Hope SENTAMU
LEARNING TRUST

Hope Sentamu Learning Trust Board of Trustees
Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 6.00pm
Via Google Meet

Present:	Jane Lewis (Chair of Trustees) Joe McKeogh *[until 6.50pm]*	Karen Osborne Patrick Looker
In Attendance:	Helen Winn (CEO, HSLT) Wendy Munro (COO, HSLT) Georgina Holman (Governance Advisor, Clerk)	

		Action
1.	***<u>Welcome & Opening Prayer, Apologies for Absence, Any Other Business and Declarations of Interest</u>*** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which opened with a prayer. Apologies were received, with consent, from Andrew Simpkin. In relation to discussions regarding City of York Council (CYC), Patrick Looker declared an interest as CYC employees. The Chair explained that the agenda would be arranged in order that any decisions could be agreed before Joe McKeogh had to leave the meeting.	
2.	**<u>Minutes of the previous meeting, action plan and matters arising</u>** – *documents previously distributed* The main minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd January 2025 were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly approved. Actions: **1.** Laura Swan to share revised link for National College Safeguarding training. **Completed** 2. Trustees to complete required Safeguarding reading/online training and declaration. **On this agenda, item 6.1** 3. Updated Pricing Strategy document to go to next Resources Committee meeting for approval. ***4.*** Updated Uniform Policy to be circulated to Trustees via email for approval. ***Carried forward, to be shared in summer 1 for approval via email.*** **5.** Safeguarding training for Trustees to be on the agenda for the first Board meeting of each academic year. **Completed.** ***6.*** COO to identify the reason for the omission of CPOMS data from Aspire and share with Trustees. ***It was clarified that the school had been unable to access data at the time of report creation. The issue had now been resolved and had been added to the board report under item 6.*** ***7.*** Clerk and Chair to look at cycle of meetings and where best scheduled. ***To carry forward for summer 1/2.*** ***8.*** COO to report on the communication of the lettings arrangements and volunteer onboarding, in terms of safeguarding responsibilities, at the next Board meeting. ***The COO advised that this would be formally launched after the Easter break.***	 COO Chair & clerk

8. **8.1**	***<u>Committee minutes/updates (taken out of order)</u>*** ***Audit and Risk Committee minutes 26/02/2025** It was confirmed that an external audit planning meeting would be scheduled prior to the next committee meeting. A meeting with the internal auditors had been scheduled. There were no questions on the minutes. ***Resources Committee minutes 10/02/2025** Patrick Looker summarised key areas covered at the meeting. The Chair agreed to attend the next Resources Committee meeting on the 28th April in place of Andrew Simpkin. ***Standards Committee draft minutes 03/03/2025** The Chair of the Standards Committee, Karen Osborne, highlighted the potential areas of investment discussed at the committee meeting including a maths homework platform called Sparx. The CEO advised that the Trust-wide adoption of Sparx was being considered but further work was required before this could be agreed. Karen questioned whether there would be an issue in terms of disadvantaged students having online access at home and whether this would be a further area of investment for the Trust in providing devices. The COO explained that there was an option for pupils to borrow Chromebooks, which was offered at all schools. Allocating a home based device to pupils would be a very different proposal. ***DPD Committee minutes 14/01/2025** The Chair gave an overview of items that would be brought to the next term's Board meeting including the Chaplaincy Model. Attendance remained a priority issue and a recent meeting with the DfE had discussed attendance in relation to five of the six Trust secondary schools which had lower attendance against benchmarked schools. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for all four committees had been approved via email.	
16.	***<u>CYC Clerking Service Level Agreement (taken out of order)</u>*** *– documents previously distributed* *The clerk and PL left the meeting at 6.17pm* ***CYC SLA Overview** The outcome of this discussion will be added to the minutes retrospectively. It was confirmed that the Trust would continue with CYC provision for a two year period and this would be confirmed in writing with CYC. ***Action: COO to confirm clerking contract with CYC.*** *The clerk and Patrick Looker rejoined the meeting at 6.20pm*	COO
15.1	***<u>Confidential items (taken out of order)</u>*** *– documents previously distributed* *This item has been recorded as a separate confidential set of minutes.*	
4.	***<u>CEO Report</u>*** *– documents previously distributed* ***CEO Report March 25** ***HSLT Strategic Plan 2024-2027** ***Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill – impact review** The CEO highlighted the positive aspects of her report, and the outcomes of recent Ofsted inspections including the report for Burton Green which had just been shared. The CEO updated Trustees on changes in leadership at ASA where Louise Beasley was now interim Principal full time and would remain at the school to provide stability alongside Executive Principal	

