

The Priestley Academy Trust – Trust Board

**Minutes and Actions**

<b>Trust Board/Academy</b>	Trust Board
<b>Date</b>	Monday, 5 December 2022, at 16:30
<b>Venue</b>	PAT Head Office
<b>Trustees Present (alphabetical)</b>	Javed Ahmed (JA) Ashfaq Rahman (AR) (attended virtually) Steve Wadsworth (SW)
<b>Others in attendance</b>	Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Director of School Improvement (DSI) Michael Horrocks (MH) – Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Michael McCarthy (MMc) – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tracey Parry (TP) – Chief Operating Officer (COO) Nicola Roth (NR) – Headteacher, Lilycroft (left the meeting at 16:48)
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Wadsworth
<b>Clerk to Governors</b>	Charlotte Heap – Governance Professional and Projects Officer
<b>Papers Circulated</b>	Minutes of previous meeting 26 September 2022 CEO Report 2021-22 Financial Accounts COO Report Governance paper PAT Menopause Policy v1.0

The meeting commenced at 16:32.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.


<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p><b>AOB – PAT Menopause Policy - NR</b></p> <p>As part of NR’s performance management targets, NR had been asked to present the Trust Menopause Policy to the Trust Board. The Trust employs a large female population and this needs to be addressed as these members of staff will go through the menopause at some point in their life and it also affects three protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2021. The menopause can affect a significant proportion of a woman’s life. Three quarters of the workforce will be affected by the symptoms, 25% of which will have severe symptoms. This policy is to support staff to keep on functioning at work. Trans and non-binary people can be affected by the symptoms, as well as males who are suffering from prostate cancer. There are 30 recognised symptoms and have a huge impact on someone’s life, making it difficult to cope with at the peak of their career.</p> <p>It can be very hard to discuss the symptoms with a male line manager or speak to a doctor. Currently the Trust Board and top executives are male. The policy will support women to be able to speak about the menopause and ask for support. It includes a risk assessment and is a guide for the Trust as an employer and for staff to discuss reasonable adjustments and how to record absences so that there is no discrimination.</p>	

Signed: 

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	<p>The policy offers advice for line managers and the person they are talking to, as well as providing prompts on how to speak to a doctor, an action plan and support for their partner. It can be very difficult for a partner, especially a male, as they may not know what is happening. It is a very difficult time of someone's life and employers will want to keep people in work.</p> <p>The CEO reported that from a Trust point of view, the policy has been to the senior executive group (SEG) and Headteachers. It is more of a user guide and has been presented for the Trust Board to ratify.</p> <p><b>AR thanked NR for her presentation, adding he has done the same in his own trust, as well as launch a video with links to wellbeing for all members of staff. We should be talking about this and hopefully the policy will develop a conversation in the Trust's schools. These conversations might not happen with the families in the Trust's community and it is worth considering how these conversations happen in the communities that the schools serve.</b></p> <p><b>The Trust Board agreed the ratification of the PAT Menopause Policy v1.0.</b></p> <p>The CEO reported NR is retiring on 31 December 2022, having been the Headteacher at Lilycroft Primary School since 2008. The central team and headteachers had a lunch on 2 December 2022 to say thank you to NR.</p> <p><b>The Chair thanked NR on behalf of the Trust Board for her hard work and support.</b></p>	
17/22	<p><b>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</b> No apologies were received. Abid Hussain (AH) was not in attendance. The Governance Professional advised the meeting was quorate.</p>	
18/22	<p><b>Any other business and requests for Agenda order variations</b> No other business was raised.</p>	
19/22	<p><b>Declarations of interest for Items on this Agenda</b> There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
20/22	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2022 were approved by the Trust Board as a true record.</p> <p>Agreement was made that electronic signatures could be included.</p>	Gov Prof (Done)
21/22	<p><b>Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda</b> There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	
22/22	<p><b>Chair's Correspondence and Actions</b> The Chair reported he has visited Miriam Lord Primary School, as well as visiting Lilycroft Primary School to meet NR and discuss the challenges of the building being grade II listed. He with the Ofsted inspectors during the inspection at Atlas Community Primary School.</p> <p>The Chair attended The Priestley Academy Trust's Conference on 31 October 2022 and stated he enjoyed the day and meeting different staff across the schools.</p>	
23/22	<p><b>CEO Report</b> This item is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	

