

# Herts for Learning Annual Report to Shareholders **2022**

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# Contents

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Chair's message .....	4
Our strategy .....	6
Chief Executive Officer's overview .....	7
Great School Framework .....	9
Results of the Shareholder Survey 2022 .....	10
Our Executive .....	11
Financial overview 2021-22 .....	12
Our Board of Directors .....	13
Corporate governance .....	15
Personnel and Remuneration Committee: Chair's report .....	16
Audit and Risk Committee: Chair's report .....	18
Our commitment to CSR and reducing our carbon foot print .....	19
Our commitment to race equality .....	20



# Our Purpose, Vision and Values

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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, their background or circumstances.

## Our vision

As a school owned and led social enterprise, we aim to work with every school, setting and trust in Hertfordshire, providing a full range of high-quality products, services, and training to support them to deliver a great education. All our services will deliver demonstrable impact. We will extend our reach through the digital delivery of selected services on a national basis, aiming to generate 20% of revenues outside of Hertfordshire by 2024-25. To broaden our position and extend our scope, we are committed to partnering with organisations that share our values and whose services deliver demonstrable impact.

## Our values

**Trusted** We are trusted by those we serve, and we trust each other, because we are recognised as credible and experienced specialists in our chosen fields; we value the role that every colleague plays to deliver our purpose and vision.



**Inspirational** We are passionate about the power of education to help young people achieve great outcomes and will inspire those we work with to strive towards this purpose; we are resilient and will innovate and adapt to meet the changing needs of our customers.



**Collaborative** We know that collaborative working with each other, with our customers, and with other partners delivers greater impact; we learn from and with each other to overcome challenges and we put company-wide objectives ahead of individual or team objectives.



# Chair's message



**I write this year's message as the interim Chair of the Herts for Learning (HfL) Board. It's been a year in which we have been able to return to a more open and 'normal' way of life. Whilst we are learning to live with COVID-19, schools, academies and settings are still managing significant disruption due to the pandemic.** Routines and disciplines are having to be re-established, absences of pupils and staff continue and there remains a concern about those children who have not been able to keep pace through lost months of schooling. Secondary school students I have spoken to say how daunting it is to take formal exams for the first time for two years.

The HfL team has worked hard to support schools, academies and settings as children and staff have returned to school. HfL were commissioned to deliver the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) funded COVID-19 'Coming Back Stronger' recovery programme for maintained schools, and we have helped to support schools as Ofsted inspections have started again.

We finish the 2021-22 financial year with a solid financial performance and strong reserves. This has enabled us to start the new financial year confident in our financial security, whilst being able to award every shareholder school a £220 book voucher to invest in anti-racism literature, either for the students or for staff, from our Common Good fund. We have had very positive feedback and are glad that we have been able to support schools in providing a diverse range of literature.

Over the past year the Board have worked closely with Andrew de Csilléry and the Executive team to guide and support the evolution of our strategy. Built on two tenets of 'Thrive Local, Grow National' the strategy aims to deepen our presence in Hertfordshire by ensuring that our remains fit for all schools, whether academies or maintained, whilst also developing a range of digital services that can be

delivered nationally for the benefit of all schools, academies and settings, regardless of whether they are based. The Board is encouraged by the work that is already underway to deliver these exciting initiatives.


We have seen a number of changes to the HfL Board during the year. Gavin Flynn sadly had to step down as Chair in March 2022 due to his commitments as Bursar at Downing College, Cambridge. We would like to thank Gavin: he helped to steer us through the pandemic with calmness and thoughtfulness; his inclusive style resulted in good Board debates. Andrew Wellbeloved, Headteacher of Townsend School, also stepped down in March, after six years as a secondary phase elected NED – we will miss his institutional knowledge, his caring attitude and his commitment. Faisal Mir, one of our HCC appointed NEDs, stepped down in May, as he moved into a new role. We thank them all for their contribution.

We were very pleased that Beth Honnor, Headteacher of Marriotts School, was re-elected for a second term as a secondary phase NED, and we welcome Jeremy Scott, Headteacher of The John Warner School, as our second secondary phase elected NED. Rachel Adler, Director of Finance & Business Support at HCC, will shortly be joining the Board as an HCC appointed NED.

I am also delighted to welcome our Chair-elect and co-opted NED, Professor Paul Layzell, to the Board. We were very pleased that someone of Paul's experience and stature applied and we were unanimous in our choice. Paul has already spent time with many of the teams and leaders of HfL and attended a number of Board and sub-Committee meetings – his educational background and leadership experience are already making a significant contribution and we look forward to him taking the Chair role after our AGM in September 2022.

