

**HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST
MINUTES FOR MEETING OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Date of Meeting	Thursday 23 May 2024 at 6pm, Hydro Conference Room 1
Present	Veryan Johnston (VJ, Chair), Sarah Kemp (SK, Vice Chair), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), Florrie Darling (FD), Iain Veitch (IV)
Also in attendance	Neil Seaton (NS HoS QE), Liam Watters (LW, HoS HMS) Anna Vellinga (AV, clerk); Hattie Curry (HC) – present for agenda item 4 a.
Apologies	James Heath (JH), Kate MacLachlan (KM), Barbara Hignett (BH)

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

	Trustees reflected on the recent passing of Reagan Brown, a former student of HMS and QEHS. The trust board expressed condolences.	
--	--	--

1.	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Apologies were received from JH, BH and KM.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of pecuniary, business or personal interests</p> <p>No changes.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting Part 1: approval and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a true record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 21 March 2024 – Part 1 <p>Matters arising</p> <p>All actions have been dealt with or are on the agenda. A record of future actions is held and these will come up when due.</p>	
4.	<p>Discussion / Consideration</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Agenda item 4a. was discussed under part II of the meeting</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Review of curriculum changes</p> <p>Trustees thanked NS for the paper that was sent prior to the meeting.</p> <p>English and maths – Regarding progress of students in Y10, NS advised that he would invite the Curriculum Leaders of mathematics and English to come to the QE monitoring committee in the Autumn to report.</p> <p>Latin – SK asked for an update on Latin in Y9. NS advised that Latin continues to be offered as a lunch time activity in Y9 and then offered as an option in Y10 and Y11, however this would be in addition to students choosing French or Spanish.</p> <p>Science – NS noted the shift in proportions doing combined trilogy science (‘double’) with those opting for triple science, with fewer doing the latter. The curriculum leader was</p>	

	<p>monitoring coverage of the content to ensure students properly prepared for examinations at the end of year 11. It is intended that the department will start the GCSE course earlier in Y9 to ease pressure in year 11.</p> <p>Art – FD asked if the curriculum change had led to a devaluing of art. NS advised that the scope to choose this remained but that much greater numbers had opted for business studies and PE instead of art. NS put this down to the fresh appeal of business as a subject new to students in Y10, with PE typically seeing high demand.</p> <p>Languages – SK noted that it had been agreed to offer students the option of undertaking both French and Spanish into Y9 to keep open the option of undertaking both languages at GCSE. NS noted that there had been no emerging appetite for the study of two languages beyond Y8. The languages advisor used by the trust had advised that students focus on excelling and deepening understanding of one language from Y9 to enable successful progression.</p> <p>Staffing – IV asked if the increase in staffing had been projected in the budget. NS confirmed that it has. He explained that the increase in EBacc staffing had not seen the equivalent reduction elsewhere, hence the increase to the overall full-time equivalent staffing number, which also reflected retention of a 0.6 dance teacher. Dance numbers are going up marginally, but it remains a small class.</p> <p>Trustees thanked NS for his input to the review. Trustees asked NS to report on the sixth form curriculum in the autumn.</p>	NS
<p>5.</p>	<p>Trust updates</p> <p>Trustees confirmed that they had read the previously circulated Trust updates and were given the opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p>GA advised trustees about the developing situation St Joseph’s Middle School following their signaling of an intention to extend provision to year 9 and beyond. No contact from SJMS or the Bishop Wilkinson Trust had been received. GA will monitor the situation and will keep trustees informed.</p> <p>IV praised the communication sent to union representatives following the last meeting.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Trust strategy</p> <p>A subgroup of trustees convened on two occasions to discuss Trust strategy which resulted in a draft strategic plan comprising three strategic priorities that was circulated prior to the meeting to invite input from trustees.</p> <p>The document was discussed in part II of this meeting.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Trustee recruitment</p> <p>VJ reported that interviews focused on the finance position had taken place. The panel, comprising the Chair of the Trust Board, a Trust Member and the Executive Headteacher, subsequently put forward a recommendation to trustees to offer the position to a candidate with a very strong background in finance. The relevant information had been shared with trustees prior to the meeting. Trustees approved the recommendation and hoped to be able to welcome the new trustee in the Trust Board meeting scheduled for July. GA will write to unsuccessful applicants thanking them for their interest.</p>	GA

