

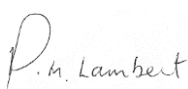
Minutes and Actions

Trust Board/Academy	Trust Board
Date	Monday, 24 March 2025 at 16:15
Venue	Virtual via Teams
Trustees Present (alphabetical)	Ruby Bhatti (RB) (left the meeting at 17:42) Alex Hallam (AH) (left the meeting at 17:29) John Hinchcliffe (JH) Peter Lambert (PL) – Chair Steve Wadsworth (SW) Jason Walsh (JW)
Others in attendance	Mathew Atkinson (MA) – Chief Executive (CEO) Rowena Dixon (RD) – Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Anne-Marie Holdsworth (A-MH) – Director of Operations (DOO)
Chair	Peter Lambert (PL)
Clerk to Governors	Charlotte Heap – Governance Professional and Projects Officer
Papers Circulated	Minutes of previous meeting – 27 January 2025 Safeguarding and health & safety report Draft Strategy 2025-2028 Strategy and Development Committee Terms of Reference Financial Procedures v1.0 Medium term financial planning assumptions Gender Pay Gap Report 2025 CEO report and PowerPoint presentation Academy Trust Governance Code

The meeting commenced at 16:17

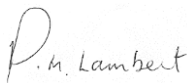
The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Introductions had been made at the AGM held prior to this meeting.

Agenda Item	Minutes including agreements, actions and challenges	Action
40/24	Apologies for absence and their acceptance Apologies were received and accepted for Sarah Bradley (SB), Beth Dawson (BD) and Christine Horrocks (CHo). The Governance Professional confirmed the meeting was quorate.	
41/24	Any other business and requests for agenda order variations There was no other urgent business raised or order variations.	
42/24	Declarations of interest for items on this agenda There were no declarations of interest made.	
43/24	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2025 were approved by the Trust Board as a true record. Agreement was made that electronic signatures could be included.	Gov Prof (Done)
44/24	Matters arising from the minutes not elsewhere on the agenda Item 37/24 – It was agreed to add CIF bids to the next FAR Committee agenda for an update to be provided on next year's CIF bids and how these will be built into the financial plans. The outcome of this academic year's CIF bids is expected in June 2025.	Gov Prof

Signed: 
Date: 2 June 2025

Name: Peter Lambert

45/24	Chair's correspondence and actions The Chair reported he had received a letter from the Director of Children's Services for Bradford following the recent Ofsted inspection at Margaret McMillan Primary School.	
46/24	Safeguarding and health & safety The Trust Board thanked the CEO for the report.	
47/24	Strategy and Development (S&D) Committee update, incl Draft Strategy 2025-2028 AH, as Chair of the S&D Committee, reported that as BD and CH were not in attendance and are both from an educational background, a meeting will be held with them to go through the strategy to gain their feedback. Would it be of value to have a Trustee on the S&D Committee with an educational background? AH confirmed the Committee had discussed the value this would bring. The first Committee meeting, held on 28 January 2025, focussed on the Committee terms of reference. The second Committee meeting, held on 13 March 2025, focused on the draft Strategy 2025-2028. The team have done a fantastic job to show the strategy direction. AH asked the meeting for their feedback regarding the strategy, three overarching goals and the four pillars supporting these goals. The meeting agreed the strategy was very clear and that the four pillars were the right areas to be focussing on. The initiatives sound more like the outcomes, do they need some sort of measure to quantify them for consistency? What does success look like? Could the objectives state how they will be achieved with something to measure against, for example achieving added value in pupil outcomes and how they will compare to the national average, or an HR measure to measure how staff are being developed? We are happy to look at these points and look at measures aligned to the goals to articulate what success will look like. We are moving towards one approach, sharing resources and consistent approaches and will continue to do so. Does the 'PAT Promise' develop the whole child? The promise is that pupils will receive a wider curriculum, via the personal development offer. There will be a list of objectives for pupils for pupils to meet, for example learning to swim 25meters, ride a bike, visit a beach and gain life skills. How will parents/carers know the 'PAT Promise' exists? Will this be included in marketing? A reference to marketing and communication is made under pillar two. Pillar one is what we want to deliver directly. Pillar two is how we communicate success and the narrative about the schools and Trust. We will look at marketing and communication strategies. Are some sort of score cards needed to show if the strategies are being delivered and to be reviewed? Is there something that you may continue to do, a process to step in quickly to address an issue or add in additional resources and carrying out regular reviews? We will think what that might look like from an operational point of view and a financial point of view.	