I would also like to recognise the work done this year on anti-racism, both within HfL and schools and settings. This has been a major focus for the Board. I would like to recognise Andrew de Csilléry and the Executive team, and Andrew Brown's (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer) work internally. Toks Olusamokun's (Race Equality Adviser) work in schools, together with the anti-racism workshops have been major achievements. We plan to appoint a second Race Equality Adviser later this year so we can accelerate our progress.

I have very much enjoyed being the interim Chair. HfL is staffed by highly dedicated and talented individuals, dedicated to delivering a range of quality services to Hertfordshire schools. I would like to thank Andrew, the Executive team and all the staff at HfL for their professionalism, expertise, innovation, flexibility and sheer hard work. HfL is a well-run, financially sound organisation run with integrity: the results it achieves with schools, academies and settings are testament to the work of everyone involved. I am looking forward to continuing to support HfL as a Board member as I step down as Chair.



**Catherine Glickman**

*Interim-Chair of the Board*

# Our Strategy

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**Our refreshed strategic plan continues to build on the success of Herts for Learning over the past nine years.** At the heart of our strategy is the continuous improvement of our offer to Hertfordshire schools whilst developing selected services for digital delivery on a national basis.





# Chief Executive Officer's overview



**This Annual Report covers the second year of operations directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and I would like to start by recognising the incredible work that has been carried out by schools, trusts and settings to continue to provide a great education to all the young people in their care.** Leaders, teachers and support staff have shown amazing resilience to deal with whatever has been thrown at them, often with far too little recognition of the sacrifices they have made. I write this as years 13 and 11 sit their A-level and GCSE exams for the first time in three years – I hope that their results will recognise the hard work they and their schools have put in.

2021-22 has been a strong year for Herts for Learning, building on the success of previous years, but particularly on 2020-21, the first year of the pandemic. We have continued to embed our new ways of working, delivering as much as we can digitally and remotely, whilst returning to in-person delivery where it makes most sense, and where we can deliver the greatest impact. We have continued to strengthen our partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to help schools navigate through these difficult times, and I am delighted that schools, academies and settings have continued to show their faith in us by buying more of our support across almost all our services.

Ofsted has resumed its work and has a target to inspect all schools by 2025. Through our contract with HCC and individual contracts with academies, we are providing support to almost all Hertfordshire schools and settings, and I am delighted to say that over 90% of all schools in Hertfordshire are now graded good or outstanding. This is particularly impressive in the context of the new(ish) inspection framework, which we believe we now understand well, and for which we can provide the necessary support and guidance. Our Great School Framework, shown on page 9, continues to underpin all our services, and helps

to align the work of all our colleagues to our purpose.

We are continuing to embed our twin strategic objectives of “Thrive Local” and “Grow National”, underpinned by more efficient delivery and improved customer service, and also our ancillary CSR objectives linked to anti-racism and the climate emergency. During the year we made important changes to the Executive team, and I am delighted to welcome Reem Al Rasheed (Operations & Technology Director), Anu Jagota (Commercial Director) and Dave Windridge (People Director) to the team. This is a very strong team that has the breadth of expertise and experience we need to implement and drive the impact of our new strategy. Whilst our work in Hertfordshire will remain at the heart of all that we do, the opportunities to take some of our digital products and services nationally, so that other schools in the UK can also benefit from them are important and allows us to strengthen our offer in Hertfordshire.

Over the course of the coming year, we will transition to operate under a new brand name, HFL Education. This is a small but important change. Most of our customers know us as “HfL”, and we believe it is important that the word Education is part of our brand. HFL recognises our geographic heritage but is more neutral when we take our

services further afield in line with our “Grow National” strategy.

In the short-term, the work to develop and grow our offer for multi-academy trusts (MATs) is more important than ever, with the recent Education White Paper and subsequent Education Bill providing added impetus. However, given the likely timescale for all schools to join MATs, and the doubts about some of the details, we will of course continue to ensure that our services to all schools and settings, whatever their governance structure, remain as relevant and strong as possible.

Later in this report [pages 19-20], we include two sections setting out progress on our two key CSR objectives to become an anti-racist organisation and to do our part to address the climate emergency. Both of these objectives have internal and external strands and I am proud of the work we are doing on both. We have significantly reduced our own carbon footprint over the past two years and are starting to make real progress on our anti-racism objectives, attracting and hiring more colleagues of colour and reporting key metrics such as pay gaps on a termly basis. There is much more to do, but we have made a good start. We will continue to try to set the example internally whilst expanding our work with schools, trusts and settings to support them on the same journey. I am grateful for the drive that the Board has provided to push this important work.

