

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
OMNIA LEARNING TRUST

Held via Zoom on Tuesday 28th November 2023 at 11am

Invitees	Role	Term of Office Ends	Attendance
Board Members (Voting)			
1. Jodie Croft (JC)	Board Director and OLT CEO	Ex-officio	Present
2. Alison Hill (AH)	Board Director	06/07/2024	Present
3. Silvia Holgado-Gomez (SHG)	Board Director - Chair	31/03/2024	Present
4. Tyler Jeffs (TJ)	Board Director	29/03/2026	Absent
5. Russell Massie (RM)	Board Director	08/11/2025	Present
6. Jason Murphy (JM)	Board Director - Vice Chair	19/11/2027	Present
7. Ada Simpson (AS)	Board Director	29/03/2026	Absent
8. Arjun Thiru (AT)	Board Director	08/11/2025	Absent
Other (Non-Voting)			
Sarah Bellingham (SB)	OLT GCO	N/A	Present
Lawrence Brooks (LB)	Edufin Accountant	N/A	Present
Carina Cuddington (CC)	OLT CFO (Edufin)	N/A	Present
Beth Gorsuch (BG)	OLT COO	N/A	Present

Minutes	
1. Welcome and apologies for absence	
1.1	SHG welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from AT and AS. The meeting was declared quorate (<i>meaning that a minimum of three voting Board Directors were present</i>).
1.2	It was noted that all documents to be discussed in the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting via Governor Hub. These were shared on screen during the meeting unless stated otherwise.
2. Declaration of conflicts of interests relating to agenda items & declare any pecuniary or business interests or receipt of hospitality for the OLT Register of Business Interests	
2.1	No conflicts of interest were declared in relation to agenda items and no updates were declared for the register.
3. Identify items for AOB and/or confidential AOB	
3.1	No items were raised.
4. Review and approve Terms of Reference for members, Directors, and Governors	

- 4.1 Minor factual updates had been made to the Terms of Reference ('ToR') since the previous autumn, to reflect the impact of new school SHPA on items such as local governor numbers.
- 4.2 The Directors had no questions, and the ToR were approved for 2023-2024.
- 4.3 SHG had reviewed the OLT Governance Handbook and asked that the opening date for planned new school Surbiton Academy be updated, as well as other minor points. SB would do this after the meeting, to include noting the date of approval of the ToR by the Board within the Handbook. **ACTION – SB**

5. Review of Trust Board membership and DBS checks

- 5.1 No update was needed at this item.

6. Review of Directors' training requirements and induction arrangements

- 6.1 SB had been in touch with all directors and governors since the start of term to remind about the completion of mandatory outstanding training. SB would send a further reminder to the relevant directors and governors after the meeting. **ACTION - SB**

7. Adopt Code of Conduct for 2023-2024

- 7.1 The Code of Conduct was contained in the OLT Governance Handbook. This had been updated in line with the latest Code of Conduct template provided by the NGA, but very few changes had been needed since the previous year.
- 7.2 The Board unanimously approved the adoption of the Code of Conduct for 2023-2024.

8. Appoint Vice-Chair

- 8.1 JM nominated himself for the role of Vice-Chair of Trustees. There were no further nominations.
- 8.2 With JM excluded from the vote, the remaining Directors unanimously approved JM's appointment to the Vice Chair role. SB would update the records as needed to reflect this. **ACTION – SB**

9. Confirm Specialist Director and Schools Link Director roles for 2023-2024

- 9.1 These were listed in the OLT Governance Handbook and had not been changed since discussed with and assigned to the Directors before the start of term.
- 9.2 CC and LB arrived at 11.08.

10. Agree schedule of Director visits

- 10.1 JC confirmed that there was no schedule in place at present. Instead, the focus this academic year was to increase the level of engagement of the school level governors, who were being asked to visit or make contact with their school on a termly basis and to

feedback to the QES Committee afterwards. Directors were also welcome to visit one or more of the schools with a particular focus in mind. That might simply be to increase visibility by attending the Christmas performance or similar, which RM had done at DPA and WPA on more than one occasion.

- 10.2** AH mentioned that she had accepted an invite from the TPA Principal to tour the school, to observe recent positive changes there. SHG would also be focussing on parent forum meetings at TPA to help reconfirm their purpose and format, for improved impact.
- 10.3** JC said she hoped to adapt the school parent forum approach this academic year and would update and circulate any changes needed to the OLT Governance Handbook in due course.