Signed: 
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Name: Peter Lambert

	<p>Does something need to describe the right sizing, the number of classes and class sizes? The demographics of Bradford and the country are changing, should capacity be considered as part of the delivery? Are we the right size for the population and capacity?</p> <p>We talked about sustainability, monitoring and a review of reserves. The Trust's reserves policy states reserves should be between 5% and 20% of revenue income. In order to achieve that, there is a process of modelling different scenarios for each school. Funding is by pupil numbers and the matrix is for comparative structures. This allows headteachers to understand their budget and be able to deliver their school development plans.</p> <p>Under pillar one, pupils to achieve outcomes to surpass the national average by 2028; is this realistic bearing in mind the base we have come from? Or should something regarding added value be added and pupil development, rather than the score as our pupils are making real progress.</p> <p>This point relates to outcomes at the end of Key Stage Two (KS2). Last year four schools were above the national average. Last year there was significant intervention to support pupils achieve these outcomes. Therefore, this target is on an even keel, so that it naturally happens by KS2. We did use value added previously, but Ofsted have removed value added and now focus on attainment. If a school has a high proportion of pupils with SEND, there will be national data for the end of KS2. We are benchmarked as compared to overall.</p> <p>In pillar two, what is meant by establishing maturity? Are you talking about effectiveness and efficiency, rather than maturity? Is this between the initiatives and what success looks like? Growth ambition seems to be the outcome?</p> <p>We are happy to go back through and sense check that to look at the detail.</p> <p>Should there be some numbers by the outcomes, some sort of measurement and what is to be achieved in a timely manner? Could there be the initial successes in place that you have identified? It is about building talent within.</p> <p>We discussed this as a team at length. It originally said 95% of pupils will achieve outcomes above the national average, then we upped this to 97%. Following the Committee meeting, we removed the percentage as it was felt this was not ambitious enough as all pupils should achieve and the Committee asked for a broader, more generic outcome.</p> <p>Could a line be added regarding the objectives to say, "What are we trying to achieve?" does that help?</p> <p>Yes, this does help. The first column is what we are doing.</p> <p>Should something be added to say why The Priestley Academy Trust? Something under marketing or communication, to put the 'why?' message across?</p> <p>Pillar three answers the question, 'why PAT?' Pillar four is about developing the identity of the Trust. We will also develop a directory under pillar two.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding creating opportunities and aspirations for every child; developing the whole child and creating opportunities and that this value is what makes the Trust different. It was agreed this message could be added to marketing and communication.</p>	
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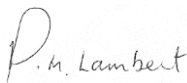
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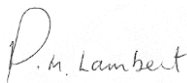
2 June 2025

	AH reported that the next steps were for MA and himself to meet with BD and CH to discuss the strategy. Create a score card. Look at what the operational rhythm will look like, articulating measures to goals in order to measure success. Review the wording in the columns and the detail to state what is to be achieved. To add 'Why PAT?' to marketing and communication. The updated draft strategy will be presented at the next S&D Committee meeting to be held on 8 May 2025 for approval. The completed Strategy will then be shared with the Trust Board on 2 June 2025	
48/24	<p>Strategy and Development (S&D) Committee Terms of Reference for approval</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that the Terms of Reference needed to include a sentence to state that the S&D Committee have the responsibility to approve the Trust strategies.</p> <p>Subject to the above amendment, the Terms of Reference for the S&D Committee were approved by the Trust Board.</p>	Gov Prof (done)
49/24	<p>Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR) Committee update</p> <p>JW, as Chair of the FAR Committee, reported that representatives of Keystone presented the findings of the internal audit report regarding the Census, which was completed in December 2024. The audit highlighted three recommendations, one of which has been closed down. The internal audit regarding procurement is to be carried out in April 2025. The Critical Incident and Business Continuity Plans are to be completed by 14 May 2025, although this deadline may have to be moved on.</p> <p>The Trust's new broadband supplier was approved, Blue Box, to start from 1 April 2025. The CEO's report contains more details.</p> <p>The budgets set at the beginning of the academic year have been revised to reflect the staff pay awards and the increase to the employer national insurance contributions. The Committee approved the revised budgets for 2024/2025.</p> <p>The Committee walked through the updated Finance Procedures, in which a number of other finance policies have been added. The Committee recommended approval of the Financial Procedures to the Trust Board.</p> <p>The Committee approved the spending of £40,000 by Margeret McMillan Primary School on their Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) outdoor play area. The Committee also approved a two-year contact with British Gas to supply gas to Miriam Lord Primary School. this will bring Miriam Lord in line with the rest of the Trust.</p> <p>The risk register has been updated; seven risks have improved and three have worsened. The top three risks are: financial sustainability, pupil numbers, and health and safety and safeguarding.</p> <p>The outcome of the latest Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids is expected in June 2025. This will be discussed at the next FAR Committee meeting.</p>	
50/24	<p>Financial Procedures v1.0 for approval</p> <p>Further to the FAR Committee's recommendation, the Trust Board approved the updated Trust's Financial Procedures.</p>	