My colleagues at HfL have continued to show great resilience and adaptability to address the challenges that COVID-19 has continued to throw at us through the year. Whether it be in evolving our offer and delivering even better service, or in making the most of the investments we have made in new systems, they have demonstrated over and over again our

shared values of trust, inspiration and collaboration. Thank you.

It is important that we never forget that our work would not be possible without the partnership between HfL, HCC, schools, trusts and settings across the county. I would like to thank you all for this partnership and the support you give us to improve continually our services for you. I recognise that the 2022 Shareholder Survey results detailed on page 10 are slightly less positive than in previous years – please be assured that we will continue to listen closely to your feedback and to adapt our offer to what you need as well as endeavouring to lead with fresh thinking and new ideas.

Before closing, it is important to acknowledge that the outlook is very uncertain, far beyond the potential impact of Government policy changes. Further COVID-19 waves are likely to come and go, the unwarranted and indefensible war in Ukraine casts a long shadow over the world, and the cost of living crisis will impact every single one of us. In these circumstances, our purpose to help ensure that every young person, through access to a great education, can realise their potential, regardless of where they live, their background or circumstances, is more important than ever. I give you our commitment that we will continue to do all we can to support you to deliver this promise.

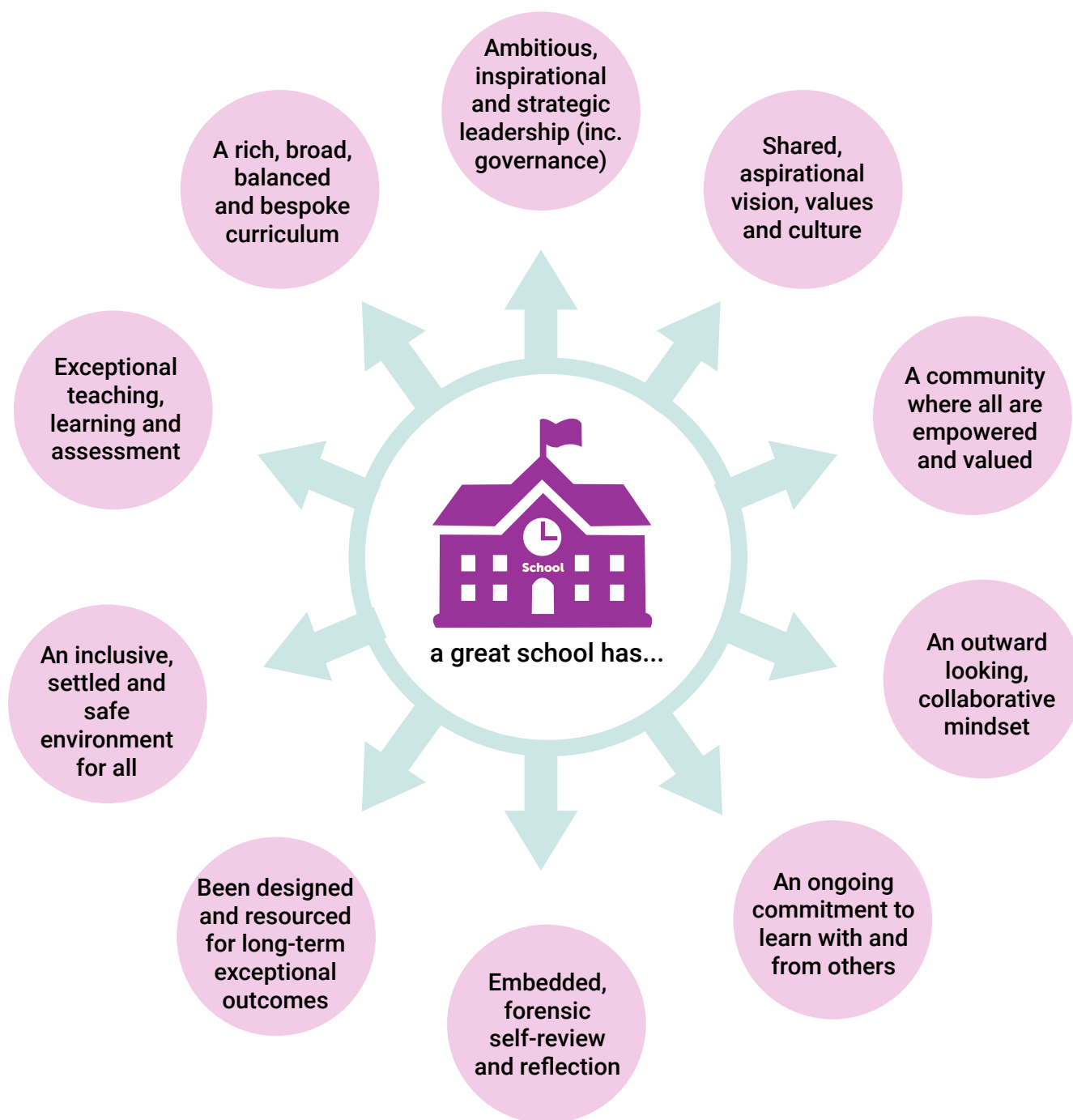


**Andrew de Csilléry**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# Great School Framework

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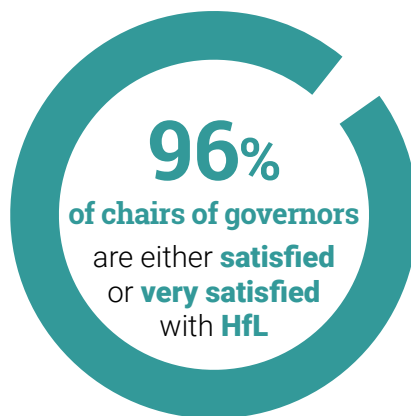
