

The Priestley Academy Trust – Trust Board

Minutes and Actions

Trust Board/Academy	Trust Board
Date	Monday, 18 October 2021, at 18:00-20:00
Venue	Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
Trustees Present (alphabetical)	Javed Ahmed (JA) (Joined the meeting at 18:07) Andrew Bruce (AB) Ros Garside (RG) (Chair) Abid Hussain (AH) Ashfaq Rahman (AR) Steve Wadsworth (SW)
Others in attendance	Mathew Atkinson (MA) – PAT DoLA Michael Horrocks (MH) – PAT CFO Michael McCarthy (MMc) – PAT CEO Tracey Parry (TP) – PAT COO Laura Rogers (LR) – Westbourne Assistant Head – EYFS Leader of Learning
Chair	Ros Garside
Clerk to Governors	Charlotte Heap – PAT Clerk and Projects Officer
Papers Circulated	Minutes of previous meeting 15 July 2021 EYFS Presentation Keeping Children Safe in Education CEO Report CFO Report COO Report

The meeting commenced at 18:03.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, especially new Trustees Andrew Bruce and Steve Wadsworth, and Michael McCarthy as the new CEO.

The Chair asked everyone in turn to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item	Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges	Action
01/21	Apologies for absence and their acceptance No apologies for absence were received. The Clerk advised the meeting was quorate.	
02/21	Introduction of CEO The CEO stated his first 100 days are about listening and talking to people. Having already attended a Trust Board meeting, this was his first as CEO to give an overview. In depth updates regarding the quality of education and finances will be given at the Trust Board meeting to be held on 28 March 2021.	
03/21	EYFS Presentation LR delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the meeting highlighting the key changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The key changes are to improve outcomes for children by allowing teaching staff more quality time with the children than recording their progress in great detail.	

Signed: 

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	<p>Trustees asked if the new framework will make a difference to teachers' workload? Under the old framework it was mandatory to collect a wealth of evidence of a child's progress via photographs, written observations and videos. The intention is the practitioner will have more time to spend with the children. A baseline has been introduced.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the use of outdoor space and the child ratios. LR reported this should not affect the schools within the Trust. However, some Early Years settings try to use the outdoor space to up the child and staff ratio.</p> <p>Has the baseline been done in Reception? All the PAT schools have completed the baseline and this has gone to the DfE.</p> <p>LR left the meeting at 18:21.</p>	
04/21	<p>Trustees' Term of Office AR's term of office officially ended on 18 September 2021. It was formerly noted that AR has agreed to serve for another term of four years, until 18 September 2025. The Board agreed AR's second term of office.</p>	
05/21	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair The Clerk invited nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board. AR, seconded by JA, proposed RG for Chair. RG, seconded by AB, proposed AR for Vice Chair. The Board unanimously agreed the election of RG for Chair and AR for Vice Chair.</p> <p>RG thanked the Board for making her Chair. AR thanked the Board for making him Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Clerk handed Chair of the meeting to RG.</p> <p>RG stated that she is planning to stand down at the end of the academic year. Therefore, succession planning needs to be thought about.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that SK had officially resigned from the Trust Board. Therefore, there is currently one Trustee vacancy on the Board. The Chair wished to formerly thank SK for her contribution to the Local Governing Board for Westbourne Primary School and for her contribution to the Trust Board.</p>	
06/21	<p>Committee Membership Following discussion, it was agreed that JA, AB, RG, AR and SW would form the Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee. It was agreed that RG, AH and AR would remain on the School Improvement (SI) Committee.</p>	
07/21	<p>Code of Conduct The Clerk reported the updated PAT Handbook for Governors had been sent to all Trustees prior to the meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed the Clerk is to resend the PAT Handbook for Governors to Trustees in order for them to read the Code of Conduct.</p>	Clerk (done)

