THE CRYPT SCHOOL
Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Monday, 13th October 2025, 4.00pm – 6.20pm
The Crypt School, Room 25

MINUTES: Part 1

Present:	Lee Hill (Chair), Sheila Bradburn, Sonia Macleod, Ahmed Goga, Dare Owatemi, Lynsey Pollard, Amit Ray, Nicholas Dyer (Headmaster); Gordon Taylor, Kate Williams (Associate Trustees)
Attendees:	Joanne Hitchings (Finance Director & Company Secretary), Nicola Donlon (Clerk), Tianna Klaric (Head Girl & Student Governor): items 1-3; Rob Biggs (Deputy Head – Academic): Presentation.
Apologies:	Suzanne Aspden, Phil Stanlake (Senior Deputy Head)
Absent:	None

	Item	ACTION
1.	**Apologies** As above, approved by the Board.	
2.	**Declarations of interest** As per the register. Four Trustees present are parents of the School.	
3.	**Student Governors' Report** The Chair welcomed Tianna Klaric (TK), Head Girl and Student Governor, and noted that the Head Boy, Liam Page, was unable to attend because he was preparing for a university entrance examination. TK reported on the work of the Student Executive (SE), including: • Social Media – the SE now has a public Instagram account which aims to be fun and trendy and increase the SE's profile. An icebreaker event is planned and they are exploring the idea of a video diary for the Leavers' Yearbook. • Diversity & Inclusion – curated quotes to be put up in the Sixth Form common room. • Fundraising – exploring the idea of a Crypt charity club and, for example, having a display board to recognise the achievements of high fundraisers or students with high involvement. • Prefects – giving presentations to forms with a feedback sheet. • Girls and Boys sport – the SE are hoping to encourage more mixed sport to encourage participation and enjoyment.	

	• Student Parliaments – hoping to discuss tactics for managing stress with the Wellbeing Parliament. TK said she and the Head Boy were aiming to increase their visibility outside school and help increase awareness of The Crypt as diverse and inclusive rather than being wrongly perceived as "stuck up". They would also like to post Sixth Form news on Bromcom. She raised the following issues for the Board's consideration: • More girls' toilets were needed, and a toilet in the changing room should be more regularly stocked up with towels • Earrings in the uniform policy – could small dangly earrings be permitted? • More fobs were needed for the Sixth Form to sign out, as queues were forming in the Cooke Centre foyer • Canteen prices. The Chair congratulated the SE on rising to the challenge he had given them of reaching out more to the lower school. Trustee thanked TK and the SE for their excellent work and suggested building a campaign on Instagram covering diversity and inclusion, perhaps also involving the lower school. The Headmaster (HM) asked for feedback on the newly refurbished Sixth Form. TK said she liked the extra areas; there had been some complaints about the new seating plan in the supervised study area because it limited computer availability. The Board thanked TK for her helpful presentation. TK left the meeting.	
(part)	**PRESENTATION:** **Understanding the School's Exam and Performance Data** Rob Biggs (Deputy Head – Academic) joined the meeting to give the presentation (slides circulated after the meeting). He: • Explained how the School records grades, monitors pupil data and informs parents throughout the year for each year group • Reminded the Board of the Crypt Learner model, and explained how the eight characteristics are used in making comments to home about students • Reported external exam results data for summer 2025 and compared headline performance for different cohorts in school. • GCSE Attainment 8 overall was 72.64, which represented an increase on recent years. There was no Progress 8 figure for 2025; the Alps score was Alps 2 (outstanding). Pupil Premium, Free School Meals and English as Additional Language cohorts exceeded this A8 score, but the SEND cohort was slightly lower. • A level average point score was 40.12 (B grade), A*-B grades were 66%; overall Alps 4 (very good). Overall, boys outperformed girls at A level in 2025; the reverse was true the previous year, and no trend was evident yet. • Looking forward, the School in its School Improvement Plan priorities was aiming to provide greater challenge to help the most able students achieve their potential. Trustees asked: Q: Can you isolate outliers in analysing the Alps data?	

