

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

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 2 March 2023 at 6pm, QEHS Conference Room 1
<b>Present</b>	Veryan Johnston (VJ, Chair), Sarah Kemp (SK, Vice Chair), David Hartland (DH), Patrick Ferguson (PF), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), Florrie Darling (FD), James Heath (JH), Kate MacLachlan (KM), Barbara Hignett (BH, until 7.10pm), Tony Brown (TB)
<b>Also in attendance</b>	Liam Watters (LW, HoS HMS), Fiona Snook (FS, Clerk)

**PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)**

		<b>Action</b>
	Veryan noted the Trust Board's thanks for the response to the tragic death of Holly Newton.	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies:</b> Kim Cowie (KC), Neil Seaton (NS, HoS QE)	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interests</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No amendments to those already held.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting Part 1</b> The minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a true record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 26 January 2023 – Part 1</li> </ul> <p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FS is following up any cyber security training not yet complete.</li> <li>GA and VJ are working to produce a calendar of board activity for 2023-24.</li> <li>Policies – GA and VJ are in the process of allocating policies to a committee or the full board to review.</li> <li>KPIs – GA has liaised with committee chairs on KPIs.</li> <li>Other matters arising are completed or covered in today's agenda.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FS GA/VJ GA/VJ</b></p>
	David Hartland steps down as a trustee after nearly ten years in post. VJ and GA thanked DH for all of his excellent work over the past decade. VJ and GA also thanked FIS, who moves to a new post later in the month, for her excellent support of the Board as Clerk.	
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>School updates</b></p> <p><i>QE</i> GA provided the QE update in NS's absence. GA explained that NS will soon begin a phased return.</p> <p>GA reflected on the circumstances in school following the tragic death of Holly Newton. Support from Northumberland County Council had been excellent and in particular from senior leaders and the safeguarding, educational psychology and communications teams. GA also appreciated the many messages of support and sympathy from those outside of the school. GA went on to update Trustees on ongoing arrangements in school, including support of Holly's sibling and friends. GA advised the Board that he had taken a call from Ofsted which was explained by the representative as a procedural requirement following a serious incident. GA had talked him through the circumstances and approach. PF commented on the importance of reflecting on the handling of events.</p> <p>The INSET Day on Friday 17 February had been well-received by staff. There was a focus on assessment; a session on supporting students with EAL, particularly the Ukrainian students; Health &amp; Safety training; and time for subject leaders to meet with their teams and to</p>	

conduct interim appraisals. PF noted it was useful for trustees to attend lunch on Friday 17 February to gain an insight from staff.

Y11 mock exams took place prior to February half term. Students approached these well with good maturity. There is a mock results day on the 22 March. In general, the school is happy with how Y11 are approaching this phase of compulsory education.

At present, staff are working with Y9 on their GCSE options and the next steps for Y11. The intention is that NS will report to trustees on this at the next meeting.

1 March was the allocations day for September Y9 school places. NCC had made errors in the admissions process, which meant that eight students who should have been allocated a Y9 place at QE were not allocated and in their place eight students who would not have been allocated a place as per the ranking were offered a place. In this situation, and because the students would win any appeal on this technicality, QE have accepted these additional students for September and will therefore be above PAN.

There have been two days of industrial action since the last meeting. Years 11, 12 and 13 were invited in for each day, along with the vulnerable, key worker and refugee children from years 9 and 10. On the first strike day, approximately two-thirds of Y11 attended. On the second strike day, just over half of year 11 attended. For the next two days of industrial action, it will therefore be optional for year 11 to attend and students may work at home instead if they wish. If they are in school, lessons will run. If not, there will be private study spaces. Depending on the projected number of year 11 students, year 9 and 10 students will be invited in.

The Assistant Headteacher for Teaching and Learning, Anne Lloyd, will begin maternity leave at Easter. The Curriculum Leader for Science, Jenny Fraser, has been appointed to this post in the high school for the fixed term. Nikkee Roff will cover this role at HMS. Jenny Fraser will continue to work in science but with a reduced teaching workload.

The School Improvement Partner (SIP) has been working with both schools. GA explained that this is expensive but is continuing to add value. On the most recent visit, the SIP worked with Hattie Curry on attendance and behaviour, with Andy Hedley on personal development, and with curriculum leaders of languages and art.