# Results of the Shareholder Survey 2022

Total **204** responses  
representing **180** different schools

Vs. 2021 total 362 responses  
representing 290 different schools



In 2021 99.5% of Headteachers are either very satisfied or satisfied with HfL (vs. 2022 = -2.8%)



In 2021 98.5% of Chairs of Governors are either very satisfied or satisfied with HfL (vs. 2022 = 2.5%)

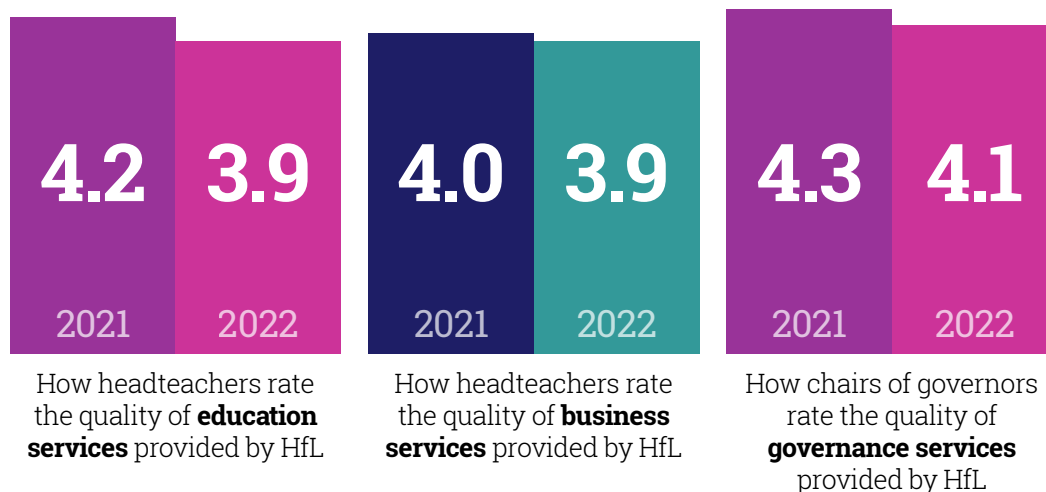
HfL continues to deliver a highly professional and customer focussed service to our school.

Paul Connolly  
Chair of Governors  
Simon Balle  
All-Through School

**86%** of headteachers  
rated our **customer service** as **good** or **excellent**

**80%** of chairs of governors  
rated our **customer service** as **good** or **excellent**

## Annual ratings comparison



All ratings shown are based on a score from one to five, with one being poor and five being excellent.

# Our Executive

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**Andrew de Csilléry**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



**Andrew Griffiths**  
*Finance Director*



**Anu Jagota**  
*Commercial Director*



**Rachel Macfarlane**  
*Director of Education  
Services*



**Reem Al Rasheed**  
*Operations & Technology  
Director*



**Catherine Tallis**  
*Director of Business  
Services*



**Dave Windridge**  
*People Director*

# Financial overview 2021-22

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£23.3m revenue  
£307k profit

**Our revenue increased by £1.1m on last year as we emerge from the COVID-19 disruption that has affected our customers over the last two and a half years.**

Full reported profits (before tax) were up on last year at £307k and were on track with budget and Board expectations. We ended the year with a strong cash balance in excess of £5m and have total reserves in excess of £3.8m.