	A: Yes, for individual departments and cohorts; this is done in analysing the data with departments. Q: Can you separately track the progress of students joining the Sixth Form from other schools and students joining from The Crypt? *A: Yes, this is done and shows no consistent trend.* Q: Are we at risk of widening the gap between science, technology and maths (STEM) and other subjects? Do students recognise that design and creativity are also part of STEM? *A: Other grammar schools are experiencing the same trend. The School is trying to promote the other subjects. Students are acting rationally; it is national policy to promote STEM subjects: next year, enhanced funding for schools will be offered for students taking four STEM A levels.* *(Remainder in Part 2 minutes)* Trustees thanked Mr Biggs for his presentation. RB left the meeting.	
4.	**Agree minutes of meeting (30 June 2025 Parts 1 and 2)** – approved without amendment.	
5. (part)	**Matters arising from previous minutes:** **i) Action table (1a)** Trustees reviewed progress on actions. **ii) Actions from Governor reviews and visits (paper 1b)** Trustees noted the actions being taken in response to the Student Scholarship Review and the Safeguarding Audit (June 2025).	
6. (part)	**Headmaster's Report:** **i) Educational performance** *(No report – covered in presentation)* ii) **Other items (paper 2)** The HM presented his report. He highlighted: • Proposals for changes to the Senior Leadership Team structure would be presented with cost implications to the Resources, Staff & Pay Committee. • Popular subjects at Y12 were full. If Trustees wanted to grow the Sixth Form further, extra capacity would be needed in economics, maths and science. Some other subjects had very low uptake. • Y13 destination data showed 71% of Y13 students secured a university place and 16 students went on to apprenticeships. • The Admissions Committee had met since his report and decided to qualify 800 students – slightly fewer than in previous years. • The roof of the John and Joan Cooke Centre was leaking and needed to be replaced in summer 2027 • The Creative and Performing Arts Centre project had received its first significant donation, which would hopefully encourage further donations. • The new Ofsted framework would come into force in November. • The School was still considering options for Religious Studies at Key Stage 4.	
7.	**Safeguarding Report and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 update (paper 3)** Trustees noted the report and update. The Chair reminded Trustees to complete their annual safeguarding training.	
8.	**Finance Director's report: Management Accounts for 2024-25 (papers 4 and 5)** The Finance Director (JH) said that income had been higher than expected, which had supported decisions to increase staffing and estates work over the summer. The	

	School had spent £524k on planned works, leaving a reserves surplus of £585k. The report set out commitments to planned works, including repairs to the Sixth Form centre roof, girls' toilets improvements and a contribution to the Condition Improvement Fund bid, which still left a healthy balance in revenue reserves. Trustee asked about the Board's policy to hold back 3 per cent of income. JH explained that this referred to Government revenue income from the previous year. The policy was that this money could be spent if needed, but not without a plan to replace it. Trustees noted the report.	
9.	**Key Performance Indicators (paper 6)** Trustees noted the report.	
10.	**Trustee attendance at school events 2025-26 (paper 7)** The Chair reminded the Board of the importance of attending events in school during the year. The Clerk was asked to send out calendar invitations to the events listed for Trustees to respond to over the next couple of weeks and add the list to the Trustees' shared drive **(ACTION).**	**Clerk**
11.	**Proposals for new committee structure (paper 8)** The Chair introduced the proposals to restructure the Board's committees to achieve a stronger focus at committee level on educational outcomes and bring together responsibilities for estates strategy and management. The Chair of the current Resources, Staff & Pay Committee (Sonia Macleod) said she agreed that her committee and the Audit & Risk Committee should remain separate, to ensure that audit work received proper focus. Trustees **APPROVED** the proposals. Detailed terms of reference and membership would be brought to the next meeting.	
12.	**Election of Chair of Trustees (paper 9)** The Company Secretary assumed the chair. She had received one nomination (Lee Hill) with three supporters for the position of Chair. Trustees unanimously **ELECTED** Lee Hill to serve as Chair of Trustees for the coming year.	
13.	**Election of Vice-Chair(s) of Trustees (papers 10a&b)** Lee Hill resumed the chair. Two nominations had been received for the position of Vice-Chair. Trustees unanimously **ELECTED** Sheila Bradburn and Sonia Macleod to serve as co-Vice-Chairs of the Trustees for the coming year.	
14.	**Agree committee terms of reference for 2025-26 (papers 11a-d)** Trustees **APPROVED** the terms of reference for the Audit & Risk, Resources, Staff & Pay, Pupil Welfare and Admissions Committees as set out in papers 11a-d.	
15.	**Appoint committee chairs and members for 2025-26 (paper 12)** Trustees **APPROVED** the appointment of committee chairs and members for 2025-26 as follows: Resources, Staff and Pay Committee: 1. Sonia Macleod (Chair) 2. Nicholas Dyer 3. Lee Hill 4. Dare Owatemi 5. Amit Ray Pupil Welfare Committee: 1. Sheila Bradburn (Chair) 2. Suzanne Aspden	

