



Whinless Down Academy Trust

Board Meeting

Thursday 2nd May 2019

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

Held at Priory Fields School on Thursday 2nd May at 5:00pm

Board Trustees Present: Anne Siggins (EHT), Alison Mackintosh (CoTB), Tricia Sherling (VCoTB), Vicky Smith, Carol Rayfield, Kathy Howell, Mike Ashley, Michelle Noden (ABM)

Others Present: Helen Seeley (HoS Priory Fields), Rachel Appleby (HoS St Martin's) and Kelly Brown (HoS Vale View)

Clerk: Claudia Sawyers

1	<p><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u> Apologies received from David Mellon, Apologies were accepted by the Trust Board.</p>
2	<p><u>Resignation / Election of Trustees</u> Claudia Sawyers has resigned as a trustee and is now employed by the Academy as PA to Executive Headteacher and as the clerk to the Trust Board.</p>
3	<p><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u> TS declared a new business interest and updated her business interest form: she is now a member of the DEALT academy in Deal, Kent.</p>
4	<p><u>Minutes from meeting in Term 3 – Thursday 24th January 19:</u> <u>Approval of Minutes</u> Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees prior to the meeting. The minutes have been agreed by all trustees and signed by the chair.</p>
5	<p><u>Matters Arising</u> A trustee asked for an update on the CIF works at St Martins, ABM explained that she has received notification yesterday that the works have been completed and snagging is due to take place next. They will complete the snagging then ABM will go over to do final snagging. The CIF application for the boiler at</p>

	<p>St Martin's was not successful in being achieved. This will be discussed in greater depth later in the meeting as it is on the agenda under Premises Update.</p> <p>Accountant audit dates were distributed. This led to a discussion about internal audits and how many are required per year, ABM explained there are currently 3 internal audits per year. The accountants, Kreston Reeves, who also do the external audits, are currently completing them. A trustee asked whether the KMA could be involved in the future and whether any of the academies in KMA do their own so advice could be sought, as there have only ever been very minor issues identified in the audits.</p> <p>In the last meeting, a trustee asked whether a secretary is necessary. EHT has looked in to this and it is not necessary to have a company secretary. There have been some indications in her research that it is preferable, but the duties are very similar to those of a clerk and it also appears that it is only preferable for larger MATs.</p> <p>New trustee folders have been created for MA and KH.</p> <p>Academy visits summer term: there are still some trustees who are interested in going to the other schools as they were not able to take part in the tours last time, but logistically it has not been possible during the school day due to working commitments. ABM is going to contact those trustees to arrange visits at PFS and VV.</p>
6	<p><u>Lord Agnew's Letter</u></p> <p>Both of the letters from February 2019 and April 2019 have been shared with trustees, one is with regards to excessive pay to employees and the other with regards to audits and governance.</p> <p>Audits have been discussed earlier in the meeting. Trustees recognised the importance of mid-year audits and also that there has only ever been very small concerns raised which are always rectified. Trustees expressed their confidence that they are well informed on the audit process and in the outcomes of audits. Accounts and audits are presented to the Trust Board and signed by trustees and submitted to the accountants.</p> <p>This also led to discussion about setting the budget, it was acknowledged that it is not possible to set a deficit budget and that staffing may need to be cut to ensure this happens, however this makes it appear that cutting staff is manageable in the long term. Each year staffing budget is cut and the cost of staff increases, however the need for staff does not decrease.</p>
7	<p><u>Academy Action Plan</u></p> <p>The Academy Action Plan and long term priorities were tabled.</p> <p><i>'To improve outcomes across the MAT in all areas- Exec HT to undertake a series of reviews to explore further developments'</i></p> <p>The review process has begun; it is lengthy process where actions are being evaluated gradually. Meetings take place with managers/leaders involved in each areas to review the actions.</p> <p>It has been identified that the workload for the SENCOs at each school are somewhat strained due to other duties places upon those members of staff. At the end of year academy review, there will be a focus on identifying further areas that can be shared across the trust to improve on this.</p> <p>The year 6 review has taken place earlier in the year to assess measure that could be put in place to ensure that provision is the best it can be prior to SATs and this provision is in place and working well.</p>

Pupil Premium reviews are planned at each school and taking place with governor involvement.

'To plan, organise and initiate a programme of works for St Martin's and Vale View in relation to the CIF funding if successful'

As previously discussed, the application for a new boiler at St Martin's was unsuccessful but it is possible to appeal. ABM is waiting to hear back from consultancies to see whether this route is likely to be effective. The boiler has broken down every winter for at least the past 7 years which has caused closures at the school, with a further closure since the application was made. A trustee asked how much this application was for and whether it can be afforded within the school budget. ABM explained it was approximately £223,000 so it not available in school budget.

