

Annual report to shareholders 2019



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Our purpose

We believe that every young person, through access to a great education, should be able to realise their potential, regardless of where they live or their circumstances.

Our vision

Herts for Learning will be the company of choice for services, resources and products, helping those we work with to deliver a great education.

Our values



Trusted

We are trusted by those we serve and trust each other because we are seen as experts, offering credibility and experience in our chosen fields; we recognise and respect and demonstrate the role that each colleague plays to deliver our purpose and vision.



Inspirational

We believe in the power of education to help young people realise their potential and inspire those we work with to strive towards this purpose; we are passionate and resilient and show we are capable of adapting to change and willing to challenge ourselves; we innovate and evolve to meet the challenges of the changing environment.



Collaborative

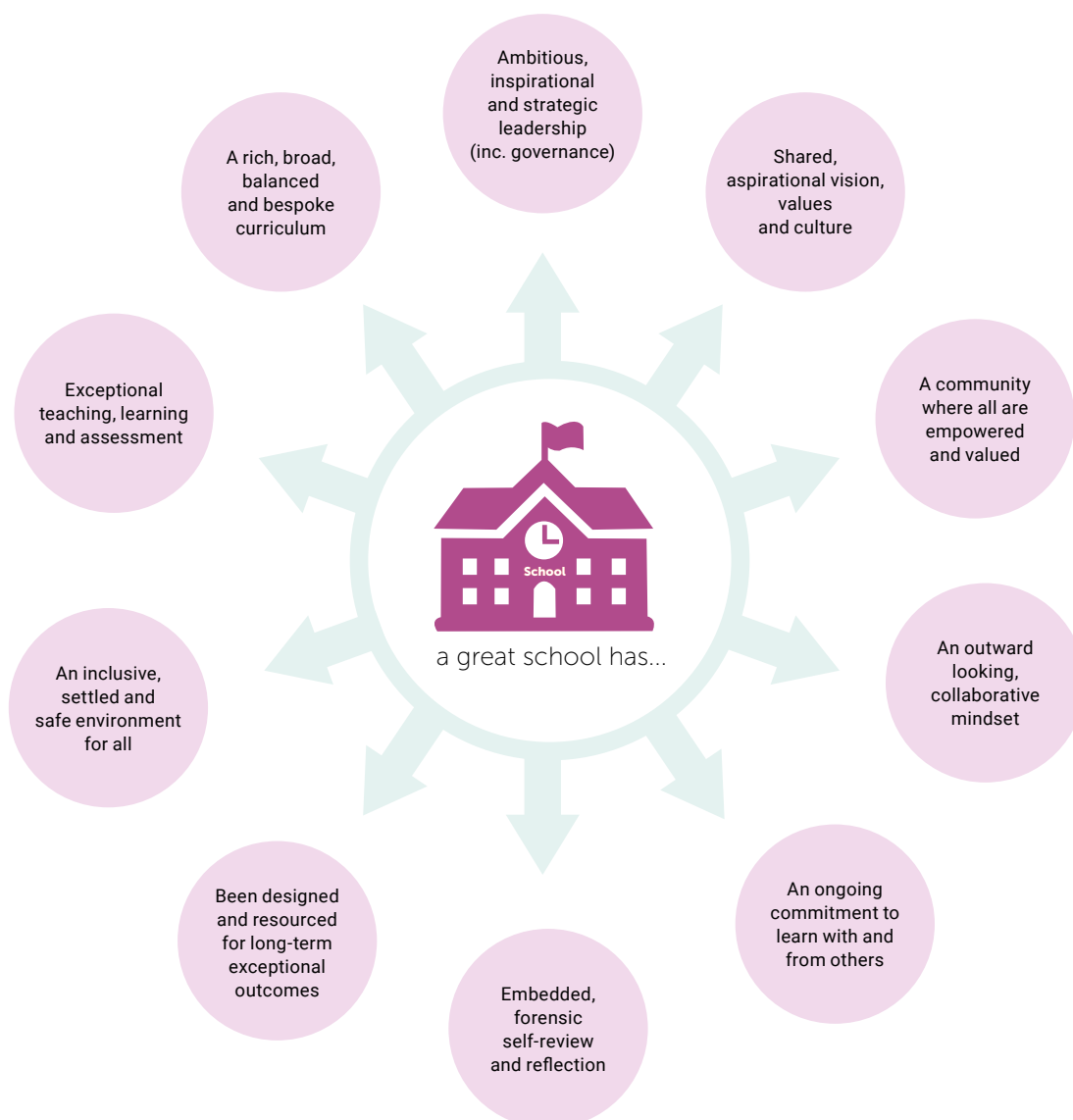
We are stronger together and work as a cross-company team to overcome challenges; we recognise that overall company objectives outweigh individual or team objectives; we pursue our purpose by working in partnership with others.

