

The Priestley Academy Trust – Trust Board

Minutes and Actions

Trust Board/Academy	Trust Board
Date	Monday, 13 December 2021, at 18:00-20:00
Venue	Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
Trustees Present (alphabetical)	Javed Ahmed (JA) Andrew Bruce (AB) Ros Garside (RG) (Chair) Abid Hussain (AH) Ashfaq Rahman (AR) Steve Wadsworth (SW)
Others in attendance	Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Director of Learning and Achievement (DoLA) Michael Horrocks (MH) – Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Michael McCarthy (MMc) – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tracey Parry (TP) – Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Chair	Ros Garside
Clerk to Governors	Charlotte Heap – Clerk and Projects Officer
Papers Circulated	Minutes of previous meeting 18 October 2021 CEO Report COO Report

The meeting commenced at 18:02.

The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming all attendees and thanked them for attending, particularly the CEO who was isolating due to being ill with COVID-19.

Agenda Item	Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges	Action
22/21	Apologies for absence and their acceptance No apologies for absence were received. The Clerk advised the meeting was quorate.	
23/21	Any other business and requests for Agenda order variations The CEO raised staffing matters as an item to be discussed without staff members present.	
24/21	Code of Conduct The Clerk reported that the PAT Handbook for Governors had been emailed to Trustees in order for them to read the Code of Conduct and confirm this via email. Five of the Trustees confirmed via email they have read the Code of Conduct in the PAT Handbook for Governors. Confirmation that AR had read the Code of Conduct was acknowledged in the meeting.	
25/21	Declarations of interest for Items on this Agenda There were no declarations of interest made.	

Signed:



Name: Ros Garside

Date: 24 January 2022

26/21	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 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.</p>	Clerk (Done)
27/21	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda</p> <p>Item 11/21-Woodfield – The DoLA confirmed all staff involved in the Ofsted visit for Woodfield Primary School had been thanked and that the Ofsted report had been sent to AB and SW.</p> <p>Item 11/21-Resourced Provisions – The CEO reported that the CFO was breaking down the pupil ratio figures for Green Lane Primary School taking into account the Resourced Provisions (RPs). This had been discussed in more detail at the FAR Committee meeting held on 6 December 2021.</p> <p>Item 11/21-Audit report – The CFO confirmed the internal audit report had been received and was discussed at the FAR Committee meeting held on 6 December 2021.</p> <p>Item 11/21-Attendance strategy – The CEO confirmed that the strategy was being written.</p> <p>Item 13/21 – AH confirmed he was the link Trustee for Safeguarding and that he had been to each school to speak with the Headteacher. A report to Trustees w/c 20 December 2021.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there was a Trustee visitor form. The Clerk is to email the PAT Governor Visit Form 2021-2022 to AH.</p> <p>AB asked how does the Board know that all staff have read the KCSIE document. AH reported this is evidenced on CPOMS, the Safeguarding software used in schools. Members of staff have to confirm on CPOMS that they have read the KCSIE document.</p> <p>Who checks that this has been done? AH reported that the Headteacher checks this at school level.</p> <p>How is this reported back to the Board of Trustees? The CEO reported this will be part of the DoLA's role and his visits to the schools at the start of 2022.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that Part One of the KCSIE document was circulated to all Trustees prior to the last Board meeting held on 18 October 2021 for Trustees to read and be evidenced in the minutes, as this is statutory.</p> <p>AB queried that part one of the KCSIE document had been supplied, but part two that is for governing boards, had not been supplied. The Chair stated she understood the Item 13/21 of the previous meeting was to confirm that all Trustees had read Part One of the KCSIE document, as there were updates.</p>	AH Clerk (Done)