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	Trustees are to read the Code of Conduct included in the PAT Handbook for Governors and inform the Clerk they have read the document by email.	Trustees
08/21	Any other business and requests for Agenda order variations Item 16/21 was brought forward as the Chair of the School Improvement Committee, AR, had to leave the meeting at 19:30.	
09/21	Declarations of interest for Items on this Agenda There were no declarations of interest made. The Clerk reminded AH to complete and return his Declaration of Pecuniary Interests form for this academic year.	(Done – Form Received).
10/21	Minutes of the previous meeting The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 were approved as a true record. As this was a virtual meeting the minutes were not signed but agreement was made that electronic signatures could be included.	Clerk (Done)
11/21	Matters arising from the Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda Item 99/20-Staff absence – The new CEO report focus was staff absence due to positive COVID-19 cases. The Central Team is looking into how Arbor can be used to record staff absences as well as how it can be used to record pupil attainment and progress. Arbor can be used to give a live pupil attendance figure, which could not be obtained previously. Item 99/20-Challenge from LGBs – The CEO reported he had attended each of the five school Local Governing Boards (LGB) and seen the difference between them. Challenge from the LGBs is on the agenda for the Central Team Senior Executive Group (SEG) to put together an action plan going forward. MH added the challenge was around the Scheme of Delegation and clarity of who is responsible for what. A review of the Scheme of Delegation is also on the agenda for the SEG to address. Item 99/20-Woodfield – The DoLA has shared the Ofsted report received for Woodfield. The Chair stated the report was positive and asked that all the staff who were involved be thanked for their support. The DoLA is to send a copy of the Ofsted report to the new Trustees, AB and SW. Item 100/20 – Trustees asked if there was a plan to look at the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) metrics and planning for September 2022. The CFO reported this was a discussion for the CEO and himself. The Headteachers are aware of the ICFP metrics and what they mean. There is an action to separate the impact of the 2-year-old provision and Resourced Provisions (RPs) from the pupil teacher contact ratio for Green Lane. Once the annual audit is complete, the CFO and Headteacher of Green Lane will work together to separate the data.	DoLA DoLA CFO

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	<p>Item 100/20 – Trustees asked if the audit report has now been received. The CFO reported the audit report has not been received, but he will chase the auditors again.</p>	CFO
12/21	<p>Chair’s Correspondence and Actions The Chair reported she had meetings with MMc as the new CEO. They have also met, together with AH and AR to discuss MMC’s performance management.</p> <p>The Chair will go through the draft Trustees’ Report to finalise the report.</p>	RG
16/21	<p>School Improvement Committee Report AR reported the School Improvement Committee elected himself as Chair and AH as Vice Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee is pleased with the progress made by the CEO and the work that has started in all the schools. The CEO has implemented a First 100 Days plan and spent time getting to know staff and the schools. He is talking and listening to leaders before introducing new strategies.</p> <p>The national attendance figures are depressed due to COVID-19 and are close to 92%. Attendance for the PAT schools is above the national average, and is higher than this time last year. The Committee has asked for an attendance strategy to raise attendance even further and for good practice to be shared across the Trust to make sure more children attend, including SEND and disadvantaged.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Committee liked the new style of Headteacher reports and report front covers. There were some consistency issues across the school reports, but it was noted that this will take time to develop. A report from each school was tabled and discussed. The information provided was really good, but may need to be more elaborate in some areas.</p> <p>Sexual harassment in schools was discussed. All the schools across the Trust log concerns and safeguarding information on CPOMS, the safeguarding system.</p> <p>The CEO and DoLA are completing deep dives in each school regarding safeguarding and looking at processes. There are no concerns regarding safeguarding. The deep dives are an opportunity to sharpen things further and tighten the processes.</p> <p>Pupil Premium reviews in each school are also being completed. The Chair stated the Committee is pleased these are happening and the reviews can be used to assess the quality of teaching and learning through the eyes of a disadvantaged pupil. This is an opportunity to look at the Trust wide approach as to what great teaching and learning looks like and for good practice to be shared across the Trust.</p> <p>An Ofsted visit to Atlas is imminent. The CEO and DoLA have provided support and done deep dives at Atlas to make sure the judgement will be positive.</p> <p>The Chair reported some of the language used in the reports was from the old framework. It has been noted the language needs to be from the new framework, for the Committee to have the confidence that staff know the new framework.</p>	