The Great School Framework[©]

A great school recognises that when the community is involved and empowered, the outcomes for pupils are improved. The great school seeks to embed a culture of active engagement with stakeholders to understand and build upon the narratives, experiences and perspectives of the whole community and meet the needs of all groups.

Designed to help school leaders review and reflect on their schools' strengths, areas for further development and shaping of their strategic planning, Herts for Learning's *The Great School Framework*[®] is based on the learning from the London Leadership Strategy's Going for Great programme, national research and Institute of School Business Leadership findings. The research has been further built upon by our experienced practitioners in our Business Services and Education Services teams to produce a model of the universal features of a great school.

Due to be launched in September 2019, via an online portal, the Great School Framework[®] contains detailed descriptors behind each of the ten lenses, including lists of Herts for Learning teams, services and resources, as well as a range of other free and low-cost resources that can support schools in developing, measuring and auditing the features of a great school.



Chair's message



This is my first Chair's message since assuming this role in September 2019, in a year that has seen considerable flux in our Board, as those Directors from our inception reach the end of our two-term limit, and others move on with career changes. All non-executive directors volunteer our time and expertise because of our passion for our purpose to enable every young person, through access to a great education, to realise their potential, regardless of where they live or their circumstances. Consequently, I want to acknowledge and thank Mike Collier, Amanda Godfrey, Nigel Ludlow, Kate Smith and Catherine Tallis for their wise counsel and commitment now that they have retired from our Board over the past year.

I am sad to note that I too will step down as Chair in March 2020, as I reach the end of my own second term as a Non-Executive Director. Therefore, with my own short tenure and with so many new directors, I am focused on building Board teamwork and performance to leave Herts for Learning (HfL) and our next Chair with access to Board advice and governance that is second to none.

We are again fortunate with our renewed Board to have an excellent breadth and depth of diverse experience: education and business, legal, human resources, strategy and financial. I am already delighted to see energetic debate and broad engagement of our directors throughout the HfL community.

HfL bridges two paradigms, the wonderful passion of educating our children, and the pragmatism of the world of business in which we must survive and thrive to continue with our purpose. All of us at HfL need to help each other to understand and appreciate the differing imperatives and perspectives of each of these communities, so important for our success. Only by embracing this diversity will we cement the professional and personal respect for each other that will make us a truly great organisation. This starts with the example that we set at Board.

I am confident, and inspired, by the high-quality and impressive potential that we have in our employees and contractors, in our outstanding Executive team, and in our excellent Board of Directors. Together, we will ensure that HfL continues to be the schools company of choice, helping those we work with to deliver a great education.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RB".

Robin Barrett
Chair of the Board

Our strategy

Our refreshed strategic plan continues to build on the success of Herts for Learning over the past five years. At the heart of our strategy is the continuous improvement of our offer to Hertfordshire schools.



Managing Director's overview



Herts for Learning (HfL) is operating in an increasingly challenging environment for our shareholders and customers. In this context, we know we must continue to deliver both value for money and tangible results in all that we do. We must also manage our resources prudently to ensure that we have the financial stability and security for the long term.

We believe that we have continued to find the right balance this year, continuing to deliver for all our stakeholders in the short term, whilst also investing for the longer term. We have continued to develop new products and services, whilst continuously improving our offer to Hertfordshire schools and settings. This focus lies at the heart of all that we do.

We have made an important investment to strengthen our digital offer, acquiring Modern Governor, the leading national online training product for Governors. In tandem, we have signed a long-term partnership with Learning Pool that will combine our content knowledge with their online training development capability, allowing us to introduce new and improved online training content across all our services in a timelier manner.

