



Cumbria Education Trust Members Meeting
Tuesday, 8th July 2025, 5pm via Teams

Present:	Lorrayne Hughes, Chief Executive (LH)
	Nick Polmear, Chair (NP)
	Kevin Phillips, Member (KP)
	Margaret Payne, Founding Member (MP)
	Debbie Francis, Member (DF)
Along with:	George Beveridge, Chair of Trust Board (GB)
	Lucy Hewson, Clerk to Trust Board (LMH)
Apologies:	None
Minutes taken by	Lucy M Hewson
Quorum required	2
Members present	4

Member support, questions and challenge in red

Responses in green

Actions in bold

1	Welcome and Apologies Welcome to all.
2	a) Minutes of the last meeting, AGM, 15 January 2025 The minutes were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting. b) Notice of any other business None c) Disclosure of interest None
3	Report from Chair of Trust Board Effective Governance The Trust Board and Committees continue to work well. There has been an improving picture as we have gone through the academic year. There has been good recruitment with some new Trustees (4) who have settled in well and been making a good contribution, challenge and scrutiny to the board. The committee structure has matured and has been adjusted with renamed Organisation Development and School Improvement Committees (which feed into the Audit and Risk Committee, particularly on risks for each Committee). We have changed the model for liaising with local governance. LABs continue to scrutinise and support at school level. There has been incremental improvement in LABs through steady recruitment. There is a new hub model which is the vehicle for Trustees, LAB Chairs and Vice Chairs to discuss relevant topics and areas for improvement. This has begun and we aim to work on consolidating this in 2025-26. Michael Donnelly, Trustee stepped down for health reasons. Thank you Michael. We are looking to recruit a new Trustee with an HR background in the next few months. Members will have final decision on this appointment. The Trust Board has a good mix of skills currently. The external environment has been challenging. This has brought a significant extra workload on the Executive team especially LH. The new Ofsted framework is scheduled for release in November 2025.

	School inspections will be suspended in September and October. There have been several schools who have gone through an Ofsted inspection in the last few months. DfE are currently in consultation on the Accountability and Regulatory regime and the outcome of this is due to be announced in the Autumn. This involves DfE regulatory powers and how they may change, LA powers regarding admissions and intervention powers around Trust and LA schools. The Curriculum and Assessment review is also taking place. We hope this is similar to the current model in that it provides a framework rather than centrally legislating the detail of curriculum for all schools. The SEND review is also taking place in the Autumn. We are pleased with the work the Trust has been doing on inclusion and SEND in the last couple of years. Financial position: there is a projected in year deficit for new schools. There is a deficit projected for budget 2025-26. GB is pleased with the financial position for the end of year as this will be a small deficit from a balanced budget. This will have been achieved given all the challenges faced this year including in year pay settlements and NI increases. We will be reporting higher reserves than last year. Four new schools brought £900k to add to reserves. Setting the budget for next year has been challenging. Due to a small increase of funding from DfE of 0.5%, £300k reserves will be used in 2025-26. This is not a sustainable long term position year on year. However, we are in a better financial position than a number of other trusts. Questions: Member asked about the deficit for this year. GB noted the £300k reserves used next year will ensure that quality of education across the Trust continues. Chair said it was great to hear governance was improving incrementally. He asked about risks. GB said the budget is the biggest issue together with pressures on public finance. The OD and SI Committee are reviewing the risks in their own areas and then report these to the Audit & Risk Committee, which is strengthening the risk process. Chair said thank you. Chair asked if it was problematic that the Curriculum & Assessment review results will come out at the same time as the new Ofsted framework. LH said a lot of change is difficult without the clarity of a White paper. There are now Inspection workshops run every term where LAB Chairs, Vice Chairs and Trustees are kept up-to-date with all these changes. Chair said that in terms of the whole Trust recognising every single school is now Good is incredible from where we were to begin. Fantastic and well done to everyone, Trustees downwards – Chair is very proud.
4	Report from Chief Executive ▪ Strategic Priorities The Trust has grown substantially in the last year onboarding four new schools within an area of Cumbria CET have not operated in before (South Cumbria). The schools joining the Trust were delayed due to the general election. This has been a huge growth and incredibly challenging for the team. There are so many positives to celebrate what these schools bring to the Trust. This growth has brought pressures on Trust Services.

	We do not want to be a mediocre Trust, we want to be at the top of our game. It is not a straight line for school improvement. The hub model is all about how we work effectively and efficiently, creating great schools in each hub. There is so much potential with the hub model and it is starting to come into fruition. The September Inset day will focus on the development of the hubs. There have been in year challenges for Finance. The existing schools have come in on budget. Four new schools brought deficit budgets (and reserves). The reserves funding will support the new schools next year. There have been 9 Ofsted visits in 2024-25 (Section 5 and Section 8). In the main they have all gone well with one exception. Aside from this exception the other inspections have all confirmed the CET self-evaluation. The Executive team has supported the Schools to ensure the best outcomes are achieved. Key Stage 2 results have been released today. There has been a 12% uplift on reading, writing and maths and achieving national average of 60%. This is a huge drive forward for some of our Primary schools. Yanwath PS has achieved 100% in reading, writing and maths and greater depth. Secondary school outcomes aim for modest gains in the summer. It has been a very busy, successful year with incredibly positive outcomes. And we have managed all the 'noise' politically and locally. The outcomes for some of the Ofsted inspections are amazing. Some of you will be attending the inaugural Student Excellence Awards this week – we have over 500 people attending to celebrate our students and we will end the year on a high. We have clear strategic priorities for 2025-26. We also have our CET @ 10 event on 25th September – from Good to Great. An impact report will be produced to show how far we have come in the last 10 years. The next step is that our schools go on a journey from Good to Great. DF joined the meeting at 17:42. LH shared the Trust Improvement Plan strategic priorities. DF said the progress was phenomenal and CET is going from strength to strength. LH thanked DF for her kind words. We hope you can all attend CET @ 10 on 25th September.
5	AOB DF offered to continue as a Member for as long as needed. LH thanked DF for this. Chair said a huge thank you - an incredible year of outcomes. LH thanked all for the great governance, challenge and support received by the Executive throughout the year. We couldn't do this without you – thank you.

Date of the next meeting: Members AGM, Monday, 19th January 2026, 5pm, Yewdale Primary School, Carlisle

Meeting closed at 17:52

Signed by:

Nick Polmear, Chair of Members Group

Date: