



Ten Year Impact Report

2015-2025

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Foreword

Ten years ago, I was approached by the Department for Education to support some schools in Cumbria. I had helped other schools before, and as I learned about the scale of the challenge, I was keen to play my part. The Department asked if I would be interested in setting up a trust of schools. At that point, I didn't really know what that would involve, or how it would help. What I did know was that there were children, families, and communities who needed support, and that we had a chance to do something that could make a real difference.

In those early days, it felt like a leap into the unknown. We were creating something new, and with that came uncertainty, questions, and no small amount of risk. But it also came with excitement, a sense of purpose, and the conviction that together we could achieve more than on our own.

Today, I can look back and reflect with pride. Seventeen schools have now joined our Trust, and together we have built an organisation that has become a force for good in the lives of thousands of young people. We have taken schools that were struggling and helped them to flourish. We have created a community of staff who support, challenge, and inspire one another. We have built systems and structures that allow us to focus relentlessly on what matters most: ensuring every child has the best possible start in life.

The journey has not been easy. There have been challenges along the way - some expected, others completely unforeseen. Through them all, one thing has remained constant: our belief that education transforms lives and our determination to provide the very best for the children in our care.

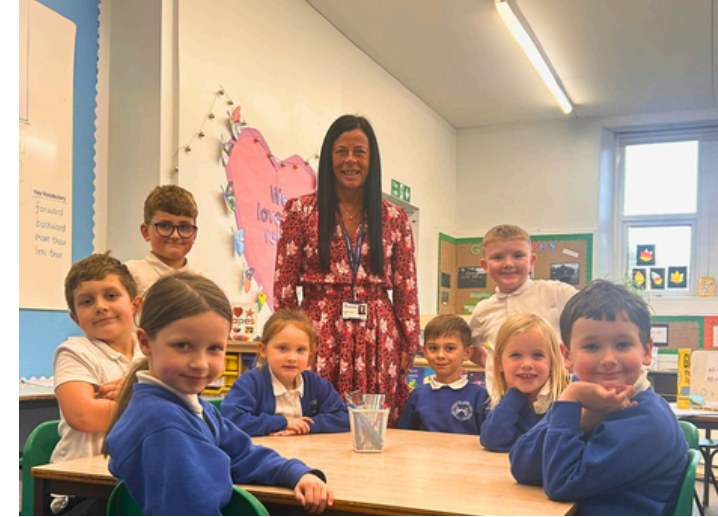
If I could go back those 10 years, I would have a lot of advice to share with my younger self. I would remind myself that success is rarely quick or simple, but with perseverance, collaboration, and integrity, extraordinary things are possible.

Being good is not the end of our story. Our ambition is to be great. Greatness does not mean occasional moments of excellence, it means excellence every day, for every child. We will ensure high educational standards and inclusion go hand in hand, with the magical moments of childhood.

From good to great: this is our mission for the years ahead. But we could not have come this far without the people who have walked this journey with us. To our staff, who give their best every single day for our pupils - bringing dedication, creativity, and care into every role. To our governors, who provide wisdom, challenge, and stewardship - ensuring that our leaders remain ambitious, accountable, and rooted in the values we hold dear. To our communities, who place their trust in us - supporting our schools, celebrating their successes, and standing by us through challenges. And to our partners, who share their expertise, resources, and encouragement - helping us to extend our impact and raise our ambitions.

We have created Cumbria Education Trust (CET) together. Every achievement is the product of collective effort, of people who believe that education transforms lives and who act on that belief every day. The past ten years are a story of shared endeavour and shared success. The next ten years will be no different. With the same spirit of deep collaboration and commitment, we will continue to improve, to serve, and to move with confidence from good to great.

Lorraine Hughes
Chief Executive



Cumbria Education Trust

Who we are

Cumbria Education Trust is a leading multi-academy trust in Cumbria, established to advance education for public benefit.

We are committed to providing high-quality education across our family of primary and secondary schools, ensuring every child has the opportunity to achieve their potential.



Our Schools



Our Vision

+

Values

Our vision is to transform lives and strengthen communities through the power of learning. We are committed to enabling every young person to reach their full potential through excellent education, enrichment and wider opportunities.



Respect



Responsibility



Resilience

Our People



Our Impact

We have built strong foundations over the last decade, rooted in our values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience. These foundations allow us to take the next steps from good to great, guided by our motto: Be The Best You Can Be.

