

The Priestley Academy Trust – Trust Board  
Company Registered Number: 10410830


## Minutes and Actions

<b>Trust Board/Academy</b>	Trust Board
<b>Date</b>	Monday, 2 October 2023 at 16:15
<b>Venue</b>	PAT Head Office
<b>Trustees Present (alphabetical)</b>	Javed Ahmed (JA) Ruby Bhatti (RB) (attended via Teams) Sarah Bradley (SB) Alex Hallam (AH) John Hinchcliffe (JH) Peter Lambert (PL) Ash Rahman (AR) (attended via Teams) Steve Wadsworth (SW) Jason Walsh (JW)
<b>Others in attendance</b>	Michael McCarthy (MMc) – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  <b>Joined the meeting at 17:28:</b> Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Director of School Improvement (DoSI) Rowena Dixon (RD) – Chief Finance Officer (CFO) (attended via Teams) Tracey Parry (TP) – Chief Operating Officer (COO) Chris Walker (CW) – Governance Lead Asa Firth (AF) – Chief Executive Officer, Brontë Academy Trust
<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 17 July 2023 KCSIE part one CEO Report CFO Report COO Report PAT Admissions Policy v5.0 Governance paper PAT Governor Handbook PAT Action plan 2023-2024

The meeting commenced at 16:15.

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Introductions were made. Asa Firth observed the meeting as the CEO is supporting him in his new role as CEO of the Brontë Academy Trust.


Agenda Item	Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges	Action
01/23	<b>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</b> There were no apologies for absence.	

Signed: 

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Date: 14 December 2023

02/23	<p><b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</b></p> <p>The Governance Professional invited nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board.</p> <p>JA, seconded by RB, proposed SW for Chair.</p> <p>JA, seconded by PL, proposed AR for Vice Chair.</p> <p><b>The Board unanimously agreed the election of SW for Chair and AR for Vice Chair.</b></p>	
04/23	<p><b>Any other business and requests for agenda order variations</b></p> <p>The CEO raised an item of urgent business that is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p> <p>Item 11/23 was brought forward.</p>	
05/23	<p><b>Declarations of interest for items on this agenda</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made.</p>	
11/23	<p><b>CFO Report</b></p> <p>The CFO reported the financial year end should be completed by 4 October 2023 to give a balancing position, draft out turn positions to schools and a revenue forecast. The year may finish better than expected by approximately £400,000.</p> <p>The CFO raised the issue that the budget approved by Trustees in Summer was different to the budget that had been submitted to the ESFA. In terms of medium financial plans, a budget can be different due to changes, but the figures that were submitted are different to those approved by the Trust Board. The Trust's projected balance is £500,000 lower.</p> <p>The figures presented to the Trust Board for approval were locked down in an audit trail. However, there is no audit trail for the figures submitted to the ESFA. The difference in the figures is two capital projects planned but not included in the figures submitted to the ESFA, this totals approximately £260,000. The remaining difference seems to be the year end balances for the schools that cannot be reconciled as there is no audit trail. The difference in the figures will be superseded by actual events in the near future. The actual account figures will not change plans or make a difference to the schools' in year position. It is just the projected balance.</p> <p>The figures submitted to the ESFA need to be retrospectively approved by the Trust Board. The budget and three-year medium-term financial plans not being approved by the Trust Board is a breach of the Academy Trust Handbook.</p> <p><b>What has been done to ensure this will not happen again and what has been learnt?</b></p> <p>The problem comes down to poor communication between the interim CFO and the Trust's finance team. The interim CFO had limited working capacity and was remote from the finance staff in the central office. The team needed to be proactive to lock down the data and the communication was critical. The Trust's finance system is good and school staff are engaged but the communication needs to be tighter. The locking down of the budget scenarios is a big risk. The Trust now has a CFO employed full time and is in constant contact with the finance staff in the central team.</p> <p><b>What are the consequences to the Trust and Trust Board?</b></p>	

