

The Priestley Academy Trust – Trust Board


Minutes and Actions

Trust Board/Academy	Trust Board
Date	Monday, 20 March 2023 at 16:30
Venue	PAT Head Office
Trustees Present (alphabetical)	Javed Ahmed (JA) (attended virtually) Ashfaq Rahman (AR) (attended virtually) Steve Wadsworth (SW)
Others in attendance	Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Director of School Improvement (DoSI) Bryan Harrison (BH) – Headteacher Miriam Lord Primary School (Observer) Michael McCarthy (MMc) – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tracey Parry (TP) – Chief Operating Officer (COO)
Chair	Steve Wadsworth
Clerk to Governors	Charlotte Heap – Governance Professional and Projects Officer
Papers Circulated	Minutes of previous meeting 30 January 2023 CEO Report COO Report Governance paper

The meeting commenced at 16:16.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

Agenda Item	Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges	Action
45/22	Apologies for absence and their acceptance No apologies were received. The Clerk advised the meeting was quorate.	
46/22	Any other business and requests for Agenda order variations The CEO raised staffing to be discussed with no other staff present. MA, BH, CH and TP left the meeting room for this discussion. During the discussions while staff were not present the following resolutions were passed: To employ, on temporary contracts for one year (with the exception of the apprentice who would be 18months), the following four posts from September 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit a one-year temporary contract for a 0.4 two 2 days per week) Governance Lead. This person would carry out the clerking element of two schools as well as providing high level support around recruitment and training. 	

Signed: 

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ a business administrative apprentice to answer the telephone, photocopy and carry out basic administration. This would be an 18month apprenticeship and the exact cost would vary depending on age of the apprentice. School Improvement Leader to be employed 0.3 (1.5 days) to co-ordinate the school improvement groups and carry out data conversations with every school on a regular basis to ask searching questions of leaders around pupil performance. This would be a 12month fixed term secondment from within the Trust. School Improvement Co-ordinator to be employed 0.2 (1 day) to carry out monitoring and evaluation in line with each school's calendar. This person would share best practice across the trust and seek to develop central systems in this regard. This would be a one-year secondment from within the Trust. <p>Trustees also scrutinised a 'Trust Dividend' document which detailed the offer for schools in the Trust which was linked to the above posts, hence the need for it to be confidential. Trustees were happy with the document.</p>	
47/22	<p>Declarations of interest for Items on this Agenda There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
48/22	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2023 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)
49/22	<p>Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda Item 35/22 – The CEO reported the external governance review report had just been received and details will be included in his reported to the Trust Board on 17 July 2023. Item 37/22 – The risk register was discussed at the FAR Committee meeting held on 13 March 2023. The risk register has been updated for each school and the current software is being looked at. Item 40/22 – The PAT Pay Policy has been shared with Trustees since the last meeting for ratification. The Gender Pay Gap Report is included in the CEO's report for discussion under Item 51/22.</p>	
50/22	<p>Chair's Correspondence and Actions There was no correspondence to report.</p>	
51/22	<p>CEO Report The CEO's report included the key risks and the mitigations taken against these risks.</p> <p>The CFO is leaving the Trust on 30 April 2023. The DoSI and COO have put the recruitment package together and the recruitment process has started. The finance team is receiving support and this will continue until the end of the recruitment process.</p> <p>A referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has been made regarding a Headteacher. The LADO closed the case and CEO will keep the Trust Board updated.</p> <p>Are the risks in order of priority, or just the top risks? These are not in an order.</p>	CEO

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Would recruitment of staff in a key position be a risk for you?

In terms of the CFO, but not others. It is hoped the vacancy will be filled soon. Schools are experiencing difficulties recruiting in some areas. However, the Assistant Head position at Green Lane had 12 strong applications, of which six were shortlisted. Therefore, recruitment for staff is not at the top of the list as yet.

Regarding staff absences, the Trust now has new software which gives a lot of detail and visual graphs of absences. The reports also detail the cost of staff absence; currently approximately £0.25million. The average number of days lost per employee is 16 days across the Trust, opposed to the national average of 5.5 days per employee.

Is there equality across the schools or is the absence in certain schools?

It is certain schools. This will be looked at and whether it is teaching staff, senior leadership team (SLT) or support staff.

The 16 days opposed to 5.5 days lost per employee, is that in any profession?

The national average of 5.5 days lost per employee is taken from education. The software provides this figure.

Is there a massive difference between teaching and non-teaching staff?

There are different reasons for absence, for example we have extra religious observance than in other parts of the country. There are high paid authorised absences. We do like to support our staff but we do need to make sure all the schools are using the same guidance.

With staff absences costing £0.25million, do you need to think about insurance cover?

There is a central pool that the schools pay into and can draw down from. The Headteachers agreed this approximately five years ago because the amount paid to insurance companies is significant. Therefore, they would rather pool that money. The CFO has spoken to the Headteachers but this will be looked at again. We want to see some movement on the absences and we will be looking to see why it is so high. Staff absence also needs to be managed across the schools in the way we expect it to be managed.

Regarding pupil attendance, the national average is 93.8%, but you are below that individually and collectively.

Yes, collectively the whole school attendance figure is 90.78% across the group.

This was touched on at the School Improvement Committee meeting on 14 March 2023, what are you doing that is different to try to close that gap?

During the external reviews we have asked what more could be done and what other schools doing. However, the external reviewers cannot recommend anything else. The schools do a vast range of things to support.