GA noted that behaviour management had been discussed at length in the QE monitoring committee. PF asked for clarification on a point in the minutes relating to behaviour and SEND. GA clarified this point in the meeting and will amend the monitoring committee minutes to this effect. GA advised that there are fewer Stage 3 and 4 detentions than at the equivalent time last year but that there are some concerns with corridor and toilet behaviour, and a desire to improve behaviour in year 9. GA outlined the details of the intended approach which sit within the existing behaviour policy and remain centred on teachers' skills in positive behaviour management, including building positive relationships. GA noted that Jill Wood, Assistant Headteacher and SENDCo, has advised in relation to SEND. As a result of the intended focus, GA advised that he expected an increase in detentions and suspensions but that this would then subside.

GA advised trustees that the school have introduced an annual afternoon sporting event, referred to as 'Scotty's Day', in memory of former curriculum leader for PE at the high school who tragically died unexpectedly two years ago. The second of these took place today. This is organised and run by the PE department and sixth form students. KM noted that this is a lovely event to commemorate and bring the community together.

*HMS*

Yesterday was the allocations day for September Y5 school places. Y5 will be at PAN with 150 pupils, which is very positive for the school. There had been 195 applications. SK asked about the 45 pupils who had not been allocated places. LW explained that pupils had been ranked according to the admissions criteria. Of the 195 applicants, some had selected other schools as their first choice so there were not 45 rejections. GA commented, although disappointing that not all children can be allocated places, it is a great affirmation of the work done by LW at HMS that there is such a high number of applications.

The annual Y3 days will take place in June, for which every HMS feeder school has signed up. These are very useful days to promote the school to potential future Y5 pupils.

Industrial action – owing to low staff numbers, the first strike day could only accommodate the children of key workers and vulnerable children. For the second strike day, the full years 5 and 6 were invited in addition. However, LW noted that planning was a challenge because some staff who had indicated they would be in changed their mind last-minute. The plans will be reviewed for the next days of strike action and it may only be possible to accommodate year 6, along with the children of key workers and vulnerable children.

There have been many extracurricular events, as always – there is an increase in sports fixtures, along with Lego League, chess tournaments etc. Residential for each year group are planned – to Whithaugh Park, London, High Borrans and France.

Recruitment – there are some vacancies, some of which are advertised externally and some internally. There is a vacancy for a maths subject leader – this is to have one maths subject leader for the whole school rather than split by key stage. There are also adverts for a KS2 teacher, an English teacher and a maternity cover in food technology. There are internal adverts for a Deputy Head of each Key Stage. This is to support pastorally given the increase in pupil numbers and need.

There are ongoing developments in curriculum work and at present the curriculum policies are being redesigned.

Y6 have had mock SATs this week. This will give a sense of the year 6 data – the early signs are positive but results are not all in yet. There is a need to keep this positivity and drive up to the SATs.

The Quality of Education review is underway with subject leaders. Academic support is ongoing for pupils. This includes two new programmes, in maths and phonics. In year 5, some pupils have significant gaps in maths so are undertaking the new programme ‘Success at arithmetic’. There is also a new phonics programme. By middle school, some pupils are fatigued with how they have learnt phonics so the new programme reflects this and is designed to enable pupils to make better progress.

There are no major updates about work with the Hexham Partnership since the last meeting. Lots of work is underway. There are plans for the HMS orchestra to visit the first schools to help generate an interest in music. This begins with a visit to Corbridge First School.

There is much work ongoing with SEND pupils and other pupils who require support. The school are working closely with the High Incidence Needs Team (HINT) from NCC. This includes teacher drop-ins and LSA training sessions. Sessions for parents and carers are planned, focusing on ADHD and mental health. LW advised that it is very useful to have the link with NCC and the help with social and emotional support.

