

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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 18 May 2023 at 6pm, Hydro Conference Room 1
Present	Veryan Johnston (VJ, Chair), Sarah Kemp (SK, Vice Chair), Patrick Ferguson (PF), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), Florrie Darling (FD), James Heath (JH), Kate MacLachlan (KM),
Also in attendance	Neil Seaton (NS HoS QE), Liam Watters (LW HoS HMS) Amy Reay Armitage (ARA, Clerk)

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies: Barbara Hignett (BH) Absent: Tony Brown (TB)</p>	
2.	<p>Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No amendments to those already held. 	
3.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting Part 1</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 – 2 March 2023 – Part 1 <p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber security training is complete. • GA noted that, as per PF’s suggestion, a meeting to review events surrounding the death of Holly from the school’s perspective, including our response to the incident, has been scheduled and will take place on 12 June; attendees to include FD and Carol Leckie of the Northumberland Safeguarding Team. • Trust updates: GA and VJ met the Chair and Headteacher of Corbridge Middle School in a very positive and constructive meeting. VJ noted that the emphasis of the meeting was to identify possible further synergies. • GA confirmed that information about the support that the West Northumberland Foodbank provides had been included in parent newsletters. • Other matters arising are completed or covered in the evening’s agenda. 	
	<p>VJ thanked Trustees for visiting the school on the 10th of March. VJ thanked KM and FD for coming along to the member meeting on the 28th of April. VJ also noted that the Spring concert on 26 of April had been very good. When GA and VJ mentioned the concert at Corbridge Middle School, they showed great interest in being invited to similar events. VJ raised that it may be good for students to get more exposure to their fellow students’ performances in order to get more participation in music generally.</p>	
4.	<p>Trustee recruitment / governance review</p> <p>VJ reported that Kim Cowie (KC) had resigned from the board due to personal circumstances and thanked KC for her excellent contribution. In order to recruit to replace KC, VJ articulated that it would be good if KC’s successor had a similar education profile, i.e. senior leadership experience in a school.</p> <p>VJ thanked the Trustees for completing the skills audit that had been introduced to get an insight in the skills across the Board. The outcome was reassuring in terms of overall</p>	

	<p>coverage. VJ thanked KM for her support in pulling together the analysis of the audit, highlighting the areas where some the Trustees felt less confident.</p> <p>As well as focussing on recruiting more Trustees with a background in education and knowledge in student wellbeing/resilience the Board discussed that they would be looking into additional training courses to close the gaps. Additionally, certain aspects such as legal advice and H&S support are sourced externally.</p> <p>GA mentioned that the Trust subscribes to the National College’s CPD package for governors/trustees. In addition, CST provide courses for governors/trustees from time to time so there are plenty of training options available. GA/clerk will circulate details ahead of the next meeting.</p> <p>PF queried if all members of the Trust Board should have training or if it would suffice to have a few specialists in each area. For example, FD as the Chair of the Safeguarding Committee had had additional training in this area and was the recognised expert within the Board, outwith GA. VJ’s view was that all Trustees should understand the basics, but it would be good to have 2 or 3 people, who would have a greater understanding in key areas. VJ also recommended that the skills audit should be completed again next year, which trustees agreed. PF suggested that it may be valuable for this to include an overview of past/current/future training.</p> <p>VJ advised that with KC leaving, there were positions on the two monitoring committees that needed to be filled in the interim. KM and JH indicated their willingness to sit on the HMS and QE committees respectively, which the Board agreed. GA indicated he would send the dates of the next meetings to KM and JH, and would ensure they received the relevant paperwork.</p> <p>VJ reported that she had meetings set up with most Trustees before the next Trust Board meeting to have a general chat and will report on the outcome of these at the next meeting.</p> <p>With regards to KC’s replacement, GA noted that he had started engaging with Inspiring Governance and that he had also been in touch with Governors for Schools. The latter is quite expensive, so this may not be the route to take. VJ asked if anyone had experience in this field to please let the Board know. Furthermore, VJ pointed out that it is important to maintain sufficient numbers in order to spread the workload.</p>	<p>GA/clerk</p> <p>VJ/clerk</p> <p>VJ/clerk</p> <p>VJ</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Schedule of board activity (including KPIs and reviews of policies)</p> <p>GA referred to the proposed schedule of governance activity circulated in advance of the meeting, which contained a review schedule for trust policies and KPIs. The intention is to implement the schedule from September. Trustees agreed.</p> <p>GA informed the Board that it is required to have a policy relating to local government pension scheme discretions. A draft policy will be presented to the HR&PM Committee and Finance and Audit Committee meetings at the end of June, after which the F&A committee will take responsibility for reviewing the policy.</p> <p>VJ suggested arranging a Trust Board session in October to review strategy for the next 3-5 years. The new clerk to the Board will be asked to organise this.</p>	<p>GA/clerk</p> <p>GA/clerk</p> <p>VJ/clerk</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Diversity reporting</p> <p>VJ advised that the DfE is encouraging trusts to monitor board diversity. GA had circulated a set of National Governance Association questions which could be used as the basis for recording. Trustees agreed with the proposed approach.</p>	