	3. Lynsey Pollard 4. Gordon Taylor (Associate Trustee: non-voting) 5. Kate Williams (Associate Trustee: non-voting) <u>Admissions Committee:</u> 1. Sheila Bradburn (Chair) 2. Nicholas Dyer 3. Ahmed Goga 4. Suzanne Aspden <u>Audit and Risk Committee:</u> 1. Amit Ray 2. Dare Owatemi 3. New Parent Trustee (when elected)	
16.	**Appoint panel members for 2025-26 and training (paper 13)** Trustees **APPROVED** the appointment of panel members for 2025-26 as follows: a) A pupil discipline panel of any 3 Trustees should be nominated by the Chair to consider a suspension or exclusion; b) An individual Trustee should be nominated by the Chair to consider representations by parents/carers in respect of external suspensions of up to 5 days in a term; c) For HR matters, a panel of Trustees should be nominated by the Chair as set out in the relevant HR policy; d) Any Trustee may be nominated by the Chair to undertake a complaints investigation or serve on a panel.	
17.	**Appoint Link Trustees for 2025-26 (paper 14)** Trustees **APPROVED** the appointment of Link Trustees for 2025-26 as follows: <u>Trustees for Departmental Review meetings</u>: Lee Hill, Sonia Macleod, Sheila Bradburn <u>Trustee Departmental visits in 2025-26:</u> It was **AGREED** that Trustees should visit a selection of Departments as part of a rolling review programme, as follows: • Maths – Dare Owatemi (by Term 3) • History – Ahmed Goga • Psychology and Sociology – Lee Hill	

Trustee	Area
Sheila Bradburn	Safeguarding Trustee
Lynsey Pollard	Deputy Safeguarding Trustee
Ahmed Goga	Development & Careers
Sonia Macleod	Pupil Premium
Sheila Bradburn	Initial Teacher Training (ITT)
Amit Ray	Special Educational Needs & Disability