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	<p>The CEO confirmed the whole document can be sent out, however, this was a new question to him, as in his previous trust it was always the confirmation that Part One had been read that had to be documented. Part Two is for more information but it would be useful for both to be shared.</p> <p>It was agreed the Clerk would share Part Two of the KCSIE document.</p> <p>Item 14/21 – The Board asked if a response had been received to the sponsorship application. The CEO reported he had received a response, but the application did not make the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) agenda for December 2021. The application should be on the RSC agenda for January 2022.</p> <p>Item 15/21 – AB and SW confirmed the CFO had sent some useful information to them regarding certain finance areas.</p> <p>The Board noted there was a typing error on Page 7, the question should read, “How often <u>do</u> the Headteachers look at the accounts, monthly?”.</p> <p>Item 17/21 – The Board asked if the caretaker’s house at Green Lane was now finished and when was the official opening. The COO reported the caretaker’s house was supposed to be handed over w/c 6 December 2021, however, there had been some issues and snagging, therefore, an official opening date was not available at present.</p>	<p>Clerk (done)</p> <p>Clerk (done)</p>
<p>28/21</p>	<p>Chair’s Correspondence and Actions The Chair reported that the CEO had kept her informed of his illness. The CEO has also kept the Chair up-to-date regarding the Trust’s support in North Yorkshire.</p> <p>AH and AR have updated the Chair regarding the CEO’s Performance Management meeting and his targets are being finalised.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed the Headteachers’ Performance Management meetings are ongoing, with the last one to be held on 16 December 2021 and that he would be in attendance.</p>	
<p>29/21</p>	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>The Board asked why had persistent absence gone up. The CEO reported persistent absence had dropped in the last week, but attendance at each school goes up and down. There is no specific reason, apart from families travelling abroad for long periods of time. The schools have been asked to look at those pupils who they can have an impact on and those who are abroad for long periods of time. Families are buying the cheapest tickets to travel and state that they will return when they can. The CEO has spoken to Headteachers about how the figures were presented at the last Ofsted inspection.</p>	

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The Board asked that as some families can be abroad for three months at a time, do the schools provide education for when these pupils are off.

The CEO reported yes, the schools can provide education but not to the full extent. The schools are able to provide education remotely, but this has to be balanced with the teachers' workload. Some families do want the remote education and some do not. Therefore, teachers cannot provide work that will not be done.

The hardest part is safeguarding, to make sure school staff are doing what they should be doing, and the schools are going above and beyond.

Pupils could previously be taken off role, but the Local Authority (LA) will no longer allow this to be done, therefore, this is less of a deterrent to parents.

The general picture is positive in terms of the national attendance picture, and the Trust attendance at 93.75% is just above the national average of 89.3%; the children that are here are in school.

When were the attendance figures taken from?

The attendance figures were captured on 6 December 2021 from Forum.

AR stated the national attendance figure was 96.3% on 11 December 2021, and 91.5% for primary schools on 6 December 2021 as the figure quoted in the CEO report is for all schools, including secondary schools. Therefore, the attendance figures for the Trust are still higher. However, the attendance needs looking at for Margaret McMillan Primary School.

AB questioned the lowest attendance figure of 91.79% and the persistent absence figure of 20.19% for Margaret McMillan, compared with Atlas Community Primary School's persistent absence figure of 12.50%. What does Atlas do differently? Why does the persistent absence figure and attendance figure not add up?

The CEO reported the persistent absence figure is for the pupils who are persistently off and may be abroad, the figures do not correlate. Some absences are shorter, for three to four days, due to COVID-19 and other illnesses, these absences need to be supported with. The Trust wants persistent absence to be as low as it can be.

Margaret McMillan have put measurable time, effort and money into attendance but it is not having the impact at this point. Absence figures were higher in the past.

There is no one thing that is being done at Atlas and Lilycroft Primary School, it is about more work with the families. Atlas can have a deeper relationship with the families and talk to them in the play ground as it is a smaller school.

What are Lilycroft doing to get such a big attendance compared to Margaret McMillan?

The CEO has spent a lot of time talking to the Headteacher at Margaret McMillan and asked her to unpick everything she can. We are going back to the drawing board and taking the best that can be done from across the Trust.

