

**Minutes**  
**Trust Board Meeting**  
**Monday, 10 February 2025 at 5pm,**  
**In person at Yewdale Primary School, Carlisle**

<b>Present:</b>	Lorrayne Hughes, OBE, Chief Executive (LH)
	George Beveridge, Chair (GB)
	Michael Donnelly, Trustee (MD)
	Catherine Reeves, Co-opted Trustee (CR)
	Brian Webster-Henderson OBE (BWH)
	Dr Bill Snaith, Trustee (DBS)
<b>Together with:</b>	Richard Berry, Trustee (RB)
	Jeff O'Neill, Co-opted Trustee (JON)
	Margaret Payne, Trustee (MP)
	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 Martin, Director of Finance (GM)
<b>Apologies</b>	Sue Newstead, Director of Learning Provision (SN)
	Kerry Rogerson, HR Manager (KR)
	Lucy Hewson, Clerk to Trust Board (LMH)
	Matt Hood, Trustee (MH)
<b>Minutes taken by</b>	Lucy M Hewson
<b>Quorum required</b>	3
<b>Members present</b>	9

**Member support, questions and challenge in red**

Responses in green

**Actions in bold**

		Actions	By who?
1	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b>            Apologies were received from MH.  <b>Chair update:</b> Chair noted Sandra Keaveney's application will go to Members for their approval.</p> <p><b>CE update:</b> LH gave an update on feedback on policy consultation, Ofsted consultation, Curriculum review and the SEND review. The Trust sector and CET is represented well on a national level, by CST and CET. The Regional Advisory Board takes place next week, with NW academy conversion decisions to take.</p> <p>Between December and March CET will have brought in four new schools to the Trust. CET will have grown by one third. The work involved in this growth is not to be underestimated and what this means to the workload of the colleagues in the room.</p>		

	<p>Stramongate and Castle Park Primaries are ready to join CET on 1 March. There have been some leadership changes at Northside, Yewdale and KSGS. The main priority is to move forward and keep the schools stable. LH updated Trustees on reopening the private nursery at Stramongate PS and extending the age range at Newtown PS down to 2 years old.</p> <p>There was an update on the new Ofsted framework to launch in September and how this is being communicated to LABs (via Inspection Committees and SCLG).</p> <p>LH is working with CST on feedback to the Childrens and Schools Bill. Further work is ongoing on the Trust Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2025-26. There have been some very positive meetings with the University of Cumbria on 6 key strands of work with the University and CET for the next 5 years. CET will be hosting a high profile 10-year anniversary event in September 2025 to celebrate our progress. We look forward to the next 10 years.</p>		
2	<p>a) <b>Declaration of Interest</b> – DBS noted he is now an assessor for Chartered Engineering Institute.</p> <p>b) <b>Notice of Any Other Business</b> – 2. LH noted Trustees visiting schools will be reviewed for next year to ensure Trustees can get to know the schools, whilst the schools continue to focus on the ‘day job’.</p> <p>c) <b>Review Trust Board Minutes - 9 December 2024</b> (1 Matter Arising actioned) – the minutes were taken as a true and accurate review of the meeting.</p>		
3	<p><b>Committee updates and review:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Update on Organisation Development Committee: 22 January 2025</b> MP went through the minutes of the meeting (please see minutes) <a href="#">003a) OD mins Draft Jan 25.pdf</a></p> <p>This included the update to Windows 11; our new Estates Manager is now in post; the new HR and Payroll software has enabled CET to review absence data, where there are no major concerns. A new HR Operations Manager begins in post following half term. She has education experience and the HR team are pleased to welcome her.</p> <p>KR noted that KSGS and QKS staff have been TUPE’d to CET. Formal consultation has begun with Castle Park and Stramongate staff. Fells Trust colleagues have joined CET. Lessons learnt from recent conversions will be put in place for Stramongate and Castle Park conversions.</p> <p>TM updated on ITT apprenticeships, a Summer DfE visit re School Resource Management (SRM), as part of DfE approval of current growth.</p> <p>GM updated on Finance. The BACS limit has been increased. <b>Trustee noted that business mergers have a high failure rate in the wider business world, so CET’s conversions are very positive.</b></p> <p>b) <b>Update on School Improvement Committee: 3 February 2025</b> Please see the minutes <a href="#">SAC Mins Feb 25.pdf</a></p> <p>At the School Improvement Committee, members discussed the recent expansion of our Trust with two new schools joining - Kirkby Stephen Grammar School in December 2024 and Queen Katherine School in January 2025, marking the establishment of our Southern Hub.</p>		

The committee were informed that academic performance update was largely positive, with William Howard School exceeding Attainment 8 targets and both Workington and Whitehaven Academies showing improvement. Trust-wide secondary attendance stands 0.8% above the national average, with persistent absence rates 3.3% below national figures.

