

HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST

Trust Board meeting held on 5 February 2026, 6.00pm, Conference room 1

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

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

PART 1 (CLASSIFIED NON-CONFIDENTIAL)

Agenda Item	Key points/Actions	Who
1. Apologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
2. Declarations of pecuniary, business or personal interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees' up-to-date declarations have been published in the HLT area of the schools' websites. 	
3. 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 – 4 December 2025 – 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GA and KM provided an update on interviews held with prospective trustees who responded to the request for interest published in the parent newsletter in January. • All candidates presented strongly and were considered to have potential for the role. • Following discussion and careful consideration, taking into account the desired qualities for the role and the importance of maintaining diversity on the Trust Board, Trustees agreed that two candidates should be invited to join the Board initially. Those not being appointed at this time should be thanked and the possibility of contacting them in the future suggested. 	KM/GA /AV
5. Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 responses to the consultation were received and all were positive. • GA noted that the main area of focus was to align SJMS with CMS and HMS in the QE policy when the oversubscription criteria apply. • IV noted that some schools place children of staff as a higher criterion than others, in the interests of staff recruitment and retention. • Trustees approved the changes to the admissions policy of each school. GA noted that the determination will be made by the March deadline, with associated publication on the websites. 	GA
6. Trust Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed that they had taken note of the Trust Updates document that was circulated prior to the meeting. • Confidential aspects of this are recorded in Part II of the minutes. • GA noted the intention to strengthen adherence to the Public Sector Equality Duty. Although the policy is already published on our website and the Trust remains compliant, the aim is to ensure clearer documentation showing how equality considerations have been taken into account, where relevant, during policy reviews and in Trust Board and SLT decision making processes. • IV highlighted the need to remain mindful of equality obligations in recruitment, ensuring that the process is accessible and supportive for 	

	<p>candidates with disabilities. VJ agreed, emphasising the importance of taking appropriate steps while still assessing candidates' resilience for working in a school environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA reported on the requirement for schools in England to be mobile phone-free by default, with phones inaccessible throughout the school day except for specific exceptions, and policies to include clear consequences. He added that from 1 April 2026, Ofsted will check how well these policies are communicated and enforced and their impact on learning, behaviour and wellbeing. JH asked how the Trust will react to this requirement. GA stated that he, LW and NS are reviewing the approach with senior leaders. GA will keep Trustees informed on developments. 	GA
7. School updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees acknowledged that they had read the circulated papers. <p><u>HMS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LW noted that attendance was the main focus at the latest HMS monitoring committee meeting. Attendance has recovered well since a sickness bug in November had a noticeable impact on numbers. LW mentioned that staff development has been positive and continues to be strategically focused. LW shared that HMS pupils made a strong contribution to the QE Winter Concert, and noted that involvement of pupils in music into year 9 continues to grow. LW explained that, with the forthcoming SATs in mind, Y6 are currently in a strong overall position, with good progress being made to date from initial starting points. Further attention is being given to maths, while reading and SPaG progress is broadly in line with last year. Gender patterns show that girls' maths performance has improved, but boys' reading results are lower, leading to the introduction of a targeted boys' reading strategy and interventions, specifically for understanding non-fiction texts. LW reported positive updates from the ski trip. <p><u>QE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NS commented that despite considerable effort, energy and determination, attendance levels are still not shifting. A notable rise in sickness absence in late November and early December undermined some earlier positive progress. FSM attendance continues to be a concern, albeit with the headline percentages skewed to a degree due to the smaller cohort size. NS reported that leaders are continually working on strategies to address. IV noted the importance being given to attendance as discussed at the QE Monitoring Committee meetings. KM added that persistence is key and that success will come through sustained, consistent application. VJ asked about the focus of the upcoming Creative Careers event. NS explained that the aim is to bring professionals from creative industries into school to raise awareness amongst students. Trustees showed their willingness to share connections with Assistant Headteacher Andy Hedley. NS thanked trustees for their support. VJ also referenced feedback from a student panel that the Green Careers fair had not landed strongly in terms of perceived relevance. NS took note of the suggestion of adjusting how these events are promoted to help improve engagement. NS reported successful recruitment within the SEND team, including the recent appointment of a new Deputy SENDCo and an inclusion manager. 	

	<p>Further recruitment for an LSA is expected. Assistant Headteacher SENDCo, Laura Warland, has expressed increased confidence in the developing team structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NS highlighted the success of West Side Story. Trustees extended many thanks to Director Jude Long and the team for their outstanding work. 	
<p>8. Committee Minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Group – 14 January 2026 • HMS Monitoring Committee – 28 January 2026 • QE Monitoring Committee 21 January 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed that they took note of the circulated committee meeting minutes referenced below: • Safeguarding Group – 14 January 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FD noted that safeguarding will be a key focus of the upcoming audit scheduled for May 2026. ○ GA confirmed strong relationships with the new DSLs and praised the quality of their reports. ○ FD suggested attending the next trustees’ day to support the audit. ○ GA also recommended that trustees explore cases of students categorised as severely absent, i.e. who attend less than 50%, to understand the reasons and review the schools’ actions that are in place. • HMS Monitoring Committee – 28 January 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There were no questions arising from these minutes. • QE Monitoring Committee – 21 January 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There were no questions arising from these minutes. 	
9. Management Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees confirmed receipt of the October and November management accounts which were circulated prior to the meeting. • GA shared that the budget is largely on track but there is a potential for upward drift of agency costs, although these are currently offset by reduced teacher expenditure. No questions were raised. 	
10. Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following policies were approved by trustees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HMS and QEHS Public Sector Equality Duty ○ Supporting pupils and students with medical conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GA noted that while the policy was reviewed at a recent Safeguarding Group meeting, the Trust Board holds responsibility to approve. GA invited trustees to share any issues. VJ raised that the content felt overly long and asked whether it could be presented differently. GA thanked VJ for her input and explained the benefit of the policy as a reference document, but agreed that conciseness should be considered for future iterations of the policy. 	
11. Risk Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GA confirmed that relevant risk register items were updated in recent committee meetings. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VJ recommended scheduling the next Governance 360% review for February 2027 taking into account Risk 14.a 'governance and strategy'. Trustees agree. AV to note and to prompt KM and GA in autumn 2026. 	AV
12. Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GA noted those included in the school and trust updates. GA commented that a recent road closure due to filming on Tynedale Terrace did not cause problems for the schools. 	
13. 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 19 March 2026.

_____ **Chair**

_____ **Date**