

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

Date of meeting	Thursday 6 February 2025 at 6pm
Present	Kate MacLachlan (KM, Chair), Veryan Johnston (VJ, Vice Chair), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), James Heath (JH, via Zoom), Florrie Darling (FD), Victoria Pugh (VP)
Also in attendance	Neil Seaton (NS, HoS QE), Liam Watters (HoS HMS), Anna Vellinga (AV, Clerk)
Apologies	Iain Veitch (IV), Carey Stuart (CS),

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

		Action
1.	Apologies Apologies were received from IV and CS.	
2.	Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interest There were no changes to the declarations.	
3.	Minutes of previous meeting Part I: approval and matters arising The minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a true record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 5 December 2024 – Part 1 Matters arising GA noted the actions addressed and those featuring on the agenda. A record of future actions is held.	
4.	Trust Board Membership In answer to a query arising at the previous trust board meeting around co-opting a non-trustee onto the HR&PM committee, GA confirmed that a board committee can have someone appointed to that committee who is not a trustee but with specialist expertise as long as the appointed persons would not outnumber trustees on the committee. It would be for the board to decide if they were to be appointed, and if they were, they would be able to vote like any trustee on the committee, however they would not be able to attend or vote at full trust board meetings. Trustees agreed to explore this route to increase capacity on the HR&PM committee.	
5.	Admissions Trustees confirmed that they had read the admissions policy paper which was distributed prior to the meeting. GA noted that the admissions policy is an annual determination which is published on the website. There were no changes to the policy. FD asked if the oversubscription criterion about siblings (bullet point 4) applies to an application for HMS when they have a sibling at QEHS. GA clarified that the criterion applies to the schools and not to the trust. VP noted that it may be helpful to remove the reference to sixth form from that bullet point to avoid confusion. Trustees agreed, with GA to action. Other than this non-material change, trustees approved the proposed determination, to be sent to the LA and published on the schools' websites.	GA AV

<p>6.</p>	<p>School updates</p> <p>Trustees noted the content in the update documents that were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><u>HMS</u></p> <p>KM commended the HMS team for their work on attendance which continues to move in the right direction.</p> <p>VJ commented that trustees visiting HMS had seen evidence of the work of the school council; pupils commented that they felt heard and feasible ideas such as additional play equipment for KS2 and increasing the frequency of cleaning toilets have been put in place.</p> <p>FD asked how well attended the SEND coffee mornings/afternoons are. LW answered that typically approximately 10 parents attend. The event is organised at different times to try to reach a wider group. LW noted that sessions after school on specific aspects such as ‘Be You’ and ‘Zones of Regulation’ had been well received.</p> <p>LW reported excellent feedback from the NCC SEND review and a SEND peer review within the Hexham Partnership. Further peer reviews have been scheduled.</p> <p><u>QEHS</u></p> <p>KM asked about the reason for the Y11 attendance to be slightly down and if this had been discussed in the QE Monitoring committee. NS advised that it had been reviewed at the recent meeting. The Y11 cohort has had poor attendance since Y9, despite frequent messaging about the benefits of attending school, alongside implementation of policy and the work of the family liaison officer. Current Y9 attendance is much stronger, reflecting the improvement seen in the middle school. JH commented on the possible links with the post-COVID effect in that more and more businesses are asking their staff to go back to work.</p> <p>Trustees congratulated NS on the outstanding Youth Theatre performance of ‘Oliver’.</p> <p>VJ recommended that a letter should be sent from the Trust Board to Mr Charles Race for his significant contribution to a fund to support students from hard-pressed families going into university. KM/AV to action.</p> <p>FD asked about demand for places for the internal AP. NS explained that there is an appetite beyond the school to access places, however the provision is currently full.</p> <p>JH enquired about staff absence in science. NS outlined the circumstances and explained that two experienced teachers had been brought in to cover the long-term absences that continue into the spring term.</p>	<p>KM/AV</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Trust updates</p> <p>Trustees noted the content in the update document that was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>GA advised on the key elements in the DfE consultation on accountability measures and indicated his intention to submit a response by the deadline.</p> <p>GA also advised on the key elements in the Ofsted consultation on changes to inspection. It was agreed that GA will provide an overview of what is currently proposed at the next Trust Board meeting. GA will submit a response to the consultation.</p>	<p>GA</p> <p>GA</p>