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	<p>The Committee has asked for coherence on raising attainment strategies, making sure no one slips through the net, additional tutoring, additional staffing and before and after school clubs.</p> <p>Coherence was also asked for regarding oracy, literacy and communication. How the pupils will become good communicators and providing opportunities for pupils to share their learning.</p> <p>The Committee discussed reading as a priority in all the PAT schools and a strategy needed to improve reading. The team have developed an approach to deal with this together.</p> <p>SW asked what specific areas were raised by Ofsted for Atlas. The DoLA reported two years ago there were a number of staff members on capability. Only three teaching staff could be observed. This was dealt with in year one.</p> <p>The curriculum was not fully developed at the time of the Ofsted visit, but the school has worked hard on the curriculum and the points for each year group raised by Ofsted. There were inconsistencies in reading and phonics and a lot of work has been put into this at Atlas. The Head was new but she is now much more experienced.</p>	
13/21	<p>Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2021 The Chair stated the requirement was for everyone to have at least read Part one of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document. There are a number of changes, for example, sexual abuse, peer on peer abuse and the different safeguarding concerns each year.</p> <p>All Trustees confirmed that they had read the KCSIE document.</p> <p>The Chair asked if additional training has been given to all staff in the schools. The DoLA reported all school staff have had safeguarding training. The Central Team completed safeguarding training with the DoLA in July 2021.</p> <p>AR queried a safeguarding link Trustee. Discussion followed regarding a link Trustee for safeguarding. It was agreed AR and AH would discuss the link Trustee for safeguarding and contact the CEO after their discussion.</p> <p>AB asked how does the Trust know staff have read the KCSIE document, as part one is for staff and part two is for governing boards. The Chair confirmed it is part one that needs to be read by governors. This is confirmed by the minutes of the Local Governing Board meetings and Trust Board meeting. AR had queried a Trust safeguarding lead to check that everything had been done and to offer support and challenge, as Trustees are governing the Trust.</p>	AR / AH