Chris Mulqueen, ahead of commencing a recruitment process. The CEO advised that the teaching unions had raised some concerns and the Trust had met with all representatives together to provide a full and comprehensive response.

A DfE RISE advisor had been appointed to ASA and was currently familiarising themselves with the school prior to seeking out schools in similar contexts to look at how to broker additional relevant support for ASA. The same advisor would also take on the RISE role at the Scarborough schools in due course. It was clarified that RISE stood for Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence and was a government initiative to support schools in challenging situations to help broker bespoke support. The scheme was behind schedule and the CEO had hoped to have work undertaken in the summer term in order to have strategies in place by the start of the next academic year but could not be certain that this would now happen in time.

A Trustee queried the recruitment process for ASA. The CEO advised that a formal recruitment process would have to take place.

With reference to the external review at ASA under item 4.2 on the agenda, a Trustee noted that this clearly highlighted some of the challenges at the school and how they were promptly addressed. The CEO explained that it had been critical to have an external perspective to validate internal understanding of the issues. The challenges had not disappeared and there was still much work to be done, but progress was evident with a number of different strategies in place and visible improvements.

4.1 ***<u>Ofsted Reports</u>***

***Burton Green Primary Ofsted Inspection Report**
***Vale of York Academy Ofsted Inspection Report**
The CEO highlighted the positive report, which recognised all the work undertaken since the Principal had been in post. Improvements continued and two new colleagues had been appointed to the senior leadership team to commence in September.

***George Pindar School Ofsted Inspection Report**
A Trustee queried the changes in Ofsted visits. The CEO explained that the difference was in the methodology and there were no longer deep dives into subject areas. Short inspections were nonetheless very thorough to ensure that there had been no decline or to identify any significant progress.

A Trustee asked when schools would next be inspected following a short inspection. The CEO explained that it would be approximately four years between inspections. However, Forest of Galtres had evidenced significant progress which could see a visit within 18 months when the school would hope to achieve an outstanding rating. George Pindar School anticipated another monitoring visit within the next 18 months to two years.

The CEO updated Trustees on the leadership at Graham School where the Principal would be retiring from the end of the school year. Recruitment was underway with a view to a new appointment commencing in September. A contingency plan might be required depending on the quality of the applicants. ***A Trustee asked how the leadership team was managing at the school.*** The CEO advised that the Ofsted inspection at George Pindar had been a very positive experience which had given staff confidence and pride in the school. New senior leaders were also establishing themselves with confidence. Associate Principal Victoria Hobson was working at the school two days a week but there was a need to consider whether additional support could be offered. Three new Vice Principals would be starting with the Trust after Easter and this could allow more capacity to be provided to Graham School during the leadership transition.