11. Receive External Audit Report and Ratify Trust Risk Register (moved from agenda item 24)

- 11.1** CC summarised the auditors findings within the Key Audit Findings Report, which the auditors had presented to the Operations Committee earlier that morning, with CC present.

Introduction and Audit Summary – pages 1-2

- 11.2** The report's Introduction explained the auditors' role and the risk levels used in the document.

Benchmarking Data – pages 3-5

- 11.3** This showed data from this and the previous year, as well as looking at primary academy averages.

Financial Summary – page 6-7

- 11.4** The financial summary helped with an understanding of the Trust's actual financial position, as the data did not contain the required disclosure items listed later in the document. The Trust was showing an increased surplus position for the current year; however, this figure included the grant income received in respect of the opening of new school SHPA (about 300k). Once stripped out, the actual surplus figure could be compared with that from the previous year.

Prior Year's Issues – page 15-16

- 11.5** A key area of EFSA focus was on whether trusts were making progress on areas of weakness identified through audits. Trusts were required to show if points had been resolved.

- 11.6** The previous year, one medium risk had been identified, linked with a DfE valuation for the Trust's land and buildings. This matter had now been marked as resolved. In addition, there had been five low risk items identified. Four had been marked as resolved, with one marked as 'progress made'. That point related to a handful of missing credit card receipts for low value expenses.

Levels of risk explained – page 24:

- 11.7** The top section on page 24 set out in detail what the risk levels meant with associated colour codes.

Current year's findings- page 24 to 25:

- 11.8** Only two points had been raised and both were labelled green and low risk. Given that an audit report was not permitted to identify the absence of risk, the Trust was in a good position.
- 11.9** The first point concerned a small number of missing credit card receipts for purchases under £28. This was not material or of concern. The second concerned a £1800 asset which should have been recorded on the Trust's fixed asset register. CC was comfortable to provide reassurance that both points were a 'one-off', especially as the school office manager responsible no longer worked for the Trust.
- 11.10Q:** Were the missing credit card receipts linked back to the activity of the former school office manager, or were they a new issue?
A: The issue had occurred at TPA when the former office manager had been in post, so this was not a new problem.
- 11.11Q:** Was JC happy with the Trust and the benchmarking data at the start of the report, for example on pupil ratios?
A: JC explained that the DfE made the recommendations on teacher to pupil ratios. The auditors had confirmed that the Trust was very much where it was expected to be overall as compared to other academy trusts. CC added that for 2023 data on total income per pupil and on capital and pre-opening grants had been included. The Trust's position appeared inflated compared to the core per-pupil funding received, which was an anomaly caused by the SHPA opening grants and capital funding.
- 11.12Q:** Should the Trust be keeping an eye on the ratio of GAG to total income?
A: CC explained that the Trust had in place a KPI on self-generated income streams. That was the better item to keep an eye on. It was tricky when it came to GAG in isolation, as the figure could be easily skewed by the inclusion of items such as the SHPA pre-opening grant. The data should spark a discussion but not be taken as indicative of change required. CC's preference was to look at the amount of the total income spent on staffing as a key benchmarking tool.
- 11.13** CC explained that the Trust had responded to the auditors' points with its management responses and that these needed to be submitted in final form to the DfE by end December 2023. JC added that the auditors had commented how comfortable the Trust could be with financial controls it had in place. This was recognition of the all the steps and hard work undertaken in recent months at the Trust to enhance this position after the previous audit's findings. No issue across the Trust had been identified and there had been nothing systematic taking place. There had been an isolated case of under-performance which had now been resolved, as well as an almost full recovery of duplicate payments for invoices. JC said that she believed a line could be firmly drawn under this point.

11.14 The Directors expressed their agreement with this view.

Review of Trust Risk Register

11.15 The Directors confirmed receipt of the latest Trust Risk Register.

12. Approve annual accounts & note related requirement for Trust to sign two letters of representation (audit and regularity) - moved from agenda item 25

Trustees' Report (pages 2-19) and Governance Statement (pages 20-24)

12.1 CC explained the key parts of these sections of the accounts. The governance statement this year included more detail on estate management, in compliance with the statutory requirement for this.

