



Whinless Down Academy Trust

Board Meeting

Monday 11th May 2020

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Siggins

Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting

Held via Zoom on Monday 11th May 2020 at 10am.

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

Others Present: Rachel Appleby (HoS St Martin’s), and Kelly Brown (HoS Vale View), Michelle Noden (Academy Business Manager)

Clerk: Claudia Sawyers

1	<u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u> This meeting is being held virtually due to COVID-19, via Zoom Secure Video Conferencing. Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies have been received from David Mellon which was accepted.	<u>Actions</u>
2 2.1	<u>Minutes from meeting in Term 2-</u> Approval of Minutes Previous minutes were distributed to Trustees via email prior to the meeting. The minutes have been agreed by all trustees; due to this meeting taking place virtually it was agreed that the chair can send an email to clerk confirming the minutes are agreed and this can be attached to a hard copy of the minutes until it is possible to meet in person to sign a copy.	
2.2	Matters Arising There are still some actions from the last meeting that have not yet taken place: A letter has been drafted to the resigning trustee but has yet to be sent (partly due to school closure). Tours of the schools have not been able to take place due to the schools being closed and social distancing being practiced.	Clerk to send letter

	<p>Vision and Values to be added to the agenda.</p> <p>The roles and Responsibilities of each member of the LGB and Trust Board to be devised on to one document.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the outbreak of COVID-19 has halted the CIF bids. ABM explained that there has been delays and there is suggestion that the outcomes may be released at the end of May and is regularly looking for updates.</p> <p>A meeting to discuss succession planning has not been able to take place due to school closures and social distancing, it may be possible to host another Zoom video conference to discuss the matter but it is felt that this can be postponed.</p> <p>ABM had arranged training to be delivered by Kreston Reeves on cash flow and balance sheets which was due to be on 6th May, however due to school closures this will be rearranged once a face to face meeting is possible again.</p> <p>The idea of hosting a WDAT event for July was agreed to be postponed until the time is right.</p>	<p>Clerk to add vision and values to agenda Clerk to devise document with roles and responsibilities</p>
<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u></p> <p>Trustees were asked whether they need to update their business interest forms (which would be done at an appropriate time when social distancing is eased) there were no updates.</p> <p>There were no interests declared against this agenda.</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p>	<p><u>DfE and General Updates</u></p> <p>On 24th April, an Executive Headteacher report was sent to trustees with an extensive update on the current measures in place and how the trust is responding to government guidelines and updates.</p> <p>The free school meals system, which had been set up by the government to provide supermarket vouchers to parents of children entitled to free school meals, had been overwhelmed by traffic which caused issues with parents being about to obtain their vouchers. ABM has been working hard to rectify the issues and help parents obtain their vouchers.</p> <p>Children learning from home has been taking place with teachers uploading tasks to the school website on a weekly basis. Teachers have also started making phone calls to all children in their class to keep in touch and find out from parents how they are coping. A trustee asked how many children have engaged in learning from home. EHT explained that an accurate figure is not possible to obtain because parents are not asked to upload/submit any proof of work. However, each school has an active closed Facebook group which many parents have engaged in to show their home learning.</p>	

<p>4.4</p> <p>4.5</p> <p>4.6</p> <p>4.7</p> <p>4.8</p> <p>4.9</p> <p>4.10</p>	<p>EHT reported that there has been one known child affected by a bereavement of a family member and there is a member of staff who is currently in hospital with COVID-19. This member of staff has not been on to premises since lockdown.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the trust intends to access the funding available for any losses caused by COVID-19. EHT explained that the only loss that is known currently is the first batch of FSM vouchers that were purchased by the school before the government system was set up with is approx. £6000.</p> <p>There has been some temporary removals and relaxations of financial returns and statutory returns; such as SATs and Teacher Assessments being cancelled. The End of Year accounts and internal audit will still take place.</p> <p>Risk assessments for EHCP children have been completed.</p> <p>Admissions and appeals are being handled by members of the school office from home and there have been no issues or concerns with this process.</p> <p>EHT reported that the two bank holidays at Easter were taken as days off; however on the two bank holidays in May, provision will be open as usual to key workers and vulnerable children.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the Kent Tests are still due to take place in September. The Head of School at VV explained that parents have needed to enrol their child online for taking the test in the usual manner and there has been no other information released about changes to the tests.</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p> <p>5.3</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding Policy Addendum</u></p> <p>The addendum is due to be reviewed by the trust board. The policy addendum currently states that it must be reviewed every 4 weeks but trustees feel that it is more appropriate to state that it will be reviewed regularly in light of new directives and government guidelines.</p> <p>EHT explained that although Helen Seeley is no longer Head of School at Priory Fields, she will remain key DSL as she is acting SENCO and it would still be appropriate for this to remain.</p> <p>Tricia Sherling is to be added to the ‘important contacts’ page as she is Safeguarding Trustee.</p> <p>A trustee asked where and how concerns are being recorded when members of staff are contacting vulnerable children, as well as the teachers contacting all children who have not been a concern previously. EHT explained conversations are being recorded on CURA for families who have been identified as being in need of regular contact. If teachers have a concern following their conversations with parents, they will notify a DSL.</p>	

