



## **Whinless Down Academy Trust**

### **Board Meeting**

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023**

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

#### **Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting**

**Held at Trust Office at St Martin's School on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 9am.**

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

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

**Governance Professional:** Claudia Sawyers

1	<b><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u></b>	<b><u>Actions</u></b>
	<p>There were no apologies.</p> <p><b>Resignations</b></p> <p>Helen Seeley has tendered her resignation to the Trust Board. The Articles of Association state that the minimum number of Trustees is three. There are currently four Trustees, not including the EHT so the minimum requirement is met, however recruitment is now a bigger priority. Trustees accepted the resignation from HS.</p> <p><b>Recruitment of Trustees</b></p> <p>There was a conversation at FSARC about approaching parents, as this has not previously been explored outside of recruiting parents as governors. HS sat on both the FSARC and Standards committee and these skills would be a priority, along with Premises, Health and Safety, Estates Management, HR/Personnel and Project Management. There are not currently any Parent Trustees and the requirement to appoint parents is currently being covered by the LGBs. But trustees agreed a Parent Trustee would be favourable.</p> <p>Gov Prof. is undertaking the NGA Level 3 Professional Clerking and part of this is undertaking a project which has recently been decided as <i>'To aid the Trust Board in recruitment by establishing a recruitment pack and using it to advertise vacancies'</i>. Gov Prof. is currently in</p>	

	<p>the process of creating a recruitment pack publication which is needed before any vacancies are advertised. External agencies have been explored and a quote has been obtained for the service provided from Governors for Schools, who would bring up to 3 suitable candidates at a cost of approximately £2500 per appointed candidate.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to start with advertising amongst parents as the first step, once the recruitment pack has been finalised.</p>	
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>2.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Minutes from Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023</u></b></p> <p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><i>TBM to update GIAS with MA's new term of Office</i> – This has been done and TBM will also now update to confirm HS' resignation.</p> <p><i>Standards committee meeting to be organised for Term 6-</i> TS will arrange date with EHT after this meeting.</p> <p><i>TBM to contact Members to gain agreement of Kreston Reeves-</i> TBM has email confirmation from the Members not present at the last Trust Board meeting to gain agreement for Kreston Reeves to be appointed.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether staff absence has improved following the discussion and data presented at the last meeting. Priory Fields Headteacher (PF HT) commented that it does appear to be a much better picture recently, based on the daily attendance there tends to be a couple of people off and sometimes nobody which is drastically improved, although no concrete data has been produced yet as a longer time span needs to be given.</p>	
<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>3.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Publication of Minutes</u></b></p> <p>The Governance Professional confirmed the approved minutes from the Trust Board meeting held on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 have been published on the Trust website.</p>	
<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Register of Business Interest</u></b></p> <p>Trustees were given the opportunity to declare any new business interests, there were no required updates to Interest forms. There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Feedback from FSARC Meeting</u></b></p> <p>FSARC Chair gave verbal feedback from meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023. The monitoring of the budget for February is not causing any concern but there is substantial pressure upcoming due to pay increases for support staff, which will be approximate £60,000 across the Trust and the impending settlement of teachers pay, which is still being disputed nationally with unions. Producing a balanced budget will also be an issue in years 2-5 and staffing may need to be</p>	

	<p>reviewed in those years in order to produce the budget. Potential changes in High Needs Funding and SEND is another factor that could have an impact to the budget.</p> <p>Looking forward there are sufficient reserves, all schools will be in-year deficit and this may be the case next year too.</p> <p><u>Indicative Budgets</u></p> <p>Indicative budgets were also reviewed at FSARC and there is a reduction in numbers at Vale View by 12 children which will impact the amount of funding received. Trustees discussed that the projected number of new children in EYFS this September is low at all schools and appears to be a low birth year. This will further impact the funding for September 2024.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed staffing structure</u></b></p> <p>Anonymised Staffing Structures were sent to Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>At StM and PF, there is a proposed Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) member of staff, both of whom are current TAs. There would need to be a TA recruited to replace them in September. St Martin's would like an additional 2 TAs for high level of SEN support, however HNF will likely not fund this sufficiently.</p> <p>Vale View would also like a FLO. This will be dependent on budgets from September, it is not possible to predict currently due to projected impact of staff pay increases on budget. There is a need for this position however.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether leadership feels that the current staffing is sufficient for covering the needs. PF HT commented that the current staffing level is a stretch to support the level of pastoral needs in the school. Group nurture approach and offering alternative learning provision, such as the Farm, is important and staffing can be difficult. Last year, implementing a forest school leader was on the plan for implementation and recruitment took place, however the candidate withdrew and the process was halted. There is still a desire to implement this provision and it would need serious investment and resourcing. There has not been capacity currently to undertake this.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<p><b><u>MAT Strategic plan</u></b></p> <p>EHT has reviewed the MAT strategic plan for Spring milestones and this was sent to Trustees prior to the meeting. Milestones are largely on track. Some challenges outstanding are:- Attendance and persistent absence, the attendance team have been meeting regularly to discuss ways to improve attendance.</p> <p>Recruitment of trustees as discussed earlier in the meeting is still a challenge but work is underway for a recruitment drive.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<p><b><u>NGA Training</u></b></p> <p>The NGA Learning Link platform was presented on the screen. It was discussed that this platform should be utilised and devising a programme of training for next year may be useful. The skills audit from last year was reviewed and it was agreed that the skills audit should be done again. Gov. Prof. will send the audit to Trustees.</p> <p>It was decided that the modules on Equality and Diversity would be useful for trustees to access individually prior to the next meeting and bring thoughts to next meeting.</p>	GP to send the skills audit