3.	***<u>Ofsted Consultation</u>*** The Chair explained that the consultation included the option to feedback on the new toolkit proposals. Trustees discussed whether responses from schools should be individual or collective and the Chair encouraged Trustees to complete individual responses. The CEO advised that the only concern was the need for clarity on the time frames and schools generally did not oppose any of the proposals in the new framework. One concern raised by staff in the Alternative Provisions had been that the toolkit didn't entirely align with their approach. ***A Trustee observed that the inspection framework toolkit for inclusion mirrored almost exactly what the Trust was striving to achieve.*** The CEO agreed, particularly with respect to the curriculum. ***A Trustee asked whether Trust schools would continue to use the SEF and whether this would require a lot more work.*** The CEO advised that the Trust would continue with the SEF for the time being because it remained useful to have a self-evaluation tool and this could be adapted to incorporate more areas and with respect to the terminology if this changed. *Joe McKeogh left the meeting at 6.50pm* ***A Trustee asked what discussions had taken place with respect to attendance at the recent meeting with the DfE.*** The CEO explained that the DfE had questioned and challenged the data and the Trust's Executive Principal had been able to provide clear responses. The CEO went on to say that she had discussed the development of a playbook for attendance, similar to the approach taken with Quality of Education. Discussions were taking place at an executive level regarding the resource available across the Trust and taking a bilateral approach with attendance. This would see data and compliance as one facet and interventions and their effectiveness as another. Further ideas had been gathered from the recent DfE conference and from colleagues across the Trust. There was also the need to develop KPIs for attendance***. The Chair noted that separating out behaviour and attendance risks for secondary and primary had been suggested.*** The COO advised that this had been proposed at the recent Audit and Risk meeting and those risks would be separated in subsequent risk reports. ***A Trustee queried the level of risk for attendance at secondary level.*** The CEO explained that there were examples of good progress such as at Vale of York where a clear strategy had been in place and attendance had increased by over 3%. Other schools would have to look at the processes and the effectiveness of strategies in order to get to that point. The CEO assured Trustees that the data was consistently recorded according to strict guidelines and it was the strategies that were more of a concern. The CEO advised that it was essential that capacity was carefully managed and coordinated across the Trust. It was agreed that attendance would be a standing item on the Board agenda for the next academic year. **Action for future agendas.**	Clerk
4.2	***<u>External Reports</u>*** ***ASA external review 17th March 2025** ***A Trustee queried whether the review had been entirely open and honest about the challenges facing the academy, other than the behavioural issues.*** The CEO explained that internal truancy was the single most significant issue in terms of behaviour at the school and the impact of this on the wider school community was substantial. Addressing internal truancy would alleviate other concerns.	
4.3	***<u>Gender Pay Gap Report</u>*** ***Gender Pay Gap Report** ***Gender Pay Gap Strategy** ***The Chair observed that it was difficult to identify which actions had been completed since the strategy was agreed last July because there were no timescales.*** The COO advised that the strategy and actions all related to the current academic year. The nature of the objectives meant that these spanned the year as part of daily working strategies within the schools and teams and would not be	

	completed within specific months. There would be a report at the end of the year in which outcomes would be shared along with reflections. ***The Chair pointed out that some actions were very specific, such as the review of adverts and recruitment for unconscious bias. It would therefore be helpful to have notes to show what had been done so far.*** The CEO suggested that the action plan be RAG rated and re-circulated to Trustees to reflect the current position. ***A Trustee noted that there had been the intention to invite the HR Director to a Trust Board meeting to give an insight into some of the work underway.*** **Action: RAG rate Gender Pay Gap Strategy Action Plan and re-circulate to Trustees.** **Action: HR Director to attend next Board meeting.**	CEO MW
5.	***Risk Register*** *–previously distributed* ***February 2025 Risk Register** It was confirmed that the February Risk Register had been shared at the last Audit and Risk Committee and an updated version would be shared at the next Board meeting in May with minor amendments to see risks such as attendance separated out for primary and secondary levels. ***The Chair asked whether there were any risks to highlight with respect to leadership and management across the Trust's schools.*** The COO advised that succession planning was already included on the register. It was recognised that schools needed strong succession planning to avoid reacting to situations and continuing investment was required in order to provide capacity. Rather than list individual schools on the register, the COO suggested that succession planning could be separated into phases. The CEO proposed adding recruitment of Principals to the register because this was a known risk for all Trusts. ***A Trustee queried whether this applied to primary or secondary schools.*** The CEO explained that it applied to both phases. **Action: Recruitment and retention of Principals to be added as a risk on the risk register.**	COO
6.	***Safeguarding*** *– previously distributed* ***CPOMS Central Team Report** ***MAT Report** The COO advised that the data for Aspire had now been included. Previously, a significant CPOMS security update had been underway at the time of the last report and the school had been unable to access the data. ***A Trustee asked how the data could be compared to previous data and how Trustees could have sight of changes over time.*** The COO advised that she was working with the Trust's Director of Safeguarding, Kyle Immanuel, to produce termly reports which would then allow comparison within the reports to Trust Board. ***A Trustee noted that there remained issues with consistency of reporting.*** The COO explained that there had been spikes in reporting which correlated with new leadership and management in place at some schools. Any contextual changes would be monitored and reported. ***The Chair asked whether LGCs were seeing the data for their respective schools.*** The COO confirmed that this was shared with LGCs. The Chair added that it would be helpful to include arrows to indicate whether there was an increase or decrease in the data.	
6.1	**Safeguarding Training** Trustees were reminded to complete the required reading and declaration. ***The Chair queried the National College link.*** The COO explained that registration was required in order to access the Safeguarding Training through National College.	