This report sets out some highlights from our story. Each section captures a different aspect of our impact – from Ofsted grades to community confidence, from pupil behaviour to attendance, and from enriched experiences to civic contribution. Taken together, they tell the story of a Trust that has grown stronger year by year and set the stage for our next chapter.



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1 – Our Ofsted Grades Are Now *All 'Good' Or Better*

When our Trust began, many of the schools that joined us had previously been judged poorly by Ofsted – some placed in ‘Special Measures’. Turning those schools around was never going to be simple, but it was central to our mission.

Today, every one of our schools has been rated ‘Good’ or better in all areas. These judgements reflect the dedication and perseverance of our staff, as well as the trust and support of our communities.

We know Ofsted judgements are not a perfect or complete measure of a school’s quality, but they do provide an important benchmark. Securing these ‘Good’ ratings shows that we have achieved the first phase of our improvement journey: becoming consistently good across the Trust. The challenge now is to take the next step – from good to great.



“The school is highly ambitious for pupils to succeed, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations and are keen learners.”

Longtown Primary School Ofsted Inspection, 2025

“Leaders have successfully created a school that pupils want to attend. The calm and purposeful learning environment, together with the plethora of extra-curricular opportunities, has helped to achieve this.”
William Howard School Ofsted Inspection, 2025

Ofsted Record of Improvement

School Name	Before Joining CET	After Joining CET	Current Self-Evaluation
Castle Carrock Primary School	Requires Improvement	Good with Outstanding	Good with Outstanding
Caldew Lea Primary School	Inadequate	Good with Outstanding	Good with Outstanding
Castle Park School	Good	Good	Good
Hensingham Primary School	Inadequate	Good	Good
Longtown Primary School	Inadequate	Good	Good with Outstanding
Newtown Primary School	Inadequate	Good with Outstanding	Good with Outstanding
Northside Primary School	Good	Good	Good
Petteril Bank School	Good	Pending	Good
Stramongate Primary School	Good	Good	Good
Tebay Primary School	Good	Good	Good
Yanwath Primary School	Good	Good	Good with Outstanding
Yewdale Primary School	Inadequate	Good	Good
Kirkby Stephen Grammar School	Inadequate	Good	Good
The Queen Katherine School	Good	Pending	Good
The Whitehaven Academy	Inadequate	Good	Good
William Howard School	Good	Good	Good with Outstanding
Workington Academy	Inadequate	Good	Good



2 – We Have Earned The Trust Of Our Communities

When many of our schools first joined the Trust, community confidence was low.

At The Whitehaven Academy, for example, a year group designed for 180 pupils attracted just 12 first-choice applications. It was a stark sign that trust had been lost.

Since then, applications have risen steadily. This is true of other schools in the Trust. Demographics play a part, but the upward trend is clear: families once again see our schools as safe, nurturing, and ambitious places for their children.

Our growth is not simply about filling places; it is about rebuilding confidence and pride. Families now choose our schools with certainty, knowing their children will be supported, challenged, and given every opportunity to succeed.



“Leaders, including those at the Trust, have placed The Whitehaven Academy at the heart of the local community.

Historically, outcomes at the school have not been strong. However, leaders have taken the necessary steps so that most pupils now achieve well.”

The Whitehaven Academy Ofsted Report, 2023

First Choice Applications at The Whitehaven Academy

In 2018, only 6% of families chose the academy as their first-choice school. By 2025, all available spaces were allocated to first-choice applications.

+12

Tebay Primary School

Parental
recommendation
rate versus the
national average
percentage point difference

+9

The Whitehaven Academy

3 – We Have Ensured Excellent

Pupil Behaviour



Our pupils deserve disruption-free learning. When expectations are clear and consistently upheld, schools become safe, calm, and purposeful places. In such environments, staff enjoy their work, pupils focus on learning, and everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be.

At CET, behaviour is never left to chance – we recognise it as a bedrock of school improvement. We teach pupils how to behave, linking expectations to our shared values of respect, responsibility, and resilience. We also recognise that pupils sometimes get things wrong. In those moments, we provide support that helps them reflect, reset, and make better choices.

