

**South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2022

Company Registration Number: 07646748 (England & Wales)

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

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SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Registered Charity Name South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust

Company Registration Number 07646748 (England & Wales)

Principal and Registered Office
Dallam School
Milnthorpe
Cumbria
LA7 7DD

	Appointment Date	Resignation Date
Members		
* Mrs E J Fraser (Trustee)		
Mrs J Clarke		
Mr R J Pirie (DSCT)		
Rev S E Wilson		
Trustees / Directors		
* Mrs E J Fraser		
* Mr R T Villiers-Smith		
Mrs S C Swindley		16/12/2021
* Mr M J Shevill		
Mr A J Knox		
Mrs P A Houghton		
* Mrs J Lees		
Mr A J Gerrard (Chair of MAT Board)		
Mr J Moffat		16/03/2022
Ex Officio Trustees		
* Mrs R Williams (Headteacher)		18/11/2022
Mr S J Henneberry	18/11/2022	

* Current members of the Risk, Audit & Finance Committee

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

	Appointment Date	Resignation Date
Company Secretary	J Hamer	
Senior Leadership Team:		
Headteacher	R Williams (Accounting Officer to 18/11/22)	18/11/2022
Deputy Headteacher	J Fuller	31/05/2022
Assistant Headteacher	J C Watton	31/08/2022
Assistant Headteacher	R Surtees	
Assistant Headteacher	D Oliver	
Assistant Headteacher	S Leech	31/08/2022
Assistant Headteacher	S Henneberry (Accounting Officer from 18/11/22)	
Chief Finance Officer	J Hamer	
Independent Auditor	Saint & Co Chartered Accountants The Old Police Station Church Street Ambleside Cumbria LA22 0BT	
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc 11 Finkle Street Kendal Cumbria LA9 4AG	
Solicitors	Schofield Sweeney Springfield House 76 Wellington Street Leeds LS1 2AY	

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 August 2022. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

The trust operates a multi academy trust (MAT) serving a catchment area in Cumbria and Lancashire. The MAT comprises the following schools:

- Dallam School

Dallam school is a mixed, converter academy school with state boarding provision for pupils aged 11 to 19, serving a catchment area in Milnthorpe and the surrounding area. It has a pupil capacity of 1150 (increased from 1050 from 01 September 2021) and had a roll of 1060 in the school census on 06 October 2022.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The multi academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the multi academy trust. The trustees of the South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as the South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust.

The full board of trustees is responsible to the Secretary of State and to the school, its staff, pupils and parents for the successful leadership and management of the school. A smaller group of trustees also act as the trustees for the charitable activities of Dallam School Charitable Trust Limited and are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law.

Details of the trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

Members' Liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charitable company in the event of it being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member.

Trustee's Indemnities

The multi academy trust has purchased indemnity insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising in connection with academy business.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The trustees are appointed under the terms of the multi academy trust's articles of association as follows:

- Up to 10 trustees, appointed under Article 50
- A minimum of 2 Parent Trustees elected or appointed under Articles 53-56 in the event that no Local Advisory Committees are established under Article 100a or if no provision is made for at least 2 Parent Local Advisors on each established Local Advisory Committee pursuant to Article 101A.
- In circumstances where the Trustees have not appointed Local Advisory Committees in respect of the Academies as envisaged in Article 100a or if no provision is made for at least 2 Parent Local Advisors on each established Local Advisory Committee pursuant to Article 101A there shall be a minimum of two Parent Trustees and otherwise such number as the Members shall decide who shall be appointed or elected in accordance with Articles 54 - 56.
- The total number of Trustees including the Accounting Officer if they so choose to act as Trustee under Article 57 who are employees of the Academy Trust shall not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees.
- Providing that the Accounting Officer agrees so to act, the Members may by ordinary resolution appoint the Accounting Officer as a Trustee.
- The Trustees may appoint Co-opted Trustees.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees (continued)

New trustees are recruited on the basis of the skills and competencies required to address gaps highlighted in regular skills audits of the existing MAT board.