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	<p>AR stated that there are no national statistics for persistent absence at this time, but for schools they are important statistics to identify. These pupils are not attending regularly. An attendance strategy is needed. The School Improvement Committee can provide information to the Board to unpick the absence. It will be a small number of children who are having an impact on the attendance figure. All the schools are above the national average and that is impressive, well done to everyone.</p> <p>North Yorkshire</p> <p>The DoLA reported that currently the Trust is supporting Woodfield Primary School in North Yorkshire. Woodfield has had a further monitoring inspection but the report has not yet been published. The Trust is also supporting a federation of three schools: Ripley CofE Primary School, Kettlesing Felliscliffe Primary School and Beckwithshaw Primary School. Two of the schools have had a full inspection, but the reports are not yet public.</p> <p>The Trust has been asked to continue support next term and discussions are taking place regarding this. The Woodfield inspection report does talk about the impact of the curriculum support from the Trust.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated the DoLA, the impact is good in terms of emphasising the work of the Trust. However, the Board agreed that support should not be spread too thinly. But it is important to support other schools to build up the profile of the Trust, and from the links that are being made a school may be brought into the Trust in future.</p> <p>The CEO agreed, the support can be given and have an impact, as well as offer continued professional development (CPD) for the Trust staff who have stepped up, but there has to be a balance, as the Trust has five schools that need support to be as good as they need to be. However, the wording in the inspection reports is very positive regarding the work the Trust has done and the DoLA deserves acknowledgement for the hard work he has put in.</p> <p>The CEO will keep the Board updated following the results of the latest inspection.</p> <p>Growth</p> <p>A further discussion regarding growth of the Trust is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p> <p>Strategy Documents</p> <p>The CEO and DoLA have worked together to develop a school improvement strategy and following discussions with Headteachers, have outlined a skeleton school improvement strategy. Other strategies will be developed together with a long-term plan and will be brought to the Board.</p> <p>The carbon reduction strategy may be referred to as sustainability.</p> <p>The Chair stated, as discussed during the FAR Committee meeting held on 6 December 2021, the Board requested a strategy on environmental issues which will incorporate lots of different areas and include curriculum.</p>	CEO
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	<p>The Board questioned the use of Pupil Premium (PP) and the need for it to be used effectively, asking how the success of the PP is addressed.</p> <p>The data is looked at and the CEO and DoLA have undertaken school reviews which have shown there are interventions taking place for these pupils. Feedback from the staff and pupils state that it is effective. The data will be looked at over the year. The first data drop was 13 December 2021 and over the year progress will be compared to make sure these pupils are making at least progress in line with their peers, if not more. The PP is being spent on the right things, as written and set out in the PP statement for each school.</p> <p>Will the school improvement strategy be ready to share with the School Improvement Committee at the next meeting to be held on 24 January 2021?</p> <p>Yes, together with the long-term plan that sits beside the strategy.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the CEO for his report, and for presenting it in a clear way despite being unwell.</p>	
30/21	<p>FAR Committee Report</p> <p>JA, Chair of the FAR Committee, reported that the external auditor, Chris Beaumont of Clive Owen, presented the report and accounts to the Committee. The Committee questioned the figures and a couple of typing errors in the report. There was not much in terms of issues with the accounts, therefore, the Committee was confident and happy with the figures that were presented. The Committee had approved the accounts.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the internal audit report. The internal report is clean and the internal auditors only commented that the Trust did not have an approved list of suppliers and contractors, but the CFO is on with preparing a list. Credit card purchases are also to be authorised and some issues around procedures have been addressed at Atlas.</p> <p>The Committee spoke about budget forecasts and why these are not as good as they should be; the CFO is looking into this. Margaret McMillan and Green Lane have got large reserves and we need to think what we are doing with this as this has been flagged.</p> <p>The Board agreed the signing of the accounts by the Chair of Trustees.</p> <p>As this was virtual meeting, it was agreed the CFO would meet the Chair of Trustees at an agreed time with the document to be signed. Once signed by the Chair of Trustees, the document would then be couriered to the CEO for his signature, as he is currently isolating due to COVID-19. The document must be signed in person on each page.</p> <p>JA asked what the time scale was for this to be finalised and submitted.</p> <p>The CFO confirmed the signed accounts had to be submitted by the middle of January 2022.</p>	
31/21	<p>2020-21 Financial Statements</p> <p>Covered by Item 30/21.</p>	

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The Trust Christmas card competition this year was judged by the Telegraph & Argus. Some very good comments were received and the judge found it hard to choose a winner. The winning entry was by a Year 5 pupil from Lilycroft. The theme was a recycled Christmas and the design said 'give the planet a present by recycling'.

