

Minutes
Trust Board Meeting
Monday, 9 December 2024 at 5pm,
In person at Yewdale Primary School, Carlisle

Present:	Lorrayne Hughes, OBE, Chief Executive (LH)
	George Beveridge, Chair (GB)
	Michael Donnelly, Trustee (MD)
	Matt Hood, OBE, Trustee (MH) (via TEAMS)
	Catherine Reeves, Co-opted Trustee (CR)
	Brian Webster-Henderson OBE (BWH)
	Dr Bill Snaith, Trustee (DBS)
	Richard Berry, Trustee (RB) (via TEAMS)
	Jeff O'Neill, Co-opted Trustee (JON)
	Margaret Payne, Trustee (MP)
	Together with: Sally McAllister Head of Operations (SMcA)
	Matt Butler, Director of Primary Improvement & Professional Development (MB)
	Des Bird, Director of Secondary Improvement (DB)
	Tom Martell, Director of Strategy & Operations (TM)
	Gill Creighton, Head of Safeguarding (GC)
	Gill Martin, Director of Finance (GM)
	Sue Newstead, Director of Learning Provision (SN)
	Kerry Rogerson, HR Manager (KR)
	Lucy Hewson, Clerk to Trust Board (LMH)
Minutes taken by	Lucy M Hewson
Quorum required	3
Members present	10

Member support, questions and challenge in red

Responses in green

Actions in bold

		Action	By Who?
1	Welcome and Apologies No apologies. Chair and Chief Executive Update Chair gave an update on Trustee recruitment. LH and GB are meeting with a potential Trustee applicant whose specialism is alternative provision. Stramongate and Castle Park Primary schools were signed off by the DfE Advisory Board and conversion will take place in Spring 2025. Chair's school visits continue. He has met with Mrs Creighton on a safeguarding update. LH noted all our CET Secondary schools have recruited very well for year 7 intake in September 2025. There are lots of changes ahead with the new Government policies.		