Signed: 
Date: 2 June 2025

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51/24	<p>Medium term financial planning assumptions for approval</p> <p>The CFO reported that following the FAR Committee's approval of the revised budgets, the financial plans for the next three years has been revised. This is a requirement of the Academy Trust Handbook. All assumptions are to be approved by the Trust Board. This will then become the budget for next year.</p> <p>The position is constantly evolving, having taken into account the General Annual Grant (GAG) being dependant on pupil intake, staff pay awards, grant funding and the rise in employer national insurance contributions. The Trust has now received information regarding funding towards the rise in employer national insurance contributions, therefore, this is no longer an assumption. The other assumptions have been made as a result of discussion with other colleagues across the sector, CST and other indications from sector specialists. The rate of uplift to GAG and other DfE funding is expected to be lower than previously expected.</p> <p>One of the biggest areas of uncertainty will be the pay award for support staff in terms of what the Unions have asked for and what has been included in the financial planning. This could potentially have a big impact. Unions are asking for the same as last year, £3,000 per FTE. The recommendation from the Bradford Schools Forum is that the settlement could be the same as last year for support staff, which was £1,290 per scale, equating to around 5.0% for the Trust. Schools have been told there will be no additional funding for this by the DfE. If the settlement is agreed at more than last year, which was funded to some extent, many schools will see a huge financial impact; £3,000 is not affordable.</p> <p>The Trust Board approved the financial planning assumptions.</p>	
52/24	<p>Gender Pay Gap Report 2025</p> <p>The CFO reported that as the Trust has more than 250 employees, the gender pay gap report is a requirement. The results have improved from last year. There are some caveats as this is a snapshot, taken in March 2024. The data is split across the quartiles per gender.</p> <p>Was the analysis outsourced?</p> <p>It was last year. This year just the raw data was provided by the payroll provider and calculations were done by the CFO.</p> <p>Is the data in line with other trusts in Yorkshire or nationally?</p> <p>There is no benchmarking. I have asked for that. However, there are some similar patterns in trust schools.</p> <p>Have there been any changes in the methodology used?</p> <p>The methodology is prescribed by the Government. Some employees are excluded if their pay is irregular, for example if a member of staff is on maternity leave at that point in time, or is receiving sick pay. Last year 100 employees were excluded for this reason. This year 50 employees were excluded for this reason. Last year there was one more member of the Trust's senior executive team (SEG), plus a Head of Estates position is now on a higher salary. There has been some movement, but we have to be aware of the way the numbers are assembled and it does lend itself to peculiarities.</p> <p>Are you confident that the Trust is equitable in the number of male and female headteachers and deputy heads?</p>	