12.2 JC confirmed that she had drawn up the content of these sections based on the template in the accounts direction received by her as the Accounting Officer for the Trust.

12.3 Q: How many times had the Operations Committee met in 2022-2023? This might have been five, but the statement on page 21 suggested four meetings.

A: JC would check again on this point and have the document updated if needed. **ACTION – JC**

Report on the Financial Statements - page 27 onwards

12.4 This was a clean report with no findings of current concern.

Statement of Financial Activities – page 33

12.5 CC asked the Directors to note that the figures on page 33 with pension data and other inclusions.

Balance Sheet – pages 34-35

12.6 The balance sheet covered fixed assets, asset depreciation, the debtors list (impacted by the systems now in place with the new payroll provider), the cash in bank position (very strong still, with an investment returns strategy in place for the benefit of Trust staff), and the creditors position.

Disclosure notes – pages 37-61

- Note 4: Funding – page 43

12.7 The catch-up premium heading needed to be replaced with the opening grant for SHPA, and the auditors had agreed to do this. This was purely an amendment to the narrative and not to the figures in the document. The figures were ready to be approved.

- Note 9: Staff Costs – page 47

12.8 There had been a discussion about staffing costs with the auditors at the Operations Committee meeting earlier that day. The auditors had agreed to update the headings showing support staff costs and the impact of the pension service charge adjustment.

12.9 Overall staffing costs had risen due to inflationary pay increases, however pension costs appeared to have dropped. This was not the true position, but the information had been presented in this way due to the lower LGPS pension service charges applying and the categorisation of the pension liability as an asset (for technical accounting purposes only).

12.10Q: Were the increased agency costs linked with sickness absence levels?

A: At TPA some permanent posts had been filled by agency staff due to the struggle to recruit teachers and teaching assistants at present. Also, some of the agency staff had been hired to fill posts working 1-2-1 with SEN children on ECHP plans, whose funding was only confirmed for one year.

- Note 16: Statement of Funds (Total funds analysis by academy) – page 54

12.11 Each school and trust showed an increase in funding. The Trust showed as sitting on a large sum of money, however that was mostly made up of the Sires Hill opening grant. That money had now been moved into the Sires Hill area ready to be spent, and was not accumulating in a central pot.

- Note 25: Related party transactions - page 61

12.12 No related party transactions had been recorded. Directors were invited to let the Trust know either during or shortly after the meeting if they were aware of any information to disclose here.

12.13 The Board was asked if there were any further questions on the accounts or the letters of representation in the folder.

12.14Q: Was JC happy with the figures and how these had been represented?

A: JC confirmed that she was. The annual accounts were the outcome of a really close monitoring of the management accounts each month, which allocated everything correctly. All of that monthly breakdown was represented here to meet the requirements of the applicable regulations.

12.15 CC added that the teacher pension contribution rate was rising from 23% to 28%, and the auditors had noted an action for them to change that figure in the relevant note.

12.16Q: Was that rate set by the government?

A: CC confirmed that it was, although the funding to meet that cost had not yet been confirmed. JC confirmed that the current year's budget had been adjusted to account for the increase.

12.17Q: Was this a risk for the Trust, needing an entry on the Risk Register?

A: The increase did not represent a huge amount, and funding was expected. JC and CC agreed that an entry was not needed in the Risk Register as the Trust was in a strong position financially, however an entry was nonetheless on the register in this respect.

12.18 The Directors confirmed their unanimous approval to the annual accounts, subject to the changes being made to the document by the auditors, which would not impact the current figures. This approval extended to the two letters of representation (audit and regularity) to be sent on behalf of the Trust in relation to the content of the annual accounts.

12.19 The approved final version annual accounts and two letters of representation required signing by SHG as Chair of Trustees, before being submitted to Companies House and the EFSA. JC confirmed that the auditors were comfortable that SHG would sign, rather than JM, the former Chair in place during 2022-2023. Signature by 'docu-sign' was also deemed fine. **ACTION - SHG**

13. Management accounts

13.1 Summary.

13.2 The following documents dated October 2032 had been circulated in advance of the meeting for receipt by the Board:

- Executive Summary
- Balance Sheet Summary
- Cashflow
- DPA Management Report
- SHPA Management Report
- TPA Management Report
- WPA Management Report
- Omnia Management Report

13.3 LB shared the Executive Summary on screen and highlighted key information in respect of the Trust and each of its schools.

Omnia Learning Trust

13.4 LB outlined the increase in the consolidated Trust deficit due to factors including:

- Investment income received being offset by its allocation to the cost of the staff meals initiative, and
- Increases in marketing in respect of the Sires Hill opening and payment of Sires Hill legal fees falling due in 23/24 due to late completion of the site and delayed handover to the Trust.

TPA

13.5 LB explained that the forecasted income increase was the result of the need to provide additional funding for 14 extra pupils who had joined after the 2023-2024 census date. JC confirmed that the DfE had refused to pay for these pupils, and that she was appealing this decision. LB would ensure that the financial data was updated in this respect. **ACTION - LB**

13.6 Q: Did the EFSA consider that it had already funded these pupils?

A: No, as the ESFA fund pupils annually, so no other school is in receipt of their funding either.

13.7 Q: Would the funding be adjusted the following academic year?

A: Yes it would, as the pupils would be on the census at autumn 2024. However, the school may still have additional pupils joining after that date during the academic year. JC's strong view was that the school was still growing, even if all year groups were open.

13.8 Q: Presumably there were no grounds to refuse new pupils joining after the census date?

A: There were not.

13.9 LB mentioned further items to include EHCP funding, the teachers' pay and pension grant, staffing and pay scales, agency fees, learning resources, and building maintenance costs.

13.10 BG asked LB to move the AfC Spark entry to the after-school club category. LB agreed to correct this in the document so that it sat in the right line. **ACTION – LB**

WPA

13.11 The forecasted surplus had gone down compared to the budget. There had been a favourable variance in the receipt of government grants but adverse variances to include staffing (the school had recruited two 1-2-1 support LSAs) and building maintenance costs (kitchen canopy as well as underfloor heating flushing works in relation to the recent leak and damaged boilers).

DPA

13.12 There had been an increase in the deficit since the original budget due to an increase in staffing costs and to the teacher's pension rate from April. There had been a small saving in administrative costs due to an administrative assistant having joined on a lower pay scale than the former one. Finance software costs had also increased.

SHPA

13.13 The accounts have been adjusted by the value of the post opening grant, which had been incorrectly posted to the Trust, prior to the school opening. The school was in a favourable position regarding premises staff, given the post was still vacant. JC added that she had been unable to appoint anyone at present.

13.14 There was also the cost of a new cleaning contract to meet now, given that there had been no applicants for a combined caretaker and cleaning role. The school had not previously had a stand-alone cleaning budget.

13.15 LB asked the Board to note that across all schools, teacher pension contribution rates had gone up.

13.16 Overall the Trust was in a healthy financial position and there was no cause for concern.

13.17 The Directors were asked if they had any further questions.

13.18 JC explained that the Trust was trying to spend the reserves available, and that she was encouraging spending by the schools. WPA was awaiting a decision by the insurers on liability for the significant costs of repairing the boilers. If the insurers refused, the money would need to come out of the surplus.

13.19 CC and LB left at 11.55.

14. Approve minutes of the last full board meeting on 12th September 2023 and confirm matters arising not on the agenda, to include actions listed from July 2023 Board meeting

14.1 The Board unanimously approved the minutes of 12th September 2023. **ACTION - SB**

14.2 All actions had been completed or were in progress with the following points noted:

14.3 The waste food action at minute 6.8 in the September 2023 minutes, would be rolled over. **ACTION – BG**. BG confirmed that at WPA and DPA, a collection service was in place for the waste food bins, with the contents of these bins being used for animal feed.

14.4 Q: Could unused food be shared in the community?

A: At present the school caterers were managing quantities tightly to help minimise waste, and any uneaten food was first offered to staff that day.

14.5 Q: What was the outcome of survey carried out by the TPA Principal about school meals?

A: JC would follow-up on that with the Principal. **ACTION - JC**

14.6 For the action at minute 12.5 from July 2023, JC had not spoken with the TPA Principal specifically about parent communications as there was no issue at present. Parent engagement was a challenge at all the schools and was being closely monitored.