<p>5.4</p>	<p>A trustee commented that the policy only refers to ‘at risk’ children and asked whether the contact that is taking place with all children should be mentioned in the policy. After discussion it was felt that the addendum is adequate for the current measures and the main safeguarding policy does cover the duty of care to all children.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether teachers who are making phone calls home are happy for their phone number to be available to parents. EHT explained that staff members who are using their own phone have been asked to block their number and they have also been offered the option of coming in to school in a safe way to make phone calls from the school phone lines.</p>	
<p>6 6.1</p>	<p><u>Staffing Update</u> See confidential minutes</p>	
<p>7 7.1 7.2 7.3</p>	<p><u>Finance Monitoring</u></p> <p>The 7 month budget monitoring was sent to trustees prior to the meeting along with the cash flow, balance sheets and a variance to original budget report.</p> <p>Priory Fields ABM explained that the rollover has increased primarily due to savings made on salaries and also due to school closures, there are fewer outgoings. A trustee asked whether it is possible to further analyse how the catering being taken in house has impacted the budget. ABM explained that this was an area that started being investigated in the January monitoring however there are currently no meals being provided in schools. The funding for free school meals is still being received by the school and the government has not released information about whether this will change as the DfE are currently paying for the FSM vouchers directly. Catering staff are still being paid and due to closure, no paid meals being taken so there is currently no income. ABM will attempt to reconcile an analysis of catering to send to trustees but this may not be possible before the next meeting, due to the current halt of school meals being provided.</p> <p>EHT commented that the rollover is healthy however the Leader of Learning and proposed Counsellor will be taken from the PF budget and those members of staff will be utilised across the trust. A trustee asked whether that is sustainable. EHT explained that the Counsellor will be appointed on a one year fixed term contract but Leader of Learning will be permanent and would be sustainable.</p> <p>St Martin’s The rollover has increased from February’s 5 month monitoring to the 7 month monitoring, it is now over the original forecasted rollover. This is contributed partly by a reduction in staff expenditure as an SMT member who has left will be replaced by a member of staff within the trust. There is also an increase in High Needs Funding from</p>	<p>ABM to analyse catering</p>

<p>7.4</p> <p>7.5</p>	<p>February and a member of the office who has left has not been replaced. There is still however an in year deficit.</p> <p>SEE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION</p> <p>Vale View</p> <p>The rollover has increased from February's 5 month monitoring to the 7 month monitoring, it is now over the original forecasted rollover. There have been two members of staff who left in the Spring, one teacher and the FLO, who have not been replaced. A trustee asked why the high needs funding has decreased. HOS explained that this is due to children who were eligible for funding having secured specialist provision elsewhere.</p> <p>EHT referred to the forecast cashflow summary. The Staff cost is £78741 in the cashflow for March which is over the GAG funding received of £68,473. This is a concern however a higher amount of pupil premium is attracted by Vale View so is a smaller proportion of the overall budget. HOS explained that in an effort to reduce costs, the assistant head will be in class from September.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the budget monitoring.</p>	
<p>7.6</p>	<p>Financial Regulations Policy</p> <p>The policy has been updated based on the latest Academies Financial Handbook 2019. Changes to the policy have been highlighted in red and sent to trustees prior to the meeting. A trustee commented that on Page 7 'Write offs exceeding £100 must be reported to the Trust Academy Business Manager' and asked whether any write off of debt should be reported to ABM, no matter the value. After discussion, it was agreed that for disposal of assets, it should be £100 but any other type of debt should not have a lower limit. Once this has been amended, Trustees are happy to agree the policy.</p>	
<p>7.7</p>	<p>Bank Signatories</p> <p>Bank signatories are:</p> <p>Priory Fields: Anne Siggins, Michelle Noden, Michelle Hards, Katie Evans. Note: Helen Seeley has been removed as she is no longer Head of School.</p> <p>St Martin's: Anne Siggins, Michelle Noden, Rachel Appleby, Kirsty Ash</p> <p>Vale View: Anne Siggins, Michelle Noden, Kelly Brown, Dominique Foulger-Coetzee</p> <p>Trustees agreed bank signatories.</p>	
<p>7.8</p>	<p>Budget information</p> <p>This information is not yet available and will be taken to the next meeting.</p>	