The case studies included in this report demonstrate the breadth of the service we provide to schools and settings, and our focus on ensuring that we can evidence the impact of what we do. Another example of the value we deliver has been our focus on assisting schools that are in immediate financial difficulty. Through a series of workshops with close to 70 of the most vulnerable primary schools and Early Years settings in the county, we have been able to support over 80% of them to deliver a substantially improved financial position and reduce potential deficit positions by over £1m.

None of this work would be possible without our continued focus on and investment in our people. We continue to implement our people strategy that supports the recruitment, development and retention of experienced professionals who bring the necessary expertise to help headteachers, chairs of governors and teachers deliver great results. We have introduced an extended programme of learning modules to assist our staff in deepening and broadening their skills. At the same time, we are continuing to develop our internal talent through investment in young people, particularly in the support and development functions of HfL. We now have a work experience programme and seven colleagues completing apprenticeships with HfL, with a strong record of developing their careers over an extended period.

I am tremendously proud of the work we do but I recognise that this would not be possible without the partnership between HfL, Hertfordshire County Council, schools and settings across the county. I would like to thank you all for this partnership and the support you give us to continually improve our service for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Andrew de Csilléry'.

Andrew de Csilléry
Managing Director

Investing in the common good:

Teach in Herts – Teacher Recruitment Events

Teach in Herts is an award-winning school recruitment support service, dedicated to and funded by shareholding Hertfordshire schools and managed by Herts for Learning.

Herts for Learning aims to support Hertfordshire schools to attract, develop and retain high-calibre teaching professionals through marketed recruitment events and campaigns, encouraging both new talent into the profession and attracting existing practitioners towards the development opportunities and support networks available to Hertfordshire schools. This remains high on the agenda for schools as one of their biggest operational challenges.

As part of our strategy of investing any surplus in common-good activities, over the past year we invested £100K in teacher recruitment activities and events, for the benefit of our shareholding schools. This allowed us to expand our teacher recruitment events from two to five, with three satellite fairs taking place in Watford, Letchworth Garden City and Cheshunt, at schools on the county borders to extend its reach and encourage the attendance of out of county delegates. We also held two new 'Get into Teaching' events in Watford and Letchworth Garden City, with targeted local marketing alongside the Department for Education (DfE) national advertising.

[Click here](#)

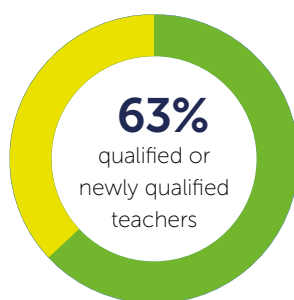
Across the five Teach in Herts Teacher Recruitment events in 2018/19:

509 attendees

(+16% on 2017-18)

Reach of 970 people

(+17% on 2017-18)



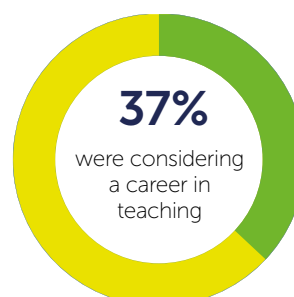
93%
attendees said
the events met
their expectations
(unchanged from
2017-18)

Get Into Teaching Events

were represented by 15 teacher
training providers representing 100's of
Hertfordshire schools

Recruitment Fairs

were attended by 83 exhibiting schools
representing over 100 Hertfordshire schools



86%
of attending schools
said the events met
their expectations
(+4% on 2017-18)

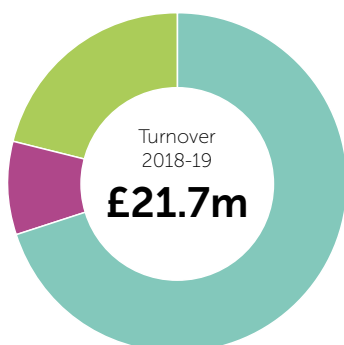
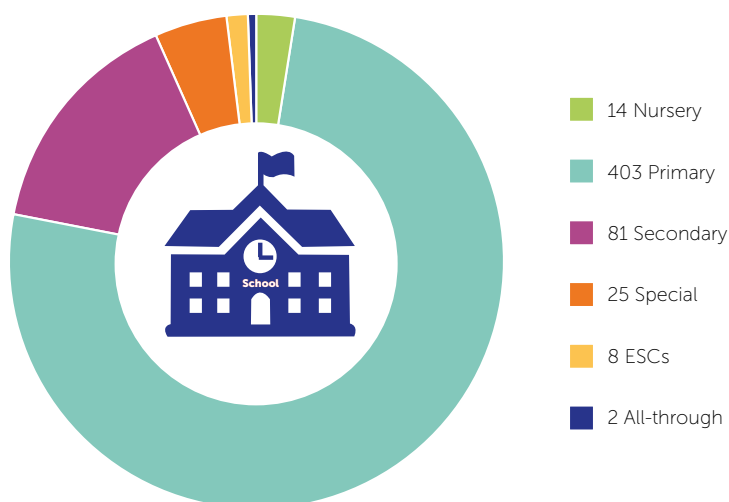
Our customers

