



**Whinless Down Academy Trust**

**Trust Board Meeting**

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

CEO: Kelly Brown

**Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting**

**Held at Trust Office at St Martin’s School at 4pm on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.**

**Board Trustees Present:** Alison Mackintosh (Chair), Sandie Butcher, Pam Brivio, Kelly Brown

**Others Present:** Michelle Noden (Trust Business Manager), Carol Rayfield (member)

**Governance Professional:** Claudia Sawyers

	<b><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u></b>	<b><u>Actions</u></b>
<p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p>	<p>All Trustees were welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Anne Siggins and Tricia Sherling.</p> <p><b>Resignations</b> There are no resignations to report.</p>	
<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p><b><u>Minutes from Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024</u></b></p> <p><b>Approval of Minutes</b> The minutes for the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair of the Trust.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p><u>Asset Disposal</u> The Vale View asset disposal has been produced and the Priory Fields asset disposal log has been updated due to additional tech in need of disposal. Both disposal logs were agreed and signed by chair.</p> <p><u>Support Staff Pay</u> Following discussion at the last meeting, the decision to bring forward the uplift in support staff pay in April was taken. This was discussed at the FSARC meeting and has been</p>	

	<p>communicated to staff. The cost of doing this has been approximately £13,000 at Priory Fields, approximately £4100 at St Martin’s and approximately £7300 at Vale View.</p> <p><u>Managing Absence and Ill Health Policy</u></p> <p>This policy was reviewed and agreed at the last meeting, however a further update has been recommended by HR Connect which was to state in the policy the number of days absence that would trigger informal absence. Previously a percentage was stated in the policy and HR Connect recommend a number of days to be stated instead. The Trust Board agreed the policy update.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p><b><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u></b></p> <p>All trustees were given the opportunity to make annual updates to business interest forms which were completed. There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>	
<p>4. 4.1</p>	<p><b><u>Committees/Trustee Monitoring</u></b></p> <p>Since the committees were agreed at the start of this year, there has been two additional trustees join the board and a change of CEO. Therefore it was suggested to review the committees/Monitoring groups. At this time, there are two trustees not present at the meeting so a suggestion based on informal discussions will need to be devised and sent out to the board following this meeting. It was suggested that SB’s experience lends to the standards committee and AS has been sitting on the FSARC committee and is happy to continue this. PB is willing to be named safeguarding trustee. The role of DPO still needs to be agreed and the idea of an outside agency still needs to be explored, some research in to this has been done and most agency/services will likely need to conduct an audit before being named as DPO. There has not been capacity within trust staff to look in to this as yet.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b><u>FSARC Update</u></b></p> <p>TBM updated the Trust Board due to absence of FSARC chair.</p> <p>At the meeting, a discussion was had regarding charging and income as some research had been conducted in to whether clubs cover their costs and it has been found that they do not. TBM and CEO explained that at Priory Fields, after school clubs have remained at £2 per session for over 10 years since they were first implemented, there has never been a price increase. Due to rising costs of staffing and resources, this no longer covers the costs. It was also noted that many schools charge at least four times this figure. Breakfast clubs have also remained £1.50 for a number of years and the rising costs of food have also meant this is not covering the costs, even though the Bursar has investigated some cost saving measures on food. The Trust Board agreed that the price needs to increase as budgets are extremely tight and this additional provision cannot feasibly be propped up by school budgets in the long term. A price of £3 for after school clubs and £2 for breakfast club was agreed and the board felt that still represents good value to parents and is still greatly lower than many other schools locally.</p> <p>The costs of school meals was also discussed, in the summer term last year it was agreed to not increase for September 2023 but it was to be reviewed this summer for September 2024. It was agreed for school meals to increase to £2.50 per day.</p>	

