

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

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| Date of Meeting | Thursday 26 January 2023 at 6pm, QEHS Conference Room 1 |
| Present | Veryan Johnston (VJ, Chair), David Hartland (DH), Patrick Ferguson (PF), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), Florrie Darling (FD), James Heath (JH), Kate MacLachlan (KM), Barbara Hignett (BH) |
| Also in attendance | Liam Watters (LW, HoS HMS), Fiona Snook (FS, Clerk), Mark Stephenson (MS, HMS AHT, item 4 only), Hattie Curry (HC, QE AHT, item 4 only) |

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

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| | VJ welcomed the three new Trustees: James Heath, Florrie Darling and Kate MacLachlan. All attendees introduced themselves. | |
| 1. | Apologies: Sarah Kemp (SK, Vice Chair), Kim Cowie (KC), Neil Seaton (NS, HoS QE), Tony Brown (TB) | |
| 2. | Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No amendments to those already held. FS to update the Register of Pecuniary interests to include JH, FD and KM. | |
| 3. | Minutes of previous meeting Part 1 The minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a true record. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 24 November 2022 – Part 1 Matters arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of matters arising are completed or will be covered in the agenda. FS continues to follow up cyber security training for one trustee. FS to send the details of the cyber security training to the three new Trustees. GA and VJ are working to produce a calendar of board activity for 2023-24. GA noted that NS will be in a position to report on his actions at a future meeting. | FS VJ/GA |
| 4. | Supporting vulnerable learners – presentation by Hattie Curry and Mark Stephenson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC and MS delivered a presentation on the current and increasing student need in the schools, and how the schools support these students, both at present and the plan moving forward. HC noted that there has been a steady increase in EHCPs granted in Northumberland, and that in addition there are many students who have significant needs but do not meet the threshold for an EHCP. HC explained that in the local area the only specialist school is Hexham Priory, who cater for students with significant additional needs but not those with SEMH needs. NCC have plans to expand the provision but HC noted that the region of West Northumberland is under-provided. There has been a large increase in need post-pandemic. The number of students with an official diagnosis has increased. It is currently more difficult to obtain a diagnosis owing to oversubscribed services and it takes c.20 weeks for an EHCP to be processed. In general – not just at HLT – Y7, 8 and 9 are the year groups demonstrating the biggest impact since the pandemic. HC explained that the internal support systems at QE have been adjusted this year. The approach is student-centred. If a staff member flags an ‘initial concern’, the form tutor, Head of Year and Deputy Head of Year are notified in the first instance, using the internal referral system, leading to appropriate internal support. This mirrors the external referral system in order to ensure that the school is collecting | |

the relevant evidence from the outset to support applications for prompt external support.