	A Trustee pointed out that the training tracker document had not been updated to reflect Trustee attendance at Safeguarding training for LGCs on 23/10/24. Action: Clerk to send updated information on Trustee safeguarding training to Compliance Officer. The COO requested a Trustee replace Andrew Simpkin as a lead Safeguarding Trustee for allegations against staff. The COO outlined the context and went on to explain that the Trust was looking to introduce a non-teaching DSL role at Vale of York and ASA as a pilot. The Chair agreed to take over the additional safeguarding oversight for staff allegations and the COO proposed scheduling a meeting. **Action: Chair of Trustees to meet with COO regarding allegations against staff.**	Clerk COO & Chair
7.	**Budget Management Update** – – *documents previously distributed* ***Executive Summary Period 5** ***Consolidated Management Accounts Period 5** The COO advised that the management accounts for Period 6 were now being finalised and would be shared at the next Resources Committee meeting. A Trustee noted that funds were stable with a relatively small monthly adjustment of £28K and no concerns. ***A Trustee asked whether the financial stability would enable to CEO to achieve more and faster.*** The CEO advised that the Trust was working through the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) process and would need to conclude this before making any decisions. There were further considerations in terms of additional capacity to help manage attendance more effectively. However, the GAG funding had been confirmed. The COO added that there would also be some additional grants to come in. The COO explained that the ICFP process was very intense and scrutinised every item within a school budget and would need to be concluded. The COO went on to give examples of where decisions had been taken to recruit additional staff or redeploy staff strategically. Many of the decisions were triggered by SEND requirements and establishing strong foundations would help create capacity at a higher level. ***A Trustee noted that start budget preparations for 2025-26 would now have a more accurate base position which looked to be much more positive.*** The CEO advised that the COO's ICFP work would inform the budget for the year ahead and there were still additional funding elements being received. Once all this had been collated the financial position would be far more accurate than previously. ***A Trustee queried the anticipated grant for NI increases.*** The CEO advised that there was no confirmed information regarding how much of this increase would be covered by the grant. The COO highlighted the recent Falling Roll funding of £100K that had been awarded to both Barlby High School and Graham School. The COO informed Trustees that a management accountant had been appointed to fill the vacancy created by Helen Nozedar's appointment as CFO. The Chair thanked the COO and the central team for all the work that had gone into the executive summary report, which was very clear and useful for Trustees.	
10.	***Trustee Visits (taken out of order)*** ***Barlby High School Trustee Visit Report – January 2025** Trustee Karen Osborne described her visit to the school as a pleasure, highlighting the excellent knowledge of the Principal, who knew the context for every vulnerable child at the school. The Chair summarised a recent visit to Forest of Galtres Primary School which had been very encouraging. A written report would follow.	