	<p>VJ noted that JH had kindly agreed to remain as Chair to the Finance & Audit Committee for the time being.</p> <p>Further interviews are scheduled, focused on candidates with a strong professional SEND background.</p> <p>With the departure of SK and BH at the end of this academic year, further trustee recruitment is anticipated.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>School updates / Ofsted reflections</p> <p>Trustees congratulated GA, LW and NS on the recent positive Ofsted inspections. They asked for appreciation to be passed on to all staff. IV noted that it seems to be a trend for schools to get a 'good' rating, with a very good to outstanding write up in the written report, but that Ofsted appear reluctant to rate schools as 'outstanding'.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed that they had read the previously circulated QEHS and HMS school updates and were given the opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p><u>HMS</u></p> <p>FD asked if any particular issues came out of the parents' survey during the inspection. LW reported that it was generally very positive and the lead inspector had advised that the positive numbers were well above average. Following the schools' own survey, already actioned was a comment from parents to create more outdoor play space. A comment about school communications had been looked into and school was working with parents on the different communication style at HMS compared with small first schools.</p> <p>VJ asked LW if he was using Ofsted wording in communications. LW confirmed that he was using Ofsted comments on the school website and in the school prospectus which was going to print soon.</p> <p>FD shared that she has attended HMS as an observer during SATs week. She noted that she had been very impressed with the way the tests had been organised.</p> <p><u>QEHS</u></p> <p>NS reported that new curriculum leaders in music, languages and RE had been appointed. QE will go out to recruit a CL for Science as our current CL will leave the Trust at the end of the school year. SK indicated it would be good for trustees to meet with the new CLs, possibly early in the new school year at an INSET day or before a Trust Board meeting. NS agreed to liaise with AV to arrange.</p> <p>IV noted that the persistent absence numbers on FSM attendance appeared high. NS agreed it was a concern, reflecting the national picture, but noted the skewing effect of particular cases within a relatively small cohort. Sixth form attendance management can have particular challenges as no legal powers exist; however, lots of intervention is provided by the team.</p> <p>VJ asked NS how Ofsted had reviewed sixth form provision. NS outlined the process and reported that feedback had been positive.</p> <p>GA noted some frustrations with aspects of the inspection experience and indicated an intention to reflect these in a response to the current national consultation on inspections.</p>	<p>NS/AV</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p>Committee reports</p> <p>Trustees confirmed that they had read the previously circulated committee minutes and were given the opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p>a. Safeguarding meeting – 22 April 2024</p> <p>GA and FD advised that they had scheduled visits to external AP used by the schools.</p> <p>b. HMS Monitoring Committee – 29 April 2024</p> <p>There were no further comments or questions.</p> <p>c. F&A Committee – 10 May 2024</p> <p>VJ advised that the F&A committee were clear about managing reductions in reserves down to reserves policy levels over the next two to three years as the trust moved to a position of sustainable in-year balances. This will be reflected in the budget</p> <p>d. QE Monitoring Committee – 13 May 2024</p> <p>There were no further comments or questions.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Management accounts</p> <p>GA advised that expenditure on alternative provision is substantially above budget with travel costs accounting for a significant proportion of overall spend. GA is liaising with JR and NS to ensure more realistic cost allocations for this next year, with clear account take of what can be afforded. IV noted that University Technical College places may be appropriate for students who aspire to have a technical career.</p> <p>IV noted spikes in the cost of teaching staff at points in the autumn. GA advised he will ask JR to clarify the details behind these.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Risk register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It was noted that Risk 9 – cyber security – will be reviewed in the Finance & Audit Committee meeting scheduled on 5 July. – Trustees agreed they were comfortable with keeping Risk 12 – operational continuity – the same. – Risk 13 – likelihood to closure – likelihood moved from 2 to 1. 	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Trustee visits</p> <p>a. Reflections on recent visits</p> <p>b. Future visits</p> <p>Trustees agreed that structured visits to the schools continued to be beneficial. The next visit to HMS is due on Friday 21 June. Such visits are an opportunity to triangulate with information received elsewhere, e.g. from monitoring committees. It is helpful to begin them with a briefing to clarify key areas of focus, with a record of the visit to be completed at the end. VJ asked NS to circulate any follow-up actions arising from the previous QE visit.</p>	<p>NS</p>

<p>13.</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – FD attended on 13/5 to observe the SATs process. – GA thanked trustees who were able to attend meetings with the lead inspectors during the Ofsted inspections. – VJ and BH attended the spring concert. – KM attended the talk by Alistair Campbell. – Parents surveys were reflected upon at the monitoring committees. – The staff survey will be reflected upon by the HR&PM committee at the end of June then shared with the wider board. – GA met with the Hydro Neighbourhood Group on 27 March and is meeting with neighbours adjacent to the hockey pitch tomorrow for a regular catch-up. – NS attended an event hosted by Tynedale Lions where QE students received awards. – A number of faith group representatives have been in at QE as part of an RE drop-down day. – SK reported that two sixth form students were joining the Hexham Town Twinning Association for a visit to Noyon in May. – VJ attended the hustings event and praised the organisation of it by sixth form students. – The music evening on Thursday 27 June will be Mr Holdsworth’s last. Trustees are invited to attend. 	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Urgent business with agreement of Chair</p> <p>There was no further business.</p>	

Close and confirm date of next meeting: The meeting closed at 8.00pm. The date of the next meeting is 11 July 2024.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**