- VJ asked for specific examples, which HC provided.
- BH asked why the KS3 years present such challenge. HC explained students in the current Y7, 8 and 9 missed key transitional school years during the Covid-related school closures. It is hoped that for pupils in younger years, who will be in school during these key transitional years, there will be a lesser impact. MS explained also that external referrals and interventions were not picked up during the pandemic as they otherwise would have been. GA noted an increase in the number of students unmoved by the behaviour system not seen to the same degree previously.
- HC noted that a Student Support Coordinator at QE has been appointed, who has an overview of all student intervention and alternative provision and can consider appropriate interventions for students and identify patterns. HC noted that the schools are looking proactively to meet the needs of differing groups of students.
- HC showed a slide detailing the different support provisions in school and explained that a part-time school counsellor is due to start, and is already booked to capacity. HC explained there are still some vacancies in the student support team but when these are filled this will make a significant difference to the support available.
- HC advised that there are 114 students (out of c.900 in Y9-11) who are accessing formal support in QE. However, there is much other informal support from Heads of Year, Deputy Heads of Year and HC which is not recorded in this total of 114.
- MS noted that HMS has a similar picture of increased need, especially post Covid.
- MS explained that in 2021 there were 49 HMS students with SEND but now there are 80, which marks a significant increase.
- AT HMS there are also EHCPs pending for some students but MS noted that there are, as at QE, other students who would benefit from support but who do not meet the EHCP threshold.
- Since September 2022, MS and LW have done much work to establish a list of the school's vulnerable learners. For these pupils, they have looked at the barriers these students face and strategies to overcome these.
- These vulnerable HMS learners were RAG-rated depending on how many vulnerable categories they fell within. MS explained this was required because c.36% of the pupil body fall within at least one 'vulnerable' category: 113 pupils with one vulnerability; 53 with two or three vulnerabilities; and 30 with four or more.
- HMS support systems are pupil-centred, as at QE. Staff and parents were recently trained with a whole school 'Emotion Coaching' support. This enables pupils to articulate their emotions and to learn how to address these.
- HMS also have an initial concern form for staff to complete when pupils may require support. This is sent immediately to Heads of Key Stage, MS and Designated Safeguarding Leads. The internal systems allow the correct people to be notified to provide support, depending on the category of need (SEND, academic, SEMH, attendance, disadvantaged pupils etc.)
- MS explained that volunteers from Hexham Trinity visit each Friday to work with pupils.
- HC and MS both referred to the external support services that can be used. HC noted that all of these services are significantly oversubscribed, with a 3-6 month waiting list.
- HC noted that the significant challenge in school are the behaviours that manifest – there is a need to recognise the needs of these students and support staff in addressing these. The trigger system flags students at different behaviour levels, which helps to identify the issues early.
- Both schools are making use of internal RESTORE units to keep pupils in school.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a significant cost element to alternative provision but nevertheless this is required for some students. Some of the significant costs relate to transport because there are insufficient providers in west Northumberland so students must travel further afield. • HC explained that looking ahead, the vision is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inclusivity – keeping students in the mainstream setting where possible but not at the expense of a calm, safe, focused learning environment. ○ Early identification of needs – continuing to do this through the trigger system and consequences procedure. ○ Pre-emptive interventions – both schools are further developing this – e.g. QE has introduced bereavement sessions for students who have suffered a bereavement. ○ Continuing to develop the holistic approach with the SEND and Student Support cross-over. ○ Developing ‘in-house’ provision to better meet particular students’ needs, above and beyond what is offered in RESTORE. ○ Further development of the mental health strategy. <p>PF asked rhetorically what multiplier would be required to the funding to fully support students. HC explained the significant costs involved, including a large cost associated with alternative provision, but as discussed this could potentially be reallocated to establish a more tailored in-house provision that might better meet need. HC advised that despite the school’s best efforts, there are some students who cannot remain in mainstream education due to the impact on others’ learning.</p> <p>PF expressed concern that a 3-6 month process to enter the diagnostic process to identify needs is a long time, in which behaviours can change and escalate. HC agreed but explained that these delays are with external providers who are outside of the control of the schools.</p> <p>GA referred to conversations with NCC about the need to address a lack of alternative provision in west Northumberland and the possibility of an ‘open day’ with providers. To illustrate the lack of provision in west Northumberland, GA explained that one QE student accesses alternative provision in County Durham, but the significant cost of this, both for the provision and transport, is borne by QE.</p> <p>BH asked how the behaviour of these students is impacting others. GA and HC explained the approaches taken to ensure others’ learning is not adversely affected.</p> <p>VJ thanked Hattie and Mark for their valuable and informative presentations and asked trustees to send any questions on this to FS. FS to distribute the slides.</p> | FS |
| 5. | <p>Committee reports:</p> <p>a. Finance & Audit Committee – 22 November 2022</p> <p>GA explained that at this meeting the main agenda item was the Audit Findings Report and the F&AC were joined by Chris Beaumont from auditors Clive Owen. The audit findings were impressively clean and GA and PF had thanked SS and the team. The meeting also included a budget update, and it was explained that the autumn statement provided some positive news. The committee took the decision to recommend to the HLT Members to continue with Clive Owen as auditors for the next year. This was accepted at the AGM in December.</p> <p>b. Safeguarding Group – 11 January 2023</p> <p>GA noted that the Designated Safeguarding Leads from each school, and the AHT overseeing online safety, Dave Todd, had reported to the January Safeguarding meeting. GA noted that all papers are now saved in the Trustee SharePoint area but</p> | |

