

HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST

Trust Board meeting held on 9 October 2025, 6.00pm, Conference room 1

Present: Kate MacLachlan (KM, Chair), Florrie Darling (FD, Vice Chair), Graeme Atkins (GA, Executive Headteacher), Iain Veitch (IV), Carey Stuart (CS), James Heath (JH), Vryan Johnston (VJ)

Also in attendance: Neil Seaton (NS, HoS QE), Liam Watters (LW, HoS HMS), Jon Riley (JR, CFO), Anna Vellinga (AV, Clerk)

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

Agenda Item	Key points/Actions	Who
1. Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no apologies. 	
2. Declarations of pecuniary, business or personal interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees' recently updated declarations will be published in the HLT area of the schools' websites. 	AV
3. Election of Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One nomination and two seconders were received for KM to be re-elected in the position of the Chair. KM kindly accepted and will therefore continue in the role of Chair of the Trust Board. 	
4. Election of Vice Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VJ stepped down as Vice Chair. KM thanked VJ for her excellent support. One nomination and two seconders were received for FD to take on the position of Vice Chair. FD was duly elected and will take on the role of Vice Chair of the Trust Board. AV to update the relevant records. 	AV
5. Minutes of previous meeting Part I: approval and matters arising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The minutes of the following meeting were agreed as a true record: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 10 July 2025 – Part 1 Matters arising: GA noted the actions addressed and those featuring on the agenda. A record of future actions is held. 	
6. Trust Board membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust Board thanked Victoria Pugh (VP), who stepped down in September, for her valuable contributions and extended their best wishes for the future. The trustees agreed to recruit a new member to replace VP and discussed the possibility of appointing an additional trustee in anticipation of the approaching end of term for VJ. Trustees discussed further recruitment options. GA, KM and FD to liaise on next steps. 	GA, KM, FD
7. Committee chairs and membership / meeting dates / link trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA expressed gratitude to all trustees for their willingness to be part of the various committees. Details of the committees are published on our websites and meeting dates have been circulated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F&A Committee: JH to remain Chair. A vacancy is anticipated in March 2026 when VJ will step down. KM volunteered to replace VJ in March 2026. HR&PM Committee: VJ to remain Chair until March 2026 when she will step down. GA will reach out to Gail A, who currently has a role on the committee as a non-trustee expert advisor, to ask if she is 	

	<p>willing to become a Trustee before exploring other recruitment options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ QE Monitoring Committee: IV to remain Chair. The Trust will be seeking to appoint additional trustees with expertise in SEND. In the interim FD will kindly take responsibility for both SEND and inclusion, as well as Safeguarding, however these will remain two distinct roles in future. ○ HMS Monitoring Committee: IV to remain Chair. No changes in the committee. ○ Safeguarding Group: FD to remain Chair. No changes to the group. • Link trustees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FD will cover Safeguarding and SEND and Inclusion, which will be treated as separate roles moving forward. ○ VJ will focus on Careers. The aim is to find a successor for VJ in March 2026. 	
8. Safeguarding refresher training for Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees attended the annual safeguarding refresher training for trustees prior to the meeting. Trustees who were not able to attend were given alternative options. 	
9. Executive Headteacher reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed that they had read the papers that were circulated prior to the meeting. KM noted that the QE report had been considered in detail at the QE Monitoring Committee meeting, with the HMS report due for full consideration at the forthcoming HMS Committee meeting. • FD noted no reference to trauma-informed practice in the behaviour section. GA explained that this remained a key part of both schools' approaches to working with young people, with the term subsumed into the broader terminology of inclusive and relational practice. • VJ expressed her hope that both schools will continue offering the wide range of personal development activities, commenting that it is an impressive and valuable programme that we offer students. • Trustees noted the details results considerations at the QE Monitoring Committee, with the HMS equivalent to follow. NES highlighted a gap between boys' and girls' achievement at GCSE, in favour of the latter. A working party has been set up to explore this in more detail. 	
10. School Development Plan Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed that they had read the papers that were circulated prior to the meeting. • GA noted that School Improvement Partner, Steve Wilson, had reviewed key priorities with senior leaders in light of 2024-25 outcomes. Steve will return later in the year to review progress with these priorities and the impact of actions. <p><u>QEHS SDP priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KM noted that the QE SDP had been reviewed at the recent monitoring committee meeting. • The committee had considered how progress will be measured. Attendance data is clear, but recent analysis shows boys, despite better attendance than girls, have poorer outcomes—suggesting an issue with effort and attitude to learning. Improving attitudes is complex and requires a thoughtful, research-informed strategy. NS explained that a working group has been established 	

