



Whinless Down Academy Trust

Board Meeting

Thursday 30th March 2023

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

DRAFT Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

Held at the Trust Office, St Martin's School, at 4pm on Thursday 30th March 2023.

Board Trustees Present: Anne Siggins (EHT), Alison Mackintosh (Chair), Tricia Sherling (Vice Chair)
Mike Ashley, Pam Brivio

Others Present: Michelle Noden (Trust Business Manager), Kelly Brown (Priory Fields Headteacher)

Governance Professional: Claudia Sawyers

1	<u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u>	<u>Actions</u>
1.1	All Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. There are no resignations to report. Mike Ashley's term of office is due for renewal, MA and all Trustees agreed to re-appoint for a further period of 4 years.	TBM to update GIAS website
1.2	There were no apologies received prior to the meeting but Helen Seeley is not present.	
2	<u>Minutes from Meeting Thursday 15th December 2022</u>	
2.1	<u>Approval of Minutes</u> Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees via email prior to the meeting. Trustees agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and minutes were signed by chair.	
2.2	<u>Matters Arising</u> Further to discussion in the meeting in October 2022, an independent review of Governance review has been sought by Governance Professional. GP has done research in to several providers and distributed the method statement of the preferred option. A trustee asked how this service would compare with the NGA, who had previously been	

	approached for a quote? It had previously been discussed that, as this is the first time an external review has ever been conducted, the approach by the NGA is more than what is required at this time and is over £1000 more expensive. The proposed quote is from 'Success Begins With' and the method statement and it was agreed their credentials meet the needs of the board. Trustees agreed to go ahead with proposed quote.	
3 3.1	<u>Publication of Minutes</u> The Governance Professional confirmed the approved minutes from the Trust Board meeting held on Thursday 18 th October 2022 have been published on the Trust website.	
4 4.1	<u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u> There were no required updates to Interest forms. There were no interests declared against this agenda.	
5 5.1 5.2 5.3	<u>Revivication Event</u> Feedback from the event has been collated in to a table which was shared on the screen in the meeting room. The vision for 5 years time in each of the areas of discussion; parental engagement, standards, attendance, behaviour has been pulled together from the discussions; what are the barriers, what are the ways forward, as well as the role of trustees and governors in monitoring this. Each area was briefly discussed. With regards to attendance, it was suggested that perhaps conducting a survey for parents persistent absentees could be useful, to try and find out any common barriers to attendance and therefore ways to improve could be identified. A survey could also be done amongst children, particularly older children if there are any common themes as to why they might not want to come to school (non-illness related). A trustee also suggested engaging with a local secondary school could also be useful as many of the same families/siblings can be persistent absentees. With regards to the discussion on behaviour, it has been identified as an increasing issue. EHT explained that being able to provide a safe, secure and calming environment is the top priority and the need to suspend children for a number of days has increased due to this. Trustees agreed that using suspension is necessary to provide the safe and calm environment for all children in school.	
6 6.1	<u>CEO Report</u> The report was sent to Trustees prior to the meeting to read and raise questions. The report included data on staff absence in terms 1-3. See confidential minute. The CEO report features current roll numbers in each school, a trustee asked whether the pupil numbers for September 2023 have been released. EHT commented that they have had the first notification and numbers are lower than previous years; however it is acknowledged that this is the case in many schools and LA data shows it to be a low birth rate year group.	

7	<u>Standards Committee Report</u>	
7.1	<p>The standards committee visited to monitor the implementation of Little Wandle and discussed this with the headteachers and English leaders at each school. TS wrote up the report and this was sent to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The report highlighted the strengths and areas for development and the committee would like to conduct a follow up visit in term 6 to review.</p>	Followup Standards committee English monitoring
8	<u>Finance</u>	
8.1	The December budget monitoring was shared with the Trust Board prior to the meeting, this budget monitoring has not yet been analysed at an FSARC meeting. Trustee commented that it is disappointing that the finance monitoring is behind, this is due to the new finance system. TBM commented it is now only one month behind so very close to being up to date.	
8.2	Vale View The predicted rollover in December was £192,907, which is an increase of £22,569 from the original budget.	
8.3	Priory Fields The predicted rollover in December was £238,726; this reflects the £100,000 which has been put in reserve as discussed at the last FSARC meeting, which explains why the rollover looks significantly less to previous months.	
8.4	St Martin's The predicted rollover has dropped at St Martin's to £53,826. TBM commented that this has gone down further too in January (In school monitoring has taken place). A Trustee asked, if the rollover continues going down, how long until it is negative? TBM explained it will be closely monitored and contingency planning for staffing will need to be considered. St Martin's will hopefully be due some high needs funding this year as this has been applied for and should be agreed.	
8.5	Catering A trustee asked whether TBM/EHT know how much a school meal costs to prepare. TBM explained this has not been analysed. The reason this was asked is that KCC have come out with a price increase for maintained schools, with £2.67 being the cheapest contract. At this time, £2.41 is received in funding for children eligible for Free School Meals. This equates to approx. £50 a year extra per child not being funded. Currently, WDAT charge £2.30 for a school meal, there was not a price increase imposed this academic year. Trustees agreed that the price will need to increase next year. Anecdotaly, a trustee commented that there was also a study done to compare with the average cost of a packed lunch which came out as £3.50. It is felt that the school meal on offer does represent good value for money, but with increasing costs involved in producing the meal, our price to parents will need to increase.	