Some of the adaptations that we made to our business in response to the COVID pandemic remain in place, in particular the blended service delivery offer with an emphasis on digital delivery. Digital service delivery continues to be well received by our customers and enables us to remove a range of expenditure from our cost base. This in turn enables us to make further investments in the business to continue to improve and adapt our services, and to subsidise work that

cannot be delivered on a commercial basis but is essential for schools, trusts and settings. Additionally, our staff now work to 'Work from Anywhere' guidelines, which enables us to work more effectively and reduce our business overheads.

The strength of our financial performance enabled us to commit to some Common Good expenditure during the year. This is highlighted through our investment in the 'Grow Your Library' initiative, through which we donated booked tokens with a value of £220 to each of our shareholder schools.



# Our Board of Directors



**Catherine Glickman**

*Board appointed NED, Interim-Chair of the Board and Chair of the Personnel & Remuneration Committee*



**Professor Paul Layzell**

*Board appointed NED and Chair-elect of the Board*



**Andrew de Csilléry**

*Chief Executive Officer*



**Lee Clarke**

*Primary phase elected NED and Chair of Governors at Higoover JMI School*



**Beth Honnor**

*Secondary phase elected NED and Headteacher at Marriotts School*



**Stephen Hoults-Allen**

*Special phase elected NED and Executive Headteacher of The Blue Tangerine Federation*



**Natalie Knight-Wickens**

*Primary phase elected NED, Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee and Chair of Governors at Sheredes Primary School*



**Nick Novak**

*Board appointed NED*



**Cynthia Rowe**

*Primary phase elected NED and Headteacher at How Wood Primary School and Nursery*



**Jeremy Scott**

*Secondary phase elected NED and Headteacher at The John Warner School*

Profiles  
of the HfL  
Directors

# Our Board of Directors

**During the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, six meetings of the HfL Board took place. Both the Personnel and Remuneration (P&R) Committee and the Audit and Risk (A&R) Committee met four times each during the same period.**

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 as from 1 April 2021 and up to the date of signing the financial statements on 28 June 2022 were as follows:

Director	Role	Date of appointment	Number of Board meetings	Number of P&R Committee meetings	Number of A&R Committee meetings	AGM September 2021
Total number of meetings held in the year			6	4	4	1
<b>Executive Director</b>						
<b>Andrew de Csilléry</b>	Chief Executive Officer	10 February 2017	6 (6)	4 (4)	4 (4)	1 (1)
<b>Non-executive Directors</b>						
<b>Lee Clarke</b>	Elected by Primary School phase	26 November 2020	6 (6)	-	4 (4)	1 (1)
<b>Jo Fisher</b>	HCC appointed (to 31 July 2021)	16 March 2020	0 (2)	1 (1)	-	-
<b>Gavin Flynn</b>	Chair of the Board (to 29 March 2022). Board appointed.	27 September 2018	6 (6)	-	-	1 (1)
<b>Catherine Glickman</b>	Interim-Chair of the Board (from 1 April 2022). Chair of the Personnel and Remuneration Committee. Board appointed.	27 September 2018	6 (6)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)
<b>Beth Honnor</b>	Elected by Secondary School phase	28 March 2019	6 (6)	3 (4)	-	1 (1)
<b>Stephen Hoult-Allen</b>	Elected by Special Schools and Alternative Provision Academies	26 November 2020	4 (6)	-	4 (4)	1 (1)
<b>Natalie Knight-Wickens</b>	Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Elected by Primary School phase.	6 July 2017	5 (6)	-	4 (4)	1 (1)
<b>Paul Layzell</b>	Chair-elect of the Board (from 1 April 2022). Board appointed.	1 April 2022	0 (0)	-	-	0 (0)
<b>Faisal Mir</b>	HCC appointed (to 6 May 2022)	11 September 2019	6 (6)	-	4 (4)	1 (1)
<b>Nick Novak</b>	Board appointed	26 March 2020	3 (6)	-	3 (4)	0 (1)
<b>Cynthia Rowe</b>	Elected by Primary School phase	26 November 2020	5 (6)	3 (4)	-	1 (1)
<b>Jeremy Scott</b>	Elected by Secondary School phase	30 March 2022	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	0 (0)
<b>Andrew Wellbeloved</b>	Elected by Secondary School phase (to 29 March 2022)	30 March 2016	6 (6)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)

Jo Fisher resigned from the Board on 31 July 2021.

