Minutes
School Improvement Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 1st July 2026, 3:30pm, via Teams

Present	George Beveridge, Trustee (GB)
	Catherine Reeves, Trustee (CR)
	Matt Hood OBE, Trustee, Chair (MH)
	Dr Bill Snaith, Trustee (DBS) (Trustee, not on SI Committee)
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)
Apologies	Sandra Keaveney, Trustee (SK), Lorrayne Hughes, Chief Executive (LH)
Minutes taken by	Lucy M Hewson
Quorum required	3
Members present	**4**

Member support, questions and challenge in red
Responses in green
Actions in bold

		Action	By who?
1	a) **Welcome and Apologies** Apologies received from SK and LH. **b) Declaration of Interest** None. **c) Notice of 'Any Other Business'** None.		
2	**Minutes of the last meeting dated 13 May 2026** *(Matters Arising page 2 of SI report)* The minutes were taken as a true and accurate record of the meeting.		
3	**School Improvement Report** **Primary Update (MB)** **Attendance** • CET attendance currently **95.2%**, ranked **44th percentile** nationally. • Last year's ranking was **39th**, although overall attendance has improved. • Continued focus required on reducing the attendance gap for **Pupil Premium (PP)** pupils. • A request was made at last SIC meeting to case study PP attendance in **Stramongate school** given the size of the gap in the school. The school has implemented the Trusts' attendance strategies in the last two terms following Ross' arrival at the school. The impact has been significant, with overall attendance improving from 94.3% at HT3, to 94.7 (+0.4%pts), whilst PP attendance has increased from 89.3% to 90.6% (+1.3%pts) over the same period. The impact is even more stark when looking at the fall in the number of PP PA pupils over the year.		

	Provisional Phonics and Curriculum Outcomes • **Phonics pass rate:** 85% (a rise from last year) • **PP phonics pass rate:** 79% (national pass rate 67%) • **NTCs pass rate:** 83%, up from 79%, compared to a national average of 66%. • Reading fluency has been a key improvement priority this year, with further data provided following LAB member requests • Committee recognised strong progress in phonics and times tables **Action:** Provide School Improvement Committee with SATs outcomes following publication on 16th July. **A confidential item was discussed.** **Permanent Exclusion** SN reported that a PEX was issued last week but has subsequently been rescinded. Following LA involvement, a 12-week support programme has been agreed for the child. There have been no further permanent exclusions for the Primaries. **Attendance and Disadvantage Gap** Trustee congratulated MB and the team on improved provisional outcomes. Challenge: For the Trust to further reduce attendance gaps between PP and non-PP pupils. MB agreed this remains a key challenge and confirmed a Trust ambition of: Minimum **93.5% attendance for PP pupils** in every school. Long-term aspiration of eliminating attendance gaps entirely. Trustee noted that success at PB and Newtown shows improvement is achievable across the Trust. **Poverty Proofing and Barriers to Attendance** Trustee highlighted the importance of continuing poverty-proofing work to ensure attendance is not affected by issues such as uniform or equipment costs. SN reported further work is taking place to improve assessment of barriers faced by vulnerable pupils, including but not limited to PP pupils. MB referenced the **My Voice Counts** initiative and stressed the importance of understanding pupils' own views regarding attendance and achievement barriers. **Secondary Update (DB)** **Ofsted** • QKS received strong outcomes in the recent Ofsted inspection, with five of seven areas graded highly and the remaining two meeting expectations. • WA is currently preparing for inspection. **Staffing** • Recruitment remains strong, including in traditionally hard-to-fill subjects. • No current vacancies across secondary schools. • Leadership restructuring completed: o Mr Hayes appointed Deputy Director of Secondary. o Two new Assistant Heads appointed at KSGS. **Attendance** • Secondary attendance is **0.4% above national average**. • TWA remains an attendance outlier but is under robust LAB scrutiny.	Provide SI Comm with SATs outcomes	MB/CK

	• Disadvantaged attendance across the Trust is **1.7% below national average**. • Persistent absence rates are at or above national averages across all schools. **Behaviour** • Suspension rates remain below national averages. • PP suspension rates remain too high, although significant reductions have been achieved at TWA and WHS. **Year 11 and Post-16** • Exam attendance was stronger than anticipated, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. • Year 11 strategy successfully re-engaged pupils at risk of underachievement. • Positive Post-16 picture, with WA improving by approximately a quarter of a grade. **Potential Risks** • New leadership arrangements at KSGS. • Historic over-prediction in English results has been addressed this year. **School Support and Capacity** Chair queried capacity given ongoing support for Westlakes and other schools. DB acknowledged pressures but praised the wider secondary team, particularly KP and the WHS team. Westlakes remains in the early relationship-building phase following Ofsted monitoring activity and will require continued support. **KP and ROC Commendation** • Trustee praised Ms Pigdon and Mr O'Connor for stabilising industrial relations and helping secure a positive future direction. • The Committee requested that MH write to KP and ROC on behalf of the Committee to recognise their work. • DB reported that Regional Improvement for Standards & Excellence (RISE) has requested a case study on this successful improvement work. **Action: Chair to send a letter of thanks to KP and ROC in recognition of their leadership and improvement work at HBHS, on behalf of the Committee.** **Disadvantage and Exclusions** • Trustee noted the continuing challenge around disadvantaged students, particularly the significantly higher exclusion rates among PP students. • DB agreed that improving outcomes for disadvantaged students remains the Trust's number one priority. • Discussion referenced national concerns relating to white working-class disadvantage. **Repeat Suspensions** Trustee asked about student voice regarding repeat suspensions. DB explained: ○ Robust reintegration processes are in place. ○ Many cases involve complex family circumstances and SEND. ○ Family engagement is often a key factor. ○ Alternative provision options are more limited than previously. ○ Creative internal AP solutions are reducing suspensions, particularly at TWA. ○ Permanent exclusions remain a last resort.	Chair to send letter of thanks to KP/ROC re support to HBHS	MH