14.7 In relation to the action at minute 12.14 from July 2023, BG explained that because all staff worked with SEN children, it was not easy to pick out specific staff to meaningfully analyse absence data. BG considered whether she might be able to review just the 1-2-1- staff absence rates, but explained that most TA's now worked on a 1-2-1 basis and their absence rates were in general higher than for other staff. It was agreed that BG would instead meet individually with support staff to gauge the impact of working with SEN children on absence levels. **ACTION - BG**

14.8 SHG left at 12.04

15. Receive QES Committee Minutes dated 17/10/2023

15.1 These were noted as received.

16. Receive Principals' termly dashboards

Dashboards: DPA, SHPA, TPA, WPA (Covering: Demographics, Fire drills, exclusions, absence, racist & bullying incidents, safeguarding, CP, complaints, CPD and staffing update)

16.1 These were noted as received.

17. Receive WPA external safeguarding report dated July 2023 with actions

17.1 This was noted as received.

18. Receive Operations Committee Minutes dated 10/10/2023

18.1 These were noted as received.

19. Receive COO Compliance Report dated October 2023

COO Compliance Report October 2023 (Covering: IT/GDPR, financial audits, HR, H&S (external audits, WRA, FRA), staff absence, premises, safeguarding (SCR audit & LADO audit), & policies review)

19.1 BG confirmed that she had presented the report to the October 2023 Operations Committee and asked the Directors if they had any questions.

19.2 There were no questions on this, and the Directors confirmed receipt.

20. Receive CEO Report dated November 2023

CEO Report November 2023 (Covering: Progress, Attainment, Performance, Targets, Equality objectives, Management accounts, Health and Safety reports, Operations Committee Recommendations, Trust development plan, Trust strategy, review of risk register, & review of pupil number estimates)

20.1 JC summarised the key points in her report in relation to each of the schools, before moving on to the later items included in her report. Directors were encouraged to ask questions.

Schools:

20.2 JC covered items to include pupil numbers on roll, pupil attendance, persistent absence, safeguarding and safeguarding audits, HR file and SCR audits, behaviour management and school culture, staff performance and pay, pupil progress towards end of term targets including combined targets, staff vacancies, SEN pupil and EHCP numbers with related costs, nursery place funding, the progress of site and building works at SHPA, and the peer support being provided by the Principals for one another at each school.

20.3 **Q:** At TPA, were the teachers spoken about new to teaching or just new to the school?

A: The staff survey had shown that many staff had not been at the school when the most recent Ofsted inspection had taken place. Therefore, there was in effect a large body of new staff. It was for the Principal to establish and help embed the school culture, by creating clarity and consistency on expectations for teachers as well as children. Lots of support was being provided to the Principal to help her create a calm and productive working environment for everyone there, and to help support teachers in the provision of

high-quality teaching in Maths especially. JC had made a visit recently and would be keeping both behaviour and teaching quality under close review.

20.4 Q: Was there an update available on the pay appeal matter at TPA?

A: There was no new information at this stage, and the relevant Directors would be told if the matter were to progress.

20.5 Q: Had reintegration support been provided for the staff member who had returned to work at TPA after a period of suspension pending the outcome of an investigation?

A: Yes, this was in place, to include BG meeting with the colleague the following week to see how she was finding things.

20.6 Q: Noting the huge level of SEN need, especially the two pupils mentioned at WPA, did the schools have the expertise required for these pupils?

A: Not for pupils with complex needs. At WPA, the two pupils mentioned were in receipt of costly 1-2-1 support, funded by the Trust. The staff in these roles were LSA's who were doing their best to create bespoke timetables and plans based on the recommendations from the educational psychologist. However, the Trust's schools were not specialist providers and did not have the resources and facilities which these children needed access to in order to thrive. Pupils with complex needs were having to be taught away from their classmates as they were not able to access any part of the mainstream provision. The Trust was also paying for residential school placements for some of the week, to give the children a better experience.

20.7 Q: This sounded like a financial risk and a risk to the staff. How should this be addressed if the schools continued to be forced down this path?

A: It was a matter of provision, where a large number of elements need to be provided together to meet needs, such as speech and language therapy and sensory play. To put that together for a child with complex needs cost in the region of £50k annually. Currently these pupils were with one adult the whole time, which was not fair on them or the staff member, also when there was not the proper space available at the school in terms of additional classrooms. The Trust could invest in a specialist provision, but again classroom space was not available for that. When an EHCP was confirmed, that said a specialist provision was needed, the school in question was required to wait until that child was moved. That might take a year or two of investment until that time. However, that level of investment could not continue per child on an ongoing basis. It was ultimately not in the best interests of the child longer term.

