



**WHINLESS DOWN
ACADEMY TRUST**

Whinless Down Academy Trust

Board Meeting

14th October 2025

CEO: Kelly Brown

Public Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

Held at Trust Office at St Martin's School at 4pm on Tuesday 14th October 2025

Board Trustees Present: Alison Mackintosh (chair), Kelly Brown (CEO), Dean Jones

Others Present: Michelle Noden (Trust Business Manager), Carol Rayfield (Member), Casey Hall, Lisa Sprigmore and Helen Thompson present 4pm-5pm.

Governance Professional: Claudia Sawyers

1	<u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u>
1.1	Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained Headteachers are present for the first part to discuss data outcomes.
1.2	Apologies Apologies were received and accepted from Pam Brivio.
1.3	Resignations Anne Siggins has tendered her resignation from the Trust Board and this was accepted.
1.4	Election of Vice Chair Following the resignation of Tricia Sherling at the last meeting, a vice chair is now required for the Trust Board. It was agreed by all that Dean Jones would be appointed as vice chair.
2	<u>Minutes from Meeting</u>
2.1	Approval of Minutes The minutes for the meeting held on 8 th July 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes will be marked as signed on GovernorHub.

<p>2.2</p>	<p>Matters Arising The actions from the last meeting were as follows:</p> <p>11.1 – <i>Gov. Prof. to email information about registering ID checks on companies house</i> – This has been done, some trustees still to complete. Gov Prof will send a reminder email and link again.</p> <p>12 – <i>Gov. Prof to publish 2025-2026 dates on Governor Hub</i> – This has been complete by Gov. Prof.</p>
<p>3 3.1</p>	<p><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u> The register of business interest is now kept on GovernorHub. Trustees must complete their annual declarations via their GovernorHub login. Some trustees have completed this, some trustee still need to complete. There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>
<p>4 4.1 4.2</p>	<p><u>Annual Updates</u> Code of Conduct All trustees are required to acknowledge and digitally sign the code of conduct via their GovernorHub login. Some trustees are still to complete their declarations and a reminder was given to do so.</p> <p>Safeguarding Training and Keeping Children Safe in Education Trustees have been given access to safeguarding training via GovernorHub and all Trustees present confirmed they have completed. Trustees have confirmed via GovernorHub that they have read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.</p>
<p>5 5.1 5.2 5.3</p>	<p><u>Annual Reviews</u> Governance Structure and Recruitment See confidential minutes.</p> <p>Delegation of Function The Delegation of function has been reviewed by CEO. There were no proposed changes and the delegation was agreed. The delegation may need to be reviewed again if there are changes to the structure of governance.</p> <p>Terms of Reference: Trust Board, FSARC and LGBs The Terms of Reference for the Trust Board and FSARC have been reviewed, however following the discussion around the governance structure, this will be deferred to the next meeting for approval. The Terms of Reference for LGBs has not yet been reviewed by LGBs as the meetings have not yet taken place. This will be taken to the next meeting,</p>
<p>6 6.1</p>	<p><u>CEO Report</u> <u>Data Outcomes</u> St Martin’s School</p>

<p>6.2</p>	<p>Key Stage 2 results were improved on last year and were broadly in line with or above national averages in all areas. Achievement in Maths was above national and this brought up the combined score to above national for the first time since 2015. The success in maths is good evidence of the impact of White Rose.</p> <p>Reading outcomes overall were slightly below the national average at 73% compared to 75%, marking the first time in several years that the school has fallen below national levels in this area. Consequently, Reading has been identified as a key priority for the current academic year.</p> <p>Disadvantaged data is slightly lower than last year, however the number of disadvantaged children was higher this year at 44% of the cohort compared to 13% last year.</p> <p>HT expressed concern over the new year 6 cohort and explained that targets are not set to exceed the 2025 attainment and the issues are very much cohort specific. There is a higher percentage of SEN children and a higher percentage of mobility, with 17% of children joining the school in Key Stage 2. Only 37% reached combined EXS at end of year 5 so there is careful planning and consideration being made to try and accelerate progress this year, assistant headteachers and HT are conducting booster groups.</p> <p>In year 1 phonics, the target was 76-88% pass rate and 82% achieved the pass mark. In year 2 phonics re-takes, 3 out of 8 children did pass and those who did not made significant progress. EYFS data took a dip this year at 57% GLD, this was primarily impacted by writing. There are significant levels of need in the year group, with 35% SEND, mainly with Speech & Language and Communication needs. Despite low percentage in Writing, Maths was better at 70% Numerical patterns and 78% number; and Reading was also good at 70% word reading, 74% comprehension.</p> <p>Vale View School</p> <p>Outcomes at Vale View were improved on last year's data and were the best outcomes seen by the school going back as far as 2013. There is potential for one child to be disapplied which would bring the combined percentage to 60%. LS gave overview of the year group, which had 62% Pupil Premium, 35% SEND, 27% EAL, 12% Persistent absentees and only 62% were 'home grown' (at Vale View from EYFS). Given the multiple vulnerabilities, Trustees commended the good result. For those children who had been at Vale View since EYFS, their outcomes were 81% in reading, 75% in writing, 76% in Maths. A trustee suggested writing a case study in preparation for Ofsted based on the good outcomes for those children.</p> <p>Maths outcomes were much improved for the cohort who were assessed at 48% at Expected at the end of year 5 and 57% was achieved, so accelerated progress was made.</p> <p>In phonics, 59% passed which was lower than last year which was 76%. There is a high level of SEND in the cohort of over 50% and there is also 59% Pupil Premium. Of the 11 children who did not pass, the needs are complex and there are plans for those children.</p> <p>GLD in EYFS was 50%, however the cohort is small at only 18 children and 39% have SEND. 67% of children were secure in prime areas however, so there is hope to build on that in year 1.</p>
<p>6.3</p>	<p>Priory Fields School</p> <p>The increase in combined from 2024 to 2025 was almost 30%, so a vastly improved picture this year which trustees commended. Combined was 53%, with the potential to disapply one child which would bring the combined to 56%. For context within the year group, it was a small cohort of 43 children with 26% SEN, 36% EAL, 67% Pupil Premium and 19% Peristent Absentees. Only 62% of children had been at Priory Fields from EYFS. On the whole, the individual scores for Reading, Writing and Maths were not that far below national, so given the context of year group being much higher than national in vulnerabilities, there is a lot to celebrate.</p>

