

THE GREAT HEIGHTS ACADEMY TRUST – Trust Board Membership

Board of Trustees

Carlton Midgley (Chair, MAT Board) (re-appointed January 2022, for 4 years)
Jackie Nellis (Vice Chair) (re-appointed December 2022, for 4 years)
Amanda Bennett OBE (CEO)
Kenneth Inwood (Chair of Standards) (re-appointed December 2022, for 4 years)
John Midgley (Chair of Finance) (re-appointed January 2023, for 4 years)
Illy Jaffar and James Power – ('new' Trustees recruited June 2020, for 6 months initially, confirmed by Trust Members December 2020, for 4 years)

Trustees and areas of expertise/specialism (in alphabetical order of surname):

Amanda Bennett OBE – (Trust Chief Executive Officer)

As CEO of GHAT, Amanda has strategically lead developments and improvements across a growing MAT, including recently taking on 2 sponsor schools who both improved from special measures to good within 3 years. She has developed the MAT offer over the past 10 years from a SAT to a MAT with 9 schools across a 2-18 age range and 3 local authority regions. Amanda led the original successful DfE approved designations and school improvement designations including a SCITT, Research School and English Hub and as CEO she has steered the successful their recent reaccreditation. She has contributed locally to educational forums and boards, regionally with developments as a previous Chair of Calderdale Primary Headteachers' Association, Teaching School Council member and as an NLE/Pupil Premium Reviewer. She continues to provide academy leader representation and advice as an NLE Champion for Y&H NLEs with the NIoT, RDP contract holder supporting the matching of system leaders to the current DfE school improvement offer in Y&H and to the ESFA nationally as a Finance Steering Group member. Most recently as a CEO member of the Financial Oversight Simplification (FOS) Advisory Group, supporting ESFA compliance simplification developments.

Amanda was the Principal and Executive Principal of The Greetland Academy for over 20 years, after successfully applying for the post of Headteacher at Greetland School in 2002. Having worked to ensure its continuing success, the school was awarded the outstanding grade in all areas in 2007 - the end of Key Stage results being consistently above national averages. It converted to an academy in 2010 and in 2015, The Greetland Academy was recognised as 49th in the country in the Sunday Times School Guide. As CEO Amanda supported Greetland Academy regaining Outstanding in October 2021.

Ken Inwood (Trustee)

Ken has been involved in education for over 50 years, teaching across the age ranges from nursery age to adult education and across the ability range from children with severe multiple disabilities to gifted athletes performing at national standards. He was a Headteacher at primary schools for over 20 years, retiring from headship in 2006, after successfully moving a large primary school from Special Measures to Outstanding.

Ken has managed two large, cross-phase federations of schools in West Central and North Halifax (2006 – 2017) and was a Director of Calderdale Excellence Partnership (2006-2017) involved in a variety of educational initiatives including large-scale national research projects. Most recently he worked as an educational consultant, delivering training nationwide for teachers in schools and MATs and worked with the National Literacy Trust on a project using self-regulation to improve writing.

Illy Jaffar (Trustee)

An award winning, commercially astute, creative marketing and communications professional with over 25 years' experience including retail, managing iconic global/luxury brands, as well as launching and developing challengers.

Illy has extensive experience from both his professional career and latterly running his own consultancy company. He worked for Asda, then Pernod Ricard for 11 years during which time he was promoted to Head of Marketing and Head of Brand Advocacy, where he travelled the world promoting the company's drinks products at various events and to large scale customers. He has created and delivered branded commercial properties such as the Perrier Jouet bar at Harvey Nichols.

Achieving excellence together

Illy spent 4 years as a Tour Manager for performing bands/artists, organising several UK and world tours. He has always believed in nurturing and supporting the next generation of talent and is an active fundraiser for Teenage Cancer Trust and Childline.

Carlton Midgley (Chair of Trustees and a Member of the Great Heights Academy Trust)

Carlton is a former Headteacher who has worked as a School Improvement Partner since 2006, providing support and challenge to primary and secondary schools/academies. From 2008, for four years, he was National Challenge Adviser to five schools/academies, each of which significantly improved their percentage of GCSE 5ACEM. Carlton made a substantial contribution to their improvement through involvement in quality assurance, monitoring and review. He was also a member of the national DfE Steering Group.

Carlton led the successful Halifax Excellence Cluster for 11 years – providing support, challenge and additional funding to 26 schools. This organisation was a major factor in Cluster schools achieving the best ever KS2 and KS4 results in 2011 and in 42% of the schools becoming outstanding (from 0% in 2000). He has wide experience of working with schools causing concern, co-ordinating the necessary support, monitoring and evaluation. As a Registered Ofsted Inspector, he led over 40 inspections and acted as team member on 60.

Governance is a strength. Over the last 20 years, Carlton has been an effective Chair of six schools/academies – two secondary and four primary. During that time, he has led the governance of three schools from special measures to good, one school from maintained to academy status and one school to change its age range by closing its sixth form provision.

Mr John Midgley FCA (Trustee)

John is a Director of KPMG, one of the big four auditing companies. He is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales with over 21 years' financial services experience. With a BA in Mathematics, John has had a varied career including spells in audit, the banking industry and advisory.

John currently leads KPMG's Securitisation team in the UK, providing services to a range of clients across Europe and the Middle East, and is the chair of KPMG's Network of Women in Leeds. Previous achievements include qualifying as an ACA with KPMG in their Financial Services audit practice in Leeds, running the UK's largest master trust securitisation and implementing the UK's first covered bond programme whilst working at the Halifax Bank of Scotland. Since his return to KPMG in 2004, John has worked closely with the FCA and the government, having been part of the consultation group for the Regulated Covered Bond Regulations in 2008, and having been involved in all the various liquidity schemes under the Sterling Monetary Framework.

Jackie Nellis (Trustee)

Experienced Educational Consultant, Executive Headteacher and Assistant Director of Children's services with a local authority, Jackie has a successful and highly regarded history of school and academy leadership. She is currently working as an educational consultant with primary, secondary and special schools, academy trusts and local authorities.

Mr James Power (Trustee)

James is Head of Procurement for the Cumberland Building Society, responsible for all procurement and supplier management. He spends much of his time deeply involved in contracts and legal matters relating to performance and delivery. His areas of expertise include financial, legal, communications and marketing, human resources and facilities management. James has worked for a number of financial services firms, most recently NatWest, as well as a management consultancy firm specialising in procurement.