	<p>There have been some changes to the way in which breakfast club works. Previously parents had to book and pay for a half term in advance. With a new booking system, parents/carers can book and pay daily. The cost has been reduced for a trial period. LW is also looking at support for those in receipt of FSM. All FSM pupils are now eligible for toast at break time, which does not use any of their lunch allowance. LW will continue to monitor and update.</p> <p>BH asked if there would need to be an increased SEND staff resource given the uplift in pupil numbers and SEND need. GA explained that he, LW, Mark Stephenson and Sarah Sparke are due to meet to discuss this.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Trust updates</b></p> <p>GA provided the Trust updates. The Hexham Partnership work continues to go well. GA and VJ are due to meet their counterparts at Corbridge Middle in the coming weeks and are seeking to do similar with Sele First. The Trust continues to work well with other local MATs. In addition to links already established, the Pele Trust IT lead is working with the HLT Curriculum Leader for IT, who reported that this has been useful.</p> <p>GA referred to the consultation document that was shared about proposed merger of the Tyne Community and Three Rivers Trust. The indication is that this will progress.</p> <p>GA advised that the members of the Monitoring Committees will be aware that HLT have concerns about EOTAS provision as well as aspects of support from the Education Welfare Service that are adversely affecting both schools. GA has made representations to senior leaders at NCC about this and about the lack of alternative provision for students in west Northumberland. He is due to attend a meeting with senior officers and other headteachers to discuss this further. The high school is considering what in-house alternative provision might look like, as discussed at the last Trust Board meeting, with a meeting to take thinking forward scheduled for next week.</p> <p>GA referred to the White Paper that came out approximately one year ago and noted that although much uncertainty still surrounds this, the intentions relating to all schools being part of strong MATs largely remains. GA advised that the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan has just been published. This includes new national standards and expectations on the type of support required. There are to be new local SEND partnerships and improved early identification of need. There is an expectation that the ordinarily available provision is consistently in place. Overall there is an intention that the number of students with an EHCP will reduce. There is to be funding for more specialist provision. There is the intention of a three-tier alternative provision system with increased accountability.</p> <p>GA advised that the DfE has submitted evidence that an increase in teachers' pay of 3.5% would need to be funded within existing school budgets. In addition, the DfE appear to be of the view that their proposed fixed increase of £1925 for support staff must also be funded within existing school budgets. GA explained that this is a concern but awaits developments.</p> <p>GA noted that the new Secretary of State for Education has offered the teaching unions talks on pay provided they call off intended strikes. However, at present the NEU still intends to proceed with the industrial action on the 15 and 16 March.</p> <p>VJ thanked those trustees who came in for lunch on the INSET day and noted that it had been very useful. VJ would encourage as many trustees as possible to come in for the school visit on Friday 10 March.</p>	

	VJ noted that she had attended the Schools North East Governance Conference in February, which was useful. VJ will share the presentations and FS will share in case these are of interest to trustees.	VJ/FS
6.	<p><b>Committee reports:</b></p> <p><b>a. HMS Monitoring Committee – 14 February 2023</b> GA referred to the minutes, which were shared in advance, and noted that both schools’ monitoring committees were good meetings. LW did an excellent presentation on progress with the HMS school development plan, which is now accessible to all trustees. KM noted that she is particularly impressed by the number of extracurricular clubs on offer at HMS.</p> <p><b>b. QE Monitoring Committee – 16 February 2023</b> These minutes were shared in advance. GA will make an amendment as discussed earlier to clarify the point that PF had raised. As above – this was a very productive meeting. At the next meeting, NS will present forecast outcome data.</p> <p>SK highlighted that although attendance at QE is lower than hoped, it is encouraging that this remains above the national average. The levels of participation in extracurricular activities is very encouraging.</p> <p><b>c. Finance &amp; Audit Committee – 17 February 2023</b> GA noted that the minutes will be shared at the next meeting. FS has shared a link to the Kreston Reeve Benchmarking reports. VJ suggested that trustees read the executive summary at the beginning, which gives a general overview. PF highlighted that the audit report was excellent and the committee have begun to establish a rolling agenda for meetings. The risk register was discussed. SS had produced an excellent graphic of the current reserves level with forecasts up to 2026/27, with RAG-rated tramlines for these. PF noted that JH joined the committee and made excellent contributions. GA explained that SS delivered a presentation on the Trust’s finances and explained that senior leaders are reviewing this and reframing thinking about some areas of expenditure. This presentation was in draft form but will be reviewed at a future date to present some conclusions in relation to decisions taken. SK asked about unfunded pay increases and GA explained that this will be factored in.</p>	GA
7.	<p><b>Trustee Payment &amp; Allowances Policy</b> This was distributed in advance of the meeting and it was noted that this was approved by the F&amp;AC at the February meeting. It was discussed that the board do not wish for financial reasons to be a barrier to potential trustees.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Trustee Visits</b> This will take place on Friday 10 March. Trustees have let FS know if they are able to attend. GA will circulate a suggested schedule for the day.</p>	GA
9.	<p><b>Governance Review</b> VJ referred to the blank skills audit sent out in advance of the meeting, and to the governance review discussed at the last meeting. VJ noted that she had emailed the skills audit template for comments last week and has since spoken to KC and PF. VJ will add or amend points following these discussions. VJ stressed that the skills audit must be driven by the ethos, values and objectives of the school, and the Trust must also meet its objectives as a charity. VJ noted that KC and PF had discussed areas relating to student wellbeing and resilience. SK suggested that wellbeing and resilience also be considered for staff. VJ noted that some areas included on the skills audit could be desirable rather than essential – for example, it is desirable to have a trustee with legal experience but advice on legal matters can be sourced externally so is not essential. FD suggested that experience relating to equality, diversity and inclusion is helpful. VJ will revise the draft and distribute for trustees to complete.</p>	VJ