Gavin Flynn resigned from the Board on 29 March 2022.

Andrew Wellbeloved stepped down from the Board on 29 March 2022, at the end of his second term of office.

Profiles  
of the HfL  
Directors



# Corporate governance

**Herts for Learning Limited (HfL) is a School Company, established under the School Companies Regulations 2002.** Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) is the Supervisory Authority. The HfL Board meets the full statutory responsibilities under the Companies Act 2006 and the School Companies Regulations 2002.

The Board of Directors consists of the Company's Chief Executive Officer and 11 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 directors are available on the HfL website.

The Board has two sub-committees, the Personnel and Remuneration Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee, and one Board sub-group for Nominations and Governance. The Board of Directors determines the terms of reference, responsibilities and composition of the committees/sub-group, which are authorised to make decisions within agreed delegations and make recommendations to the Board of Directors, as appropriate. Details about the Board structure are available on the HfL website.

The Board provides over-arching strategic direction and corporate governance for the organisation and holds the Company's Executive team to account for the educational impact, standards achieved, and quality of provision and infrastructure services provided to schools, trusts and settings. The Board also has a strategic duty to ensure that our products, resources and services meet the evolving needs of schools and children, whilst ensuring that high standards, a focus on school improvement and financial viability are the strategic intention of all decisions made.

Directors are responsible for upholding the values of the Company and ensuring that the organisation promotes equality, diversity and inclusion for all of our stakeholders.

The Board undertakes various duties in accordance with the Matters Reserved for the Board, including approving acquisitions and partnerships, capital expenditure and common good investments. The Board also oversees the system of internal controls, corporate governance and risk management and approves the Strategic Plan, which is reviewed at the annual Board Strategy Day each summer.

The Board has an established and detailed process for the management of conflicts of interests. On appointment, each Director is required to disclose any conflicts to the Chair of the Board and Company Secretary and has personal responsibility for ensuring that any changes are notified. At each Board or sub-Committee meeting, each Director is asked to note any changes. Once a year, each Director confirms all conflicts of interests to the Company Secretary, and the Conflicts of Interest Register is reviewed by the Board.

The Board is supported by the Company Secretary, who provides assistance on corporate governance matters and ensures the Board has access to independent advice, if required.

## The 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

of Herts for Learning Ltd will take place virtually

on Tuesday 27 September 2022  
at 5:00PM via Livestorm

For further information about the AGM please email: [board@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:board@hertsforlearning.co.uk)

# Chair's Report: Personnel and Remuneration Committee

Year ended 31 March 2022

**On behalf of the HfL Personnel and Remuneration (P&R) Committee, I am pleased to present its report for the year ended 31 March 2022.**

Over the past year, the P&R Committee has worked with Kate Aspinwall and more recently David Windridge as People Director and the Executive team to manage and monitor the ongoing impact of the pandemic on HfL colleagues, ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of staff remains a priority as we now learn to live with COVID. The Committee provided extensive support for the changes to the Executive team, which have now been completed, with high-quality additions to the team.

As Head of Company HR, Kate Aspinwall set strong foundations for HR in HfL, and we thank and wish her well in her new life in the North-East. David Windridge was promoted to the post of People Director in January 2022: an internal appointment, David was formerly the Head of HfL's Schools' HR Service. During the spring term he established himself in post, gaining insight into the current HfL HR activities; he used his findings to establish the short-term people priorities for 2022-23 and an interim People Strategy. The Committee look forward to

working closely with David over the coming year as his strategy develops and in supporting him as he ensures the HR priorities align with the Strategic Plan and evolving needs of the organisation.

In September 2021, the 'Working from Anywhere' Policy was introduced to enable colleagues to work from anywhere effectively and safely. The aim is to improve the working lives of all colleagues and to encourage a healthier work life balance, whilst meeting the needs and expectations of our customers. This demonstrates HfL's commitment to creating and providing a modern, efficient, productive, and flexible way of working for all our colleagues. The new Policy will also help to *reduce our carbon footprint*, as colleagues have significantly decreased their daily commuting and business mileage. The Committee oversee the work undertaken to promote and engage colleagues in this key business objective (see page 19 for further details of how we are reducing our carbon footprint).