<p>7.</p>	<p>Complaints handling</p> <p>GA noted that in two recent suspension cases, parents had exercised the right to make representations to a panel of Trustees who then reviewed the suspension decisions. He also advised that SK had dealt with a complaint at stage 2 of the complaints procedure. In light of these, GA noted that the forthcoming training session for trustees on complaints handling scheduled for the following week was timely and encouraged trustees to either attend or access the recording.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>School updates</p> <p>HMS – an update by LW, Head of School, HMS</p> <p>LW advised that the HMS roll continues to increase with 562 pupils currently on roll with 4 more joining after half term. Transition arrangements for September are under way with the school expecting 152 pupils in year 5. In July years 3 and 4 pupils from all feeder schools will come in for a taster session.</p> <p>LWA provided an update on various staff development initiatives including a programme for subject leaders and one for LSAs. This has seen each LSA given the opportunity to lead a project in their specialist area, which has been well received.</p> <p>HMS continues to work closely with the school improvement partner, Mark Wilson. The next session has a focus on safeguarding with Mark Stephenson, HMS’s DSL. Mark will update the safeguarding committee at their next meeting in June.</p> <p>HMS has successfully recruited a new maths lead and key stage 2 teacher and has other key staff returning from maternity or sick leave. Two excellent teachers have taken on the deputy head of key stage roles. An internal move for the current PE subject lead at HMS has created a vacancy which the school will recruit to from within the Trust.</p> <p>LW reported a successful SATS week from an organisational perspective and children were well prepared. The end-of-SATs reward activities were very well received. The school’s writing assessments will be assessed by external moderators on 12 June at school. SATS results are expected to be available on 11 July, a week later than expected due to the Coronation.</p> <p>Quality of education reviews continue to be undertaken across all subjects. LW noted that the subject leaders’ confidence in undertaking this process is increasing. Regarding SEND, LWA advised that the GA had approached the local authority SEND team to undertake a SEND review at each school, with the HMS review scheduled for 19 June. BH will be involved with these reviews as SEND trustee. GA advised that he would arrange a SEND training/information session for trustees on SEND provision early in the new academic year.</p> <p>LWA advised that breakfast club numbers remained low despite changes such as making it pay-as-you-go instead of book in advance and reducing the price. LW will continue to monitor. GA advised that senior leaders are looking at the scope to make a basic breakfast provision available for all.</p> <p>Many trips have taken place this half-term including residential visits to London and High Borran. There have also been various STEM events. Bikeability has taken place and went well. LW noted a significant increase in sporting fixtures which has been positively received. He is grateful that external coaches are involved in some of the 50 clubs that are running currently as this takes some pressure off the staff. He thanked FD for her assistance with</p>	

organising student visits to the Baltic Flour Mill. LW reported that HMS has started to work more closely with the Queens Hall, which for instance resulted in a jazz workshop followed by a concert. LW invited the Trustees to the Eurovision Song Contest-themed Summer Fair organised by the PTA on 10 June and the Summer Music Evening on 29 June at 7pm in the QEHS Main hall. He also advised that an art show was being planned, however the date for this has yet to be confirmed.

QE – an update by NS, Head of School, QE

NS reported that the GCSE and A level exam season had commenced. There had been a visit from GCQ, the examining authority, who generally come in once each cycle to check that we are meeting our statutory obligations. The visit went well.

The SLT has had recent training on trauma informed practice provided by a representative from NCC's HINT team, with the intention that this is then rolled out to wider staff in due course, in response to the changing student profile.

Recent training sessions for teaching staff have focused on SEND to be followed by an internal review of provision. NCC's SEND team has been commissioned to undertake an external review in the Autumn.

QE has externally recruited two ECT English teachers and internally appointed two achievement and progression coordinators to support Amanda Fletcher Woods. The school is still in the process of recruiting a new classics and history teacher, as well as a new drama lead and a social emotional mental health teacher.