	<p>to explore viable measures to influence outcomes. Ultimately the intention is for boys' achievement to be better than it was in 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV noted the discussion has on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, explaining that whilst the headline figures indicated a sizable gap with non-disadvantaged, there was a pronounced skewing effect caused by a small number of non-attenders, late admissions and, to an extent, figures for individuals within the AP. GA noted that, whilst it was intended that AP attendance would be higher, the students' actual attendance was much better than it would have been without the AP, and each had a clear progression pathway to post-16 provision. • It was agreed that trustees will focus part of their visit day in November on discussion with students about their attitudes to learning and their aspirations. • As part of a broader societal conversation, and an issue that FD feels strongly about personally, FD raised that she was keen to support with reviewing vocabulary in documents used in school to check that potentially stigmatising language is avoided. LW welcomed this but noted that the schools typically mirror sector-wide and recognised terms used by the DfE and Ofsted. <p><u>HMS School Development Plan (SDP) priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV noted that the development plan covers all areas of SATS but perhaps more was needed to address SPaG concerns. LW acknowledged this and indicated that an updated development plan would be circulated ahead of the upcoming committee meeting for a fuller focus then. 	
11. School updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed they took note of the content of the update documents that had been circulated prior to the meeting. <p><u>HMS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV enquired what actions are taken around the notably low attendance amongst Y7 SEN pupils. LW explained that the attendance figures were significantly affected by a small number of pupils with complex needs, and reassured IV that senior leaders are actively working on improving attendance within this group • VJ was interested in what the CO crew sessions were about. LW explained that CO-crew training sessions are teaching pupils about carbon monoxide risks. • FD asked LW about the Healthy Masculinity workshops. LW shared that these workshops involved targeted work with male and female students around misogynistic language and attitudes. The workshops were very well received. <p><u>QEHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV raised concerns about Year 10 PP and FSM attendance, noting a recurring pattern from last year, and asked about Year 11. NS confirmed similar trends in Year 11 but highlighted ongoing efforts to improve attendance although a change in the attendance officer and absence of the key senior leader had made progress more challenging. He noted that a small group of students is driving lower-than-expected figures in Year 9 and Year 11. Positively, a higher proportion of students are in the highest band for attendance, i.e. 95%+. • GA noted that increased efforts to improve attendance include extending the attendance officer's hours. Despite a stronger relationship with the education welfare service, students with severe absence continue to significantly impact overall attendance figures. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA reported that MATs with improved attendance are often better resourced, with staff engaging directly in the community. KM asked about the increased focus on attendance in newsletters and direct letters from school. NS said there may have been some gains in the higher bandings but a higher level of persistent and severe absence remains. JH asked whether the recently heard appeals for places were included in the 313 Year 9 students, and NS confirmed they were. NS explained that a similar number of appeals come in annually, noting that responding to these is a time-consuming process. 	
12. Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum document outlined proposed adjustments to course offerings in response to growing financial pressures. Trustees acknowledged that proposed changes are driven by budget constraints and difficult decisions need to be made. Proposed changes are to no longer offer Dance, Latin and BTEC sports. VJ noted that these subjects have historically contributed to the school's distinctiveness and stressed the importance of future-proofing the curriculum, warning that if trends shift in five years, the school may not be in a position to reintroduce such subjects. NS noted that these subjects have consistently attracted low student numbers, which ultimately has led to the proposal to discontinue them VJ asked in relation to sixth form recruitment if there is data indicating whether students chose not to return due to subject availability. NS noted that losses occurred in Graphics, Sport and DT, partly due to limited course options (e.g. not enough graphics or biology classes). Many students viewed Sixth Form as a backup if college applications were unsuccessful. NS reported that Drama was retained this year, but uptake in KS5 remains low. Spanish also remains low, despite significant efforts to develop the subject. NS mentioned that preferences have shifted this year. If the EBacc mandate were removed, subjects like Drama and Art might benefit, whereas Dance and Latin likely would not. VJ asked if school would consider exploring shared specialist teaching resources with other schools, rather than assuming certain subjects are unfeasible. IV advised against this, based on his experience of previous joint approaches. NS recommended the approach proposed in the paper, given the need to have a curriculum model that was affordable and was aligned with realistic forecasts of future sixth form numbers. NS outlined plans to try to secure better retention of year 11 students into the sixth form. One proposal is to release sixth form offers ahead of results, as internal data already indicates which students are likely to meet entry criteria. An earlier offer could positively influence commitment levels. Trustees agreed the offer as suggested. NS will speak to the relevant subject leaders and staff. 	NS

<p>13. Committee Minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Group –10 September 2025 HR & PM Committee – 12 September 2025 QE Monitoring Committee – 6 October 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees confirmed they took note of the minutes of the following committees that were circulated with the meeting papers: Safeguarding Group –10 September 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no questions arising from these minutes. HR & PM Committee – 12 September 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no questions arising from these minutes. QE Monitoring Committee – 6 October 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no questions arising from these minutes. 	
14. Management accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees confirmed they took note of the June and July management accounts that had been distributed with the meeting papers. Trustees noted that the accounts were going to be discussed by Trustees in the F&A Committee meeting which is due to take place on Friday 10 October. 	
15. Trust updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted the content in the update document that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Confidential matters were minuted in part II of the meeting. 	
16. Scheme of delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA reported that the Scheme of Delegation has one update to reflect that the HR&PM Committee can consist of at least two non-staff trustees and the Executive Headteacher and that they may co-opt professional non-trustee expertise onto the committee as deemed necessary. AV to arrange for previous version to be replaced on each school's website. 	AV
<p>17. Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025-26 HLT Complaints Policy and Procedure Whistleblowing Policy Business Continuity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following policies were reviewed and approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2025-26 HLT Complaints Policy and Procedure Whistleblowing Policy Business Continuity GA noted that the Admissions policy was in the process of being re-drafted following advice from Browne Jacobson, our legal advisors. Representations received from other MATs would be considered when the updated policy is reviewed at the next meeting. 	GA
18. Website compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA reported that the website compliance is an ongoing process, with key updates in place and statutory requirements being actively managed. 	
19. Risk register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted that all risks that are due to be considered according to the risk register will be considered by the F&A committee in their next meeting scheduled for 10 October. 	
20. Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA noted those included in the school and trust updates, including a trustee visit day in November. He advised that the regular meeting with neighbouring residents is scheduled to take place soon. 	

21. Urgent business with agreement of Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no urgent business. 	

Close and confirm date of next meeting: The meeting closed at 7.30pm. The date of the next meeting is Thursday 4 December 2025.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**