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24/22	<p><b>Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee Report</b></p> <p>JA, as Chair of the FAR Committee, reported there were two main items on the agenda. There were no issues with the minutes of the previous meeting. The CFO provided the Committee with information in terms of budget forecasts. Currently at 31 August 2022 there was a Trust reserve of £2.9million. However, the budgets going forward forecast a deficit of (£1.8million) by 2026. Three factors contribute to this: the falling number of pupils on roll; staff pay awards and increase in energy costs. These will have a major impact on the budgets in three to four years' time. However, the government have announced more funding but it is not clear how much this will be. Another announcement will be made in Spring 2023. Once the amount of further funding is known, the CFO will update the budgets. Appropriate action will be taken to deal with this.</p>	CFO
25/12	<p><b>2021-22 Financial Accounts</b></p> <p>JA reported the external auditor went through the figures for the accounts for 31 August 2022. There were no issues to note. The auditor indicated there were no incidents of fraud and the Trust received a detailed clean audit report. This reflects the good work of the CFO and the finance team. There were a couple of amendments regarding Trustee attendance that have been done.</p> <p>The accounts have been brought to this meeting for formal approval and to be signed off by the Chair of Trustees.</p> <p><b>The Trust Board formally accepted the accounts and agreed the signing of the accounts by the Chair of Trustees.</b></p>	
26/22	<p><b>COO Report</b></p> <p>The COO reported the key risk is cyber security and the central team is doing a lot of work on this. The IT team met week commencing 28 November 2022 to do some training on phishing emails and passwords and have recommendations to take forward. The team are looking to be accredited the cyber essentials, which demonstrates the Trust is taking this seriously. The phishing emails are becoming very effective; one was picked up by a member of the finance team, which looked like a conversation between a member of the finance team and COO. The Trust's cyber security insurance is now through the RPA; therefore, every member of staff will have to undertake cyber security training. This will be done via a form for staff to sign to say they have done the training and the form also shows how long the member of staff has taken to do the training.</p> <p>Since the last meeting there have been two data protection breaches. The first breach was an incorrect form attached to Weduc. There was no data but it did include initials, this was taken down straight away and logged on the system. The Headteacher has spoken to the member of staff to ensure this will not happen again. The second breach was paperwork passed to the wrong parent. The paperwork was returned straight away; therefore, it needed no further action but the Headteacher reiterated to staff how important it was to take care when giving out paperwork.</p> <p>There have been twenty-one reportable injuries since the last Board meeting. One incident was a member of staff who slipped whilst on a school trip and fractured their elbow. This was referred to the HSE but no response has yet been received.</p>	

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Since writing this report another reportable injury has occurred but there was a delay with the central team receiving the information. This has implications and the HSE may ask why it was delayed. Action has been taken but a reply has not yet been received from the HSE.

**Is this a pupil or a member of staff?**

This is a member of staff. This incident will be reported to the unions at the next JCNC meeting in January 2023.

There have been eight reportable incidents of violence to staff. These have all be reported to the unions. The pupils have one to one support and staff members are aware. There is nothing overly concerning and schools have dealt with the incidents.

There have been nineteen requests to recruit since the last Board meeting. These have all been through the senior executive group and approved.

**Some of these positions are new, but given the current economic climate should these be approved?**

These positions are to support pupils one to one with SEND; therefore, there is funding for the posts not in the staffing structures.


The Trust has moved to SAM People for HR administration for all six schools. Letter and staff contract templates have been uploaded to the new system. Senior members of staff will receive further training and the central team will be able to supply staff reports.

In terms of marketing, the T&A has featured an article on the pupil take over day; the next one will be regarding the eco work being done in schools. These articles will continue to be sent in. Green Lane Primary School have chosen a new logo and the school involved pupil feedback in this process. New signage will be ordered and this will include reference to the Trust. The Trust staff conference was a successful day.