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| | <p>asked trustees to be aware that the report that was distributed to the meeting was very granular and the meeting provided much additional context. GA noted that there had been a S170 self-review which is audited by NCC. Thought had been given as to whether there were any patterns that needed to be addressed and these were reviewed at the January meeting.</p> <p>FD noted as the new Safeguarding trustee that it had been very useful to understand the systems in school. VJ asked if all trustees had now attended their initial Safeguarding training delivered by NCC and all three confirmed this had taken place.</p> <p>Trustees noted that GA and FD will undertake the next review of the Single Central Record.</p> <p>VJ noted that the November HR & PM minutes had not been distributed but these would follow after the meeting. VJ explained that part of the discussion was on KPIs, which will be discussed in agenda item 10. FS will share the HR & PM minutes by email. Please send any questions to FS.</p> | <p>GA/FD</p> <p>FS</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>School updates</p> <p><i>QE</i> GA provided the QE update in NS's absence. The end of the Christmas term was positive with the music concert and awards evening, although it was unfortunate that term ended so late, on Friday 23 December, unlike in most other authorities. Educationally this was not ideal given the impact on attendance of the significant spike in illness in the lead up to the break, exacerbated in Northumberland by going on an extra week. GA will raise these concerns with NCC.</p> <p>Assessment weeks for Y9 and Y10 have taken place. Y11 data from mocks went to parents. Spring mocks begin on the 9 February for Y11. SLT mentoring is in place for vulnerable and disadvantaged students. Ofqual have issued guidance around summer examinations: they have scheduled in some contingency dates. Ofqual continue to offer some protection for students' results owing to the effects of the pandemic. However, overall results in 2023 will be much closer to pre-pandemic years – this means that results in 2023 will be lower than in 2022.</p> <p>UCAS update: there were 140 applications. Six students applied to Oxford of whom five have a conditional offer. The Y11 Sixth Form taster day has taken place. Y11 students are now indicating intentions and this data may be available by the next meeting. There are possibly 15 external candidates.</p> <p>GA noted the Prime Minister's announcement that more students will study post-16 maths; further details are awaited.</p> <p>The Y9 subject choices evening takes place on Monday 30 January.</p> <p>Quality of Education reviews continue to take place – Anne Lloyd reported to NS and GA today and the findings are largely positive. The School Improvement Partner, a practising Ofsted inspector, has supported with different areas and more visits this academic year are planned.</p> <p>Work has taken place with students around protected characteristics – GA noted that although the school is inclusive it is important to revisit these explicitly. Staff have been given guidance on how to manage conversations relating to malign social media influencers.</p> | <p>GA</p> |

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| <p>There have been assemblies on LGBTQ+ History month and there has been work on Holocaust memorial day. The school is taking part in the 'No Place for Hate' campaign.</p> <p>QE have signed up to a Poverty Proofing organisation, who will come into school for three days.</p> <p>QE have also signed up for a partnership with the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools, funded by North of Tyne. This is a community approach to mental health and provides support and guidance, including professional development, for staff in schools.</p> <p>GA provided a brief update on the forthcoming NEU industrial action. There are four days planned which would affect schools in the north east. These are the 1 February, 28 February, 15 March and 16 March. At this stage the school is unaware which teaching staff will be in school as individuals are not obliged to inform and unions have actively discouraged members from doing so. However, it is known that 41 teaching staff from QE are in the NEU. Provision has been planned for the 1 February and parents/carers are being updated. Y9 and 10 – with the exception of vulnerable students – will be at home but Y11-13 will be in school.</p> <p><i>HMS</i></p> <p>549 pupils are now on roll. The school is continually growing. The admissions process has started for September, for which there are 152 first choice applications for HMS.</p> <p>The last half term was very busy and successful with festive events. The curriculum continues to undergo a process of development.</p> <p>There is fantastic programme of internal CPD. There are three bespoke programmes this academic year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject leader development. This is a six-session programme, of which there have so far been four. This is very useful for middle leaders. The focus at the moment is being prepared for Ofsted. • Head of Key Stage programme. There are two new Key Stage leaders this year – both excellent colleagues. This programme of support helps to embed consistency. • LSA development programme. This is new and seems to be very successful. <p>The School Improvement Partner (SIP) has been into HMS working with Science, Personal Development and SEND. This has been very positive – it has been positive to have external validation of the good work. With the SIP's input, there is further work intended to develop SEND provision in light of increasing need.</p> <p>There is a new writing strategy at HMS, focused on improving the structure around writing. This is having a good KS2 and KS3 impact.</p> <p>There is a new reading and literacy strategy – a huge amount of work has gone into this. Staff have been very receptive. The programme of support to identify and support struggling readers is excellent. LW noted that reading, literacy and writing could be a focus of a next trustee visit.</p> <p>The Quality of Education reviews are underway, with subject leaders leading these. LW will update trustees on findings via the HMS Monitoring Committee.</p> <p>Achievement – Y6 English outcomes look stronger this year. Maths last year was significantly better but is the weaker area this year, in contrast to last year. A huge amount of work is going into this. LW will report in more detail at the HMS Monitoring Committee.</p> | <p>LW</p> |
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There is a full mock schedule for Y6 SATs week. With 140 children this presents a big logistical challenge. There is also a large increase in exam needs – readers, scribes, prompts etc.