	Trustees **AGREED** to consider appointing a Link Trustee for Data at a future meeting, following the election or appointment of additional Trustees (**ACTION**). The Careers Link Trustee (Ahmed Goga) said he had recently met the Careers Lead and would notify the Clerk of their programme of future meetings (**ACTION**).	**Clerk** **A Goga**
18.	**Approval of Scheme of Delegations 2025-26 (paper 15)** The Clerk highlighted the changes to make explicit where authority to approve expenditure on fundraising projects lay. The HM said that the fundraising committee was advisory only. The Finance Director said that the levels of expenditure authority would be the same, but the HM would need a budget from which to authorise spending on fundraising/development activity. It was agreed that this should be picked up at a future Resources, Staff and Pay Committee meeting (**ACTION**). Trustees **APPROVED** the Scheme of Delegation 2025-26.	**RSP, JH**
19.	**Policies for approval**: Safeguarding Policy (paper 16): **APPROVED** Attendance Policy (paper 17): **APPROVED** Health and Safety Policy (paper 18): **APPROVED WITH AMENDMENT** to clarify that references to work placements were to the school taking work placements. Policies approved under delegation in Term 1 (paper 19): noted.	
20.	**Approval of Term dates 2026-27 (paper 20)** Trustee asked whether it was the best option to start school for all students on a Friday (4th September). The HM said that it was complicated this year because 31st August was a Bank Holiday. After reviewing other options, Trustees **APPROVED** the term dates for 2026-27 as set out in paper 20.	
21.	**Careers Report (paper 21)** Ahmed Goga introduced the report and said he had recently met the Careers Lead, Chris Germaine. He said that the achievements were excellent and should be celebrated by the School. He said: • The School should emphasise the special success of the programme in talking to parents, and raise its prominence. • The work experience model was moving to touchpoints throughout the year, rather than a single block. They had discussed ideas for deepening some of these, e.g. using technology and social media. • It was important to build understanding of how the labour market is changing and help students adapt to that. • The School should continue to give more visibility to the apprenticeship route. The deadlines for applications were starting earlier, and opportunities were spread throughout the year, which made it more challenging to support students following this route compared to the university route. Trustees were asked to follow the School's LinkedIn page and promote its posts to help raise the profile of the Careers programme (**ACTION**).	**ALL TRUSTEES**

22.	**Committee reports:** **1. Audit (met 22/9/25) (paper 22)** Trustees noted the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee. Trustee asked what changes were being considered for school trips. JH said there were no changes planned, the review was checking the reconciliation for a trip from 2024-25, as it had not been available at the time of the internal scrutiny review undertaken in that year. Trustee said that trips had been raised regularly as a concern in their meetings on Trustee visits with teachers, who wanted a central process. The HM said that there was a process for teachers to follow but agreed that there was some work involved. The biggest issue was the legal requirement to ask only for voluntary contributions for trips during school time; if insufficient contributions were made, trips had to be cancelled, which meant the work of organising the trips had been wasted. Trustee asked if the School should allocate some money to support trips. The HM said that some support was offered for curriculum trips, but not necessarily for enrichment trips.	
23.	**Link Governor reports:** **a) English (paper 24)** **b) Geography (paper 25)** **c) History and Politics (paper 26)** Trustees noted the reports. The Chair reminded all Trustees to complete a short report after making a visit to the School.	
24.	**Academy Trust Handbook 2025: key changes (paper 27)** The Finance Director (JH) reminded all Trustees that they should familiarise themselves with the Academy Trust Handbook, and highlighted the following changes in 2025: • New link to sustainability guidance to help trusts have a climate action plan in place; • Reminder that trusts should be working towards meeting the 6 core digital and technology standards. Trustees **AGREED** that the Audit Committee should consider whether to include this in the 2025-26 review programme (**ACTION**); • A stronger focus on estates management, which would in future fall within the Resources, Staff and Pay Committee's remit. JH reminded the Board that the Department for Education had powers to intervene in the running of a trust, for example, if the trust was in deficit or internal scrutiny was poor.	**Audit**
25.	**New Companies House ID verification requirements** The Clerk notified the Board about the upcoming requirement for company directors to verify their identity before a company's confirmation statement was submitted (which would be in January 2026 for the School); she would circulate details of how to do this, with a deadline of after half term.	
26.	**Confidential items (*to agree items that should be recorded as confidential)*** Presentation - part Item 5 - part Item 6 - part	
27.	**Any other business**	

	None.	
28.	**Date of next meeting: Monday 8 December 2025, 4pm**	

Signed:

Date: