p>LS reminded Directors of the ISBL review feedback meeting on Friday 1 May, and SS and TH confirmed their attendance.</p> <p><b>Outcome: The report was received. Directors noted the early positive impact of the model and requested a further update as it continues to embed.</b></p>	
<p><b>7. CONSOLIDATED BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – PERIOD 6</b></p>	
<p>The CFO provided an update on the consolidated management accounts for period 6.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been no material movement in the forecast revenue position compared with prior reporting. Directors also noted an additional schedule confirming agreed top-up rates across Local Authorities, highlighting increased variation between authorities.</p>	

Questions were raised as to whether Ebor management accounts should be included for discussion by the full Board, rather than being considered solely within the Merger Advisory Group. Clarification was also sought on the terminology and formatting used within the management accounts.

It was agreed that Ebor’s management accounts should be brought to the full Board, supported by appropriate accompanying narrative, to enable Directors to raise questions directly. Officers confirmed that the most recent version would be circulated in advance and that a simple glossary/crib sheet would be provided to aid clarity. **Action: Clerking Services to add Ebor Management Accounts and Merger Feedback to the May Board agenda and future meeting agendas into 2026-27.**

**Action:  
Clerking  
Services  
30/04/26  
Completed**

**8. NEXUS MAT EXECUTIVE PAY REPORT**

MS provided an overview of the Executive Pay Report, which included the annual executive pay benchmarking update, based on IMP data. Directors noted that no changes to current executive pay ranges were being proposed at this time and that the paper was provided to support assurance over propriety and value for money, in line with statutory responsibilities.

CEO and CFO pay were reported to be broadly aligned with sector benchmarks for comparable trusts, with the CEO pay range noted as having headroom for potential future pay progression as it sits in the lower quartile. Directors also noted that a nationally recognised pupil weighting is applied when determining benchmarking bands for special schools. It was agreed that a further review would be undertaken should the scale of the organisation change, including through any merger, with due consideration given to any resulting changes in role scope and responsibility.

**JM asked: how will the Trust assess appropriate executive pay when organisational size outgrows the current benchmarking bands?**

MS explained that pupil weighting is applied when benchmarking executive roles within special schools. Directors were advised that, in the event of merger or organisational growth, the Trust would undertake a further benchmarking exercise, as previously completed, to ensure appropriate progression headroom. It was also noted that while benchmarking provides assurance of proportionality, it should be considered alongside wider public sector comparators and the span of control associated with the roles.

**JM asked: how should directors interpret the high level in reported chief executive salaries elsewhere, and are MATs moving beyond a ‘super headship’ model?**

The CEO explained that advertised pay levels can be difficult to compare directly due to differences in governance structures, role scope, and whether figures include pension contributions. Directors were advised that benchmarking should be used as an assurance tool, taking account of wider sector challenges such as pay inflation, and that proportionality should be considered alongside levels of responsibility and organisational complexity.

<p>8.1 IMP Benchmarking Report</p> <p>As discussed above.</p>	
<p><b>9. PROPOSED 2026-27 MEETING DATES</b></p>	
<p><b>Directors approved the proposed schedule of Board and committee meetings for 2026/27.</b> It was noted that committee dates had been adjusted to support diary management and director availability.</p> <p><b>Action: Clerking Services will now issue diary invites.</b></p>	<p><b>Action: Clerking Services 20/05/26</b></p>
<p><b>10. POLICY REVIEW REPORT</b></p>	
<p>Directors considered the policy review report and the recommended amendments.</p> <p><b>Directors approved the policy review report.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Clerking Services to update approved policies on the Trust website.</b></p>	<p><b>Action: Clerking Services 20/05/26</b></p>
<p>10.1 Academies Policy Review Board Action Log</p> <p>JH reported the new process for escalating complaints to a stage 3, which now includes a review of appropriateness before escalation. This aims to ensure efficiency and purpose in the handling of complaints without reducing the potential for resolution wherever possible.</p>	
<p><b>11. RISK REGISTER</b></p>	
<p>Directors noted the risk register (previously reviewed through committees). No changes were proposed.</p>	
<p><b>12. NEXUS SERVICES GROUP – BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE REPORT</b></p>	
<p>LS provided a summative overview of the NSG Business Plan Update, and Directors confirmed that they were satisfied with the update.</p>	
<p><b>13. CEO/CFO MID-YEAR REVIEW UPDATES</b></p>	
<p>Minuted separately as Confidential Appendix 1.</p>	
<p><b>14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b></p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>15. REVIEW OF RISK</b></p>	
<p>To consider any new risks identified during the meeting for referral to Trust Committees.</p> <p>None.</p>	

<b>16. CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting.  Item 13 minuted separately as Confidential Appendix 1.	
<b>17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	

Wednesday 20 May 2026	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Via Teams</b>
Wednesday 24 June 2026	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 22 July 2026	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ

**Minutes approved.**

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