The mid-year data input for all year groups is underway.

Pupil support – LW noted that this had largely been covered by MS in his presentation with HC. Academic support – LW noted that Bridget Toor and Zara Scott are working well with pupils. There is a new intervention programme in academic support called ‘Touch-type, Read and Spell’. Spelling is a focus across KS2 in particular. There are challenges relating to pupils coming from 15 different feeder schools.

Mental health – the new Emotion Coaching programme is going very well. There is a definite increase in Y5 need.

Personal development – there are 48 extracurricular clubs. Chess club, Warhammer club and a Shakespeare society have started after Christmas, and Mandarin club has restarted. There are now clubs covering a broader range of needs – e.g. Lego league and Dungeons & Dragons. Lots of events coming up: First Aid visits, theatre workshops, careers events. For September 2023/24 HMS has committed to offering each year group an opportunity related to arts, spiritual, PHSE and STEM. This needs to be fully mapped out in the school calendar but the aspiration is to have a well-rounded personal development programme.

Residential for each year group have been planned for this year. There is now much better financial support for families who would otherwise not be able to participate.

LW noted that AHT Paul Freeman-Myers has put together a strong assembly programme and ensures that form time provides a valuable lesson for pupils. Assemblies follow themes and LW uses these to feed into his weekly whole-school assemblies.

LW noted that he continues to chair the Hexham Partnership. There are working parties in history, geography, languages, technology and reading, particularly focused on the first-middle transition – previously much work had been done on the middle-high transition. There is a focus on reading profiles – e.g. after a child has taken their Y2 SATS, looking at what happens next. The partnership is focused on ways to achieve consistency across the schools. They have also engaged more with external providers – for example, NCC’s BeYou mental health team, Teach First etc.

LW continues to look at the breakfast provision and why uptake is so low – is this related to cost or is there not a large need for this. The senior team are currently looking at breakfast/brunch provision, targeted to pupils in receipt of free school meals.

LW updated on the NEU industrial action. He has had a very good response from staff as to who is in and who is not, and knows that there will not be many staff in school on the 1 February and so HMS can only offer provision to critical workers and vulnerable students. As such there is provision in school for c.120 students on the 1 February. Some remote learning will be set for those at home. This is optional and those who do not engage will not be disadvantaged. HMS have also published a pack of engaging challenges that pupils can do. After the 1 February, plans will be reviewed for the next dates of industrial action if these go ahead. LW noted that free school meals will be provided for pupils who require them on the 1 February.

KM asked if there had been any feedback from staff on the emotion coaching. LW advised that it has been very positive, although there have been questions about the time required in order to implement this. LW has noticed a positive shift in pupils in terms of self-regulation.

