



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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25/06/2025

Minutes
Audit Committee Summer 2025
Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 9.30am at central office

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Graeme Barriball, Steve Tavener, Ian Wilkinson (virtually), Jon Sharpe, Margaret Savage

Apologies: Peter Hague

In Attendance: Jo Callow (CEO), Emma Gilbert (CFO), Toni Martin (Governance Officer)

2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared.

3. Confirm minutes of Audit Spring Meeting (12th March 2025) and Matters Arising

- Arrange internal audit completion and receipt of report by 18th June in order to provide to committee (EG). *Audit not complete by this date. **EG to chase to ensure done by full Board.***
- Update on ERG recommendations (TM). *Complete, on SP. Committee content this has been actioned and can now be closed.*
- On-line safety policy – carried forward (AF). *See item 11.*

No actions from confidential minutes. Committee agreed both sets of minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

4. Confidential Matters

Item 9 is recorded under confidential.

5. Trust SEF

SEF provided to the committee. Updated in Autumn term and two recent Ofsted inspections have now been included as evidence. Teaching and learning recognised as good but the student outcomes are not always where we need them to be, always for known reasons, but this nonetheless this continuously needs to be worked on. Finances and reserves remain an issue, and this will affect provision, staffing, curriculum and outcomes.

There is a lot of work done and impact evidenced in the SEF, and the committee agreed this is positive and thanked all concerned.

6. Trust Risk Register

Previously agreed that this needs a thorough review, and it has had a in-depth review. The latest register was produced for the committee. There is an increase in Subject Access Requests (SARs) nationally, and one has been submitted to the trust; it is a lot of work to provide all relevant information from emails, reports, databases, whatsapp messages and the like. It should be noted that SARs are a risk in terms of staff time and those able to do this work, especially given the

timelines involved and the need to redact much of the information provided. There is also a reputational risk. There has been an increase in parental complaints nationally, although this is not the case in the trust.

The risk register, along with some other documents, seem to be getting forever bigger and potentially unmanageable, what can we do about that? It was agreed that the risk register should focus on the main risks and those with less significance could be thinned out, or else it will just continue to grow.

7. **MAT Improvement Plan**

JC provided a brief update. **Support of Callington and Werrington needs to run through everything. Attendance and well-being; increasing attendance – given the evaluation, we do a lot of work on improving attendance but perhaps there should be some words that show targeting improvement in the attendance?** Attendance used to be good prior to Covid but since then it is lower, including nationally. While our attendance is better than most schools, it is still worthwhile trying to improve it. **The inclusion of safeguarding was challenged.** Not included as purely safeguarding, as generally our safeguarding is strong, so the AIP is focussed on attendance as this has safeguarding knock-ons. **Culture – we have a good culture of learning, can we make the aspects of culture in the improvement plan more specific?** Yes we can do that. **What are you looking at for governance?** CG and Callington are being monitored, and will almost definitely need to be looked at going forward.

Great work on succession planning, do we need to do something similar with the next layer of leadership with executive Heads and Heads? The original draft plan was circulated in early May, and this is being worked on and updated now that we know who is doing what in the next academic year.

We need to look at what we can do to raise our profile given the success we have had with the trust schools, Ofsted inspections, external school improvement review and external governance reviews. We need to be better at selling ourselves and selling our good news stories and successes, especially as it is clear that no-one is going to do that for us. This will be looked at and JC is already networking and collaborating more than has been done previously.

8. **Finance**

a. **Latest Management Accounts**

This will be brought to the full Board.

b. **Debt Report**

LA have changed their systems so we have to invoice them, this shows on debtors list but still not huge amounts of debt; around £22K across the trust and most of that is current debt not older debt.

c. **Going Concern**

Although there are financial concerns, the trust is still functioning with good cash flow and on the wider front, continuing with good Ofsted inspections and so on. Balancing the budget remains a concern especially given falling rolls, not being supported by government with full funding for NI and salary increases and competition from the new Launceston primary school; our old and sometimes small school buildings cannot compete with what a new built school might offer.

9. **Review Budget**

Following on from FRS 2 – the budget needed to be discussed again prior to full Board. Matters discussed recorded at confidential.

10. Internal Audit

Internal audit is not yet complete. It will be discussed at full Board. Options for internal auditors will need to be looked at in the Autumn term.

11. External Audit

JC gave an update on actions raised at the last external audit and they have all been dealt with or resolved, or is a process that doesn't happen any more so no longer relevant. This included related party transactions, journals signed off and the operating lease issue being resolved.

Likely topics in the next Trustees annual report will be the external governance review and the positive Ofsted outcomes as a start point. The external review of school improvement was picked up on last year's report.

12. Policy Review

- a. **Anti-Fraud & Anti-Corruption** (JC) – 3 changes linked to the ATH. ESFA is gone are still mentioned in the latest edition of the ATH. ESFA will be replaced by DfE. Approved.
- b. **Asset Control & Accounting** (EG)- no changes. Approved.
- c. **On-line Safety** (AF) - Reviewed from a Safeguarding Perspective and IT perspective. May need amendments fairly quickly when guidance received from KCSiE about online safety (awaiting imminent publication). Will probably end up needing to insert a cross reference to AI. Policy approved for now.
- d. **AI use in Schools** (AF). New policy. A note for the AI Policy - it is a best practice policy and as such suggests that AI generated documents should be identified to recipients. However, the Trust uses AI to support not generate documentation. Directors are requested to consider whether this needs to remain in the policy or be removed? **Remove it, AI may support work but is not used to generate it. This policy should be amended and tidied up, and presented to the full Board for approval.**
- e. **Cyber Suite of policies** (JC): all approved
 - i. IT acceptable use – one typo amended
 - ii. IT asset disposal – no change
 - iii. Access control – no change
 - iv. Password – no change
 - v. Secure Configuration – 2 typos amended
 - vi. Ransomware – 2 changes as ESFA is no longer
 - vii. Patch Management – no change
 - viii. Information Security – no change
 - ix. Firewalling – one typo amended

TM will replace ESFA with DfE on these policies. In future, policy owners will be requested to remove any mention of ESFA.

13. AOB

None other than ST requested that the Chairs of each sub-committee give a brief update on the work of their committee at the full Board going forward, so that everyone is up to speed on this. Already on the full Board agenda, but **it will be reiterated and laid out on the agenda so it is clearer.**

14. DONM

Next meeting is on Weds 3rd December 2025. All directors are invited as the external auditor will present their findings.

Meeting closed 10.50am.

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

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|---|---|
| J. Callow – Ex Officio/ CEO & Director G. Barriball (Committee Chair) P. Hague – Director (Committee Vice Chair) S. Tavener – Director | I. Wilkinson – Director J. Sharpe – Director M. Savage – Director E. Gilbert – CFO |
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