Several high-priority risks were discussed at the meeting. Kirkby Stephen Grammar School is undergoing leadership transition while tackling core subject concerns, particularly in English where mock results were disappointing. Weekly support from our Trust SIL in Maths and English support from Queen Katherine School are being implemented, alongside a comprehensive intervention program and sixth form mentoring.

The committee discussed that behaviour at Whitehaven and Workington remains challenging, though external monitoring shows improvement following staffing reorganisation and Positive Regard training. The board considered the lack of AP generally, and in the West in particular. We resolved to keep looking at the issue.

Teaching quality concerns centre on Whitehaven's high number of ECTs and new staff. This is being addressed by a focus on onboarding processes. External monitoring revealed inconsistent teaching standards at KSGS, with these being addressed through enhanced monitoring and cross-trust mentoring, with considerable resource being deployed at the school.

Subject-specific challenges were reviewed, with Geography showing signs of stabilisation after previous staffing turbulence. The committee discussed the potential advantages of a more aligned curriculum in future.

The committee were informed that Design Technology in Workington and Whitehaven has new staff in place, supported by expertise from William Howard. Mathematics at William Howard is receiving significant support, including two days per week from the CET Maths SIL and a former Director of Mathematics working three days weekly. English at William Howard shows some improvement, though literature performance remains an area for development.

Medium-priority concerns include changes to SEND staffing at William Howard and variable post-16 performance, being addressed through enhanced monitoring and structured support measures.

Finally, the committee discussed staff survey results at Workington. I assured the committee that a robust plan of action was in place to tackle issues around workload and behaviour in particular.

A confidential staffing update was noted.

MB gave an update on the two Primary schools joining the Trust next month. Projected outcomes for Summer SATs are broadly positive and improved on last year. There is positive data on attendance. Persistent absence rates are reduced and behaviour is good. There was discussion on projected Year 6 outcomes, which is the key focus for the next few months. Regular assessments are being increased in regularity and exam technique practice. The Year 6 teacher from Stramongate is supporting other Year 6 teachers within CET. There is an increased focus on Year 5 pupils and identifying gaps in knowledge further down the school years. English as additional language (EAL) at CLPS challenges were discussed.

SN spoke about policy consultation and the changing world around SEND. We aim to keep ahead of discussions and focus on provision, rather than number of hours.

There is ongoing work with the integrated community offer. DBS offered a contact to support on EAL provision.

DB noted that throughout the new Ofsted framework there is an emphasis on disadvantaged and SEN pupils. To ensure a School receives a 'Secure' judgment national outcomes and attendance are needed for these groups of students.

Chair has continued his school visits and is pleased to note that the same message regarding OKRs is heard from the Heads on hard thinking and behaviour.

**c) Update on LAB meetings Jan – Feb 2025 including LAB Self evaluation**

**a. Secondary LABs**

Looking across all three secondary schools, several key strengths emerge. Safeguarding understanding was consistently excellent, with nearly all responses strongly positive and high levels of "strongly agree," indicating robust child protection governance. Strategic alignment was another standout area - LAB members across all schools demonstrated clear understanding of their Trust's vision and their role in achieving it. The governance culture also showed considerable strength, with high positive responses indicating well-functioning LABs that collaborate effectively with senior leaders. While all schools performed strongly, there were some variations in confidence around risk management and self-evaluation processes, principally at WA, suggesting these could be areas for shared learning across the schools. The overwhelmingly positive responses across most categories, particularly in areas crucial to student welfare and school improvement, indicate effective governance structures. The Whitehaven Academy demonstrated exceptional governance with their respondents showing 100% agreement across most categories and a strong preference for "strongly agree" responses. William Howard School's seven respondents showed consistently high positive responses (86-100%) with particular strength in values/ethics alignment, safeguarding and governance culture. Workington Academy's seven respondents displayed generally positive outcomes (70-100%) with notable peaks in safeguarding and vision alignment, though showed more variation in their responses and some uncertainty around risk management and self-evaluation.

In general, secondary LABs are operating well. Attendance is good, and vacancies are low in number and do not limit effectiveness. The level of challenge varies slightly, but is still robust in all schools. In all schools, LAB members frequently visit the school and are able to report back to the meeting on findings.

KSGS and QKS had their first LAB meetings since joining CET. At KSGS, Tom is acting Chair while the board is established. There is good appetite from pre-existing Governors and new members to join. The level of challenge at this LAB was particularly robust.