The P&R Committee also oversee the work undertaken to support our aim of *becoming an anti-racist organisation*. In September 2021, Andrew Brown, Head of Administration & Business Support,



was appointed to a new internal role of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer, two days a week. Sponsored by David Windridge and working closely with the Company HR team, the aim of this role is to drive forward our EDI work through the implementation of a roadmap to set out how we will achieve this Company objective. The Committee have recently reviewed and refined the EDI roadmap and agreed the focus of activities for year one (2022). Andrew provides regular updates to the Committee on the progress being made (see page 20) for further details about our internal and school facing anti racism / race equality work).

Following a change to our HR and Payroll systems last year, for the first time, the Committee have been able to review and monitor a termly Pay Gap Report, which provides helpful insight into not only gender pay gaps, but also disability and ethnicity pay gaps. This data has allowed us to identify and subsequently address a small number of pay discrepancies. We have also ensured, during the year, that we have invested in our team, both through targeted pay awards where we found that we were out of line with the market and in pay awards and bonus payments to recognise the contribution that our staff make to HfL and Hertfordshire schools, trusts and settings. We recognise that all our staff are being impacted by the cost of living increases and are doing as much as we can to support them. We provided a one-off payment in December 2021 to assist colleagues with meeting additional costs from working at home due to higher energy costs and have ensured that the bonus paid for 2021-22 reflects the success of the year and the commitment made by all colleagues.

Looking to the future, the Committee will continue to support the Executive and the Company HR team on the wider Company Transformation Programme and the implementation of the Strategic Plan and People Strategy. I would like to pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication and sheer hard work of all the HfL teams over the last year and throughout the pandemic: on behalf of the Committee, we will continue to support them to continue their work with schools and settings, and to support the delivery of the strategic objectives of Thrive Local, Grow National.



*Catherine Glickman*

**Catherine Glickman**

*Chair of the Personnel and Remuneration Committee*

# Chair's Report: Audit and Risk Committee

Year ended 31 March 2022

**On behalf of the HfL Audit and Risk (A&R) Committee, I am pleased to present its report for the year ended 31 March 2022.**

The key function of the A&R Committee is to provide scrutiny and to ensure that the Board observes due process relating to the management of financial and other risks procedurally and competently. The Committee exercises oversight of financial controls and reviews financial statements and other significant documents, prior to approval by the Board.

Over the past year, the Committee has worked closely with the Chief Finance Officer, Andrew Griffiths, and the Executive team, to monitor the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic on the business, ensuring that the Company remains financially stable and that associated risks are being managed robustly. The Committee monitored the 2021-22 budget and termly budget reforecasts throughout the year, taking into consideration the potential financial impact of the pandemic.

The Committee is also responsible for reviewing the scope of, and outputs from, the external annual audit. Mercer and Hole stepped down as Company Auditor's after presenting their Auditor's Report and the Financial Statements for 2020-21 to the Committee in June 2021. During the summer, members of the Committee were involved in the tendering and appointment process for new Company Auditors. The appointment of Hillier Hopkins as Company Auditor's was approved at the Annual General Meeting on 29 September 2021.

While the Board is ultimately responsible for risk management, the Committee oversees the overall effectiveness of risk management within the business and spends considerable time at each meeting reviewing any key current and emerging risks on the Company's Risk Register, together with the associated controls and mitigating factors.

The Committee also monitors the Company's compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and is responsible for reviewing and approving a number of financial and risk related Company policies.

All Committee members have executed their responsibilities with diligence and expertise, and, using their broad range of experience and expertise, have provided support and guidance to the Executive team during what has been another challenging year.



**Natalie Knight-Wickens**

*Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee*





# Our commitment to CSR and reducing our carbon footprint

**In line with HfL's purpose (see page 3), our work is focused on supporting those we work with to achieve successful long-term outcomes for their children.** A key component of our corporate social responsibility is to reduce our environmental impact for future generations by actively managing our consumption of natural resources, implementing comprehensive recycling and reducing our carbon footprint.

The HfL Board has committed the Company to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, at the latest, and to offsetting emissions in the intervening period.

Our verified carbon footprint for 2021-22 is 212 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e, representing a 46% reduction on usage against our benchmark year 2019-20. Our Working from Anywhere Policy supports colleagues to minimise non-essential travel, and the reduced use of office space supports a decrease in our energy usage. By ensuring that digital is our default, we continue to make the best use of technology to help us achieve our environmental goals. Our portfolio of events has continued to focus on the use of digital platforms, blended remote workshops and face-to-face events, where appropriate.

Our relationship with **Trees for Life** is renewed for the year ahead and has enabled us to offset our carbon usage from both 2020-21 and 2021-22 under an accredited scheme. These units go towards their continuing rewilding work across the Dundreggan Estate, alongside initiatives supporting the management of the wild forest and reintroduction of wild species such as the Red Squirrel and Lynx.