2	a) Safeguarding Strategy GC gave an update on the Safeguarding report and strategy. The annual plan has been annotated to highlight progress and the 3 year strategy is on track. Priorities remain unchanged. There is a good internal review system; conducting peer to peer reviews; champions are in place and QA processes are embedded. The strategy has been shared regionally and nationally with Browne Jacobson and CST. GC is part of NAASA (National Association of Academy Safeguarding Advisors) and GC has an advisory role for other Trust leaders on safeguarding. b) Safeguarding Report The report updated on Local Authority supervision which has been overwhelmingly successful for schools in Cumberland where we pay for at least half termly, high-quality supervision for challenging cases. Westmorland and Furness operate a different model and there is currently no facility to obtain such supervision. However, they do operate a free supervision service with the same capacity to support schools but cannot always commit to scheduling meetings. GC updated on internally appointing 3 Safeguarding Practitioners, and the work they do such as supporting the writing of robust referrals and how to escalate a concern. There has been a lot of progress in schools as a result of supervision: GC offers 1:1 supervision for safeguarding leads following challenging circumstances and is available for consultation regarding the most complex cases and Sue Newstead is available if capacity is stretched or GC is unavailable. Mental Health and wellbeing are still a huge priority across some of the schools. GC described the work taking place in two West Cumbrian schools with appropriate professionals engaging where possible. GC has written a Safeguarding Handbook for Trustees and LAB members which is a quick and easy guide for practice and responsibilities, to ensure consistency. Questions/thoughts from Trustees: Chair is pleased to hear the feedback on local authority support, with Cumberland in particular. The supervision regime is building a closer relationship with schools and the Local Authority on complex cases and giving school access to information. GC said there is a high turnover of social workers, and often families don't have the same social worker throughout their support. GC encourages the Safeguarding team to congratulate the Local Authority and social workers on Cumberland Council Children's Services recently being classified as Good in the last Ofsted inspection. Chair likes the Level 4 Train the trainer approach and generating capacity internally to train our own people. Chair said the suicide attempts are a concern. He is satisfied that CET is doing everything we can along with the other agencies responsible. Unfortunately, some of the attempts are down to what is taking place in the wider environment. Trustee felt assured by the activity. This was a good quality report, Trustee asked if there were plans to evaluate the supervision model to give an evidence base. GC noted within the CET OKRs we are collecting robust data and will be getting a report from D Mitchell on Cumberland Council's supervision before the end of term which will highlight common threads and areas for schools to work on. Trustee said this was great – thank you.		
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	Trustee noted that Cumberland suicide rates are above national average. The CPOMS data on harmful sexual behaviour at Whitehaven Academy is higher than other schools. GC is going to carry out some work on this with the new DSL at TWA. Chair thanked GC for all the work she does across the Trust.		
3	a) Declaration of Interest Brian Webster-Henderson noted he is a Trustee of Fells Trust until its closure. b) Notice of Any Other Business - two. c) Review Trust Board Minutes - - 30 September 2024 (No Matters Arising) The minutes were taken as a true and accurate record. d) Update on LAB meetings ▪ DBI updated that the Secondary LAB meetings continue to work well. The November-December LAB meetings have focused on triangulation feedback, the majority of LAB members have visited their schools and met with senior team members for effective triangulation meetings. DB is pleased with how the secondary LAB meetings have gone. ▪ MBU updated on the Primary LAB meetings. There is some work to be done with increasing challenge in some of the LAB meetings. Trustee may have some contacts regarding LAB recruitment. Trustee asked what the plans are to move the LAB challenge on. MBU said the focus item on LAB agendas has helped with challenge. Head engagement with the LAB members prior to the meetings also helps. The Primary Executive team support the LAB members and there is Executive support at every Primary LAB meeting. e) Update on Organisation Committee meetings 14.10.24 and 11.11.24 Please see the minutes x 2. The new HR and Payroll software is now up and running. f) Update on Governance Council North 22.10.24 GB updated on this. There was good discussion also including some members from Governance Council West. The agenda covered governance OKRs; challenge and support and looking ahead to the Nov-Dec LAB meetings. The breakout groups worked well. TM noted feedback from LAB Chairs was they found it useful to discuss these items with Trustees. g) Update on Inspection Committee 13.11.24 DB updated that this was well attended and all schools currently in the Ofsted window bar one, were represented. The agenda covered the new Ofsted framework, reading, evidence and challenge, possible Ofsted inspection questions for LAB Chairs and triangulation questions. This was all well received, and feedback from evaluation forms on the first meeting was very positive. We await one of our schools to be inspected under the new framework to provide CET with some feedback. Chairs and Vice Chairs were asked what they would like covered for the remaining two meetings of the year and feedback was provided. h) Update on Audit and Risk Committee 20.11.24 and approval of A & R ToR Chair updated that the Committee meeting was not quorate due to unforeseen circumstances. The Committee met with external auditors UNW who gave a presentation on the external audit. It was a clean audit and small adjustments were put through. The Committee had an update from Mrs Kirsopp, Dodd & Co, Chartered Accountants who lead		