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<p>14/21</p>	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>The CEO was pleased the new report front covers had been well received. The cover informs the reader if the attached paper is confidential or not. The papers can be separated out by the key elements, and the reader can prioritise which papers are for information only, or which papers are to be read in more detail and scrutinised.</p> <p>The CEO reported there are some cases of COVID-19 across the Trust, but the cases are stable and there has been no great increase across the Trust. However, staff are aware of the risks.</p> <p>In secondary schools, around half of the pupils are testing positive. Calderdale Council have put blanket restrictions in schools. There are contingency plans across the Trust if required.</p> <p>Attendance has increased, the figured recorded was 94.4%. Persistent absence has increased by approximately 2%.</p> <p>The Trust sponsorship application was sent to the DfE on 18 October 2021. The sponsorship application had been previously discussed but had never been sent to the DfE. The CEO is hopeful a decision will be received during this calendar year.</p> <p>The Trust is providing support to a hub of schools in North Yorkshire. This is providing opportunities for staff continued professional development, and there may be potential growth in North Yorkshire. The schools being supported are: Ripley CofE Primary School, Kettlesing Felliscliffe Primary School and Beckwithshaw Primary School. There is currently no Headteacher at Beckwithshaw, therefore, the DoLA and the Pupil Progress Leader from Westbourne will be supporting the school until Christmas 2021. Support at Woodfield will continue until the end of the academic year.</p> <p>The DoLA is working extremely hard and going above and beyond. The work with North Yorkshire is also good for the reputation of the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO reported discussions are underway with other local primary schools. Further discussion followed. It was agreed growth of the Trust is to be steady and sustainable.</p> <p>The CEO thanked the Trustees for approving the move of the Trust Head Office. This will allow Margaret McMillan to have their hub back.</p> <p>Trustees asked if the CEO's plans were on track and if the strategies would be delivered in February 2022.</p> <p>The CEO reported the school improvement plan is under the strategic plan and confirmed they are on track. The first draft will be ready in January 2022.</p> <p>The Chair asked for an update to be brought to the Trust Board meeting to be held on 13 December 2021.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
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	<p>The Chair thanked the CEO for his report, stating that a lot has already been put in place and been consolidated.</p>	
<p>15/21</p>	<p>CFO Report The CFO asked the new Trustees to contact him with any areas of finance they would like training on.</p> <p>The Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee meeting scheduled for 11 October 2021 was cancelled due to it being the start of the academic year and the audit was not completed in order for it to be discussed by the FAR Committee.</p> <p>The CFO reported he did have unaudited figures for each school. The budget accuracy is not where it should be. The schools' actual budgets as at 31 August 2021 are different to what was forecast at the beginning of July 2021.</p> <p>There are reserves, but it is about the link to resources and if the budgets are not effectively managed this can impact pupil progress. The DfE and ESFA have questioned the reserves. The reserves for Green Lane and Margaret McMillan are approximately 30% of the General Annual Grant (GAG). Therefore, there is a lack of accuracy in budget forecasting that needs to be discussed with the Headteachers.</p> <p>Trustees asked if it was known why there was inaccuracy with the budgets and why they were so far out. The CFO reported the Heads do not fully understand what the report is telling them. The CFO will go over the report again with Headteachers.</p> <p>Is there a training need for the Headteachers and Office Managers? There is an issue due to the level of involvement from the CFO. There is a lack of ownership. The CFO provides the information but the Headteachers need to take ownership of the information.</p> <p>Trustees stated this is not the first time and this is not improving. The CEO has asked the CFO to hold regular meetings with the Headteachers and Office Managers. There is a level of inconsistency as to what support the schools ask for.</p> <p>The Trustees stated the schools need to interrogate the information. The Board will monitor if this is making a difference. The money needs to be used for the children. The CFO stated he cannot make a decision for schools. This goes back to the Scheme of Delegation (SoD). The schools are given the information but they are not using the information effectively.</p> <p>How often do the Headteachers look at the accounts, monthly? The accounts are picked up month by month using a budget software system. The system maintains staffing contracts and there is a line by line for other non-staffing expenditure. The CFO produces a management report every month, but does not focus on the areas of underspend as this is up to the Headteacher. The CFO discusses the budget with the Headteachers if it needs to be updated. The budget is agreed in summer and the Heads maintain it to the next Local Governing Board meeting. A revised budget is then taken back to the Local Governing Board.</p>	<p>AB / SW</p> <p>CFO</p>

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	<p>The figures reported were taken to the Local Governing Boards meetings in July 2021 but there is a big difference over the last few weeks.</p> <p>Are the Local Governing Boards presenting the right level of challenge or asking the right questions? The level of challenge is not there as governors do not fully understand what the information is telling them.</p> <p>The level of accuracy is different across the schools. Atlas is supported by the Central Team; therefore, the budget is quite accurate. Westbourne's budget is also more accurate. Lilycroft is usually accurate, but this has slipped. The level of accuracy at Green Lane and Margaret McMillan needs to be focussed on.</p> <p>Could each school report to the FAR Committee to explain their budget on a regular basis? There is a level of explanation. If there is anything negative the CFO does bring this to the Headteacher's attention.</p> <p>The CEO stated he will address the level of reserves with the Headteachers during their 1:1s. Conversations need to be held with the budget holders, the Headteachers. The CFO will support the budget holders to remind them what they should be looking at and that they are answerable to the Board. There is also a training need for LGBs as this is not their level of experience.</p> <p>Further discussion followed. It was agreed COVID-19 did affect last year's budgets and would have had an impact on reserves. The CEO stated the next step is understanding that the money could have been used to make a difference last year and can school improvement be funded this year.</p> <p>AR left at 19:34.</p>	
17/21	<p>COO Report The COO reported most staff have completed the GDPR training. The COO has arranged for some staff to receive paper copies.</p> <p>Trustees and Founder Members are to complete the GDPR training, but were reminded they need their PAT email address to access the online training. Trustees also need to use their PAT email to access the Trust intranet.</p> <p>A claim has been received for an incident that happened at Margaret McMillan Primary School. It is likely the claim will be granted. Medical information has been requested. Any money arising from claim will be held until the pupil is 18 years of age. The Headteachers report was very detailed, therefore, a visit to school is not required.</p> <p>Trustees asked if this claim is covered by insurance.</p>	Trustees