<p>7.9</p> <p>7.10</p>	<p>Key Financial Performance Indicators</p> <p>Guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook states that trusts must set their own key performance indicators. EHT has devised a list of possible performance indicators that could be considered. An example was suggested as staffing costs should exceed the GAG funding. A working group was suggested to be set up to look in to this more thoroughly.</p> <p>Online Scams</p> <p>EHT notified trustees that two attempted scams had been received from unknown sources posing as EHT, asking for funds to be transferred in to an account. The members of staff who received the emails were able to realise the emails were scams so forwarded on to ABM. ABM ensured that all office members of staff were aware of the scams and there has been no risk of transferring funds.</p>	
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p>	<p><u>Estates Strategy Introduction</u></p> <p>EHT has been working on an Estates Management Strategy, which was sent to trustees prior to the meeting to review, as per the guidance in the Academies Financial Handbook. The Estates Vision is in line with Academy Trust vision. Trustees feel that the first draft is a good starting point to continue to work on.</p> <p>EHT encouraged trustees to complete the ‘Good Estates Management Tool’ which was sent in an email alongside the agenda and asked to send this back to clerk as it will be a useful audit tool.</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p><u>Eileen Milner Letter</u></p> <p>Trustees were sent the letter prior to the meeting for information purposes. The scheme of delegation for virtual meetings needs to be looked at and virtual decision making will need to be added. The delegation of function will be emailed to trustees to review.</p> <p>EHT highlighted some other useful documents as linked in the letter for trustees to look at. Trustees agreed that the letter was clear and precise about the current situation.</p>	
<p>10</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p><u>Risk Assessments</u></p> <p>EHT has begun assessing the risks associated with returning to school and these have been sent to trustees prior to the meeting. EHT welcomed further suggestions. A trustee asked for the consideration to be added regarding teachers calling children as mentioned previously in the meeting to ensure parents do not obtain teachers’ phone numbers.</p> <p>The statement made by the prime minister yesterday is to aim for schools to return on 1st June for children in Early Year and Years 1 and 6. This led to discussion regarding how it is possible to manage social distancing in classrooms with small children.</p>	

	Trustees would like to ensure staff feel comfortable returning and recording concerns and fears, as well as measures they would like to see put in place. EHT will gather feedback from all members of staff and consider responses in the risk assessment. EHT asked whether trustees thought that masks should be worn. It was suggested that staff members should be able to choose themselves whether they would like to wear PPE. Adequate PPE will be required to be worn for first aid in all circumstances. Taking temperatures of children and staff as they arrive to school was also suggested and anyone that has a high temperature will not be able to remain in school.	
10.3	A trustee suggested that a risk to be considered is of a subsequent case of COVID-19 being found in school, how this would be managed.	
10.4	A trustee suggested that the movement of staff between schools should be added to the risk assessment and this should be kept to essential travel only.	
10.5	ABM has done an audit of PPE and is in the process of sourcing further supplies.	
11	Confidentiality of Proceedings Item 6 and item 7.	
12	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 16 th July.	
13	AOB None.	

Action Points

1. Clerk to send letter on behalf of chair to resigning trustees.
2. Vision and values to be added to agenda by clerk
3. Trust Board and LGB roles document by clerk
4. When it is safe to do so, arrange tours of Vale View and arrange meeting for succession planning.
5. ABM to arrange analysis of school meals (not necessarily before next meeting)
6. Delegation of function to be sent to trustees by clerk
7. Trustees to look at the 'Good Estates Management Tool' (which has already been sent to trustees)

Minutes taken by Clerk Claudia Sawyers

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