



Whinless Down Academy Trust

Board Meeting

Thursday 10th October 2019

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

Held at Priory Fields School on Thursday 10th October 2019 at 5pm

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

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

Clerk: Claudia Sawyers

1	<u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u> Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies have not been received from David Mellon. It was suggested that skype attendance could be explored as it is often due to work commitments that he is not able to attend.	<u>Actions</u> Clerk to speak to DM about skype
2	<u>Minutes from meeting in Term 6 – Thursday 18th July 2019:</u> Approval of Minutes Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees prior to the meeting. The minutes have been agreed by all trustees and signed by the chair.	
3	Matters Arising ABM is waiting to hear back from CR and VS to arrange a time to tour Vale View. Related Party Questionnaires which are required to be completed for the external audit were distributed and completed. All members, trustees, governors and senior leaders need to complete these forms. This led to a discussion regarding member recruitment, there is one vacancy on the board of members and several avenues have already been explored, such as volunteering sites and local advertising but it has been difficult to fill the position thus far. Trustees agreed that further thought	

	needs to be given to how recruitment could be encouraged and any ideas will be sent to the chair/EHT.	
4	<p>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</p> <p>Governors were given the opportunity to update their business interest forms, as it is a new year the forms were re-signed and there were no changes.</p> <p>There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>	
5 5.1	<p>Reviews</p> <p>Three Core Functions</p> <p>EHT asked trustees what they believed to be the three core functions on the trust board. Trustees discussed that they believed their duties included finance, the strategic elements and overseeing the performance of the academy. The three core functions, as detailed in the Academies Financial Handbook, were shown on a screen and discussed. They are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction -Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff -Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance <p>Chair suggested that the agenda for each meeting could include the mission statement and the values so that it reminds trustees at each meeting that they are a core priority of the trust.</p> <p>Trustees felt positive that they were familiar with their role and were able to identify the functions without seeing them written down first. A laminated card with the core functions of the trustees and LGB will be made.</p>	Clerk to ensure agendas contain this
5.2	<p>Delegation of Function</p> <p>The delegation of function is reviewed annually and there are some changes in light of the new Academies Financial Handbook. For example, it previously stated that the 6 and 9 month monitoring was a responsibility of the FSAC, it is now a responsibility of the whole trust board to monitor 6 times per year.</p> <p>'Report financial monitoring to the LGB' has been added, as there is a member of the FSAC on each LGB and they feed back to the next LGB meeting.</p> <p>'Establishing disciplinary/capability procedures' was previously a duty of the LGB and it was agreed that it should be a trust board responsibility because the policy is the same across the MAT.</p> <p>'To establish a curriculum policy' is currently an LGB responsibility, but it was suggested that it should be down to the trust board. There was a discussion regarding whether the curriculum policy will be the same for each school. A trustee asked whether there is a written intent for the curriculum, which is different for each school (due to differences between the individual school priorities). HOS said that they were happy to have one curriculum policy because they work very closely with curriculum design and any necessary differences can be managed within the document. A trustee</p>	

	<p>expressed that they were concerned that the LGBs may be unsure where their duties lie. It was discussed that the LGB's role is to monitor the impact of the curriculum policy and this should be added to the delegation of function. LGBs monitor and trustees assess the impact of the monitoring and outcomes. It was agreed by the trust board that the curriculum policy accountability should be moved to the trust.</p> <p>'Responsibility for standards of teaching' is currently delegated to the EHT, but it was questioned whether this is correct as it was suggested that another statement should be added instead for 'holding leaders to account for the quality of education' and this would be the responsibility of the EHT, with the accountability for standards of teaching moved to HOS.</p>	
5.3	<p>Terms Of Reference</p> <p>In the Trust Board terms of reference, there is a concern over the number of members as there should be 5 members and there is currently 4. This has already been discussed earlier in the meeting and recruitment is still ongoing for a fifth member. The individual trustees' area of responsibility were also reviewed and were written in to the terms of reference as a reminder. At this point, TS suggested that she would be prepared to step down from the FSAC as there are already 4 other trustees on the committee and is aware that she will be unable to attend two of the FSAC meetings this year. All trustees agreed for TS to step down.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference for the trust board was agreed and signed by the chair.</p> <p>In the LGB terms of reference, the number of meetings has been changed from 6 to 5 which was discussed and agreed at the last trust board meeting. The monitoring roles have also been re-addressed to follow the SIP areas, Quality of Education now encompasses Teaching and Learning, Standards and Curriculum. The Terms of References for the LGB were agreed and signed by the chair.</p>	
5.4	<p>Roles and Responsibilities</p> <p>The roles and responsibilities document was sent to trustees prior to the meeting, this is a document which is regularly reviewed to ensure it is still accurate and relevant. Further to the previous discussion regarding the curriculum in 5.2, the roles and responsibilities document states the LGB 'approves the proposed curriculum proposed by the HOS'. It was agreed that this should be removed from the LGB and moved to the trust board.</p>	
5.5	<p>Best Value</p> <p>The best value statement has been reviewed by EHT and updated. This was sent to trustees prior to the meeting. The evidence of best value has been updated further to developments that have been made throughout the year and future objectives have been updated. There was a suggested change to the monitoring areas, to include 'monitoring of quality of education'.</p>	