At Vale View, ABM has received a phone call today with consultants regarding the tendering process for the successful CIF bid to adhere to fire regulations within the school building. A meeting is to be scheduled and ABM is asking for schedule of works to be prioritised. ABM expects the schedule to be tight with regards to the available time frame (6 week summer holiday) as the work is likely to take this long.

'Develop roles that work across the academy'

An ICT Technician has been appointed to work across St Martin's and Vale View. An SLT member to work across the academy is still in development and budget implications are being considered.

'Explore catering solutions to move towards delivering our own catering options'

The catering for Vale View, which was previously being provided by a third party school, has now successfully been moved to Priory Fields kitchen so that all schools in the MAT are being provided for in-house (by Principals). The KCC contract for catering ends this year, however it is thought that this would not be enough time to allow for a new independent catering solution to be initiated. A three-year contract is standard for KCC (it is possible to end the contract after 2 year) and ABM would like to see if this is negotiable to a shorter length, a one-year contract would be ideal. EHT has spoken with other CEOs who provide their own catering, they have indicated that there are great savings to be made financially and this is to be explored further. Trustees agreed that having control over the quality and menu of the catering would be beneficial, as well as the cost saving potential.

'Explore a MAT ICT solution to enable MAT staff to access'

- A new website for the WDAT and individual school websites are currently in production.
- A shared platform with KLZ is in the process of being set up, this will enable staff to access and share documents across the schools.
- CURA a safeguarding software is being implemented which is a system for reporting and securely storing safeguarding concerns.
- A system for communication with parents is being explored
- SIMS finance- This is being explored as a solution to replacing the BPS tool, this would be beneficial as it would be more cohesive and academy-based rather than the current system which is an individual tool for each school.

'Multi-MAT working developed'

The KMA (Kent MAT Alliance) links are continuing to grow, with EHT and ABM attending meetings and further links are to be made. Trustees and Governors have also been invited to attend a KMA workshop for the new Ofsted framework. There is also a training session for SLT due to take place next term. The moderation programme for the KMA is in the process of being developed for the next academic year.

'explore possibilities for MAT premises'

It is not possible to accommodate academy staff at Vale View or St Martin's, the demolition of the old Priory Fields building is due to be complete soon so it will be possible to establish whether there is a viable option for developing a new building on the site.

8 **FSAC minutes and Feedback**

See Confidential Minute

Related Party Transactions

An update has been received from the ESFA regarding new arrangements for related party transactions, which states any new contracts/agreements made after 1st April 2019 must be declared to the ESFA prior to entering in to the contract/agreement. ABM has confirmed that there are not any related party transactions within the MAT.

9 **Staff**

Proposed staffing structures were sent to trustees prior to the meeting. Each Head of School has produced a basic staffing structure as well as an 'ideal' structure, which will be budget permitting. The staffing structures do not currently include staff who work across the academy, as their salaries are paid proportionately by the three schools.

The staffing structures have now been costed. The costing is working out a percentage of staffing costs in relation to budget. The budget figures used is based on the GAG funding, Pupil Premium and High Needs Funding. However, the figures for Pupil Premium and high Needs Funding have not yet been received so current figures have been used.

Benchmarking released by the DfE against all school nationally states that the percentage of staffing of the total budget is expected to be above 70%, however over 80% is deemed to be high.

ABM presented the staffing structure costings including on-costs.

Priory Fields School:

Basis staffing without academy staff	Basic staffing with academy staff	Desirable staffing without academy staff
82%	88%	85%

To get down to 80% of the budget, the total figure needs to be £164,340 less. This equates to 10 TAs. This does not include rollover. Trustees were reminded that this does not mean 10 TAs would be lost, but is equated to this to show the impact in real terms.

In 2017-2018, the percentage of staff of the total budget was 76.4% and in the current year 2018-2019 it is 78%.

TS- A trustee expressed a concern over the impact on the offering at the school and the provision in the classroom to allow learning to take place. Trustees agreed that funding across the country is being cut and this must be an issue in all schools. Salaries are increasing each year and budgets are decreasing.

St Martin's School:

Basis staffing without academy staff	Basic staffing with academy staff	Desirable staffing without academy staff
89%	96%	

To get down to 80% of the budget, the total figure needs to be £152,337 less. This equates to 9 TAs. This does not include rollover. Trustees were reminded that this does not mean 9 TAs would be lost, but is equated to this to show the impact in real terms.

In 2017-2018, the percentage of staff of the total budget was 78.7% and in the current year 2018-2019 it is 80%.