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	<p>The COO reported the risk protection is through the RPA. The claim is processed by RPA and they assess the outcome. The incident was an accident and should therefore be covered.</p> <p>The COO reported that a Freedom of Information request has been received from the Guardian dated back to 2016/2017. The COO cannot use an exemption as it is not likely any specific child can be identified as the request is across the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO has implemented a new request to recruit process. The SEG have approved four new posts through the request to recruit process.</p> <p>The COO reported a pupil catering feedback meeting was held on 14 October 2021 at Atlas. Four pupils from each school attended the meeting and were very professional. Their feedback was very good; pupils feel they have more choice and the food is an improvement. The pupils also gave Mellors some things to think about, such as the use of throw away plastic cups. The pupils were very good ambassadors for the Trust.</p> <p>The Chair asked that the pupils be thanked for their involvement and feedback.</p> <p>The CIF bids for this year have not been successful, however, there is work that can be done and the bids will be appealed. If they are not done under appeal, the bids will be put in again.</p> <p>There has been a delay on the caretaker's house at Green Lane; the new completion date is 22 October 2021. Trustees may like to be involved in the official opening</p> <p>Four Trust policies were attached to the COO's report for ratification by the Trustees. These policies were: Attendance Management Policy, Capability Policy and Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure Policy and Grievance Policy. The four policies were agreed by Unions prior to being sent to Trustees.</p> <p>AB asked if the policies had been looked by HR or a solicitor.</p> <p>The COO reported the policies go through an HR consultant and the Trust has a working relationship with the Unions. The Unions have agreed these policies. ASCL always comment but do not attend the Union meeting with the Trust. ASCL's comments have been taken on board, but the policies have not been changed.</p> <p>All four policies were ratified by the Trustees.</p> <p>The COO reported the Pay Policy has only just come back from HR and is to be sent to the Unions. The COO will forward the Pay Policy to the Trustees for ratification once the Unions have approved the policy.</p>	<p>COO</p> <p>COO</p>
<p>18/21</p>	<p>LGB Matters</p> <p>The CEO reported the first Local Governing Board meeting since returning in September 2021 held at Atlas Community Primary School was held in person. However, a positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed after the meeting, therefore, all Governing Board meetings since the meeting held at Atlas have been held online.</p>	

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	<p>Some of the Local Governing Boards have had Governors who have not attended and the Chair has contacted them to ask if they wish to continue or resign. Governors will be written to thanking them for their time and support if they no longer wish to continue.</p> <p>The relevant vacancies will be advertised and filled accordingly.</p> <p>The Central Team are working on governance paper, which will provide Local Governing Boards with a full picture of each Board, the latest skills matrix results, training, etc.</p>	
19/21	<p>Safeguarding and Health & Safety Covered by Item 16/21.</p>	
20/21	<p>Any other business referred from item 08/21 The CFO reported the auditor's report will be available for the FAR Committee meeting to be held on 6 December 2021. A Founder Member is to be present at the FAR Committee meeting and following Trust Board meeting. The Clerk is to invite Bryan Millar to the FAR Committee meeting to be held on 6 December 2021 and Trust Board meeting to be held on 13 December 2021.</p>	Clerk
21/21	<p>Dates of meetings for the next academic year The dates of the next Trust Board meetings are: 13 December 2021, 24 January 2022, 28 March 2022, 23 May 2022 and 18 July 2022. Meetings to start at 6:00pm.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone and for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 20:11.</p>	

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