Anne Lloyd, Assistant Headteacher for teaching and learning, has commenced her maternity leave with Jenny Fraser now undertaking the role during Anne's leave.

On the 4th of July new year 9 students will be visiting QE for Transition Day. Visits to QE for current year 7s are scheduled for week commencing 26 June.

Regarding admissions, 314 students are going to be taken into Y9. This is 8 above the published admissions number however the need arises due to a mistake by the local authority. There have been progression days for students in the 6th form and the Y12 higher education evening had been well attended.

NS updated on RE provision, which had included two recent 'drop-down' days for students in years 10 and 11 where the focus had been on different religions. Follow up work linked to determining moral ethics statements. Literacy groups in Y9 who do not do modern languages but get additional support have visited the Laing Gallery in Newcastle to do creative writing.

NS thanked trustees who had been able to attend the Spring music show case, which had been excellent. There has been a non-uniform day to fundraise for a memorial for Holly with £1500 being raised. During the memorial for Holly, a holly tree will be planted. The German exchange had been very successful. Spanish and French exchanges are being explored.

The Year 13 leavers day had been very successful, with praise received from the wider community commending the students on their excellent behaviour.

The Art Exhibition for Y11-13 dates had been arranged. The Trust Board Members would receive an invitation.

	<p>The PTA in the High School was up and running and had been nominated for an award to be the best new school PTA in the country. NS reported that this is a great group of parents; they had already raised a lot of money which they intended to spend on outdoor gym equipment for the high school. FD mentioned that perhaps the PTA could take on an alumni activity. NS would suggest this in next meeting. VJ asked NS to pass on the appreciation by the Trust Board and to keep the board informed.</p> <p>Performing arts staff were working on a drama show case and intending another youth theatre production. As soon as there were dates for performances, NS would confirm these.</p>	<p>NS</p> <p>NS</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Trust updates</p> <p>GA reported that the schools continue to engage positively with others. For example, this week we are engaging with King Edward VI school in Morpeth over support with special exam arrangement processing. GA advised he had been approached by the CEO of Pele Trust who are planning to become a languages hub, which would mean they would get funding to establish hub status with a view to working with partner schools to develop the quality of languages provision. GA has signalled interest and will update the Board further as more detail emerges.</p> <p>GA noted that the Hexham Partnership continues to work very well together. LW, who continues as chair of the partnership, advised trustees that the focus for first and middle schools had been on curriculum development and upskilling teaching staff across certain subjects, including languages, history, geography and design technology. The partnership was also working together to identify pupils who struggled with reading in order to intervene more effectively. In addition, a cross-partnership performing arts showcase at the Queen’s Hall was being planned.</p> <p>GA advised that the DfE had recently published Trust Quality Descriptors which could be referred to in future reviews of governance.</p> <p>GA informed Trustees of the recent meeting with Members where he and Sarah Sparke had provided updates on provision and finances respectively. Members had expressed their appreciation of the work of Trustees and were keen to see a continuation of good support and challenge of school leaders reflected in the minutes.</p> <p>In addition to the reported external reviews of SEND provision at each school that had been commissioned, an external review of the Trust’s provision for disadvantaged students had been commissioned, to be undertaken by Jane Kennedy, NCC’s lead in this area, in June and July. Findings will be reported to trustees when available. External reviews of certain subject areas across the two schools will also be undertaken over the coming months, with the support of our School Improvement Partner and a separate adviser.</p> <p>GA reported that poverty proofing work continues across the Trust, with a team from Children’s North East having been at QE recently, gathering detail on current practice, replicating the process undertaken previously at HMS, and due to report thereafter. GA noted that LW had previously fed back on changes to approaches at HMS in light of the feedback.</p> <p>GA advised that the NEU had indicated they intended more strike days in the summer term. Furthermore, the main unions and professional associations were balloting for joint action in the autumn term. GA, NS and LW will keep trustees informed of developments.</p> <p>GA concluded by informing trustees that although the snagging list relating to the new build continued to get smaller, work remained ongoing.</p>	<p>GA</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>Reflection on curriculum changes</p> <p>NS referred to his circulated paper and the list of questions VJ had sent him in advance which he had sought to address. He noted the comprehensive review of the curriculum undertaken by senior leaders and trustees in recent years and the changes that arose from this. As previously reported, the changes to the key stage 3 curriculum, implemented at the start of this academic year, were operating well. Year 9 students had now made option choices within the new key stage 4 curriculum and the process had gone well, with the intended increase of EBacc uptake to 77% and maintained demand in non-EBacc subjects where the inclusion of an additional option for students had worked well. Parents had been well informed about the reforms and feedback had been positive.</p> <p>NS explained that KS2 data, CAT, reading age and comprehension testing, and progress data in year 9 had enabled identification of students needing additional support and curriculum time, particularly in English and/or maths, to enable them to succeed across all their GCSEs. Trustees asked about the nature of additional support for those at risk of not achieving pass or good grades in English and/or maths in particular. NS outlined this in terms of hours, staffing and curriculum coverage, noting that his team was consulting with the Trust’s external curriculum advisor, who is an Ofsted inspector, on the shaping of the provision which would be finalised in the coming months ahead of implementation in September.</p> <p>LW reported that the introduction of Spanish to the year 7 and 8 curriculum in the middle school was going well. NS explained that the majority had opted for Spanish in current year 9, which had had some staffing implications. Current year 8s would be making their choices towards the end of this academic year.</p> <p>Discussion followed on the uptake of certain subjects at key stage 4 from September. Subjects such as art, business and PE had held up well. Music was also discussed, with NS noting that a change of syllabus was intended to make the subject more accessible at GCSE.</p> <p>NS then updated Trustees on plans to support internally those unable to regulate their behaviour in the mainstream setting, to ideally avoid recourse to external alternative provision and permanent exclusion. There are currently 5 students in year 9 for whom such provision could be beneficial. Senior leaders have engaged with other AP providers to determine best practice approaches and are developing a curriculum and staffing model based on findings. NS referred to the detail behind this in his paper. GA outlined the funding implications, noting the high cost of current external provision. He and SS had met with the Director of Education, SEND and skills to discuss the model and potential funding support, which was likely to come via interim STAR funding and EHCP additional funding.</p> <p>PF commended the ambition behind the intentions and emphasised the need for full Trust Board engagement with the model as it develops. Trustees agreed and asked NS to report further at the next Board meeting in July.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Committee reports:</p> <p>a. HR&PM Committee – 8 March 2023</p> <p>SK referred trustees to the previously circulate minutes. GA noted the amendment to the terms of reference. The date of the next HR& PM Committee meeting was 28 May 2023. KM offered her availability to attend.</p> <p>b. Finance & Audit Committee – 17 March & 2 May 2023</p>	