	<p><u>Budget Monitoring</u></p> <p>TBM reported that the FSARC commented on the good stability of budget monitoring and have no major concerns in the management accounts. There are concerns over funding and the potential need to reduce staffing levels over the coming years. Benchmarking was analysed and it highlighted the need to improve pupil numbers, as schools of similar size PAN have greater funding due to attracting more pupils and WDAT schools are not full.</p> <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>The risk register was reviewed and updated. A risk was highlighted to be added which was the Vale View nursery; it is being propped up by school budgets. Some analysis was done which showed the nursery funding is covering the main staffing costs but does not cover the input from SENCO, EYFS lead and Headteacher and also does not cover facilities and maintenance. It has been widely publicised in the media that nurseries are under-funded and this is heavily felt at Vale View. The nursery does not currently charge for consumables, which many nurseries do. This could be further investigated to improve income.</p> <p><u>Indicative Budgets</u></p> <p>Indicative budgets were shared at FSARC and were sent to the Trust Board prior to this meeting. Falling roll numbers are a concern as just discussed as part of the discussion on the risk register. CEO and TBM commented that it is becoming increasingly difficult to set a balance budget and there has already been the need to not replace staff who have left. This is also having an impact on provision and at Priory Fields, it is now extremely difficult to ensure lunchtime and break duties are covered and any further staffing reduction would mean it is not possible to cover duties.</p>	
6.	<p><u>MAT Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The MAT strategic Plan has been reviewed for season two – Spring and was sent to Trustees prior to the meeting. CEO explained that some of the priority areas are not as far forward as she'd hoped, this has been due to unavoidable issues arising such as staff absence having a knock on impact through all schools, two Ofsted visits and CEO spending the majority of time at Priory Fields due to the HT being on maternity leave.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether CEO believes outcomes for Key Stage 2 are likely to meet the target. CEO explained outcomes are a risk this year and may not be met, this is partially due to staff absence again, as interventions have not been possible and these are crucial to aid children who require additional input to make progress.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Staff Structures</u></p> <p>The anonymised staffing structures were shared for agreement. The structures include the reduction in staffing that has already happened naturally through resignations and being unable to be replaced due to budgets. All staffing structures have been budgeted for and can be achieved. There has been a significant change at Vale View as the SENCO is due to resign in the summer and it is felt that the role can be performed by an existing member of staff and this has aided the budget. Trustees agreed the staff structures for September 2024.</p>	

8.	<p><b><u>Safeguarding</u></b></p> <p>The safeguarding report was tabled at the meeting. CEO reported that the cyber essentials accreditation was attained, which is a great achievement for the cyber team and the Trust Board thanked those involved in the hard work in completing the accreditation.</p> <p>Some actions on the safeguarding report from last term have been carried forward due to time constraints. None of the actions are areas of great concerns; but best practice measures such as ensuring online safety tips on the newsletters.</p>	
9.	<p><b>Minutes from LGB Meetings (Term 3)</b></p> <p>Minutes from the LGB meetings in term 3 were shared for information purposes, there were no comments.</p>	
10	<p><b><u>Policies</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Anti Fraud Policy</u></b></p> <p>The Anti Fraud Policy was reviewed at the FSARC meeting and recommended for agreement by the Trust Board. The Trust Board agreed the policy.</p> <p><b><u>Asbestos Management Plan</u></b></p> <p>The Asbestos Management Plan was reviewed and there were no material changes needed. The plan was agreed by the Trust Board and signed by CEO, TBM and Chair.</p> <p><b><u>Special Leave Policy</u></b></p> <p>The Special Leave Policy has been reviewed early due to the need felt by the leadership team to renew staff members' understanding of what leave is available. HR Connect have updated their model policy with some amendments, which were highlighted in a copies made available to Trustees.</p>	
11.	<p><b>GDPR Update</b></p> <p>No breaches.</p>	
12.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b><u>The School Day</u></b></p> <p>The DfE have set the expectation (although non-statutory) that all schools will provide a 32.5 hours week; which WDAT schools are currently shy of. There will need to be a consultation with parents for a change in September 2024. The proposed changes will see all schools starting at 8:45 and end at 3:15, which is an earlier start at Priory Fields and a later finish at Vale View and St Martin's. A trustee asked whether staff will need to change their working hours and CEO confirmed they staffing will not need to change hours. There may need to be some further consideration to Vale View's nursery hours and EYFS Lead is looking in to this. The Trust Board agreed this change to be consulted on.</p>	
13.	<p><b>Dates</b></p> <p>The date of the next Trust Board meeting is Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July at 4pm.</p>	

	The Trust Event AGM is going to be on Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> June at 3:30pm.	
14.	<b>Confidentiality of Proceedings</b> None	

Minutes taken by Governance Professional Claudia Sawyers

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

Alison Mackintosh

*(Chair not present - Sign at next meeting)*