<p>5.6</p>	<p>Asset Disposal</p> <p>The assets disposal log for Priory Fields and St Martin’s was shared. The disposal logs detail the name of the asset and reason for disposal.</p> <p>At Priory Fields, there are 47 classroom laptops to be disposed of as they were purchased 8 and 11 years ago and have become obsolete. The laptops have already been replaced as they were purchased with additional ESFA funding that was received last year. At St Martin’s, all items for disposal are obsolete.</p> <p>A trustee asked what the process is for recycling. ABM confirmed that an external company is use who offer a free collection service for recycling. All devices are wiped and hard drives are removed and kept by the school. A trustee asked what happens to the hard drives. ABM is going to speak to the IT Technician to find out, but is aware that a certificate is produced by the recycling company to guarantee they are disposed of safely and securely. All trustees agreed to the asset disposal and the logs were signed by the chair.</p> <p>The asset disposal log for Vale View was not ready for this meeting and will be on the next agenda.</p>	<p>ABM to find out about safe disposal of assets</p>
<p>6 6.1</p>	<p><u>EHT Report</u></p> <p>The report was sent to trustees prior to the meeting to review. This is linked to the MAT Strategic Plan which is an agenda item later in the meeting.</p> <p>A trustee asked ‘What is it that we’re going to do to ensure standards are raised?’, EHT explained this is detailed in the MAT plan.</p> <p>EHT explained one aim of the trust to improve community links is to produce a publication to be sent locally which will also offer free advertising. This is part of the citizenship programme which is being developed to increase the profile of the WDAT.</p> <p>A trustee asked ‘what do we see as the advantage of being WDAT?’ EHT explained that the overall aim of local schools for local children is important for having a good understanding of the community we are serving and it’s needs. This is also advantageous for recruitment as staff are collaborative and supported in working together as the schools are close geographically.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether job adverts are advertised externally as individual schools or as a MAT, EHT and HOS explained they are currently advertised on each school’s Kent Teach page but as a ‘Whinless Down’ member of staff and ABM is in the process of securing a Kent Teach account for the MAT.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether local estate agents are engaged with in promoting the schools to people buying in the area. EHT explained this does not currently happen but when the aforementioned publication is produced, this would be a good avenue to explore.</p> <p>An information leaflet for the Early Years open days does get sent to local nurseries to promote the MAT to those who are looking for school places next September.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that getting children out in the community together is important for further engagement, such as entering children from across the three schools in to teams together rather than competing against one another to improve collaboration.</p>	

	Data for each school's individual 2019 performance was included within the report and this was also discussed at the last meeting. EHT has now provided combined data for all three schools and this was shared. It was noticed that maths is the challenge across the MAT which also impacts of the combined total. Trustees agreed that they found it useful looking at the data as a MAT. A trustee asked whether going forward, having the previous year data would be helpful. EHT agreed this will be possible in the future but this is the first year it has been available so cannot be done retrospectively.	
7	<u>Minutes from Term 6 LGB Meetings</u> The Minutes from the minutes in term 6 were sent to governors for information, all the minutes have been agreed by the LGBs. Trustees did not have any questions or comments about the minutes.	
8	<u>Premises Update</u>	
8.1	ABM gave a verbal report. The aim of having a MAT premises is still being investigated and ABM has had a visitor to look at the site at PF to give an estimated price for this. It is becoming increasingly evident for the need for academy staff to be removed from the PF building as space is an issue and this impacts on the provision for children, as areas that are used for offices should be allocated to learning areas. This also has an impact on behaviour as there are very few areas to take children to. It was suggested that a temporary solution could be renting a space elsewhere, however this impacts on budgets.	
8.2	Vale View has had major works completed in the holidays for the CIF funding which included replacing 55 doors and door frames. There are still some works still to be carried out in the October half term. The old wooden front door is still to be replaced and other external doors. Major re-decoration work in the mobile classroom is being carried out by the site staff across the academy as well as some structural investigation taking place externally. A new CIF bid is going to be submitted for the asbestos removal and potentially for a new mobile unit. A health and safety walk will be taking place next week.	
8.3	At St Martin's, the 2018 CIF funding has been completed and the bid for a replacement boiler will be resubmitted this year and there is hope that it will be approved as there was another partial school closure due to boiler failure since the last submission. A new curriculum server is also being installed. A health and safety walk was completed this week which did not highlight any major concerns, a small list of actions, such as PAT testing, were devised to be rectified.	
8.4	At Priory Fields, there is a further 12-month period for the ground maintenance with Portakabin and since the summer, there has been some issues with cracks forming on the new banks at the front of the site and these are going to be assessed. During the demolition, the pond was removed which it shouldn't have been, so this will be re-instated at their expense. A health and safety walk took place this week in which there were no concerns, a small list of minor actions was devised.	