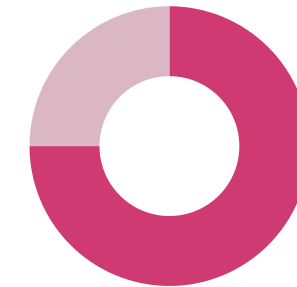
Recent Ofsted inspections have judged behaviour in several of our schools to be outstanding, a reflection of the strength of our culture. Our own internal reviews confirm that classrooms are calm and disruption is increasingly rare. Stakeholder surveys add another independent lens: staff, pupils, and parents overwhelmingly report that behaviour is positive and improving year-on-year.



Scan to read CET's behaviour case study:
Building a Culture of Positive Behaviour



Key Behaviour Statistics



Three out of our last four graded Ofsted inspections have been rated 'Outstanding' for Behaviour and Attitudes



Teachers report that behaviour is less disruptive to learning (18 percentage points higher) than the benchmarks from the National Behaviour Survey

"Pupils learn in an extremely calm and purposeful environment. They enjoy their lessons and focus exceptionally well."

Newtown Primary School Ofsted Report, 2025



4 – We Have Built Strong

Organisational Foundations

The core of our work is about the interactions between our teaching staff and our pupils. For this to happen, a lot of support needs to happen behind the scenes, and we have built these strong foundations so that our teachers and leaders can focus their energy on the most important challenges.

A financially secure Trust is a resilient Trust. We have grown our reserves year on year, giving us the ability to invest strategically, weather uncertainty, and plan for the long term.

Clean financial audits demonstrate our commitment to transparency, accountability, and good stewardship of public funds. This strong financial footing is not an end, but the platform that enables us to achieve our goals.



Financial reserves within the DfE guidance



Clean financial audits every year



Strong governance standards



Excellent safeguarding audits



High staff retention rates



5 – We Have Transformed

Historically Weak Schools

The Whitehaven Academy and Workington Academy, two of our neighbouring secondary schools on the west coast of Cumbria, have undergone remarkable transformations. Their predecessor schools were placed into special measures by Ofsted and faced significant challenges. Today, both are thriving: they have secured Good judgements from Ofsted, become oversubscribed, improved examination outcomes, and established a successful joint sixth form.

In Carlisle, another pair of neighbouring schools, Newtown Primary School and Caldew Lea Primary School, have also achieved transformative journeys. Both are now judged Good by Ofsted, with Outstanding grades for Behaviour and Attitudes and for Personal Development. Historically, all four of these schools were placed into Ofsted's lowest category.

The story of these schools is one of hope and renewal, as they journey from good to great.

"We now have a strong and innovative curriculum that is helping students progress to their next step. We have bucked the national trend of declining standards of attendance, with attendance now above the national average for the first time."

Nigel Youngman, Headteacher at The Whitehaven Academy



"We are thrilled with the outcome of this (Ofsted) inspection, but we're not standing still. We remain focused on further improvement and helping every child to flourish. This result is not just a celebration of where we are – it's a launchpad for where we're going next."

Mhairi Roberts, Headteacher at Newtown Primary School



18



2014

'Special Measures' to 'Good'



Today



2017

'Special Measures' to 'Good'



Today



19

6 – We Prioritise Foundational

Learning For Success



Mastering the basics of learning is essential, so that every pupil can access the curriculum. We prioritise early reading and learning times tables, which gives pupils the confidence to tackle more complex knowledge and skills, ensuring all pupils are ready for the next phase of learning.

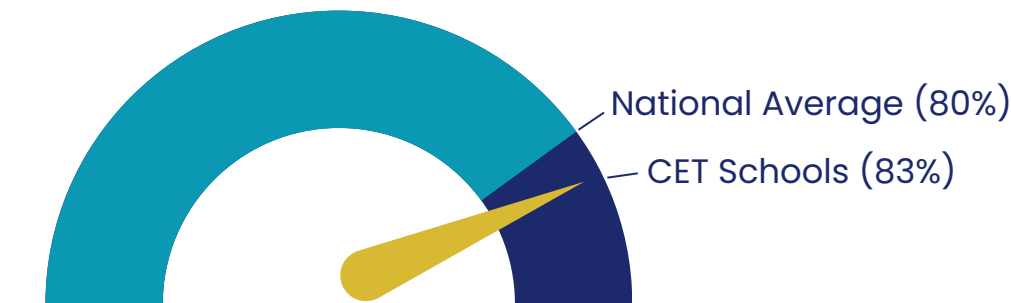
Securing the basics is not just about test results – it is about building confidence and readiness for further learning. Pupils who can read independently and recall multiplication facts with ease approach new challenges with resilience and self-belief, shaping positive attitudes to learning.