In March 2022, we launched our Cycle to Work scheme for colleagues to take advantage of the benefits of alternative travel means. As part of our People Plan, we aim to investigate the opportunity for

further schemes that support our carbon reduction aims.

Our work with Hertfordshire County Council and schools continues through close working with the Environmental Reference Group, the development of an eBook of Hertfordshire school environmental case studies, and resources for schools' use through a dedicated section of the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning website. We are keen to identify areas of Hertfordshire which may become designated for projects including rewilding or reforestation. We hope this may provide options for a local managed zone or a long-term accredited offsetting relationship, to increase engagement with both our colleagues and schools and to make an even greater contribution in support of the environment.



# Our commitment to race equality

**In line with HfL's purpose (see page 3), we believe that every young person's education should be free from barriers presented by a lack of equality, diversity, and inclusion.** We strongly believe that education is key in creating meaningful change and we know that we have a significant role to play.

Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Our Board, Executive and colleagues are passionate about building a culture where everyone feels equally included and valued, so that diversity will follow.

Over the last 12 months, colleagues at HfL have been working to further race equality on two fronts: within the organisation and within schools, trusts and settings.

## **Inward facing: Anti-Racism action in HfL**

- We have appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer, Andrew Brown, to provide dedicated focus on our internal anti-racism work and to champion the broader EDI agenda alongside our Board, Executive, teams and leaders. Our People Director, David Windridge, now holds

sponsorship of our EDI agenda as part of our People Plan. Whilst good progress has been made, there is still much to do. David will drive our ongoing momentum and, working with Andrew, will lead on the delivery of our 2022 roadmap of anti-racist activities, including our support for Black History Month in October 2022.

- We were joined at our November 2021 Staff Conference by speaker John Ameechi, who delivered a powerful and poignant session on the topic of care and belonging. Our internal theme for 2022-23 is 'belonging', and this will feature throughout our regular staff communications, Company Updates and the summer Staff Conference to reinforce contribution and connectivity within HfL through equity and respect.
- In February 2022, our BAME Forum joined with the Hertfordshire County Council and schools forums, to develop greater shared awareness and experiences, and this coincided with our recognition and celebration of Race Equality Week.
- Our focus on recruiting without bias, using anonymised applications, has supported an increase in appointments from colleagues who identify as non-white.
- All colleagues are committed to an annual anti-racism performance goal dedicated towards their individual efforts and contributions, through respective roles, to our anti-racism agenda.





## Outward facing: Anti-racism action to support schools, trusts and settings

- Since the start of the 2021-22 academic year, our new Race Equality Adviser, Toks Olusamokun, and colleagues in the HfL Wellbeing team have delivered:
  - 15 staff training sessions to primary and secondary schools
  - consultation sessions with 24 schools
  - 15 pupil, staff and/or parent voice sessions
  - seven race equity and anti-racism visits to schools
  - six school masterclasses on race equality and anti-racism
  - 12 training sessions on race equality and anti-racism for HfL and associated bodies
  - a briefing for governors on Race Equality and Anti-Racism
  - a **podcast** with the Rt. Hon. Stuart Lawrence in honour of Stephen Lawrence Day.
- In addition, 24 schools (primary, secondary and special) have participated in The Great Representation Programme, whereby two leaders from each school attended six seminars over the year, with contributions from a range of leading thinkers and academics. A case study of anti-racism initiatives that have had demonstrable impact in each school will be published in both a hard copy and digital format and will be sent to every Hertfordshire school in summer 2022.
- In March 2022 we launched the 'Grow Your Library' initiative, whereby £220 of book tokens, funded by our Common Good initiative, were sent to every HfL shareholder school to coincide with World Book Day, along with a booklist of recommended texts highlighting people of colour and addressing issues of race for children of all ages and adults.

- A range of race equality resources has also been produced:

- Hate Crime Unit – free on The Grid website
- Race Equity Toolkit – free on The Grid website
- Race Equity and Anti-Racism self-evaluation tool

- A 'Have Your Say!' parent and carer Forum took place in May 2022, as part of HfL's preparations for Black History Month in October 2022.

- As part of the Board's commitment to HfL becoming an anti-racist organisation, it has agreed to allocate Common Good funding for an additional Race Equality Adviser, to start in September 2022.

- Herts Voices, a programme to provide speakers of colour for school to book, is launching in October 2022.

- Plans are underway for a first national HfL Race Equity Conference in the spring of 2023.