	<p>PF provided an overview of the minutes. VJ noted that the risk framework would be a key point to bring forward in the next Finance and Audit committee. The other development that stood out was that the Committee had decided not to renew the insurance for staff absence given the high cost of this and the lack of call upon it over several years. The preference was to focus on supporting staff to prevent absence.</p>	
12.	<p>Management accounts</p> <p>These were considered by the Board. GA noted that it was important that the Trust Board had exposure to the management accounts, for further reflection in the Finance and Audit Committee.</p>	
13.	<p>Internal assurance reports</p> <p>These were considered by the Board. GA noted an action from the Finance and Audit Committee relating to internal assurance and the extent of the confidence the coverage gives to trustees around ensuring that obligations are met. GA and SS are in the process of drawing up an assurance map, to be considered by the Committee at their next meeting on 30 June.</p>	
14.	<p>School resource management self-assessment tool checklist</p> <p>It was noted that this checklist was good documentation for the Trustees and that this currently showed no significant concerns.</p>	
15.	<p>Trustee visits</p> <p>GA would make sure that Trustees visits were scheduled before the end of the term and appreciated the Trustees' input and time.</p>	
16.	<p>Risk register</p> <p>The safeguarding group has identified that items 1 and 2 will be on the agenda at the next meeting. Item 12 was then reflected upon with consideration given to the mitigations in place, including RPA insurance, the recent review of the business continuity plan, the statutory testing arrangements and checking of these and remote learning contingencies. It was agreed that likelihood could move to 1 as a consequence, with impact as 3. The risk register would be updated accordingly.</p>	GA/clerk
17.	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>GA reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a positive meeting with the Hydro neighbourhood group; • that a staff and parent surveys had been conducted, and the feedback would be reported via the HR&PM Committee and the Monitoring Committees respectively; • that representatives from Polam School in Darlington had visited recently for advice and guidance relating to their own new build project; • that there were upcoming concerts and events to which Trust Board Members would be invited. 	
18.	<p>Urgent business with agreement of Chair</p> <p>VJ confirmed with the Trustee members that there was no further business and thanked the Trustees for their presence and input.</p>	

Close and confirm date of next meeting: The meeting closed at 8.40pm. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 6 July 2023. Part 1 begins at 6pm.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**