<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>Members</b></p> <p>For information, the document on the ‘Role of Members’ was shared in advance. VJ noted for the benefit of new trustees that both she and SK also sit on the board of members owing to their roles as Chair and Vice Chair. VJ explained that two new members have been appointed so that there are now seven members, of whom five are independent. VJ highlighted that the new members bring a significant skills benefit in terms of experience of large organisations and from a legal perspective. VJ also advised that it is helpful to boost the number of independent members from three, given that three is the minimum number required.</p> <p>VJ summarised the role of the members and noted that this group safeguards the school ethos. They are not involved operationally but oversee at a higher level. VJ and SK bridge the gap and the Clerk to the Trust Board sends a regular flow of communication. They receive final minutes from the Trust Board and committees as well as other key papers and reports throughout the year.</p> <p>GA noted that the two new members will come into school this term for a tour and presentation with GA and SS.</p> <p>VJ explained that the members attend an annual AGM, to which all trustees are also invited. VJ encouraged trustees to attend where possible – it is helpful for members to meet trustees in person. VJ noted that one of the roles of the members is to hold the Trust Board to account.</p> <p>VJ suggested inviting trustees in for coffee after the next members’ meeting on the 28 April.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <p>VJ noted that this continues to be reviewed. Committees will now review this at each meeting as a standard agenda item. It will also be added to the agenda for Safeguarding meetings.</p> <p>Item 1 on Health &amp; Safety was discussed. It was agreed that there was no need to adjust the risk or likelihood rating.</p> <p>It was noted that School Closures had been discussed at the February monitoring committees.</p> <p>All other aspects remained as they were. FS to notify SS of review dates.</p>	<p><b>FS</b></p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GA thanked PF for providing a contact with West Northumberland Foodbank. GA made contact and the Foodbank explained that at present they have insufficient donations. They have provided some information and are keen for organisations to signpost the support they provide. This can be included in a future parent/carers newsletter – how families can donate and where support is available.</li> <li>• The schools continue to have many guest speakers coming in.</li> <li>• Surveys are due to take place. These are for parents/carers, staff and pupils. The findings will come to the relevant committees in due course.</li> <li>• The QE Spring Music concert has been rescheduled from 22 March. The new date will be shared when confirmed.</li> <li>• Trustees visited the schools for lunch on the 17 February.</li> <li>• DH asked if there have been any updates from neighbours. GA noted that some had raised concerns about the flashing electric vehicle charging points, which have subsequently been covered up. GA will meet the Hydro Neighbourhood group this half term.</li> </ul>	<p><b>FS/GA</b></p>

	FD asked how pupil panels are selected for pupil voice. LW advised that a representative selection is taken from each cohort. When the panels take place, a group of pupils are in the room together. However, when the pupil surveys are undertaken, these are done individually and in silence.	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Urgent business with agreement of Chair</b> None.	

**Close and confirm date of next meeting:** The meeting closed at 7.40pm. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 18 May 2023. Part 1 begins at 6pm.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Chair**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date**