Herts for Learning is the largest school company in the UK

We are a leading provider of school improvement and business support products and services that enable schools, academies and educational settings inside and outside of Hertfordshire to deliver a great education.

533 schools in Hertfordshire

99% are shareholders



	Shareholders traded income with Hertfordshire schools and settings	Non-shareholders traded income with non-Hertfordshire schools and settings	HCC contract with Hertfordshire County Council to deliver its statutory school improvement functions
2017/18	67.9%	8.6%	23.5%
2018/19	67.7%	10.0%	22.3%

what our customers say:

 **98.1%** of Headteachers are very satisfied or satisfied with HfL*

99% of Hertfordshire schools purchased multiple services

 **95.2%** of Chairs of Governors are very satisfied or satisfied with HfL*



580 non-Hertfordshire schools purchased HfL products and services

*Source: HfL Shareholder Satisfaction Survey – May 2019

CASE STUDY:

KS2 reading fluency research project

The Herts for Learning KS2 Reading Fluency Project, designed and delivered by our Teaching and Learning English team, incorporates the strategies of modelled expressive reading, echo reading, repeated re-reading, skilled questioning, challenging text selection and modelling comprehension skills. Delivered over an eight-week period, the aim of the project is to improve the trajectory of Year 6 pupils (summer term Year 5) towards the expected standard in reading at the end of KS2.

[For more details on the case study click here](#)

Average progress in
reading comprehension
for all pupils



PPG pupils made



82%
of eligible pupils made



progress in
their reading
comprehension age



Our research projects



Reception Early Reading

saw children make double the expected progress in their reading with an **increase of +2.9% percentage points in Good Level of Development (GLD)** scores, compared to non-participating Hertfordshire schools of -0.2%.



Early Years Assessment

enabled participating schools to **increase their Good Level of Development (GLD) by an average of +11 percentage points**.



Year 1 Phonics Screening Check (PSC)

saw an average **increase of +16 percentage points for children passing the Y1 PSC** – significantly above the national average increase of +0.8 ppts and +0.3 ppts for Hertfordshire.



Improving Progress in Mathematics

saw participating schools **improve their progress on average by +0.6 percentage points**, using the KS2 progress calculation.

Our education services



517 newly qualified
teachers registered with HfL
(Hertfordshire's Appropriate Body)



PA Plus | **411** Hertfordshire schools
109 non-Hertfordshire
subscribed to PA Plus



382 pupils attended
HfL GCSE Revision Workshops

NQT **190** newly qualified teachers
attended the HfL NQT Induction Programme



102 headteachers
attended the HfL Headteacher Induction Programme



5,670 delegates
from private, voluntary and independent (PVI)
Early Years settings attended HfL training courses



11,000 days in schools
by consultants and advisers



with over
33,000
delegates



Helped over 120
schools with inspections

EDUCATION SERVICES

Advice and consultancy

Courses and conferences

Training packages

Research projects

Bespoke training

Curriculum resources and
materials

Ofsted and self-evaluation
support

NQT support and training

Parent2Parent® programme

Leadership and management
support

Safeguarding guidance and
support

Contract with HCC
delivering statutory duties to
schools and settings

CASE STUDY:

Chromebooks and G Suite for education



Homerswood Primary School in Welwyn Garden City has been working with Herts for Learning (HfL) over the last two years, to implement the use of Chromebooks and G Suite for Education across the school. Starting with a single set of Chromebooks, which were mainly used across Years 5 and 6, they have gradually introduced more sets and developed their practice so that today they have an extensive Chromebook provision, which is used effectively across the age groups and curriculum.

