

Minutes
School Improvement Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 13th May 2026, 5pm, via Teams

Present	George Beveridge, Trustee (GB)
	Lorraine Hughes OBE, Chief Executive (LH)
	Catherine Reeves, Trustee (CR)
	Matt Hood OBE, Trustee, Chair (MH)
	Dr Bill Snaith, Trustee (DBS) (Trustee, not on SI Committee)
	Sandra Keaveney, Trustee (SK)
Along with	Chris Kearton, Director of Data & Assessment (CK)
	Tom Martell, Director of Strategy & Operations (TM)
	Des Bird, Director of Secondary Improvement (DB)
	Lucy Hewson, Clerk to Trust Board (LMH)
	Sue Newstead, Director of Learning Provision (SN)
	Matt Butler, Director of Primary Improvement and Professional Development (MB)
	Kath Pigdon, Executive Head (KP)
Apologies	None
Minutes taken by	Lucy M Hewson
Quorum required	3
Members present	5

Member support, questions and challenge in red

Responses in green

Actions in bold

		Actions	By who?
1	a) Welcome and Apologies No apologies b) Declaration of Interest None c) Notice of 'Any Other Business' None		
2	Minutes of the last meeting dated 11th February 2026 (Matters arising in SI Report) The minutes were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.		
3	School Improvement Report The Director of Secondary Improvement presented key developments in the Secondary schools. Please see report. Trustee asked about standardised practice on attendance and how much is adapted depending on the context of the school. DB said Attendance strategies are set in consistent principles across all schools, though contextual adaptations are required (e.g. rural transport challenges). Trustee thanked DB.		

DB noted: • Stronger attendance cultures are being embedded, supported by tailored provision teams. • Intersectionality across student groups regarding attendance (e.g. disadvantaged, SEN, gender) is closely monitored. • Four out of five secondary schools are currently above national benchmarks, though further improvement is expected. • A relaunch of attendance strategies is planned, following the May half-term. Behaviour A reduction in suspensions, particularly at Key Stage 4, was noted. Trustee asked whether the reduction in suspensions at WHS was due to a change of behaviour or a strategy implemented. DB said this improvement reflects sustained improvements in inclusion strategies and targeted support. KS4 has seen a marked reduction in suspensions over a period of time. SN said WHS piloted the Restorative Learning Zone (RLZ) with a real focus on reintegration and their Aspire provision. The introduction of restorative approaches and reintegration provision has contributed to improved outcomes. Post-16 Developments Trustee asked about the transition from BTECs to vocational (V-Level) qualifications. The rollout remains phased and uncertain, with small cohorts expected initially from 2027. Primary Phase Overview MB reported: Writing and Fluency • A Trust-wide focus on writing fluency has been introduced, including timed writing exercises and handwriting development (linked to the “4Ps”). • Early impact is evident in classroom practice. • Writing fluency is identified as a limiting factor for achieving greater depth. • Trustee asked about Trust wide moderation on handwriting. MB said there had been one assessment so far, with pupils writing for 3 minutes. The fluency of writing is critical and the speed with which pupils can write. It can be frustrating for children not to be able to express thoughts in writing as fast as they can think.		
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Disadvantaged Gap Trustee asked about specific measures taken for disadvantaged students and work on narrowing the gap looking down the year groups. MB said the disadvantaged gap for year 6 is still too significant. We will continue with what we are doing already to close the gap. Key priorities include: • Inclusive classroom practice • Foundational fluency (reading, writing, maths) • Development of background knowledge and cultural capital TM noted there are three core gaps were identified: • Foundational learning (reading, writing, curriculum access) • Attendance and engagement • Background knowledge. SATs test knowledge of history, geography and science. Earlier intervention is expected to improve outcomes in lower year groups. Action: Provide a broader dataset beyond Year 6 to show the attainment gap across all year groups. Attendance Monitoring Challenge: Chair expressed concern that attendance data trends were not sufficiently visible across reports from meeting to meeting. For examples, PA/PP year to date attendance and gaps in two of the primaries. Specific focus was placed on Persistent Absence (PA) and disadvantaged pupil attendance, including school-level comparisons. SN noted some data remains affected by contextual factors (e.g. students leaving roll but still counted). Improvements are beginning to emerge, particularly where strategies have recently been implemented. Challenge: Chair would like to see the persistent attendance improving especially in those two primary schools, and the narrowing of the gap between PP and non PP students. Trustees emphasised the need to see clear, measurable progress over time. Action:	Provide a broader dataset beyond Year 6 to show the attainment gap across all year groups. For next SI Committee, provide	
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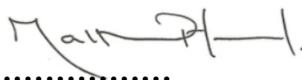
	For next SI Committee, provide clearer comparative visual attendance data on each school and national average. Chair requested week by week data improvements and narrative with actions. SN presented on Learning Provision / Inclusion (please see the report). - Progress in provision development was noted, though some areas remain challenging. Trustee asked if the inclusion grant is ringfenced for school. SN reported that Schools are accountable for reporting use of inclusion funding, with some flexibility in deployment. Staff Development A structured programme of professional development is in place, including: - Level 5 specialist qualifications - Training for teaching assistants - Induction-aligned development pathways Trustee asked about bespoke training for staff. SN noted the 'Be Ready' partnership – Level 5 specialist qualifications for support staff ie SEND, curriculum, wellbeing, ELSA training. We ensure we have distributed qualified staff in each hub area. There is also Ambition TA training with modules and all TA's will have gone through this by September as well as it being included in the new staff induction. Trustee is reassured by these qualifications. Trustee was surprised there were availability for the provision at Workington Academy. SN said that the Local Authority is working with CET on redesignating the provision so the places will be filled. Trustee thanked SN.	clearer comparative visual attendance data on each school and national average. Chair requested week by week data improvements and narrative with actions.	
4	2025/26 TIP Review (Presentations) KP joined Project 3 – Self-Evaluation – TM presented. - Work continues to strengthen consistency in self-evaluation across schools. - Alignment with inspection expectations was discussed: - Inspectors value self-evaluation but prioritise first-hand evidence - Greater emphasis is placed on how data informs action		

	Trustee asked about self-evaluation grading feeding together. Judgement is applied at school level. Trustee asked how much of our self-evaluation do we share with Ofsted inspectors. TM noted that Ofsted's responsibility is to gather first-hand information (eg assessment data and what is done with it) though self-evaluation is obviously useful for us to know our schools. Project 4 – Leadership Excellence The use of transactional analysis was welcomed as a tool to strengthen leadership communication and organisational culture. The Chair left the meeting at 17:56; George Beveridge assumed chairing responsibilities. Trustee is delighted to hear transactional analysis is being used – this is very powerful and creates a common language.		
5	Draft 2026/27 Trust Improvement Plan / Education Model (Presentations) DBS left at 18.15. The draft plan was presented, with positive feedback on the clarity of its narrative and alignment to Trust priorities and inspection expectations. Trustee asked about aligned practice when new schools join the Trust. MB noted that when new schools join, a distinction remains between: • Mandatory standardisation (e.g. assessment systems) • Preferred approaches (e.g. phonics programmes) Implementation timelines vary depending on school context and capacity. Trustee said it was good to see that the Education Model continues to evolve as a key driver of improvement, supported by ongoing Trust self-evaluation. Trustee thanked MB. LH noted the TIP is draft and is pleased to see the Trustees can see the Education model coming alive. There will also be self-evaluation of the Trust as a whole.		
6	Growth and School Improvement Staffing Model The Committee reviewed the developing model to build Trust capacity: Key Components		

	1. Network Leads • Connect schools, facilitate collaboration and share best practice • Support professional development within subject leadership and curriculum development • Do not hold line management responsibility 2. Aligned Practice Partners • Provide practical, hands-on support • Hope this to be a large team offering development opportunities to staff 3. Learning Provision / Inclusion • Increased focus on specialist staff development • Increase capacity with safeguarding practitioners • Work with English and Maths leads (School Improvement leads) • SN shared the staff flow chart and described specialist training opportunities to upskill and add to specialist practice partners Trustee asked about the difference between SI leads and Network leads. SN clarified the distinction between School Improvement Leads and Network Leads, including their complementary roles. Funding considerations for other subjects were discussed. LH noted that there are interviews planned for the Deputy Director of Secondary Improvement and also Head of Professional Development roles.		
7	Outreach Key Updates • Strong progress reported across outreach programmes, including HBHS and RISE. • DB said that engagement with Ofsted pilot initiatives is providing valuable opportunities. • CET support at Hayden Bridge HS is going well and the team are doing great work in a challenging environment. An Interim Executive Board (IEB) is currently being formed. West Lakes Development Trustee asked about Westlakes School. DB said a structured support plan for urgent improvement has been developed following a challenging inspection outcome.		

	Significant Trust resource will be required to secure improvement. Trustee said it sounded like a plan was in place. Regional Attendance Initiative Early indications suggest a positive impact. Trustee asked how much oversight from DfE there is on the initiative. DB said the programme is currently light-touch monitoring. It is well received across the sector.		
8	AOB None		

The meeting finished at 18:59.

Signed by: 

Matt Hood, Chair of School Improvement Committee

Date: 1.7.26.....

Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 1st July 2026 at 5pm, Yewdale PS Conference Room, Carlisle

Actions from the meeting:

Item No.	Action	Who	By when
2 – SI Report	Provide a broader dataset beyond Year 6 to show the attainment gap across all year groups.	CK	1.7.26
2 – SI Report	For next SI Committee, provide clearer comparative visual attendance data on each school and national average. Chair requested week by week data improvements and narrative with actions.	CK	1.7.26