	Attendance, Mental Health and Safeguarding Updates (SN) **Attendance Enforcement** • Westmorland and Furness LA has not consistently pursued holiday attendance cases due to staffing issues. • This has contributed to an increase in term-time holidays with parents taking their children out of school. **Mental Health** • Mental Health Strategy is being refreshed. • Existing ELSA interventions have not always achieved desired impact. • Further work planned to support pupils reluctant to attend school. **Mobile Phones** • Guidance issued for implementation for the ban in schools from September. • This is expected to be a manageable change for schools and families. **A Confidential item was discussed.** **Alternative Provision (AP)** Trustee asked whether Cumberland's AP developments appear sustainable. SN confirmed efforts are being made to establish sustainable provision, although inspection and legal requirements continue to create challenges. The Trust is exploring creative solutions to address these issues. **Main Areas of Work:** 1. **Mental Health Strategy Refresh** – Continue review and strengthening of support for attendance-related mental health barriers. *(SN)* 2. **Medicines Procedures** – Roll out revised documentation, appendices and associated training from September. *(SN)* 3. **Attendance Gap Reduction** – Continue focus on PP attendance with aspiration towards minimum 93.5% attendance and reduction of attendance gaps across the Trust. *(MB / School Leaders)*.		
4	**School Improvement Risk Register** (Heatmaps) TM presented the report and said there were no significant changes since the last SI meeting. Chair noted reputational and financial risk of supporting within the RISE project (risk appetite – Averse). The two Ofsted inspections we have had so far have highlighted the increased expectations in the new framework and we have recognised the gaps in our previous preparation systems and the gaps we must close in each school. Given the expected visit dates, we have time to fix each of those gaps. The preparation documents have already been updated and are being used to prepare Tebay school. We await the KS2, 4 and 5 outcomes this Summer. TM noted the Ofsted toolkit will be updated for September. This will include more consideration of school context. For some of our schools this will be advantageous.		
5	**Indicators** TM presented Indicators report. Please see report. 005 Indicators.pdf		

	Chair noted the indicator around school engagement and the students participating in the wider curriculum. He noted that regarding the national ban on phones in school and access to social media for under 16s, that a richer offer of clubs and wider curriculum may be required. Challenge: Trustee noted the Education Model and linkage of the indicators to the Ed Model. He would expect the indicators mapped onto the components of the Ed model and see if there are any gaps. **Action: An explicit mapping of the Ed Model and the indicators to check any gaps.**	Explicit mapping of Ed model and Indicators to check any gaps	TM
6	**Aligned Practice Portfolio** TM presented on the above. 006 Aligned Practice.pdf Challenge: Trustee is interested in the 'So what?' question. We need to see benefits if we are putting resources into aligning practice. Tracking the benefits as aligned practice is implemented will be important. TM said this was helpful, thank you. The Aligned Practice paper will be brought back to the Committee and the indicators will answer the challenge of 'So what?'.		
7	**Enhanced Support Portfolio** DB presented on the above. 007 Enhanced Support SIC DBI.pdf Chair asked for more detail on the Intensive Support category. DB said that any school in need of intensive support will be led by himself as Director of Education: Standards. Academy scrutiny will review any school on the intensive support category twice yearly and there are links from the Trust Board through to the LAB. Chair said it was good to see different levels of support. He suggested putting in something beyond 'On track' – if a school is strong and stable they could make an active contribution to other schools still on the journey to on track. **Action: DB to make addition to the Enhanced Support model that an on-track school will support those further along in their journey.** Challenge: Chair agrees with the intent of the model but raised a concern regarding time and work commitments for Trustees on academy scrutiny. Chair of Trust Board agreed. DB needs to ensure the model is not onerous for Trustees. DB will ensure that the benefits for the school are clear and that this is a supportive process. It may be possible to involve Heads further.	DB to make addition to Enhanced Support model re on track schools supporting other schools	DB

8	**AOB** None.		

The meeting finished at 16:57

Signed by: …… 

Matt Hood, Chair of School Improvement Committee

Date: ……23.9.26…….
Date of next meeting: 23rd September 2026 at 5pm, Yewdale PS Conference Room, Carlisle (date tbc)

Actions from the meeting:

Item No.	Action	Who	By when	Progress
3 – SI Report	Provide School Improvement Committee with SATs outcomes following publication on 16th July	MB/CK	After 16.7.26	Included in Item 3 – 23.9.26 meeting
3 – SI Report	Chair to send letter of thanks to KP/ROC re their leadership and improvement support to HBHS	MH	ASAP	Actioned
5 - Indicators	An explicit mapping of Ed model and indicators to check any gaps	TM	16.9.26	Update on 23.9.26
7 – Enhanced Support Portfolio	DB to make addition to Enhanced Support model re on track schools supporting other schools	DB	16.9.26	Verbal update on 23.9.26 meeting