9.	***Trustee Recruitment*** The Chair updated Trustees on discussions with the Diocese and Diocese of York Educational Trust regarding the Trust Board vacancies, notably with respect to Church of England representation. There were two potential candidates identified and more information would be shared when available. There was also a suggestion from the Diocese that an existing Chair of Governors join the Trust Board but this would then create a significant vacancy on the joint LGC for the Scarborough schools. The Chair intended to speak to the LGC Chair to gauge interest. Trustees agreed that the circumstances at the Scarborough schools required stability for the joint LGC at this time but it would be helpful to understand whether the LGC Chair would wish to join the Board in future. The Chair advised that another application was forthcoming for an individual who had recently met with the CEO and would be a suitable candidate to join the Trust Board or an LGC. This individual did not have any previous governance experience, however. The Chair agreed to circulate his CV to Trustees. **Action: Chair to circulate applicant's CV to Trustees.** Additionally, the CEO and Chair would be meeting with Nurole, a company specialising in sourcing diverse and experienced Trustees.	Chair
11.	***Policy Review*** The COO advised that the Uniform Policy would be circulated for approval via email. Working groups had been held with union representatives to consult on HR policies and these would be brought to Trust Board meetings for approval in due course. A Trustee requested sight of the Policy Tracker at the Audit and Risk Committee. **Action: Policy Tracker to be shared with Audit and Risk Committee.**	COO
12.	***Updates from LGCs*** - documents *previously distributed* ***Vacancies and Appointments** Trustees approved the Foundation Governor reappointment at ASA as an extension until the end of the academic year. The Chair noted the significant vacancies across some LGCS and the ongoing work required to address this. The Chair advised that the number of Foundation Governor vacancies had been highlighted to the Diocese. The Chair proposed working to support LGC recruitment with the clerk and the Trust's Executive Support Manager, Laura Swan, during the summer term. **Joint LGC proposal for Aspire and Compass.** The Chair outlined the proposal for merging the two Alternative Provision LGCs. The Chair for both, Lynn Benton, would speak with another joint LGC Chair and a representative from an external joint LGC board for a number of different provisions to gain insight into how this worked effectively in practice. Agreement and timescale were yet to be determined following discussions within LGC meetings. **Staff governor term of office** Trustees discussed whether there was a benefit in reducing the term of office for staff governors in the context of the challenges with governor recruitment. It was agreed that staff and unions should be consulted before any decision was made. The CEO suggested this be postponed given the other current priorities for the Trust. It was agreed that no change would be made at that time.	
13.	***Summary of items to report to LGCs***	

	• LGCs to be notified of the continuity of the clerking service from CYC, and to highlight the overrun charge being introduced. • Governor conference will take place on the 24th June 4-8pm in York. This will incorporate some training on the new attendance reporting that will come into effect from September. There will also be an update on the new Ofsted framework.	
14.	***Any Other Business*** There was no other business to discuss.	
15. **15.2**	***Confidential items (continued)*** *– documents previously distributed* ***Confidential Minutes from the Trust Board meeting on the 22nd January 2025** The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were approved. *The following discussion has been recorded in a separate confidential set of minutes.*	
17.	***Dates and times of next meetings*** Wednesday 21st May 2025, 6pm - online Wednesday 16th July 2025, 6pm – in person	

The meeting closed at 8.02pm

These minutes were approved by the Heartwood Learning Trust Board at their meeting on 21st May 2025

Action Points from the Hope Sentamu Learning Trust Board meeting
held on 26th March 2025

	ACTION	ITEM	WHO	WHEN
1.	Updated Uniform Policy to be circulated to Trustees via email for approval.	*2*	*Wendy Munro*	*21/05/25*
2.	Clerk and Chair to look at cycle of meetings and where best scheduled.	*2*	*Clerk and Jane Lewis*	*Summer term*
3.	COO to confirm clerking contract with CYC.	*16*	*Wendy Munro*	*Completed*
4.	RAG rate Gender Pay Gap Strategy Action Plan and re-circulate to Trustees.	*4.3*	*Wendy Munro*	*21/05/25*
5.	Action: HR Director to attend next Board meeting.	*4.3*	*Mandy Watson*	*21/05/25*
6.	Recruitment and retention of Principals to be added as a risk on the risk register.	*5*	*Wendy Munro*	*21/05/25*
7.	Clerk to send updated information on Trustee safeguarding training to Compliance Officer.	*6.1*	*Clerk*	*21/05/25*
8.	Chair of Trustees to meet with COO regarding allegations against staff.	*6.1*	*Wendy Munro*	*21/05/25*
9.	Chair to circulate applicant's CV to Trustees.	*9*	*Jane Lewis*	*21/05/25*
10.	Policy Tracker to be shared with Audit and Risk Committee.	*11*	*Wendy Munro*	*21/05/25*

Items for future meetings:
Trust Self Review
Non-teaching staff career development case studies.
Risk Management Training
Policy tracker to be shared at Audit and Risk committee
Attendance as standing item on board agenda for 2025-26