The term of office for all trustees is four years. The Accounting Officer is not appointed as a trustee. The trustees who were in office at 31st August 2022 or who served throughout the period, except where shown, are listed on page 1.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees.

During the period under review the trustees held 6 meetings. The South Westmorland MAT recognises that new trustees do not necessarily have a background in education or a thorough understanding of the school. To ensure they receive the necessary support to undertake their duties as soon as possible, the induction and training process includes:

- A preliminary informal discussion with the Headteacher, and as necessary the Chair of the MAT or Local Advisory Committee, to ensure they understand their general responsibilities and time commitment
- An induction meeting with the Headteacher, Chair of the MAT and Chair of the Local Advisory Committee, to include a tour of the school
- An induction pack and initial training on the school systems and sources of information by the Clerk
- Assignment of a mentor from the existing Local Advisory Committee
- Regular training on developments in governance issues
- Annual training for each trustee related to their specific roles

Organisational Structure

The trustees are the charity trustees and are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the trust in accordance with the provisions set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board of Trustees is accountable for the performance of all academies within the trust and as such must:

Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Hold the Academy Heads to account for the educational performance of the schools and their pupils, and the performance management of staff

Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure its money is well spent

The Trust Board is permitted to exercise all the powers of the Academy Trust and delegates responsibility for the day to day operations to the Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer has the delegated responsibility for the operation of the trust including the performance of the trust's academies and performance management of the academy heads. Assistance is provided by the chairs of each Local Advisory Committee.

In the role of Accounting Officer the Chief Executive Officer holds overall responsibility for the academy trust's financial responsibilities and must ensure that the organisation is run with financial effectiveness and stability; avoiding waste and securing value for money. As leader of the MAT's leadership team the Accounting Officer can delegate executive management functions to the team and is responsible for their performance.

Arrangements for Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The MAT Board holds responsibility for setting the pay and remuneration of the academy's key management personnel in accordance with the Pay Policy for Teachers, based on the format of the DfE's model policy and NJC terms and conditions for support staff. Pay progression is based on an annual cycle running from 1st September to 31st August and is determined by achievement of pre determined performance objectives. Responsibility for the appraisal process has been delegated to the Head Teachers Pay Review Committee and Pay Review Committees, both sub committees of the MAT Board. The MAT Board has delegated responsibility for the appointment and performance management of the academy heads to the Accounting Officer through the Scheme of Delegation.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
3	2.8

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1% - 50%	3
51% - 99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time	£1,800
Total pay bill	£6,073,975
% of total pay bill spent on facility time	0.030%

Paid trade union activities

There was no paid union activity during the period

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The multi academy trust is made up of the following schools:

- Dallam School

Dallam School supports the rationale that there is strength in partnerships and is a member of the South Lakes Federation to bring rigour, challenge and a greater capacity for improvement. The collaborative federation is made up of nine secondary schools, Kendal College and a special school within the South Lakes area, providing an opportunity for curriculum enrichment, access for students to vocational courses and support for gifted and talented students. A series of 'thresholds for performance' or benchmarks for attainment and progress of students are set within the federation and support for improvement is provided where necessary.

Dallam School is also a member of the South Lakes Rural Partnership (SLRP), a group of secondary and primary phase schools working as part of a wide ranging partnership with a focus on school improvement, service provision, staff development, training, governance and leadership.

Dallam School benefits financially from Dallam School Charitable Trust, an unincorporated charity whose objects include assisting the trustees to defray the costs of maintenance of the school, assist in providing special benefits not normally provided by the DfE, and to promote the education of persons who are attending/have attended the school.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The main objects of the multi academy trust are:

- to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, by establishing, maintaining, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum
- to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the areas in which the academies are situated the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the condition of life.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

The main objectives for the year, the strategies for achieving them, and the key personnel and timeframes are all detailed within the school improvement plan. Progress toward these targets was monitored through weekly meetings of the senior leadership team. South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust monitored and evaluated this progress through the Local Advisory Committee and regular Headteacher reports.