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	<p>The consequences are reputational. The spending plans will not change and the projections overall will not change. The CFO is trying to mitigate the consequences by asking the Trust Board to retrospectively approve the figures submitted to the ESFA. The CFO is trying to pull together the narrative to understand who, what and why this has happened if the ESFA were to question the retrospective approval.</p> <p><b>If the financial year is almost complete, is it worth waiting until this is done to make sure the figures are based on the actual?</b> The latest budget forecast is more accurate, the issue is that the budget submitted to the ESFA has not been approved by the Trust Board.</p> <p><b>What is the risk to the Trust to giving that approval?</b> The risk is the ESFA will criticise the Trust. The figures were not accurate but they have been submitted and the difference will be accounted for with variance analysis in the budget.</p> <p><b>The Trust Board retrospectively approved the budgets and three-year forecast that was been submitted to the ESFA in August 2023.</b></p> <p><b>What is the SEND funding progress and will this affect the income for this academic year?</b> Two schools had been granted £120,000 and emergency reviews have been arranged for the other four schools.</p> <p><b>Is this in the figures?</b> No, but the schools are currently spending this on support staff for these pupils.</p> <p><b>What are the CFO's views on GAG pooling?</b> For a MAT to realise the full potential, a Trust needs to look at GAG pooling to move resources to where the Trust feels is the greatest need. There are two steps to GAG pooling; the funding comes to the central team and the central team decides where the funding goes and invests in a more strategic way. The communication from the Government is confusing as they are pushing a standardised funding formula from 2027 but are encouraging GAG pooling. This may change if there is a change in government. The pooling of GAG should not be rushed through without consultation with schools.</p> <p><b>To deliver our mission, can we make savings, generate income and pull out additional reserves for school improvement strategies?</b> GAG pooling is not urgent for this year but if the Trust Board feels this is necessary, the CFO will invest some time looking at this.</p> <p>The CFO will present a new investment policy for ratification by the Trust Board having had a meeting with Insignis regarding investments.</p>	CFO
06/23	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 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)


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07/23	<b>Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda</b> There were no matters arising from the minutes.	
08/23	<b>Chair's Correspondence and Actions</b> The Chair had no correspondence to report.	
09/23	<b>Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2022</b> It was agreed all Trustees should email the Governance Professional to confirm when they have read the KCSIE document.	Trustees
10/23	<b>CEO Report</b>  <b>With the imminent retirement of the Estates Officer and confidence regarding safety in view of the news about Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) should the estate not be a bigger discussion with Trustees?</b> There is no RAAC in the schools within The Priestley Academy Trust.  <b>It was agreed that estate management should be added to the next Trust Board agenda.</b>	Gov Prof (done)
12/23	<b>COO Report</b> The COO reported she will work with the Estates Officer and CFO regarding different options and bring this to the Trust Board to discuss.  <b>Policies</b> <b>The Trust Board ratified the PAT Admissions Policy v5.0 (updated by Admissions) the only update being the reduction in PAN for Green Lane from being a three-form entry to a two-form entry.</b>  <b>The PAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy v9.0, having been previously approved via email by the Chair, was formally ratified by the Trust Board.</b>  <b>The safeguarding training mentions an audit, how is this done?</b> The DoSA confirmed safeguarding is a theme on the visits he does in schools each year. He looks at the single central record and audits are planned through the year. This is reported via the school improvement visit forms.	COO
13/23	<b>Safeguarding and Health &amp; Safety</b> It was agreed this was covered by Items 10/23 and 12/23.	
14/23	<b>Governance Paper</b> The Governance Lead reported that following the governance review the governor handbook now included information regarding meetings being quorate and the removal of the finance information for link governors.  <b>Following discussion, it was agreed that documents such as KCSIE and governance handbook should be included in the papers pack as a link rather than the full documents.</b>	Gov Prof ongoing
15/23	<b>Governance action plan</b> The Governance Lead reported the action plan has been drawn up to address the recommendations following the governance review and looking at best practice. The action plan is a working document.	

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	<p><b>Was the governance review internal or external?</b> The governance review was carried out by an external consultant.</p>	
03/23	<p><b>Committee Membership</b> The Governance Professional asked if another Trustee would like to volunteer to be on the FAR Committee to ensure meetings are quorate.</p> <p><b>Trustees not already on the FAR Committee are to consider if they would like to be on the Committee and email the Governance Professional.</b></p> <p><b>At the FAR Committee in July, the interim CFO included a KPI dashboard, could the Trust Board have site of this dashboard?</b> The CFO is to include a KPI dashboard in her report to the Trust Board.</p>	Trustees  CFO
16/23	<p><b>Any other business referred from item 04/23</b> The urgent business raised under item 04/23 is recorded in a separate confidential minute.</p>	
17/23	<p><b>Dates of the next meetings</b></p> <p>14 December 2023 at 17:30, following the AGM at 16:15, 29 January 2024, 25 March 2024, 3 June 2024 and 15 July 2024</p> <p>Meetings to start at 16:15.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone and for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 18:16.</p>	

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