Collaboration across our schools has been central to this progress. At Petteril Bank School, for example, every pupil achieved full marks in the Multiplication Tables Check – a remarkable outcome that demonstrates what is possible when expectations are high and support is strong. Successes like this are celebrated Trust-wide, raising ambition and spreading effective practice.



Reading Outcomes

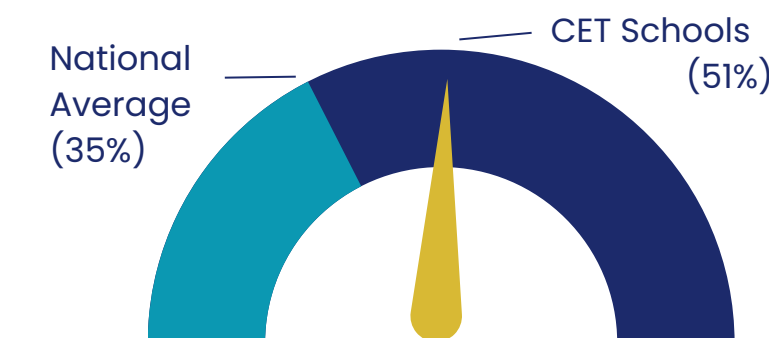
The phonics screening check pass rate is 3 percentage points better than national average.



Mathematics Outcomes

In the Multiplication Tables Check across our schools, 51% of pupils scored full marks, which is 16 percentage points above national average.

51%
pupils scored full marks in 2025



7 – We Have Enriched *Learning Experiences*

Alongside our focus on academic success, we recognise the vital role that trips, clubs, and extra-curricular activities play in shaping pupils' school experience. These opportunities are not an add-on – they are an integral part of our curriculum. They broaden horizons, nurture talents, and help pupils develop the confidence and character to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. Just as importantly, they create a sense of belonging by connecting pupils to their peers, their school, and the wider community.

Every school in the Trust offers a vibrant programme of enrichment and this strength is consistently highlighted in Ofsted inspections. Several of our schools have received 'Outstanding' judgements for personal development, a recognition of how central these experiences are to our pupils' growth.

Enrichment also brings our schools together. Joint activities, events, and competitions allow pupils and staff to connect across the Trust, sharing experiences and building friendships beyond their own school community. These opportunities not only make school life richer, but they also reinforce our vision of providing a well-rounded education that develops the whole child.

"Pupils benefit from the school's commitment to pairing academic rigour with personal development. They eagerly participate in the vast array of opportunities to discover and nurture new talents and interests."

William Howard School Ofsted Report, 2025

School Trips



CET Events



Partnerships



Competitions



Enrichment Activities



8 – We Have Raised Pupil Attendance

High pupil attendance is both a vital component of a great school and a reliable measure of how well a community is working.

Strong attendance reflects the quality of education, safety from bullying, the richness of our educational offer, and, ultimately, the sense of belonging that staff build with pupils. Research consistently shows the link between belonging, wellbeing, and attendance, underscoring why culture matters every bit as much as systems.

Attendance has become a strength across the Trust. Our overall figures are robust, and our schools compare favourably with their DfE 'family' of similar schools – even against the challenging national backdrop that followed the pandemic.

A key factor in this success is structured collaboration. Schools share effective practice with one another and adapt promising approaches to their own contexts. We also look outward, learning from the wider system and integrating new insights into our work.



On average, our attendance is now in the **top third of schools**.

Schools that have been part of the Trust for longer are typically performing better.



“The school values strong attendance. It has implemented effective strategies that have significantly improved pupils’ attendance over the past year. As a result, attendance rates are now high.”

Tebay Primary School Ofsted Report, 2025

Last year, because our attendance was above the national average, it meant that eight extra classes of pupils avoided persistent absence.



Scan to read CET's attendance case study: **School Trust's Attendance Strategy Delivers 'Huge' Learning Gains Amid National Crisis**



9 – We Have Created *Inclusive Schools*

At CET, inclusion means more than simply providing additional adult support. Our mantra is 'provision, not hours' – focusing on the quality of strategies and interventions, rather than the quantity of teaching-assistant time. This approach has empowered teachers and SENCOs to tailor provision precisely to each child's needs.

The impact has been clear. An independent *ImpactEd* study found that our SEND toolkit improved both the quality of teaching and teachers' confidence in adapting lessons.

Ofsted inspectors have praised the precision with which provision is matched to pupils' needs. Outcomes are improving too: in 2023–24, a significant number of pupils with SEND achieved or exceeded expectations at Key Stage 2, with some working at greater depth. Parent surveys also show higher confidence, fewer complaints, and greater trust in our schools.

Inclusion in practice is delivering better learning and brighter futures for every child.

Scan to read the independent *ImpactEd* case study: **Inclusion in Practice**



Data from the *Sutton Trust Fair School Admissions Analysis* shows that CET schools reflect their local communities by admitting 2.7% more pupils who are eligible for free school meals than live locally.



"Pupils speak kindly to each other and to the adults in school who care for them well. They care deeply for each other. Everyone is valued and included at this school."
Caldew Lea Primary School Ofsted Report, 2024



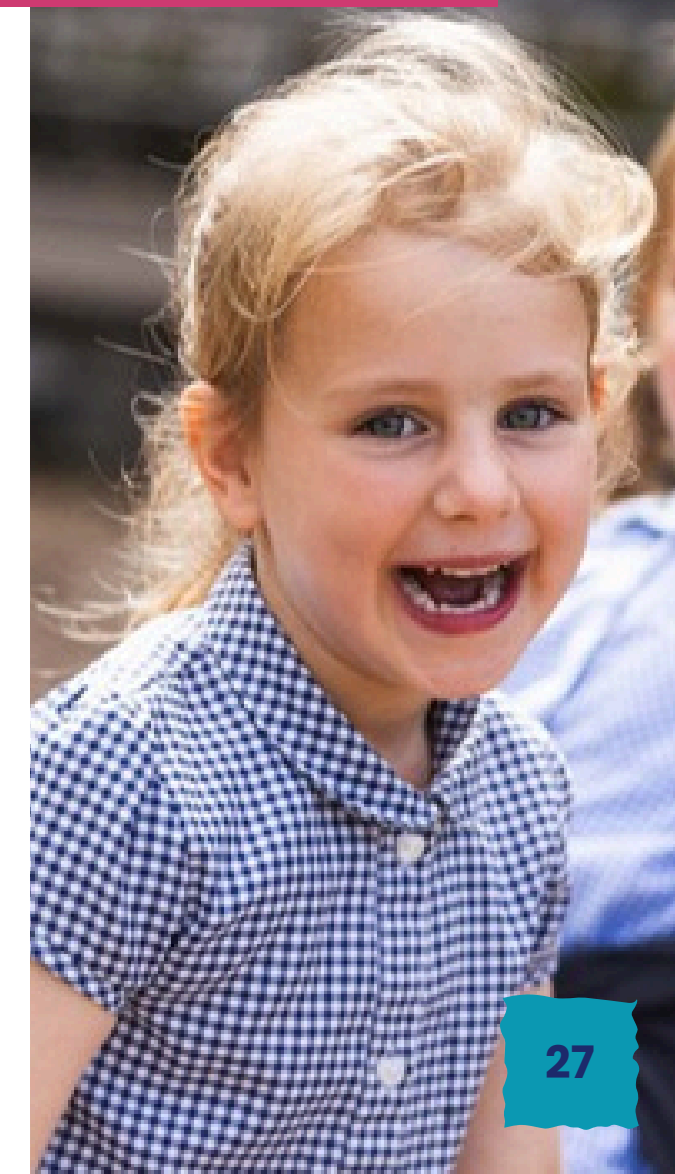
Parent Quote

"Wow, what a journey from all the way back in 2016 to where the academy is at now!"

I'm not surprised that our academy is among the best in the country – the headteacher and staff have created a warm, friendly and welcoming environment for our children to thrive.

CET has given the school the structure and support it needed and deserved from the very beginning when it first became an academy."

Mr and Mrs Agnew, parents at The Whitehaven Academy



10 – We Have Contributed To The Wider System

Our core mission is to improve our own schools for the benefit of our pupils. We also see ourselves as active contributors to the wider school system – locally, regionally, and nationally. We believe these goals reinforce each other: the stronger our schools become, the more we can give back, and the more we contribute, the more we learn.