8.6	<p>SRMA</p> <p>The School Resource Management Assessment Tool has been completed for discussion/approval by Trustees, all boxes have been assessed as a 'yes' which is a positive. Trustees agreed that the assessment is accurate and agreed to be submitted. A trustee asked whether there were any areas that the Trust struggled to get a 'yes' in? TBM commented that Q-25-<i>'Do Trustees challenge pupil number assumptions and can the trust move quickly to recast the budget if the projections and reality are materially different?'</i> with the recent numbers released (as discussed earlier in the meeting) this will have an impact on the year after next; the budget set in May will need to consider this in 5 year plan. If numbers stay that low then natural wastage of staff will need to be considered as well as possibility of different ways of class management.</p>	
8.7	<p>Recommendation of Accountants</p> <p>Trustees have been sent the Review of Performance of the External Auditors prior to the meeting. This is information from TBM who has researched the effectiveness of Kreston Reeves compared to two other providers, along with quotes. Trustees have felt that Kreston Reeves have provided very good service so far, they have confidence in their service and believe their quote represents good value for money. Trustees would like to recommend agreement of Kreston Reeves to Members.</p> <p>Two Members are present at this meeting, Alison Mackintosh and Anthony Welch who agree to Kreston Reeves being re-appointed. TBM will seek agreement from other Members not present.</p>	TBM to contact members
9	<p><u>MAT Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The Autumn review of actions were sent to Trustees prior to the meeting to review. There were no comments or questions regarding the MAT strategic Plan.</p>	
10 10.1	<p><u>Minutes from LGB meetings – Term 2 and 3</u></p> <p>The LGB minutes from term 2 and 3 were shared for the joint Vale View and St Martin's LGB meeting, and the term 3 meeting for Priory Fields, there has not been a Priory Fields LGB meeting in term 2. There were no questions or comments on the LGB Minutes.</p>	
11 11.1	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>Special Leave</p> <p>The Special Leave Policy was sent to the Trust Board prior to the meeting to review. This is a model policy from HR Connect (personnel provider) and there are some minor changes to the policy; namely the addition of the section 'Parental Bereavement Leave' and minor wording changes which were highlighted in the version sent to Trustees. There were no questions or comments on this policy. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p>GDPR Privacy Notices</p> <p>The following Privacy Notices have been reviewed and updated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Privacy Notice Pupils -Privacy Notice Parents/Carers -Privacy Notice Staff 	

	<p>-Privacy Notice Trustees/Governors -Privacy Notice Job Applicants</p> <p>There has been a change to the Pupils Privacy Notice which is the removal of SEAAS in 'Information sharing'. A trustee asked why SEAAS is no longer being used. EHT explained that they have not been able to uphold the contract as the SEAAS employee who worked with the Trust has left and they have been unable to replace. This has resulted in an increase in workload at Priory Fields and Vale View.</p> <p>There has been an update to the Staff Privacy Notice, the addition to information sharing as 'The School Bus' is a platform which is now used for Policy Management and all staff have access.</p> <p>The Privacy Notices were agreed by Trust Board.</p> <p>Grievance at Work</p> <p>The Grievance at Work policy was sent to the Trust Board prior to the meeting to review. This is a model policy from HR Connect (personnel provider) which is the same model as before, but updated. There were no questions or comments on this policy. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p>Bullying and Harassment</p> <p>The Bullying and Harassment policy was sent to the Trust Board prior to the meeting to review. This is a model policy from HR Connect (personnel provider) which is the same model as before, but updated. There were no questions or comments on this policy. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p>Investment</p> <p>The Investment policy was sent to the Trust Board prior to the meeting to review. There were no material changes, only updates to acknowledge the update to the name of the 'FSARC'. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p>Gifts and Hospitality</p> <p>The Gifts and Hospitality policy was sent to the Trust Board prior to the meeting to review. There were no material changes, only updates to acknowledge the update to the name of the 'FSARC'. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p>	
12	<p>Safeguarding Update</p> <p>The actions from the previous meeting have been reviewed by EHT and new actions identified. The written report was sent to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>An internal audit was conducted by EHT in each school and some improved practice was identified. A further external audit has also taken place recently, which went well and the final report is due to be received soon.</p>	

	A trustee asked; If something goes wrong concerning safeguarding, do we have the answer in the policy? It was discussed that it would be difficult to cover all hypothetical scenarios in writing in the policy. It was suggested that coming up with some example scenarios to test the policy may be beneficial.	
13	GDPR Update There has been a suspected breach at one of the schools but it was found to not have caused harm, however some further training is going to be put in place to tighten up procedures .	
14	Confidentiality of Proceedings 6.1: CEO Report Staff absence discussion	
15	AOB Risk Assessment Protocol A protocol for risk assessments for individuals who require one, such as due to medical condition, pregnancy or injury, has been written for Trust approval. The protocol was shared with the Trust Board. The purpose is to ensure all members of staff are aware of their duties and the school's duties in regards to risk assessing individual circumstances and the procedure for reviewing risk assessments. The protocol was agreed by the Trust Board. Support Staff Pay The Local Authority has now published the 2023-24 Kent Range, the pay scale used for support staff. The pay scale includes an annual increase of £2000 to all on KR3 to KR11. This was discussed previously at FSARC; with the discussion being whether the Trust implements the pay increase early in April 2023 or in the normal pay cycle, in September 2023. The decision was made to implement the increase 5 months early, in April 2023. It was felt that this would be beneficial to support staff and would acknowledge the impact of economic circumstances experienced by all. Trustees agreed that this was the right decision to make and supports this.	
	Dates The next Trust Board meeting will be held on Thursday 18 th May at 2pm.	

<u>Action Points</u>
1. TBM to update Get Information About Schools with MA's new term of office 7. Standards committee – follow up English monitoring in term 6 8.7 TBM to gain agreement from Members to appoint accountants

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of Whinless Down Academy Trust: _____ Date: _____
Alison Mackintosh