	<p>FD asked if the new Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill means that the breakfast club will be available to all pupils. LW responded that it would be. Currently the HMS breakfast club is available to all pupils, however only free for eligible pupils and runs at a loss. The government has indicated that it will provide funding although the details are not yet clear.</p> <p>JH asked GA to explain what the AI in education group is. GA explained that it is an internal group that comes together half-termly, led by the Trust’s IT lead, Dave Todd. The initial focus is on enhancing learning whilst reducing teachers’ workload with a longer term intention to look at operational efficiencies. JH noted the importance of tuning into peers’ developments in their use of AI.</p> <p>KM enquired about the impact of the QTS element for teachers on cover. GA advised that he understood that cover supervisors (internal and through agencies) would be able to be deployed without QTS although the details proposed by the Government appeared ambiguous and more clarification was needed.</p> <p>VP referred to the proposed changes in the NCC policy about arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs and asked what impact this may have on the Trust. GA explained that there were a number of concerns, including the insufficient number of hours being mooted and the potential cost to schools. These would be fed back to NCC.</p> <p>VJ asked about the current status of the proposed letter regarding smartphone free childhoods. GA advised that the letter was being finalised and would go out to parents of children in most schools in the Hexham Partnership before the Spring half term, seeking views. GA will provide an update on responses received at the next meeting.</p>	<p>GA</p> <p>GA</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Committee minutes</p> <p>Trustees confirmed they took note of the minutes of the following committees that were circulated with the meeting papers:</p> <p>a) Safeguarding group –13 January 2025</p> <p>FD reported a useful discussion in the Safeguarding group meeting about an increase in suspensions and exclusions, noting that permanent exclusions within the trust remained rare. The group concluded that although it was desirable to decrease the amount of suspensions, it may remain high for some time due to changed student behaviours, however they were hopeful that continued embedding of the relational approach would have a positive effect. GA noted that each suspension decision is taken very carefully, with the ‘tariff document’ providing helpful guidance to ensure consistency but allow for mitigations to be properly taken into account. Trustees acknowledged that the increase in suspensions is seen more widely in education and this reflects changes in society. FD agreed to look at case studies of students getting more than 5 days suspension in a term during a future trustee visit.</p> <p>b) HMS Monitoring Committee –20 January 2025</p> <p>KM summarised that the main topics such as attendance, behaviour, achievement and progress had been discussed in depth.</p> <p>c) QE Monitoring Committee – 27 January 2025</p> <p>VJ reported that the QE monitoring committee discussed similar agenda items as the HMS monitoring committee. NS informed the committee about disadvantaged students and their engagement, as well as giving an update on progress with school development</p>	<p>FD</p>

	<p>plan priorities. He also updated the committee on curriculum thinking, confirming that key BTECs are back in the sixth form offer after the government reversed its decision to withdraw funding. NS briefed trustees that, after careful consideration, the intention for KS4 is to maintain the main EBacc pathway with a further review scheduled for the autumn taking into account government thinking following their curriculum and assessment consultation.</p>	
9.	<p>HMS/QE Trustee visits</p> <p>GA noted that actions from the trustee visit that took place in November had been followed up. Although the next trustee visit was originally scheduled for 10 March it would make sense to postpone this until the following one in May, given scheduled March activity included the SIP visits, the HMS and QE SEND reviews and peer review visits. Trustees agreed.</p> <p>VJ mentioned that she will be coming into school for a trustee visit scheduled for mid-February focusing on careers.</p> <p>The next trustee visit is scheduled for 2 May.</p>	
10.	<p>Management accounts</p> <p>Trustees confirmed they took note of the November management accounts that were distributed with the meeting papers.</p> <p>JH reported that the accounts are in line with expectations. The December accounts will be ready to be discussed in the F&A committee meeting scheduled on 14 February.</p>	
11.	<p>Policies</p> <p>GA informed trustees that the communications team looks after the policy schedule, sending prompts to the relevant policy holders and, once policies are reviewed, keeping the websites and master schedule updated.</p> <p>GA noted that a suggestion that FD made during the Safeguarding meeting around self-harm resulted in an appendix being added to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in January.</p> <p>KM asked if GA expected any implications on policies in September with regards to the Ofsted consultation. GA responded that he doesn't expect substantial changes to policies, as inspection is more about the quality of policy implementation rather than policies themselves.</p>	
12.	<p>Risk register</p> <p><u>Risk item 13. School closures</u></p> <p>Trustees agreed the likelihood with mitigations remains 1 (low) with potential impact remaining at 3.</p> <p><u>Risk item 14. Governance and strategy</u></p> <p>Trustees agreed the likelihood with mitigations remains 1 (low) with potential impact remaining at 3.</p>	

<p>13.</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GA thanked trustees for visiting the HMS Carol Service, the QE Winter Concert and 'Oliver' the Musical. • GA thanked trustees for their engagement in trustee visits. • GA invited trustees to attend the staff lunch on the 21 February INSET day. • GA informed trustees that Councillor Fairless-Aitken and Carrie Hager enquired about using the school as a base for a holiday camp to support children/families generally but particularly those hard-pressed. FD shared that she has been doing research on this topic over the last year and is happy to share her knowledge, including in relation to funding. • GA reported his appreciation to Joe Morris MP for engaging well with both QE and HMS. 	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Urgent business with agreement of Chair</p> <p>There was no urgent business.</p>	

Close and confirm date of next meeting: The meeting closed at 7.45pm. The date of the next meeting is 20th March 2025.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**