Westbourne's attendance is the lowest in the group but it is affected by asylum seeking pupils and refugees who only stay for a short period of time. They can struggle to get places in other parts of the country when they are moved. Schools cannot do any more for the families. The schools are following processes, fining families or getting Early Help involvement where needed.

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	<p>There is a big gap but the contextual information is very useful. However, there are some local schools with higher attendance. Have they not got this context? The attendance figure for Bradford is 90.3%, therefore, the Trust whole school attendance is above this at 90.78%.</p> <p>The Trust is supporting with external partnerships. Staff across the Trust are involved in supporting Bankfoot Primary School. The DfE have provided a suggested ten-day overview of what they expect the support to look like. The DfE suggest the first three days are for scoping out and planning but this only leaves half of the time for delivering support. Therefore, the Trust has gone over and above that where there is capacity to do so.</p> <p>Further discussion regarding external partnership is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p> <p>The Trust is sponsoring the next Bradford City Football Club meeting to raise the profile of the Trust, increase governor recruitment and bring in some sponsorship for the inter-school competitions.</p> <p>The Trust has been nominated for the MAT Excellence Awards for 'Trust Executive Team of the Year' and MA has been nominated for a 'Rising Star' award. The awards take place on 29 June 2023 in London.</p> <p>Trustees have been sent a link to the Gender Pay Gap Report. The CFO did have some difficulty with the data and as to which employees are male or female. There are factors that impact the gap in the percentages. The Trust has hit its target of apprenticeships, however, 15 out of the 16 apprentices are female and in the lower paid bracket.</p> <p>The Trust Board suggested that successful actions taken should also be celebrated in the Gender Pay Gap Report and how the gap will be reduced into the coming year. It can be linked to equality, diversity and inclusion. The national figures need to be included to give the report contextual information.</p> <p>The COO reported the Gender Pay Gap Report is to be published on the Trust website by 31 March 2023, therefore, there is time to change the report.</p> <p>The CEO stated that when the new CFO is in place, the document will be looked at to make sure it fits the needs required.</p> <p>There have been a number of condition surveys done across the estate by the local authority (LA) and DfE. Initial surveys have been by the Estates Officer and site staff. The Trust is not far off being eligible for school condition allocations (SCA) funding, being only 50 pupils below the allocation for SCA funding and if one more school joined the Trust, the schools will be eligible.</p> <p>Some refurbishments need to be done quickly and there are some end of life things that need doing. This is where the central capital money will go.</p>	<p>CEO/CFO</p>
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	<p>What are other people doing to add to their learning spaces, for example in the early years foundation stage, or staffroom facilities? The documentation has taken time to create to give a comprehensive list of environmental changes for each school.</p> <p>Will Trustees receive a summary at the end? It will come as a paper and a standing item once a year. It will run to millions across the Trust and costs are spiralling. Some refurbishments have been done by site staff and this is ongoing. This is to give Trustees a sense of what is happening.</p> <p>The Trust has received millions in condition improvement fund (CIF) bids but there is more to be done.</p>	
52/22	<p>COO Report The COO reported the top key risk is building work if the CIF bids are not successful. This will put added pressure on the budgets for that building work and this is why the condition surveys have been looked at. Cyber security is also still high on the radar as cyber-attacks are still high. Extra software is being put in place.</p> <p>The cleaning contract tender is going out on 31 March 2023 and Red Box are supporting with this. The COO has included a time line in the report.</p> <p>There have been 18 reportable injuries since the last Trust Board meeting. Two incidents involved contractor's staff. These have been reported to the HSC via the contractor's health and safety team.</p> <p>The recently updated Pay Policy and Admissions Policy were uploaded to the Trustee page of the intranet for Trustees to view prior to the meeting. The Pay Policy has been ratified by the Unions and the Admissions Policy (amended to reflect the reduction in pupil admission number (PAN) for Green Lane Primary School in September 2024) has been shared and agreed with the Local Authority.</p> <p>The Trust Board formally ratified the Pay Policy and Admissions Policy.</p> <p>Trustees are aware of a school complaint. There have been 12 requests to recruit across the Trust since the last meeting. The T&A have published the Ofsted inspection report for Atlas Community Primary School and did ask for a comment.</p> <p>There have been three IT filtering incidents since the last meeting. These are all low level and have been dealt with by the headteacher.</p> <p>The tender has gone out for Green Lane's sports' hall. This was lower than expected and this work will be going ahead.</p> <p>What is the budget for the schools for the cleaning tender? The cost is £70,000 for a two-form entry school. The tender is for a three-year contract but as staff TUPE over this causes a lot of turmoil, therefore, it may be possible to extend the contract for a further two years to avoid this.</p>	

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53/22	<p>Safeguarding and Health & Safety It was agreed this was covered by Items 51/22 and 52/22.</p>	
54/22	<p>Governance Paper Following discussion regarding start times for the remaining Trust Board and its committee meetings for this academic year, it was agreed the meetings would start at 4:15pm.</p> <p>Ruby Bhatti was appointed as a Trustee on 20 March 2023. Interviews for the external Trustee applicants will take place on 24 April 2024.</p>	
55/22	<p>Any other business referred from item 46/22 There was no other urgent business discussed.</p>	
56/22	<p>Dates of the next meetings The dates of the next Trust Board meetings are: 5 June 2022 and 17 July 2023</p> <p>Meetings to start at 16:15</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone and for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 17:19.</p>	

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