9	<p><b><u>Policies</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Whistleblowing Policy</u></b></p> <p>The Whistleblowing Policy has been reviewed in accordance to HR Connect model policy and updated to reflect the model. There are no material changes to the process of Whistleblowing. There will now be a central record kept by TBM of Whistleblowing concerns made. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p><b><u>Investment and Reserves Policy</u></b></p> <p>The Investment and Reserves Policy is new and was previously just the Investment Policy. This policy was taken to FSARC to discuss what the level of reserve will be set as. This still needs to be decided about what the reserve minimum and maximum reserve is going to be.</p> <p><b><u>Attendance Policy</u></b></p> <p>This Attendance Policy has been reviewed in line with the DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance. The Trust Board agreed the policy.</p>	
10 10.1	<p><b><u>Safeguarding Update</u></b></p> <p>There was an external audit undertaken by Proactive Safeguarding at each school and a report has been written. EHT has pulled out actions to formulate a plan and response to each point. The overall audit was successful and Safeguarding was found to be robust, with no 'red' concerns under the RAG rating system used.</p> <p>The actions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide FLO with advanced safeguarding training and provide formal supervision for safeguarding team- this is going to take place through accessing courses on National College online platform and through Trust DSL network meetings.</li> <li>Check name of birth certificate as a safer recruitment good practice- This will now be requested at interview.</li> <li>-Interview questions to include a more in depth safeguarding question such as a 'warner style' question- This will be included in interview questions going forward.</li> <li>-Allegations against staff recorded on CURA system- Currently they are input on CURA at the highest level of concern that only headteachers can see, however it was not known whether they appear on a printed chronology. This is being checked and will be redacted where necessary and the method of logging these types of concerns may need to change.</li> <li>-Safeguarding policy did not name responsible governor/trustee- this has now been amended.</li> <li>-Green safeguarding forms being kept in a file- There are some members of staff who still use a green form rather than entering straight on to CURA as they don't have easy access to computer. It was suggested to keep these forms as police evidence may require this. It was decided that this would not be practical, the forms will be scanned in, and originals destroyed.</li> <li>-Young carers training for staff- It was suggested that further training for staff on Young Carers would be beneficial. A trustee suggested contacting the SMART Gallery in Dover as they do a lot of sessions for young carers. It would also be beneficial to do another round of identification as there is a new criteria for children to be classified as young carers. There is also a young carers week coming up which would be ideal for doing something in school.</li> </ul>	

	<p>-Equality objectives need to be updated for each school- this is already underway. The Lettings Policy also needs to set out the requirement for organisations to have their own safeguarding policy- this is already practice but the policy needs to state this.</p> <p>A trustee commented that it was surprising that there was no significant comment in the audit regarding Prevent training. There have been some updates in this area and it will be checked on the Single Central Record to see if there are members of staff who need to undertake update training. A trustee commented that there is a local provider who offers this training in person and it is tailored to the local area and parents could benefit from this training too.</p>	
<b>11</b> <b>11.1</b>	<p><b><u>GDPR Update</u></b></p> <p>No breaches.</p>	
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Confidentiality of Proceedings</b></p> <p>None</p>	
<b>15</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>There was a monitoring visit by TS and HS who came in on the in-school monitoring day and TS will share with report with Gov. Prof to add to next agenda. Overall it was felt that learning is monitored effectively and a follow up would be good to find out how effective is the impact of the feedback from the monitoring.</p>	
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>17<sup>th</sup> July at 4pm.</p>	

<b><u>Action Points</u></b>
Gov. Prof. to send the skills audit to Trustees.

Minutes taken by Governance Professional Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of Whinless Down Academy Trust:\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Alison Mackintosh