Three latest Trust newsletters for staff, parents/carers and governors will be sent out by 17 December 2021.

Previous to the meeting, Trustees had been sent the Trust Pay Policy for comments, which have all been implemented. The COO thanked Trustees for their feedback regarding the Trust Pay policy, and asked the Board if the Pay Policy could be ratified.

The Board unanimously agreed the ratification of the Trust Pay Policy.

Pupils from each school met with Mellors at Westbourne to provide feedback regarding the school meals and a pupil menu selection; therefore, pupils have been involved at every stage. The menu is on a three-weekly cycle. From January 2022 pupils will be able to choose their meals in the classroom which will provide a lot of data to the Trust.

Regarding IT, the Trust has received a further 191 laptops from the DfE and IT are currently setting these up and the laptops will be out with schools by 17 December 2021.

The Trust uses Smoothwall to provide filtering and forensic monitoring on all devices. The Headteachers receive an alert if the forensic monitoring detects anything and Headteachers can access the portal for further information. There are five different levels of incident. The only levels to be alerted to Headteachers are levels four and five, but all incidents from levels one to five are logged. The portal is comprehensive and the filtering is very sensitive.

The Chair thanked the COO for a very thorough report.

The Board asked when four of the five schools use the Trust IT provider, why does one school have a different provider, is this a legacy?

The COO confirmed this was a legacy, one school has got their own IT technician.

Is there a strategy to bring that in line with the rest of the schools and the Trust IT provider?

The CEO reported he had raised the same question. Under the Scheme of Delegation, the Headteacher has the power to put that structure in place, therefore, there is no need to spend the money to remove this. It would be preferable to have a streamlined provision. The Central Team needs to look at the Scheme of Delegation and see what is working and what is having an impact on education and bring this back to Trustees to take that forward.

Further discussion took place regarding the IT provision in schools. Atlas and Westbourne originally also had IT technicians. Green Lane and Lilycroft had IT contracts with two different companies. When the Trust was formed, Margaret McMillan decided to keep their own IT technician, as per the Scheme of Delegation.

Signed:



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<p>33/21</p>	<p>Safeguarding and Health & Safety It was agreed this was covered by Item 32/21.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there was a section in the CEO's report regarding safeguarding. The CEO stated that if there was an update, there would be an item included in his report. This can be added to his report or left as a separate item.</p> <p>AR, as Chair of the School Improvement Committee, stated that such areas as sexual abuse and harassment and safeguarding matters have to be reported, but there is not always a School Improvement Committee report at each Board meeting. Therefore, a standard report to the Board is helpful.</p> <p>The CEO asked if the Board would like safeguarding to be a separate item or as part of his report in future. The Chair stated part of the CEO's report.</p> <p>AH reported that during his recent meetings with Headteachers, it was noted that domestic abuse cases increased over the last year. The schools are doing well to support parents that have been subjected to this abuse. Safeguarding does need to be reviewed on a regular basis and how families can be supported.</p> <p>The Clerk stated that safeguarding and health & safety was a standard item on each Board agenda. The CFO added that it was good practice to have safeguarding and health & safety on the agenda as a standard item.</p> <p>It was agreed that safeguarding and health & safety should be covered by the CEO's report and listed as a separate item on each agenda.</p>	
<p>34/21</p>	<p>Any other business referred from item 08/21 The CEO raised staffing matters as an item that was discussed without staff members present. This was clerked by a member of the Board and recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	
<p>35/21</p>	<p>Dates of the next meetings The dates of the next Trust Board meetings are: 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 19:25.</p>	

Signed:

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