20.8 Q: Were these risks from SEN pupil numbers and severity of need, in the OLT Risk Register?

A: Not from a funding perspective but JC would flesh out the current SEN entry in there after the meeting based on this discussion. **ACTION - JC**

20.9 Q: Could the Trust allocate money from its investment returns to addressing these issues?

A: It was worth looking at but also important to ensure that the class teacher was first and foremost responsible for the quality of education for all of his or her pupils, with support provided by the SENDCo as needed.

20.10 The Directors expressed their thanks to JC for her impactful leadership to date, and the support and professionalism shown by her in particular to DPA this term, noting the lack of Director of Education at the present time.

Buildings:

20.11 JC summarised the progress being made with key projects at the schools to include the playground works and flooring project at TPA, the efforts to close off on council works at DPA, the boilers at WPA, the building works and internet at SHPA, and an update on procurement and tendering at SPA.

Development Plan:

20.12 JC spoke about the vacancy in the Director of Education role. This had arisen after the sudden and unexpected resignation by the recently appointed individual into the role, earlier in the term. JC would be making a proposal later in her report summary for how to fill this role.

20.13 JC spoke about the progress of the Principal's network, the development of staff and parent governor roles, the rolling open invite for new trustees, recent updates to Trust website, the outcomes of the summer 2023 governance survey, and JC's membership of several networks on a local and national basis.

20.14 The Directors confirmed they had no questions at this stage.

Central Services:

20.15 A lot of work was being done at a central level by BG supported by SB, with many useful frameworks now in place to support the schools.

Internal communications:

20.16 The Trust-wide bulletin was now being shared with parents via the Trust website to enhance communications between the Board and the parent body. Eventually there would be a more formal Board-to-parents communication structure in place as well, when capacity allowed for that.

Risk register:

20.17 JC confirmed that all key risks had been included, subject to updates spoken about at this meeting already.

Proposal for the Director of Education role in 2024-25:

20.18 JC spoke to her proposal document shown on screen. She spoke in detail about what was needed from the role to support both the Trust's schools and the CEO role, and the challenges in achieving this to date with budget limitations. JC was now proposing a full time (five days per week) Deputy CEO role on a competitive salary, to attract a high-quality, experienced, and committee candidate wanting a long-term role. The additional funding

required would be found by increasing the percentage top slice taken from each school and by decreasing the number of days worked per week by JC.

20.19 The Directors discussed this proposal in detail with JC, looking also at what services were currently provided by the Trust in-house as well as via external consultants. JC agreed to update her proposal document based on the matters discussed and circulate this for review and approval by the Board after the meeting. **ACTION – JC**

20.20Q: What was the typical percentage top slice at similar sized academy trusts?

A: This was typically between 4-7%. Omnia was at the bottom end at present. BG added that the central services provision to the schools had gone up dramatically since the Trust was started, but the top slice had not increased at all. JC confirmed that ultimately it was a decision for the Board, rather than the EFSA, as to what top slice the schools should be paying. There was also the possibility for bringing the top slice back down in the future, if the additional money was no longer required.

20.21Q: When did the Board need to decide by?

A: JC was hoping to recruit for the role as soon as possible to increase the chance of filling it in time for September 2024.

20.22Q: Was JC comfortable with the changes proposed to her own role?

A: For now, yes. JC knew that it was key for the Trust that she delegate the educational expertise aspect of the central team service, to someone experienced at the primary level. Separately, if the planned school in Surbiton opened on time, there was the possibility of sufficient funding for additional working days at the CEO level connected with the work involved with that.

21. Review and approve expenditure over £50k

21.1 There was none to review.

22. Receive 'Dear Accounting Officer' letter from EFSA

22.1 There was no letter to review at this time.

23. Review and Approve Policies in line with OLT Policy Scheme of Delegation

SEND Policy and Information Report 2023-2024: DPA, SHPA, TPA, and WPA

23.1 JC explained that QES were happy to recommend these policies for approval. The Directors approved these unanimously.

OLT Pay Policy 2023-2024

23.2 BG and JC summarised the update and explained that this had been reviewed by the Operations Committee. The Directors unanimously approved the policy.