HfL has run a number of training sessions for both teaching and non-teaching staff, and offers technical support to maintain the Chromebooks and G Suite environment. In the spring term of 2019 HfL visited the school to make a short video to show how and why this school has adopted the Google technology.

The following video will be used as a tool to show other schools how this technology can add benefit, and how HfL can support them in their journey to 'go Google'.

[Click here](#)

Our ICT services



895 Chromebooks supplied to schools



48,933 tickets raised by the HfL ICT Service Desk



511 schools have accredited SIMS support



97% of customers are happy with the service they received from the HfL ICT Service Desk



475 routine ICT technical visits made to schools



32,445 ICT anti-virus licences issued to schools



95%

of Hertfordshire schools subscribe to **Hertfordshire Internet & Connectivity Service (HICS)**


Our business services

 **9,640** governors attended | **541** HfL governor training courses

 **2,098** governor meetings clerked by HfL staff

 **98%** of Hertfordshire schools use Teach in Herts service

 **92%** of Hertfordshire schools subscribed to the **HfL** led **Occupational Health support service**

 **HfL appointed as one of nine nationally accredited partners** working with the Department of Education on the School Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) programme supporting financial sustainability; providing expert consultancy to identified settings across the south-east England region

 **Over 300 sets** of **school year-end accounts** completed in April 2018

HR **HR advisory support service** retained by **97%** of Hertfordshire schools with **85%** of incoming queries resolved on the same day

 Over 30,000 hours of **Financial Adviser support** to schools

 **475** schools subscribed to the **HfL GDPR Toolkit**

BUSINESS SERVICES

ICT services

Hertfordshire Internet and Connectivity Service (HICS)

Data management services

HR and Recruitment services

Financial services

Governance services

Business management services

Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) support

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidance and support

Occupational health service

Staff absence and well-being membership cover

Procurement service

School website support

Advice and consultancy

Courses and conferences

Financial overview 2018-19

Revenue **£21.7m** (-4.4%)

Operating profit **£253k**

Profit before tax **£119k**

* Full financial details can be obtained from the Company's financial statements, which are available on the HfL website. >>>

Investments

Consistent with last year, the HfL Board has agreed plans to invest the post-tax profit from the financial year 2018-19, and residual profit from previous years, into a combination of **common good activities** and **business development initiatives**.

To date, agreement has been reached to fund two common good initiatives: the Great Expectations programme at £20k, and teacher recruitment activities at £36k. In addition a range of business initiatives will be supported, including Modern Governor, the Bucks Education Partnership and developments with GovernorHub.

The Board has also agreed that it will consider further common good investment proposals, including the best ideas arising from the HfL staff conference in June 2019, at the Board meeting in October.

Our team

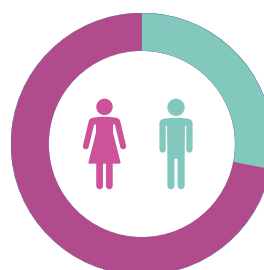
477



staff employed by HfL across Hertfordshire:

309 permanent/fixed term staff

168 consultants, clerks and associates



Workforce

71.5% female

28.5% male

7 apprentices

48% of our permanent/fixed term workforce have flexible working arrangements

63 staff have term-time only contracts

150 staff have part-time contracts

22 internal training and development events have been delivered, attended by over 130 staff

57 new staff have attended the Company Induction Day since it launched in September 2018

STAFF SURVEY response rates

Summer 2018

87%

Autumn 2018

93%

Our Board of Directors

During the year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019, five meetings and one extraordinary meeting of the Herts for Learning (HfL) Board took place. Both the Personnel and Remuneration (P&R) Committee and the Audit and Risk (A&R) Committee met four times each. The attendance record of each Director at these meetings is set out below. Against each Director's name, the number of meetings at which the Director was present is shown and, in brackets, the number of such meetings that the Director was eligible to attend during the year.