Over the past decade, we have taken part in initiatives that have improved attendance, strengthened community engagement, and received positive recognition beyond our Trust. We have also made it a priority to share our expertise with others – providing tailored support to schools and trusts across the region. Our guiding principle is simple: be useful and add value.

A recent example is our new Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme, launched in 2024 to help meet the regional need for more high-quality providers. Early feedback has been very encouraging, with trainees reporting that they feel well-prepared for the classroom. Many have joined our own staff team, while others have gone on to secure roles in neighbouring schools.

We also continue to see the local authority as a key strategic partner. Through projects such as the Family Connector initiative, we have used our capacity and expertise to meet local needs, building stronger ties with communities and extending our impact beyond our own schools.

In short, we are committed not only to the success of our pupils but also to the health of the wider system. By sharing, supporting, and leading where we can, we are helping to shape an educational landscape where every school – and every child – has the chance to thrive.



Initial Teacher Training

in partnership with



Scan to read the case study:
**Trainee teacher talks: from
veterinary science to
teaching science**



“I have thoroughly enjoyed the ITT programme – it has been a supportive and enriching experience. It’s clear that the training provider and tutors are truly passionate about education and were absolutely committed to our success, both within the programme and within our future careers”.

Abby Kemp, ITT Trainee 2024-2025

Family Connector Project

The Family Connector Project supported over 9,000 pupils, families and staff. The project focused on mental health, family relationships, resilience and attendance. We delivered programmes to support families, staff development and community events.

Scan to watch
the impact video:
Family Connector
Project 2024



“The course gives you a lot of knowledge, a lot of insight, a lot of reassurance, plus a lot of support from the course but also from the group. I walk out (of the sessions) and I feel so thankful.”

Parent who took part in the Family Connector Project, 2024

9,000
people
reached

2,000
families
benefitted

100%
of schools
recommend

80%
increase in pupil
confidence

The Next Ten Years:

From Good To Great

Looking ahead, it is tempting to imagine what the next decade will hold. Yet, if the past ten years have taught us anything, it is that the future rarely unfolds exactly as expected. What we can say with certainty is that we have journeyed from being a Trust defined by challenge to one defined by opportunity. The task before us now is to take the next steps, but what does that mean practically?

First, it means maintaining a focus on what happens in classrooms. Great schools are not defined by buildings or policies, but by the thousands of daily interactions between young people and adults. Our responsibility is to ensure that every pupil arrives ready to learn, and every teacher is fully equipped to teach brilliantly. If we get this right, every child will experience excellence every day.

Second, it means deepening purposeful collaboration across our Trust. Over the past decade, we have seen the power of schools working together under a shared governance structure: pooling resources, solving problems collectively, and raising standards through mutual support. In the years ahead, this spirit of collaboration will matter more than ever.

Finally, it means anchoring everything we do in the best interests of children. Strategies and systems matter, but they are never the goal. The true measure of success is found in the lives of our young people: their confidence, their aspirations, their fulfilment, and their readiness for the world.

The next decade will bring challenges we cannot yet see. But with a clear focus on classrooms, a strong culture of collaboration, and an unwavering dedication to our pupils, we can step forward with confidence. This is how we will move from good to great.



Moving our system from good to great for young people

We are proud of the role we have played as system leaders within Cumbria and beyond over our first decade. As we enter our second, we recognise that there is more to do, and that we have a distinctive opportunity to be a force for good in this place we call home.

Our approach is simple: be useful. We will continue to share our expertise generously, supporting others wherever we can, and contributing to the wider education system with humility and purpose.

In the next ten years, we will build on our strong foundations and continue to work more strategically with partners, to shape a system that better supports every young person. By strengthening both our schools and the wider system in which they sit, we can create opportunities that no school, and no trust, could generate alone. In doing so, we will honour our responsibility not just to our own pupils, but to communities of Cumbria and to the future we all deserve.

I've had the pleasure of working closely alongside colleagues from CET for many years. What consistently stands out is their unwavering commitment to the success and wellbeing of every young person across Cumbria, paired with a remarkable professional generosity in supporting anyone who shares their mission.

I look forward to further strengthening this partnership and the positive outcomes it continues to deliver.

Natalie Ruane, Founder, Just People



www.cumbriaeducationtrust.org