School Admissions Policies for September 2025 entry

23.3 JC explained that there had been no changes to the admissions criteria for DPA, SHPA, and WPA. There was a consultation process in place for the TPA policy, in respect of a new provision giving priority to the children of staff with a minimum of two year's employment with the school. JC was comfortable with this proposal as it would help with staff retention, and the same provision was already in the other schools' admissions policies.

23.4 The Directors unanimously approved these policies, noting that this was subject to the outcome of the consultation in the case of TPA.

23.5 SB would upload the approved final versions of these policies to Parago, the shared drive, and Trust website as required, and would notify the schools of the approvals so that policies were uploaded to school websites as needed. **ACTION – SB**

24. Receive Staff & Staff Diversity and Inclusion Survey Results, and Receive Governance Survey Results from July 2023

24.1 The Governance Survey had already been discussed.

24.2 JC spoke in detail about the key findings within the report of the findings of combined Staff and Staff Diversity and Inclusion surveys. She asked Directors for their thoughts on areas to focus on, either in the meeting or afterwards.

24.3 Based on the findings, JC said that staff performance management would be a particular focus for the year including the provision of increased training at senior levels. JC also planned to share sickness and other absence data with staff to encourage meaningful engagement and discussion about the impact of absence on the schools. **ACTION - JC**

24.4 AH left at 13.13.

24.5 Suggestions for matters to address included staff perceptions of procedural fairness, more support for staff professional development, and enhanced transparency about the availability or likelihood of progression within the Trust in terms of both pay and position, given the size of the organisation.

24.6 BG would explore if there was more which could be done on communications with staff about the impact of capped pay scales on performance pay decisions to help avoid disappointment after performance review processes. There might also be more which could be done to inform staff about the qualifications and experience needed for the types of roles on offer. **ACTION - BG**

25. AOB/Confidential AOB

25.1 Nothing was raised at this item.

26. Agree the confidential status of OLT documents, excluding the agenda, approved minutes of meetings, and approved final version policies, brought to each Board meeting (Ref: 1.45 ATH 2023)

26.1 The Board agreed that all documents brought to this meeting were confidential to the Trust, other than the meeting agenda, any final version approved policies and final version minutes of meetings approved by the Board or Committee as required.

Meeting Closed: 13.20

Dates of next OLT Board meetings:

(3/5) Tuesday 12th March 2024 10.00-12.00

(4/5) Tuesday 14th May 2024 10.00-12.00

(5/5) Tuesday 9th July 2024 10.00-12.00

Actions from the Omnia Trust Board meeting of 28.11.2023

Action 1	Minute 4.3	SB to update OLT Governance Handbook with date of Board approval of ToR and Code of Conduct for 23-24, with date of SPA opening, and suggested updates e-mailed by SHG. Upload to website and Hub once done. DONE
Action 2	Minute 6.1	SB to send a further reminder to directors and governors on outstanding training. Once completed, update training record and upload to Hub. DONE
Action 3	Minute 8.2	SB to update the Trust's record re JM taking on Vice Chair role. DONE
Action 4	Minute 12.3	JC to update page 21 of the annual accounts to show that five Ops Committee meetings took place in 2022-2023 DONE
Action 5	Minute 12.19	SHG to sign the approved final version annual accounts and the two linked letters of representation (audit and regularity) from the Trust. DONE
Action 6	Minute 13.5 & 13.10	LB to make the agreed updates to the October 2023 Management Accounts DONE
Action 7	Minute 14.1	SB to ask Chair to sign previous meeting's approved minutes, and to upload those, this meeting's agenda, and this meeting's attendance to the Trust website DONE
Action 8	Minute 14.3	For JC: roll over of food waste action from minute 6.8 in September 2023 Board minutes DONE
Action 9	Minute 14.5	JC to speak with EM about outcome of school meals survey DONE
Action 10	Minute 14.7	BG to meet with individual support staff members to assess the impact of close work with SEN pupils on sickness absence levels DONE .
Action 11	Minute 20.8	JC to update the SEN entry on the OLT Risk Register DONE
Action 12	Minute 20.19	JC to circulate her updated DoE role and funding proposal requesting comments and approval. DONE
Action 13	Minute 23.5	SB to upload and publish final version approved policies as needed. DONE

Action 14	Minute 24.6	BG to explore the agreed avenues for action in light of staff survey findings. DONE
Action 15	Minute 24.3	JC to share sickness and other absence data with school staff to help engagement with reducing levels of absence DONE