The Pay Policy has been updated. HR have checked this and it will go to the unions before it comes to the Trust Board for final ratification.

Regarding buildings, the condition improvement fund (CIF) bids have gone in. The central team are working with Miriam Lord around playground works, this was agreed following their conversion. A no notice health and safety fire audit has been done for Lilycroft and fire audits at the other schools will be completed in January 2023. No notice kitchen audits have been completed and the feedback will be shared with the Trust Board at the next meeting.


Good IT support continues to be received by Strive. The schools in the Trust have qualified for the DfE's "connect the classroom" programme which will provide funding to upgrade the wifi from January 2023. Smoothwall provides the safeguarding filtering and forensic monitoring on all devices and there have been five incidents since the last Trust Board meeting. Headteachers have dealt with these accordingly. The software is very sensitive and Smoothwall are changing the title of some of the event type names.

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	<b>Trustees are pleased to see all the works that are being done in the schools and agreed it is good to see that refurbishments are still happening.</b>	
<b>27/22</b>	<b>Safeguarding and Health &amp; Safety</b> It was agreed this was covered by Item 23/22 and 26/22.	
<b>28/22</b>	<p><b>Governance Paper</b> The Governance Professional reported there are various governor vacancies across the schools and three Trustee vacancies, giving some details regarding each Board.</p> <p>A link to an online Pecuniary Interests Declaration form has been sent out to all governors and trustees. Most have been received and the Governance Professional will chase any outstanding.</p> <p>The CEO reported that the vacancies across the Trust are a key risk. The Trust is looking to adopt the new Articles of Association and the CEO has spoken to the DfE regarding increasing the number of Trustees on the Board from seven to eleven. The Trust Board also needs to be diverse and the team are working on this to include a mixture of people. The Governance Profession has received a quote for Trustee recruitment of £7,500, which is very steep.</p> <p><b>If there are governors who have recently stepped down or in the process of stepping down, is there anyone suitable with the right skills to be co-opted on to the Trust Board?</b></p> <p>One problem is that we are struggling at local level. There are a couple of strong governors, one of which may want to join the Trust Board, but the other wants to stay at local level. The governors who have left wish to step down from governance or have commitments elsewhere. There are a number of new governors and new Chairs. This is part of a wider discussion. The Local Governing Boards have a lot of delegated power if they remain like a proper governor board at a maintained level but strength is needed at trust level and local level. The governance review will look to see if we have the balance right. We do not have the balance right in terms of finance. The Local Governing Boards do not offer challenge.</p> <p><b>The quote for Trustee recruitment may be a lot of money, but if there are no Trustees, there is no robust governance. You need to make an assertive effort to make sure you have the right people around the table and quickly. Meetings can be conducted online and face to face development days can be held. If the recruitment is done right you can get some excellent people. You are doing a school leadership programme and a brilliant way to learn about school leadership is to be a governor. This is another area to explore. If AH was to resign, the School Improvement Committee meetings would not be quorate.</b></p> <p><b>As the CEO stated he was unable to make the School Improvement Committee meeting to be held on 6 December 2022, it was agreed to reschedule this meeting to Thursday, 19 January 2023 at 16:00 to be held online via Teams. To support with the meeting being quorate, JA agreed join the School Improvement Committee.</b></p> <p><b>The CEO is to ask the Headteachers to be more proactive to make sure there are people on the Local Governing Boards.</b></p>	<p>Gov Prof (done)</p> <p>CEO</p>

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	<p><b>How long will the governance review last?</b> Approximately half a term. There will be a conversation with each Local Governing Board Chair and the Governance Professional. The report from the review will be shared with the Trust Board when it is received.</p>	CEO
29/22	<p><b>Any other business referred from item 18/22</b> There was no urgent business discussed.</p>	
30/22	<p><b>Dates of the next meetings</b> The dates of the next Trust Board meetings are: <b>30 January 2023 (following AGM), 20 March 2023, 5 June 2022 and 17 July 2023</b> Meetings to start at 15:00</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone and for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 18:05.</p>	

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