	<p>A trustee asked whether White Rose has been as effective at Priory Fields as it appears to be at St Martin's. CEO explained that White Rose has been well received and is effective, however it would be expected to take longer to show the good impact at Priory Fields because of the higher levels of challenge compared to St Martin's. For example, higher levels of EAL at Priory Fields means that decoding of mathematical vocabulary and reasoning takes longer to embed. The current year 6 cohort were discussed as a concern, it is a full cohort of 60 children and within that, there is 70% pupil premium and 40% SEN. There are 17 children with significant SEMH needs. There has been additional adult support implemented in to year 6, however reduced staffing makes it very challenging.</p> <p>In phonics, only 3 children have moved on to key stage 2 without having passed the phonics screening, two of whom are very new to English.</p> <p>Staff absence and use of leave was discussed, it has not been possible to compare the levels of leave to previous years as the policy was previously not consistently applied however it has been calculated that approximately £16,000 was saved last year in consistently applying the use of unpaid leave.</p>
<p>7 7.1</p>	<p>MAT Strategic Plan</p> <p>CEO has reviewed the plan from the last year and this was uploaded to GovernorHub prior to the meeting to read.</p> <p>The first priority area has generally been covered under the discussion above regarding outcomes. Priority area Two, The People Stategy project has taken longer than anticipated to reach completion; however, this extended timeline reflects both the ambition of its scope and the depth of work undertaken. While progress has been slower, there is clear evidence that the initiative is already beginning to have a positive impact on the workforce, particularly through greater consistency in trust-wide approaches.</p> <p>Health and Safety was a major part of priority area Three, The external Health and Safety audit conducted in Term 5 proved to be a valuable learning experience for leaders across the Trust, clearly identifying strengths and areas for development. This process has enabled the Trust to take decisive action to ensure compliance and embed best practice. Priorities identified are already being addressed and will be submitted for re-assessment over the summer.</p> <p>Priority area Four, governance and leadership, has been slower to develop over the year however recent discussions and recruitment drive is suggesting some positive progress in recruiting trustees and/or governors.</p> <p>CEO gave verbal update on the priorities for the coming year, which will be formalised on to the strategic plan for 2025-26. It will include areas such as maintaining at least expected standards, developing the digital strategy, sustainability and structure/succession planning for Trust Board.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Minutes from LGBs</p> <p>Minutes of the Term 6 Priory Fields LGB meetings were distributed to the board for information purposes. The St Martin's/Vale View LGB meeting has not yet taken place this term for minute agreement, so they have not yet been shared. There were no comments.</p>
<p>9 9.1</p>	<p>Policies</p> <p>Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed in line with KCSIE 2025 and the model policy from Kent has been adapated. All trustees agreed the policy.</p>

<p>9.2</p> <p>9.3</p> <p>9.4</p> <p>9.5</p>	<p>Health and Safety Policy The Health and Safety Policy has been reviewed by TBM and has been re-written based on a model provided by the auditors. The introduction of a Health and Safety Committee is one of the main new changes, which will involve CEO, TBM, headteachers, site managers and H&S representatives meeting termly to ensure a robust approach to Health and Safety in schools. The policy includes a Statement of Intent, which was signed by Chair and will be displayed on new Health and Safety boards in the school staff rooms. All trustees agreed the policy.</p> <p>Pay Policy The pay policy has been reviewed and updated in line with HR Connect model policy. There were some changes highlighted, such as the new Kent Scheme pay for support staff. All trustees agreed the policy.</p> <p>Finance Regulations Policy The Finance Regulations Policy has been updated in line with Academy Trust Handbook 2025 and in response to audit feedback, such as a change to monthly banking rather than weekly now that the schools are mostly cashless. All trustees agreed the policy.</p> <p>Appraisal Policy The appraisal policy has been reviewed in line with the model policy from HR Connect. All trustees agreed the policy.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>GDPR Update No breaches.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>11.1</p>	<p>AOB None.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Confidentiality of Proceedings Item 5.1.</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>Dates Next meeting: FSARC Meeting now at 3pm on Thursday 13th November 2025 AGM/Trust Board on Tuesday 9th December 2025 at 3:30pm</p>

Minutes taken by Governance Professional Claudia Sawyers



9/12/25