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| <p>7.</p> | <p>Trust updates GA provided the Trust updates.</p> <p>GA noted that LW is doing an excellent job in this role as Chair of the Hexham Partnership.</p> <p>Relationships with other local MATs – Tyne Community, Pele and Three Rivers – are going well, and GA is also working positively with schools and trusts outside of the area for mutual school improvement benefit. GA noted that KEVI, Ponteland and HLT shared thinking around planning for the industrial action. The Trust is engaging with a maths teacher at Ponteland who sits on the North East maths hub around developing the quality of provision and HLT are supporting Excelsior with DT. HLT is engaging with Three Rivers on management information systems and has provided new building advice to schools at Amble and Framwellgate Moor.</p> <p>GA noted that NS and Amanda Fletcher-Woods are due to visit Ashington Academy to look at their approaches to supporting disadvantaged students given they reported the strongest outcomes in Northumberland for this cohort in 2022.</p> <p>In addition to the Poverty Programme, HLT have signed up to a programme with Citizens Advice. Colleagues have had training in how to refer struggling families to specific sources of support.</p> <p>GA noted a recent announcement on additional capital funding for schools amounting to approximately £144k for HLT.</p> <p>GA noted the recent announcement on support for schools with energy costs which for HLT is limited.</p> <p>A number of schools were subject to cyber attacks recently. The Trust’s technology lead has contacted one of the school’s involved to learn more.</p> <p>New build updates – Galliford Try are still on site. There are no significant problems but actions to address snagging remain ongoing.</p> <p>GA noted that AHT Anne Lloyd will begin maternity leave at Easter. The post has been advertised as fixed term or secondment. There has been some interest and a shortlist will be interviewed on Tuesday 7 February.</p> <p>GA thanked the trustees who attended the AGM with Members before Christmas.</p> <p>VJ noted that FS has sent details of the North East Schools Conference. VJ will feed back at the next meeting.</p> | <p>VJ</p> |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>Governance Review VJ referred to the paper on Trust Board effectiveness sent out in advance of the meeting, which followed a similar approach to the last time this was conducted. VJ invited comments or questions. There were none. VJ noted that in addition to speaking to all trustees as mentioned in the paper, she would like to also speak to GA, SS, LW and NS. VJ advised that in future years there could be value in a professional organisation undertaking the governance review. GA noted that the internal auditors or a body such as ASCL could provide this.</p> | |
| <p>9.</p> | <p>Policies GA noted the importance of the board holding leaders to account to ensure that the Trust’s policies are accurate and up-to-date. Some are statutory and others are optional. Some are external-facing, published on the website, and some are internal. VJ has recommended that there is a more systematic approach to the review of policies and has asked the chairs of the</p> | |

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| | subcommittees to review the policies within their remit. GA and VJ will look at the allocation of the policies so that each policy is allocated to a committee or the full board. | GA/VJ |
| 10. | <p>KPIs</p> <p>This paper was sent in advance of the meeting. GA explained that the purpose of this document is to formalise areas of significance and noted that most suggested KPIs would be familiar to trustees. GA asked trustees if they were in agreement that these are important indicators. PF noted that he would like to see KPIs related to safeguarding, wellbeing, colleagues, education and financial matters – but noted that the challenge is in identifying a KPI for each of these. PF suggested that some are removed to streamline the list, and suggested that each area has one main KPI with others for back-up. GA noted this was helpful. It was suggested that perhaps there could be a net promoter score. VJ suggested that there are two main KPIs for the HR&PM Committee – one on staff satisfaction and the other staff sickness absence. FD suggested adding in pupil satisfaction as a KPI although PF noted the challenges in getting an objective measure of this. GA to review and streamline, perhaps going through the chairs of each committee.</p> <p>VJ asked about the community-focused KPIs and noted that one of the focuses of the Members is whether the Trust is fulfilling its obligations to the community. VJ asked if trustees could review all and let FS know of any comments or ideas.</p> <p>LW noted that community and stakeholder engagement is increasingly mentioned in inspection reports.</p> | <p>GA</p> <p>All</p> |
| 11. | <p>Risk register</p> <p>VJ drew attention to items 14 and 15 on the risk register, which require an updated review.</p> <p>For item 14, Governance & Strategy, given there are trustees with significant financial expertise – amend likelihood for this to a 2 rather than a 3 and update the review date to Jan 2023. The governance review will be undertaken.</p> <p>For item 15, Strategic Projects, this was reviewed and the risk and likelihood remain the same. FS to notify SS of the change to item 14 and the revised review dates for each.</p> | FS |
| 12. | <p>Trustee visits</p> <p>GA referred to the visit by some trustees in early November 2022 and noted it is healthy for trustees to visit the schools to triangulate with reports to the full board and the monitoring committees. The suggested date for the next visit is Friday 10 March. For those who can attend, please let GA know possible areas of focus. GA to follow up.</p> | GA |
| 13. | <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Robinson, Pro Vice Chancellor Engagement & Place from Newcastle University, visited QE. • The Hexham Courant have given coverage on school fundraising activities and asked GA for a quote relating to cost pressures on schools. Both schools have been featured in the January education supplement. • An adult disability group has been coming into the school – QE sports leaders are working with this group. • Some trustees attended the QE Autumn Concert, the HMS carol service and various meetings in school. • The AGM and buffet lunch were well attended by trustees and members. • There is an open invitation to all trustees to join staff from both schools for lunch at the INSET Day on Friday 17 February. FS to send an invitation with timings. | FS |
| 14. | <p>Urgent business with agreement of Chair</p> <p>None.</p> | |

Close and confirm date of next meeting: The meeting closed at 8.30pm. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 2 March 2023. Part 1 begins at 6pm.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**