QKS had their first LAB meeting, and had an excellent presentation from Ian Hick. The Chair from the QKS Governing Body is proposed to be elected as chair, and is both committed and knowledgeable. Some

	<p>additional challenge was required from CET staff at this meeting, however the discussions were always fruitful and reflective. TWA LAB operates at an extremely effective level, and it is clear the positive impact they have on the school. At the January meeting we were joined (virtually) by a member of Newtown LAB, who wanted to see how this LAB operated.</p> <p>b. <b>Primary LABs</b> MB noted similar strengths from LAB self-evaluation as the Secondary LABs which are safeguarding, a very positive CET culture and governance. LAB members understand their role in challenging the schools and the challenge is taken seriously by schools and the Trust. Weaker areas are the difficulties with LAB recruitment which means a knock-on effect on executing their roles, and risk management. There were mixed responses on the broader role description on challenge. Executive have been supporting the LAB members with example questions to shape their challenges. We also need to investigate some poorer attendance at Primary LABs and whether this is linked to membership.</p> <p>d) <b>Update on CET AGM 15 January 2025</b> – all Members were present. Chair of Members, Mr Simpson is stepping down for family reasons. Mrs Francis is staying on as a Member until the summer. The annual report was presented and noted by Members. LH briefed members on the TIP. It was an engaging AGM. The Members are very supportive of the Trust's progress and meet again in July. Mr Polmear was voted in as Chair.</p>		
4	<p><b>Finance:</b></p> <p>GM gave an update from the report. The consolidated <b>Full Year Forecast indicates a net deficit of £103.3k</b>, compared to a balanced budget. This is a £58.2k increase in the full year deficit from Period 3. Much of the movement over the last month falls within central as costs relating to onboarding new schools are absorbed. The updated reserves policy puts target reserves in 24/25 at £3.1m. Reserves held at 31 August 2024 are <b>£2.107m</b> (audited).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2025/26 Budget update</b></li> </ul> <p><b>National Funding Formula (NFF) in 2025/26</b></p> <p>Key additional grants are rolled into the NFF from September 2025; this ensures that additional funding through these grants forms part of schools' core budgets going forward; these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' Pay Additional grant (TPAG),</li> <li>• Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution grant (TPECG)</li> <li>• Core Schools Budget grant (CSBG)</li> </ul> <p>The Government is committed to moving towards a 'hard' NFF whereby individual school budgets will be set directly by the DfE rather than independently through a locally agreed funding formula. In advance of this, local authorities continue to have flexibility to set a local school funding formula.</p> <p>The Westmorland &amp; Furness Schools Forum recommends that the NFF is used as the basis for allocating funding to schools in 2025/26.</p>		

Cumberland Council intends to reduce the formula by just over 1.1% due to matters of affordability. This reduction effects all but one of our 10 schools in Cumberland and is likely to reduce funding by circa £155k on this factor alone.

Finance managers are working through all income expectations in 25/26 to ensure grants expected are accurately represented for all schools. There are some grants which are still to be confirmed, and further information is expected on these over the coming months. The grant associated with the NI increase is also still to be confirmed.

Primaries are attracting funding on a total of 1,365 pupils in 25/26 against an expected total of 1,291 pupils in school; a funding variance of 74 pupils (note that this does not include other starters/leavers since the Oct 24 census which, upon review, is considered negligible).

Most primaries are indicating static numbers or reduced numbers for 25/26, when you consider expected reception intake numbers for Sept 25 compared to the number of year 6 leavers. The lagged funding effect means that having fewer pupils in school to what is being funded gives time to adjust for any changes to staffing, class structures etc.

Reducing numbers reflects the national picture of low birth rates. Pupil growth is a key priority and Trust leaders are pursuing a variety of initiatives to raise the profile of Trust schools, in a bid to increase pupil intake; this includes raising awareness of our schools and their achievements, open days, enhancing nursery provision and providing affordable wrap around care. Further analysis on primary pupil numbers and projections over future years will be shared with Trustees over the coming months.

The exception to this is Yanwath Primary, where pupil numbers have grown due to larger cohorts joining the school over recent years and other in year growth compared to smaller year 6 leavers. The reception intake for Sept is particularly strong at 26 pupils and most other year groups are full. Whilst this is an extremely positive position for the school, this increase in pupils creates some capacity issues in terms of accommodation, as classrooms are not large enough to deal with larger class sizes. This was a known risk for the school and potential solutions are being considered by leaders with the support of the Estates team.