	Trustees thanked ABM for her efforts with the ongoing CIF funding and improvements.	
9	<u>Finance Update</u>	
9.1	The updated Academies Financial Handbook has some new guidelines for expectations for reporting and management accounts. All trustees will be given accounts 6 times per year. This includes the monitoring of the income and expenditure. A cash flow statement is also a new expectation to be shared with all trustees. This will monitor the income and expenditure in relation to what is in the bank account. An example of a cash flow sheet was shared so that trustees can see what they should expect.	
9.2	There is a new secure online platform in the process of being implemented, so when this is live all trustees will have access to a shared area where these documents will be uploaded and can be viewed at any time.	
9.3	The idea of GAG pooling was discussed. This has been a topic of conversation at FSAC and trust board meetings in the past. Trustees agreed with the idea that it would be beneficial for ensuring funding is used where the academy most needs it.	
9.4	In the Academies Financial Handbook, there is guidance about the direction of audits that the trust would like the accountants to look at; Trustees are able to ask for specific areas to be audited. Trustees asked whether there is a fixed rota of what is currently already audited at certain points. EHT explained that the emphasis is on trust boards challenging MATs in areas of concern. A trustee suggested that knowing what they have recently audited or regularly audit would be useful to know what other areas could be looked at.	
10	<u>Risk Management</u> The action plan was reviewed at the end of the last academic year and has now changed to reflect this with new actions. Trustees will take this away to review the document due to time constraints in this meeting. Any new risks that trustees can think of are to be sent to ABM.	
11	<u>Pay Awards and Appraisal</u> See Confidential Minute	
12	<u>Skills Audit</u> The skills audit was sent to trustees prior to the meeting and some have been returned, further audits to be sent back in to clerk by trustees as soon as possible. These will then be reviewed.	
13	<u>MAT Strategic Development Plan</u> The MAT strategic plan was sent to trustees prior to the meeting and the plan links to EHT report. The Autumn milestones have been devised and spring and summer	

	<p>milestones are yet to be completed. This is going to be reviewed seasonally. All trustees agreed that it links to the priorities that have already been identified.</p> <p>A trustee asked for this to be higher on the agenda next time to allow more time for discussion. EHT welcomed any questions regarding the plan to be emailed. It was acknowledged that growth and sponsorship is to be an item for further discussion as the DfE expected all MATs to explore growth. It does need to be considered annually as a statutory requirement and after discussion, all trustees agreed that this year it will not be actively pursued.</p>	
14	<p><u>Policies</u> All policies were sent to governors prior to the meeting to review.</p>	
14.1	<p>Safeguarding policy The policy wording identifies Malcolm Bowler as the trustee responsible and this is no longer correct, Kathy Howell is the Safeguarding trustee. Sally was also identified as the SM governor and this has very recently been changed (after the policy was written). These amendments will be made. Trustees agreed the policy based on those changes.</p>	
14.2	<p>Appraisal policy A new appraisal policy has been written by the EHT, a new policy was needed due to the way in which performance is now monitored and reviewed within the MAT. Trustees agreed the policy.</p>	
14.3	<p>Health and Safety Policy This policy has been reviewed and updated. Trustees were concerned that trustee DM is identified on the document and this may need to be re-considered as he has not been able to attend many meetings. Trustees agreed the policy and it was signed by the chair.</p>	
15	<p><u>Confidentiality</u> Item 11- see confidential minute</p>	
16	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> 6th February 2020. This is a new date which has already been sent to trustees.</p>	
17	<p><u>AOB</u> Brexit EHT met with Lord Agnew and other headteachers to discuss the topic of Brexit. Until it is known what will happen, it is difficult to formulate concrete plans; however, contingencies have been discussed and a contingency plan has been written and all areas of consideration have suggested solutions. This includes matters such as staff not being able to drive to work due to gridlocked roads and the solution to this would be using trains. Another possible issue would be the delivery of food to the kitchen and the provision of school meals to Vale View and St Martin's. The proposed</p>	

	solution is ensuring there is a stockpile of food and arranging for children from Vale View and St Martin's to walk to Priory Fields to have their school meals.	
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Action Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Clerk to speak to trustee DM regarding attendance/skype➤ Clerk to ensure agendas contain mission, vision and values➤ ABM to find out how assets with memory are safely disposed of

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

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

Alison Mackintosh