The priorities detailed in the School Improvement Plan during 2021/22 were as follows:

SIP Priorities

- An enhanced culture and ethos, based on a strong understanding of the vision, values and aims of the school, secures sustainable and measurable improvement in behaviour, attitudes, personal development and wellbeing.
- Engagement in Visible Learning + secures sustained improvement in learning and teaching. There is a coherent and consistent model of CPD, leading to improved outcomes for students, better student engagement in learning, improved retention into sixth form and improved retention of staff.
- Sustained focus on recovery across the organisation to improve outcomes for students.

Quality of Education

- Re-focus on curriculum intent – new curriculum working group established which meets every two weeks. Input from the South Lakes Federation every term.
- Visible learning focus on curriculum implementation and impact.
- New network manager appointed – changes to ICT provision, including blended learning, under review.
- Changes to the curriculum structure, including the purchase of timetabling software to support more efficient modelling and review of leadership and management time across the organisation.

Behaviour and Attitudes

- Behaviour Hub support engaged to refocus and restructure our behaviour rules and routines, ensuring they are consistent, coherent and fit our vision, values and aims.
- Staff behaviour group established.
- House system re-launched.

Public Benefit

In setting the objectives, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular to its supplementary public benefit guidance on advancing education.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

During the academic year 2021/22, Dallam School and SWMAT have made considerable progress towards the SIP priorities in addition to those additional priorities generated by our mid-term review in February. Progression is measured through the following local advisory committee meetings and LAC champions, which provide both support and challenge to school leaders:

- Performance and evaluation committee (examination and performance data, pupil attendance and recruitment)
- Safeguarding
- Curriculum

The South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust achievements in the year include:

- Building a recovery three- year budget plan after the impact of Brexit and Covid-19 on Boarding
- Supporting and securing the quality of education in Dallam School
- Monitoring and supporting the school throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery
- Ensuring governance is well understood and effective

Dallam School achievements in the year include:

- Further improvement in teaching and learning through the implementation of Visible Learning and the development of Learner Dispositions
- Embedding the school vision, values and aims across all aspects of the school
- Successful home learning for pupils during Covid absence
- High quality support for the most vulnerable students, especially those who have experienced a loss of social skills during Covid
- A structured and safe return to school for all students in September, securing the confidence of staff, students, parents, and the wider community
- The recruitment of 61 boarders (full time and Dallam Experience) and the management of their return to school

Key Financial Performance Indicators

Dallam School

Staffing costs as a % of total income (excluding capital income)

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Teaching staff	52.8%	51.0%	54.1%	48.7%	46.1%	46.8%
Support staff	19.1%	20.0%	21.3%	22.2%	22.9%	24.0%
Total	71.9%	71.0%	75.4%	70.9%	69.0%	70.8%

Teaching Staff

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Pupils on roll	1060	1082	1075	1024	972	956
Full time equivalents teachers	64	67	68	66	63	63
Pupil teacher ratio	16.6	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.4	15.2

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the MAT Board of trustees has a reasonable expectation that the multi academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason it adopts the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Accounting Policies note of the financial statements.

Financial Review

The South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust's financial statements are for the year ended 31 August 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on the Trust's ability to generate additional income streams, particularly from its extended services provision of boarding, and community education and outdoor education programmes. The organisation has relied on external providers to deliver adventurous learning opportunities for students throughout the year, and community education classes have been delivered by Lancaster and Morecambe College at the Milnthorpe and Heversham sites.

The Trust has continued to invest time and resource in exploring alternative markets for its boarding provision, post Brexit and Covid. Recruitment of boarding students has been significantly better than expectations in the 5 year recovery plan, particularly for the Dallam Experience programme.

The Academy Trust ends the year in a very strong financial position based on an increase in the net current assets to £1,153,192 (2021: £1,146,508). Trustees are mindful of the impact of the pension fund deficit on future employer costs, and the need to regrow the boarding provision post Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The majority of each academy's income is obtained from the Educational and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2022 and the related expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the statement of financial activities.