Yewdale Primary reduces its PAN to 30 from Sept 25, so is restricted to this intake. This will have a longer -term benefit in that the class size can be better maintained and there should be efficiencies in associated staffing.

#### **Capital Plan**

School Condition Allocation (SCA) is a capital funding grant for multi-academy trusts with more than five academies and +3000 students. The funds are intended to maintain buildings and grounds. The Trust is expecting the notification of SCA funds for 25/26 in late March and this is expected to be in the region of £1.2m. Growth through four new schools joining the Trust in recent months, will not be recognised in the SCA grant formula until 26/27.

	<p>The Capital Programme, which details how the SCA funding will be spent, is currently being drafted and will be ready for consideration by the end of March. This Plan will require approval by the Board of Trustees. It will be necessary to circulate the Plan by email for approval due to how Trust Boards have been scheduled in 2025.</p> <p>Chair noted the relative financial stability for the Trust with some difficult issues being dealt with such as fall in pupil numbers in the Primaries.</p>		
5	<p><b>Safeguarding update and report</b></p> <p>SN presented the report written by Mrs Creighton, Safeguarding Manager. An Internal review has taken place at KSGS and an internal review at QKS is pending. This follows CST quality assurance principles. The Governance handbook on safeguarding has been well received with LAB members and Trustees. Chair met with GC for a half termly catch up which was thorough and useful.</p> <p>SN discussed transition and particular attention will be focussed on the pre-school assessment of 'school readiness'.</p>		
6	<p><b>Trust Improvement Plan (TIP) update</b></p> <p>See presentation.</p> <p>LH noted the upcoming 10-year anniversary for CET. Initial Teacher training is going well and recruitment next year is due to be higher than this year. The planning process for the TIP has begun earlier this year for 2025-26. There are three areas: School improvement; Clarifying ways of working (codification) and Workforce. How we develop leaders and onboard new staff is crucial to our success and we will share the TIP for 2025-26 for discussion at the Trust Board planning meeting in April.</p> <p>Trustee noted there are a lot of priorities, is there capacity to deliver them all and reflect on the outcomes.</p> <p>TM said we are discussing the number of priorities. Priorities will be phased with a 4-stage implementation model. Individual schools also have distinctive priorities.</p> <p>Trustee said there needs to be a balance between quality and growth, with some priorities being more important to be timely than others.</p> <p>Chair said we need to ensure the TIP is sharply focused and easy for the Heads to use.</p> <p>LH said there is a lot of work going into self-evaluation. We still need to work on daily challenges in schools and Trust Services daily challenges as well.</p> <p>Challenge: Trustee feels 14 priorities are too many.</p> <p>Trustee said it was important, with the growth of the Trust, to ensure the workforce plan is fit for growth.</p> <p>LH said workforce is one of the themes. LH agrees with Trustee, workforce planning is crucial.</p> <p>KR said HR Team are reviewing skills gaps, suspensions, strategic KPIs and a longer-term plan for the next 3 years.</p> <p>Trustee said from the absence figures shared, absence is low in the Trust which is positive.</p>		
7	<p><b>Growth</b></p>		

	<p>Jon Hayes, Head at QKS is now Executive Head at QKS and KSGS. QKS is a 'Good' school from its last Ofsted inspection. It has great outcomes projected. Stramongate PS and Castle Park PS are on progress for conversion on 1st March.</p> <p>The Southern hub is now well on the way, and it will be good to see how the hub model can work efficiently for School Improvement and Trust Services.</p>		
8	<p><b>Governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Governance Conference: 3 April 2025</b> – Programme is due out this week. The theme is 'Next Generation Governance'. Thank you to those who have agreed to host break out workshops.</li> <li>• <b>Governance Councils – 26 and 27 February.</b> LH to meet with GB and MP.</li> <li>• <b>CET Articles</b> to be updated – This will be approved by Members. The legal team are working on this.</li> <li>• <b>SRM – process for approval</b> – school resource management self-assessment by mid-March. This will be circulated to Trustees for feedback.</li> </ul>		
9	<p><b>Policies for ratification:</b></p> <p>Workington Academy Admissions Policy, 2026-27 – there is a catchment update. There has been no feedback from the consultation.</p> <p><b>Decision: Policy ratified.</b></p> <p>There was an update on expected appeals in Spring.</p>		
10	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>LMH noted that there has been a parent election for 3 parent applications for KSGS LAB. Ballot results are due later this week.</p>		

The meeting closed at 18:51

Signed by:  Date: 15/7/25

*George Beveridge, Chair of Trust Board*

**Date of Trust Board Annual Planning meeting: Monday, 28 April 2025 from 2pm to 7pm, Carlisle Racecourse**