	on internal audit. Again, a clean set of audit results and a proposed schedule of work was presented for next year. There was an update from SMcA on the risk register and an update on the Procurement waiver register (no additional items since the last meeting). Decision: Audit & Risk Terms of Reference approved. i) Approval of Internal Audit Service Provision and Audit Programme 2024/25 The Trust Board is asked to approve: - the appointment of Dodd and Co. as the Trust's appointed Internal Auditor for 2024/25, noting the changes applied by the ATH from September 2024; - the increase in audit days for 24/25 is increased by a further 5 days to 28 days, and - the Internal Audit programme for 2024/25; see section 4 of this report GM noted CET meets the changes in the Academy Trust Handbook on internal audit and scrutiny arrangements. GM discussed the areas for focus for 2024-25 internal audit programme. There was a discussion on risk. Chair asked for a paper to next Trust Board meeting on Board assurance framework. Action: To add Board assurance framework to February Trust Board meeting. Decision: Internal Audit provision and Audit Programme 2024-25 approved.	Board Assurance framework added to Feb TB agenda	LMH
4	Finance: Finance Report – P2 Revised 24/25 Budget 2025/26 Budget update The consolidated Year to Date position is a net deficit of £70.5k compared to a budgeted net deficit of £30.1k; a negative variance of £40.5k. It is important to understand that this YTD position does not show income released from reserves. Use of reserves affects Whitehaven Academy which has £80k of designated funds included in its budget (the balance of remaining funds ring fenced for the school arising from unspent DFE deficit funding in previous years). Should two months of this funds be released, this would have a positive effect of £13.3k and reduce the YTD deficit to £27.4k. A new current account has been opened for the schools in the southern hub. DFE and other funding bodies have been instructed to pay funds into this account from 1st December in respect of Kirkby Stephen Grammar School. Similar bank instructions are to be made in respect of Queen Katherine School which joins us on 1st January 2025. The new Senior Finance Manager for the Southern Hub will be given access to the bank to oversee the southern banking arrangements. Note that two factor authentication is in place for all banking transactions. Trustee asked about this appointment. GM noted there is always a two-stage verification process for any banking transactions.		
5	a) External Auditor's Board Report and Financial Statements (including the Trustee's Report) 2023/24		

	GM noted the external audit was a clean audit with some minor adjustments. Chair said Well done, a smooth and clean audit which is a credit to GM and the Finance team. LH agreed. Decision: External Auditor's Board report approved.		
6	Operational update SMcA gave an operational update. LH is soon to receive her OBE at the Palace, in London – a massive achievement for LH and the Trust. BWH will also receive an OBE. It will be nice to celebrate success across the Trust. Employment Bill – School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) An element of the recent Employment Bill which is applicable to the Education sector alone is the proposed reinstatement of a separate negotiating body for school support staff – school support staff negotiating body (SSSNB). As it stands the remit of this body could have significant implications for Academy Trusts who would potentially be bound by the terms, conditions and pay determined through this Body. Consultation with the Government regarding this body is currently underway. Chair said the outcome will be a good indicator the scope the Government will give Academies to innovate and challenge norms etc. LH is very well placed to take forward this work. Natalie Ruane from Just People is the employment / legal representative sitting on the consultative group on behalf of members of CST and is leading the work on the CST response to the initial proposal.		
7	Strategic Planning Objectives, CSF and future reporting – TM presented this. Trust Improvement Plan Term 1 Review: Project 1 – School Improvement OKR 2 – repeat suspensions (secondary) and internal isolations decline – progress is marked at risk. Trustee said it will be important to continue to look outwards at good practice for suspensions. OKR 1 - systems are established to monitor the number of lessons not taught by the class teacher. Trustee asked if HLTAs could be asked how many lessons they have covered. There was a discussion on this topic. Project 2 – Trust Services OKR 'The implementation of the new catering service is successful' is at risk. OKR A review of the cleaning services across the Trust is completed with recommendations taken to the relevant committee – this has not begun. Trustee recommended lessons learnt from the catering contract.		
8	Growth update A confidential item was discussed.		
9	Policies to ratify: • Reserves Policy (<i>OD Committee recommend approval by Trust Board</i>) approved • Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy approved • Attendance Policy approved • Behaviour and Culture Policy approved • Equality Policy – Part 1 - approved The following policies have been reviewed and no ratification required: <u>SEND Policy (Part 1)</u>		

	V9 – Reviewed September 2024. Minor amendments made. <u>Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions (Part 1)</u> V5 – September 2024. Reviewed and no changes required. Decision: Policies approved.		
10	AOB LMH gave an update for Trustees to approve two Vice Chair recommendations: Neil McNicholas, current LAB member, Workington Academy LAB Danielle Pearl, current LAB member, CLPS LAB Decision: Approved. SMcA updated that KSGS policies have been transferred to CET template. Decision: Approved.		

The meeting closed at 18.55pm.

Signed by:  Date: 10.2.25
George Beveridge, Chair of Trust Board

Date of next Trust Board meeting: Monday, 10 February 2025 at 5pm, Yewdale Primary School, Carlisle