Dallam School is a state boarding school with 141 boarding places. A large proportion of its income is generated from annual boarding fees.

Under Financial Reporting Standard 102, it is necessary to charge projected deficits on the Local Government Pension Scheme, which is provided to support staff, to a restricted fund. This results in reducing reserves shown in the total funds of the academy. It should be noted that this does not present the academy with any current liquidity problem. The employer contributions are currently being assessed and it is expected that they will increase to bring a reduction in this pension deficit in future, although this may not be achieved until stock market investment values start to recover.

During the period ended 31 August 2022, total general expenditure of £8,266,143 was covered by recurrent grant funding from the DfE together with other incoming resources. The excess of income over general expenditure for the year was £166,236.

At 31 August 2022 the net book value of fixed assets was £11,547,701 and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in the notes to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the Academy.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

COVID - 19 impact

Despite the upheaval caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, prudent spending and additional grant funding has resulted in a significant increase in the year end surplus and a very healthy reserves level of £797,058. Refurbishment work scheduled to take place over the summer break was severely hampered by a shortage of materials and contractor availability. Trustees recognise that this contributed towards an increase in the level of reserves carried forward and have agreed these funds will be drawn down in the next financial year as the outstanding work is completed.

Staff employed in the organisation's extended services provision were furloughed, where possible and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme helped to mitigate the loss of income during periods of extended lockdown. A successful application for business support grant funding was made to South Lakeland District Council to support the closure of the community sports centre lettings.

Education support grants received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency were used to support student catch up sessions for lost learning, the implementation of additional health and safety measures in the school and the mass testing of students and staff to reduce viral transmission.

The financial sustainability of the organisation's extended services provision - boarding, sports centre lettings, community and outdoor education - was challenged during the pandemic. The Trust recognises the positive impact its extended services provision has on both the school and the wider community and has implemented recovery plans to ensure the future success of all areas of the provision. The measures being taken include exploring new markets, the creation of a new website, and working with external partners and agents.

Reserves Policy

The level of reserves held takes into account the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match them with commitments, including future capital projects, and the nature of the reserves. The trustees continue to keep the level of reserves under review.

The general unrestricted fund balance at the year end was £195,120 (2021: £186,033). The trustees believe that this level of reserves is required to support the running of the school. The designated sports fund at the year end was £178,281 (2021: £168,743), this fund is for the purchase of sports equipment and the resurfacing of the all weather pitch.

The Trust aspires to hold reserves in the region of one month of annual expenditure to ensure it is able to produce a three year balanced budget, support a staffing model commensurate with curriculum requirements and maintain the Trust as a going concern in the event of unforeseen events, such as a pandemic. Trustees acknowledge that although the reserves level of £797,058 held at 31st August 2022 exceeds their expectations, this provides the security required to support the boarding provision and mitigate the boarding fund deficit during the five year recovery plan.

Funds in Deficit

The trustees note that certain restricted funds are in deficit which have been disclosed in the funds note supporting the financial statements.

Pension Reserve Fund - this fund represents the deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) at the year end. The academy has previously entered into an agreement effective from 01 April 2014 to make additional contributions in addition to normal funding levels. It is anticipated that further payments will be made over 10 years from 01 April 2023.

Boarding Fund - Trustees approved a balanced three-year budget, with healthy reserves for the period to 31/08/2025. As a result of the exceptional circumstances arising from Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Boarding Fund has been supported by a transfer of £100,000 from General Unrestricted Funds for the financial period ended 31/08/2022. A full review of boarding provision is ongoing, including the development of a comprehensive marketing plan to explore new and additional markets, a staffing restructure, and a review of charges apportioned to boarding. As a result of these measures, we aim to bring the fund out of deficit by 2026.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Principal Funding Sources

The main sources of income for the year were: The ESFA, boarding provision, the local authority, community and outdoor education courses and the Dallam School Charitable Trust.

Investment Policy

The Board of Trustees aims to ensure value for money when considering investment decisions whilst exercising caution and ensuring security of funds takes precedence over revenue maximisation. Any reserves are currently held in a range of higher interest accounts with the multi academy trust's bankers. The main Lloyds Bank account is an instant access account which currently attracts an interest rate of 0.1% pa.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks the multi academy trust is exposed to concern the real terms cut in funding by the Department for Education. The multi academy trust mitigates these risks by preparing a 3 year budget forecast and closely monitoring the budgetary position. The multi academy trust maintains a risk register which is monitored on a termly basis by the Risk, Audit & Finance Committee, established by the trustees.

Financial and Risk Management Objectives and Policies

A budget for the period was agreed prior to the beginning of the accounting period. Management accounts were presented at each termly Risk, Audit & Finance Committee trustee meeting and income and expenditure monitored against budget. All the MAT's financial policies, systems and controls are disclosed in the MAT's Financial Regulations Manual.

Risk Management

The trustees have reviewed all major risks to which the MAT is exposed and systems have been established to mitigate those risks. A risk register has been produced, as per guidance in the Academy Trust Handbook which demonstrates the results of the risk assessment process. The trust recognises and manages present and future risk to ensure the effective and continued operation of Dallam School and will update its procedures accordingly as and when additional academies join the MAT. A contingency and business continuity plan has been prepared to deal with crises that could face the MAT. The MAT has effective systems of internal financial controls and this is explained in more detail in the statement on internal control.

Fundraising

During the period in question the Trust has not engaged professional fundraisers or commercial participators to undertake any fundraising activities on its behalf. The Trust has undertaken minor fundraising activities which included a whole school sponsored walk, whereby students sought voluntary donations from parents, carers and the local community. The development of a rigorous approach to external fundraising will be a priority moving forwards.

Plans for Future Periods

The South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust

- Building a strong rapport with the Regional School Commissioner and other local partners to secure long term financial viability, joint procurement initiatives, the sharing of best practice and ultimately improving student outcomes for all.
- Explore options for the growth of the SWMAT, taking advantage of the changing priorities within Cumbria
- Explore opportunities for growing the trust through free schools (if and when funding is released) specifically focused on Alternative Provision
- Continue to grow our boarding provision

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

TRUSTEES' REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Plans for Future Periods (continued)

Dallam School

- To focus on moving the Quality of Education from good to outstanding, by further refining our curriculum, ensuring consistent high-quality learning and teaching, and improving student outcomes still further, including closing the attainment gap for PP students, boys and students with high prior attainment.
- To significantly improve the school culture and ethos, by focusing on systems and routines that support excellent behaviour, embedding our vision, values and aims and focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- To maintain our focus on staff and student wellbeing, through the wellbeing charter, including prioritising mental and physical health, having a clear communications policy, ensuring students and staff have a voice in decision making and reducing workload by streamlining systems and adhering to the directed time agreement.
- To ensure financial stability with a rigorous business strategy, a clear improvement and development plan for boarding and a focus on multi-academy trust growth that improves outcomes for young people and families, and meets our vision, values and aims.
- To ensure boarding is financially viable and moving from 'good' to 'outstanding' against the new NMS

Funds Held on Behalf of Others

The multi academy trust acts as an intermediary for the 16-19 Bursary fund, but has no responsibility, the trust distributes the funds to students as an agent for the ESFA.

Auditor

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Saint & Co Chartered Accountants were formally re-appointed by the Members at a meeting of the Trust held on 15th December 2022.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 15th December 2022 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr A J Gerrard
Chair of Trustees

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge that we have overall responsibility for ensuring that the South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

As trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between the South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The MAT Board has formally met 6 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings Attended	Out of a Possible
Ms R T Williams (Headteacher & Accounting Officer)	6	6
Mrs E J Fraser (Chair)	6	6
Mr A J Gerrard (Vice Chair)	5	6
Mrs P A Houghton	6	6
Dr A J Knox	3	6
Mrs J Lees	6	6
Mr J Moffat	1	3
Mr M J Shevill	5	6
Mrs S C Swindley (Vice Chair - resigned 16/12/2021)	1	2
Mr R T Villiers-Smith	4	6

Governance Review

Key changes in the composition of the Board of Trustees

Whilst the Board has lost a recent appointee due to their work load, we continue to benefit from Trustees with significant experience in education and Trustees with wide experience in business and the medical profession. The Chair of the Dallam School Local Advisory Committee (LAC) who was appointed as a Trustee last year, has now assumed the role of Chair of Trustee Board having relinquished his role on the LAC. The Board is actively seeking a new Trustee to fill the current vacancy. The Board continues to work well together, unafraid of differences of opinion and prepared to express strong views in a respectful and collegiate manner.

The coverage of its work

Following an easing of the Covid pandemic the MAT Board felt it appropriate to explore growth options for the MAT. In March 2022, representatives from the MAT and LAC Boards, together with governors from other schools in the South Lakes Federation, met with the RSC to explore interest in establishing a MAT incorporating schools from within the SLF. Since then, Heads have continued those discussions and Governing Bodies have discussed the proposal. Further meetings are planned in the near future.

SOUTH WESTMORLAND MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2022

The coverage of its work (continued)

Following the resignation of the Deputy Head of Dallam School, the MAT Board has approved a change in senior leadership structure to reflect the complexities at the school. It is proposed to appoint two Deputy Heads instead of the previous one. Trustees have supported the shortlisting and interview process for these posts. In the interim, Trustees approved the appointment of temporary posts at Associate Assistant Head levels internally.

Across the financial year, the Board, working closely with senior officers, fulfilled its duty in ensuring financial probity. The continued impact of the pandemic on Boarding and Extended Services has been a particular focus. Regular updates on boarding recruitment and marketing activity have been provided to trustees and discussed in detail.

The Board has agreed the new Dallam School vision developed by the senior leadership team with input from the whole school community. The Board has closely monitored all aspects of Dallam School's work supporting key initiatives: Visible Learning; Behaviour with support from the Department for Education Behaviour Hubs programme; and Wellbeing of staff and students.

LAC Champion roles established last year are firmly in place and reports are published 2 or 3 times a term for discussion at LAC meetings and circulation to the MAT Board.

The board's performance, including assessment of its own effectiveness and any particular challenges that have arisen for the Board

MAT Board and LAC meetings are now mostly held face to face; virtual Board meetings are still held on occasions where appropriate to reduce the load on staff and Trustees. Individual trustee review meetings are held and a skills audit was also undertaken which, together, informed recruitment and training needs. A 360-degree assessment of the chair was positive, with trustees noting the many strengths of the Board. Members work effectively together without any sense of cosiness or complacency – in fact the opposite, trustees are active, interested, questioning and supportive.

A peer review of Governance from within the South Lakes Federation was completed and reported to the MAT Board. Amongst many positive observations, a few areas were identified where governance could be further improved and these will be part of our Governance Development Plan.

The Governor Hub central online portal is being used by most MAT Board and LAC members; those not yet using it have been encouraged to do so.

Information about the quality of the data used by the board, and why the board finds it acceptable

The quality of data provided to the Board and the Dallam Local Advisory Committee has continued to improve over the last year. How Dallam School performance data is presented is under review in an effort to improve clarity and reduce workload on staff members. Safeguarding and other internal reports such as Pupil Premium reports are now delivered using a standard format adopted from best practice documents available from Government or other external sources.

A clear School Improvement Plan for Dallam School with clear objectives and impact measures is in place. Feedback from the Headteacher at all meetings is comprehensive and straightforward.

The presentation of financial data includes comprehensive summaries of changes made, clear reasons for changes and benchmarking against DfE KPIs. In facing the financial challenges of Boarding and other services, the Board was very well advised by the CFO, with clear options and including worst case scenarios. Risk Registers for the South Westmorland MAT and Dallam School are in place which are regularly reviewed and risk assessments are provided on a regular basis so that the Board can make informed decisions. Audits are also undertaken to check financial systems of internal control and risk management/non-financial controls, with reports provided for review by the Board.