The directors of the Board who were in office since 1st April 2018 and up to the date of signing the financial statements on 26th June 2019 were as follows:

Director	Role	Date of appointment	Board meetings	P & R Committee meetings	A & R Committee meetings	AGM September 2018
Executive Director						
Andrew de Csilléry	Managing Director	10 th February 2017	6 (6)	4 (4)	4 (4)	1 (1)
Non-executive directors						
Nigel Ludlow	Chair of the Board until September 2018. Board appointed	26 th March 2014	2 (2)	-	-	1 (1)
Robin Barrett	Chair of the Board from September 2018. Board appointed	26 th March 2014	6 (6)	-	-	1 (1)
Mike Collier	Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee until July 2018. HCC appointed	5 th November 2014	1 (1)	-	1 (1)	n/a
Gavin Flynn	Board appointed	27 th September 2018	5 (5)	-	2 (3)	1 (1)
Catherine Glickman	Board appointed	27 th September 2018	5 (5)	3 (3)	-	1 (1)
Amanda Godfrey	Elected by primary school phase	17 th April 2013	6 (6)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)
Beth Honnor	Elected by secondary school phase	28 th March 2019	0 (0)	-	0 (0)	0 (0)
Ben Jay	Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee from October 2018. HCC appointed	4 th July 2018	6 (6)	-	3 (3)	1 (1)
Natalie Knight-Wickens	Elected by primary school phase	6 th July 2017	6 (6)	-	3 (4)	1 (1)
Graham Lane	Chair of the Personnel and Remuneration Committee from April 2019. Elected by Primary School phase	11 th June 2014	4 (6)	3 (4)	-	1 (1)
Annemari Ottridge	Elected by special schools and alternative provision academies	29 th November 2017	3 (6)	-	4 (4)	0 (1)
Kate Smith	Elected by secondary school phase	17 th April 2013	5 (6)	3 (4)	-	1 (1)
Robert Staples	Elected by primary school phase	28 th March 2019	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	0 (0)
Catherine Tallis	Chair of the Personnel and Remuneration Committee until March 2019. HCC appointed	3 rd February 2017	6 (6)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)
Andrew Wellbeloved	Elected by secondary school phase	30 th March 2016	5 (6)	-	3 (4)	0 (1)

- Mike Collier stepped down from the Board on 3rd July 2018, upon his retirement from Hertfordshire County Council.
- Nigel Ludlow resigned from the Board on 26th September 2018.
- Amanda Godfrey and Kate Smith both stepped down from the Board on 27th March 2019, at the end of their second term of office.
- Catherine Tallis stepped down from the Board on 27th March 2019, upon her resignation from Hertfordshire County Council. She was recruited to join HfL as Director of Business Services from 1st June 2019.

Profiles for each Board Director are available to view on the Herts for Learning website. >>>

Board business

Herts for Learning Limited is a School Company, established under the School Companies Regulations 2002. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the Supervisory Authority.

The Herts for Learning Board consists of the Company's Managing Director and eleven non-executive directors. Six elected by school shareholders, two appointed by HCC and three appointed by the Board. The term of office for a non-executive director is three years. Details about the roles and responsibilities of Board members and the Board structure and committees are available on the Herts for Learning website.

The Board agrees the overall strategy for the development of new products and services, including potential acquisitions and partnerships, at their annual Board strategy day.

The 2018 Board strategy day took place in July, following which the three-year strategic plan was refreshed and approved at the September Board meeting. The refreshed strategic plan (see page six) sets out the priorities for the Company over the coming years and how the Company intends to address emerging challenges. At the heart of the plan is the continuous improvement of our offer to Hertfordshire schools.

Throughout the year, the Board monitors and reviews the progress of the agreed strategic developments and key initiatives, and considers further business cases for new developments and initiatives, as and when appropriate.

The Board also regularly reviews the Company's finances, business development strategy and risk register.

[Click here](#)
for roles and responsibilities of
Board Directors

[Click here](#)
for details of the Board structure
and committees

Annual General Meeting (AGM) for shareholders

on **Thursday 3rd October 2019** at **5:00PM**

at the **Hertfordshire Development Centre, Stevenage**

Chair's report:

Audit and Risk Committee

year ended 31st March 2019



On behalf of the HfL Audit and Risk (A&R) Committee, I am pleased to present its report for the year ended 31st March 2019.

The key purpose of the A&R Committee is to provide scrutiny that due process relating to management of financial and other risks is observed by the Board professionally and competently. It exercises oversight of financial controls and agrees financial statements and other significant documents, as delegated by the Board, prior to approval by the Board.