A trustee asked whether there is a plan to reduce staff and how this would be done. EHT explained there are fixed term contracts in place which end in August 2019. EHT also explained that the increase in percentage is not due to any additional staff, it is due to the rise in staff salaries.

A trustee asked whether there has been a noticeable impact in those classes who have one TA shared across the two classes and is there anything being done for reducing teacher workload?

EHT explained that there is a monitoring group and wellbeing group, both of which are made up of in-class staff members across the three schools as well as HoS. They have been set up to gain ideas and feedback from staff members for improvement and their ideas have started to be implemented. They will also be involved in planning the school year from September in terms of monitoring activities.

A trustee asked whether the academy would want to move from having TA support to more teachers to support learning. EHT explained that although more teachers would be desirable in terms of learning, there are tasks that TAs complete that would not be expected of teachers.

A trustee commented that it would be interesting to see how other schools compare in benchmarking.

Vale View School:

Basis staffing without academy staff	Basic staffing with academy staff	Desirable staffing without academy staff
84%	90%	
Includes nursery staff but not nursery funding (75% without nursery)		

To get down to 80% of the budget, the total figure needs to be £101,556 less. This equates to 6 TAs. This does not include rollover. Trustees were reminded that this does not mean 6 TAs would be lost, but is equated to this to show the impact in real terms.

	<p>In 2017-2018, the percentage of staff of the total budget was 77.5% and in the current year 2018-2019 it is 78%.</p> <p>Staffing structures will be revisited once funding is confirmed. Trustees acknowledged the importance of long term strategy planning to ensure sustainability. The ‘basic’ structure may need to be carefully re-considered. Trustees commented that reductions would need to be made this year where possible.</p> <p><u>Career Pathways</u></p> <p>A draft career pathways document for both teachers and TAs was sent to governors prior to the meeting. This has been devised by EHT to show the paths to different areas and progression within the academy. Trustees were pleased to see this is being considered and retention of good staff is favourable, offering clear pathways also ensures that staff are aware that their work is being valued and there are possibilities to progress.</p>
10	<p><u>LGB Minutes</u></p> <p>The minutes for the terms 3 and 4 LGB meetings at each school were distributed prior to the meeting for information purposes.</p>
11	<p><u>Premises update</u></p> <p>Demolition at Priory Fields is almost complete.</p> <p>The CIF funding for Vale View has been successful to ensure fire regulations are met with regards to doors and door frames, the works are due to take place in the summer holiday.</p>
12	<p><u>Academy Visits</u></p> <p>Academy visits were discussed earlier in the meeting in relation to the minutes of the last meeting. ABM is going to arrange visits for the trustees who were not able to attend the previous school tours.</p>
13	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>All policies were sent to Trustees prior to the meeting to read.</p> <p><u>Finance Regulations Policy</u></p> <p>Some amendments have made to finance regulations policy. The changes are:</p> <p>3.1 Expenditure Limits page 6- limits have increased to £30,000 for EHT (from £15,000), to £50,000 for FSAC (from £25,000) and above £50,000 is Trust Board. Increases have been made in accordance with the introduction of the third school to the trust, the limits are now more appropriate to a larger trust size.</p> <p>4.7 Budget monitoring page 10- the policy now states that the trustees receive the monthly monitoring 6 times per year (which wasn’t worded in the policy before).</p> <p>11.1 Risk management page 17- the risk management register is now presented to the FSAC (rather than the LGB) at every meeting.</p> <p>7.6 Banking Arrangements page 14- Currently BACS facilities have not been initiated, however this will be in place by August 2019.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the policy including changes and implementation of BACs.</p>

	<p><u>Recruitment Policy</u></p> <p>This is a new policy (which was written following the SPS model policy) and has been put in place in response to the Safer Recruitment Training with Senior Leaders and some trustees/governors attending. The policy has been taken to an SLT meeting as there are some new practices to be put in place with regards to requesting references and short-listing procedure which will now be implemented. Trustees agreed the policy.</p>
14	<p><u>Confidentiality of Proceedings</u></p> <p>Item 8.</p>
15	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Thursday 18th July at Priory Fields School, 5pm.</p>
16	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Invitations to the WDAT Visions and Values event have been sent; trustees confirmed they have received their invitations. The local governing bodies are using their meeting in term 5 to discuss what they would like to bring to the meeting. It is due to take place on 13th June.</p>

<u>Action Points</u>	
➤	MN to arrange tours of school for CR and VS at Vale View and MA and KH at Priory Fields.

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of Whinless Down Academy Trust: Alison Mackintosh on 18th July 2019