Working with the HfL Executive, the A&R Committee has developed a systematic methodology for ensuring that risks are identified, assessed accurately and that mitigation plans are robust. At each meeting, the Committee reviews the HfL risk register, recommending a rating for each risk according to the severity of its potential impact on HfL and the likelihood of it occurring. We review the progress made by the HfL Executive on the actions to mitigate each risk and we discuss any new risks that may need to be added due to emerging internal or external circumstances.

The Committee seeks to ensure that the risk register is a 'live' document and that it is a useful document for HfL in providing a framework for operational decisions. We have been satisfied with the outcomes to manage risks during the year.

The top risk facing the Herts for Learning remains the continuing pressure on Hertfordshire County Council's and schools' budgets. HfL recognises that it must continue to ensure all its services represent good value for money and that it must be able to demonstrate positive impact in terms of results delivered.

The Committee has also sought to provide support and a source of broader professional expertise and advice when the HfL Executive have been considering significant business decisions – for example, the sourcing of more suitable IT systems and the acquisition of an e-learning business (Modern Governor).

The Committee has seen some changes in membership during the year. All members have executed their responsibilities with diligence and expertise, and have provided valuable support and guidance to the HfL Executive. In turn, our duties have been facilitated by the essential information regularly provided by the HfL Executive, and through the positive relationship that exists between us.

I believe that shareholders can be confident that the A&R Committee continues to protect both the integrity and values of the Company and for the greater good of education in our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BJ' with a stylized flourish.

Ben Jay

Chair of the HfL Audit and Risk Committee (from 3rd July 2018)

Chair's report:

Personnel and Remuneration Committee

year ended 31st March 2019



On behalf of the Personnel and Remuneration (P&R) Committee, I am pleased to present its report for the year ended 31st March 2019.

During the past year, the P&R Committee has continued to work closely alongside Kate Aspinwall, Head of Company HR, to review and track progress of the HR People Strategy. The strategy informs the work of the Committee, ensuring that Herts for Learning is able to meet the challenges it faces in a dynamic sector and cements its position as the employer of choice across all of the sectors in which it operates.

Through the excellent work of Kate and the Company HR team, we are pleased that the HR People Strategy is enabling a greater level of analysis of the workforce through key performance indicator (KPI) metrics, alongside more efficient processes and improved value for money from the whole team. In addition, a broader range of profiling has been undertaken which enables a deeper understanding of how careers develop within the organisation and how development journeys for staff can be better supported.

The P&R Committee has overseen a number of key tasks during the past year, including:

- Improvements to the sick pay policy
- Major streamlining of staff handbooks
- Removal of legacy issues with the joint unions
- Insourcing of all recruitment and onboarding processes
- Reporting of the gender pay gap
- Reviewing of HR based data, including the outcomes of staff surveys

In September 2018, the P&R Committee welcomed Catherine Glickman as a Non-Executive Director. Catherine brings extensive HR experience gained across a range of sectors and adds considerable value to our work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Tallis'.

Catherine Tallis

Chair of the Personnel and Remuneration Committee (until March 2019)

Award-winning and accredited Herts for Learning



Herts for Learning and Hertfordshire County Council ranked third best local authority in Stonewall's Education Equality Index 2019



Ranked fifth best local authority in Stonewall's Education Equality Index 2017



Ranked number 1 local authority in Stonewall's Education Equality Index 2016

Third best local authority in Stonewall



HfL winner in the Education Resources Awards 2019 – Early Years Resource or Equipment category with Places to Play Every Day



HfL nominated for four awards in the 2019 Education Resources Awards



Finalist in the 2018 Hertfordshire Business Awards



Teach in Herts named Winner in School Recruitment Award at the Education Business Awards in the School Recruitment category (July 2016)

Commendation Award (July 2017)

Commendation Award (July 2018)

Commendation Award (July 2019)



ESSENTIALmaths Finalist in 2018 Teach Primary Resource Awards



Finalist in the 2018 Nursery World Awards 'Staff Resources' category for Making the Difference Early Years toolkit



Winner with Places to Play Every Day in the 2017 Nursery World Staff Resources Award



Places to Play Every Day awarded 4 Star Prize in the 2017 Early Years Excellence Awards



British Educational Suppliers Association (besa) members



Continuing Professional Development Standard National Centre for Excellence on the Teaching of Mathematics



SIMS-accredited support team



Google for Education Certified Trainer



Cyber Essentials certification