Signed: 
Date: 2 June 2025

Name: Peter Lambert

	There split of genders across most of the quartiles is representative of the split of genders across the organisation as a whole. 89% in the upper quartile is female. The fourth quartile, the lower quartile is highly female due to the high number of part time, term time only positions being more attractive to females. This is typical across the sector.	
53/24	<p>School Resource Management Self-Assessment Checklist</p> <p>The CFO reported that the Trust is required to self-assess its processes and management by answering over 40 questions. This checklist is a formal submission by the Trust. The estates vision strategy is under construction.</p> <p>The Tendering Policy, within the Financial Procedures, is to be updated imminently regarding purchasing goods and services in line with the new Procurement Act that came into effect from February 2025. Further work on the asset register is planned for during the school holidays.</p> <p>Regarding the Financial Procedures, when will the information regarding tendering be added?</p> <p>The Governance Professional checks the policy supplier daily for the latest updates. The vast majority of school procurement is unchanged. It is when a contract would exceed £214,000, the EU threshold, that the new Procurement Act comes in. We need to see a secure approved updated template in order to adopt that as a policy. There are no other major changes anticipated.</p> <p>JW, as Chair of the FAR Committee, observed that the information in question 10 regarding him being a CEO was incorrect. He confirmed he has been in the past.</p> <p>Action: Information to be updated in next checklist</p> <p>Will the Business Continuity Plans be completed by May 2025?</p> <p>Yes, these are being updated.</p> <p>Is the Whistleblowing Policy reviewed annually and provided during training?</p> <p>Yes, it is reviewed annually and all staff are made aware of this every September and during induction.</p>	CFO
54/24	<p>CEO report</p> <p>The CEO reported that there were a number of successes and concerns. The central team has successfully relocated to the new office situated at Green Lane Primary School. It is good for the head office to be in a school and the team is much more accessible to the schools. The Trust has been shortlisted for two awards, the National MAT Awards and the MAT Excellence Awards in relation to the Trust's SEND provision. It is a success to be acknowledged on a national platform. The Draft Strategy for 2025-2028 has been shared with the Strategy and Development Committee.</p> <p>The Head of Estates has left the Trust. This position has been advertised by the Trust via Indeed and Prospects. There have been 29 expressions of interests to date and there are a number of potential candidates. The position has been benchmarked against similar positions across the sector. The health and safety company has given notice that they are withdrawing their services as of 31 March 2025.</p> <p>Has the change in health and safety consultant been added to the risk register?</p> <p>There will be no gap in the provision of health and safety by a consultancy as HandSam has been appointed by the Trust to start as of 1 April 2025.</p>	

Signed:

P. M. Lambert

Name: Peter Lambert

Date:

2 June 2025

	<p>Is the move to a new health and safety consultant a financial risk? No, the contract is slightly less, even though HandSam are located slightly further away from the Trust.</p> <p>Is there any risk regarding the provision of health and safety by the new consultant? No. The current provider has supported the Trust for some time. Whilst looking for the new provider, the other companies did a review of the current information available and there were some concerns raised regarding the strength of that information.</p> <p>What was the notice period of the current provider? There was no notice period as they were on a monthly invoice, there was no actual contract with the current provider.</p> <p>The Trust continues to prepare the remaining schools for Ofsted inspection. Work has started on the school development plans for 2025-2026 based on school data and work on the Trust's plan for next year. The new Director of School Improvement, Tom Fay, has been in the Trust half a day a week to start his induction and officially starts on 1 April 2025.</p> <p>Regarding the medium-term financial plans, there are concerns around staffing costs, particularly support staff and school funding. The Trust has received information regarding the funding for the increase to the employer national insurance contributions. The Trust anticipated 75% but this may be slightly higher.</p> <p>The Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP) metrics are being updated to provide contextual data and how these compare across the sector. The metrics will be completed after Easter to support the schools to meet their school development plans and produce financial plans.</p> <p>Is the drop in pupil attendance something the Trust Board should be concerned about and the number of pupils on extended leave? What initiatives are being delivered for increasing attendance? Yes, this is something to be concerned about. Schools meet with each family to see if they can dissuade them from booking holidays during term time, or move holidays to be tagged on to a school holiday, to try to reduce the number of days their child is absent. The families who take leave during term time are fined by the Local Authority (LA), in keeping with LA processes. We expect attendance to continue to decline because of these long-term extended leaves but these are monitored. All systems are being applied in a consistent way by the attendance teams across the schools.</p> <p>How does the attendance figure compare to local and national levels of attendance? There is not a comparative figure for extended leave. The Trust is broadly in line for attendance.</p> <p>Action: To obtain latest attendance figures and comparison to national average</p>	
55/24	<p>Adoption of Academy Trust Governance Code The Governance Professional reported that adoption of the new Academy Trust Governance Code is not a must but is good practice. The Trust's governance handbook is currently being updated. If the Trust Board is to adopt the Code, this will be added to the Trust's governance handbook for trustee and governor induction.</p> <p>The Trust Board agreed the adoption of the Academy Trust Governance Code.</p>	CEO

Signed:

P. M. Lambert

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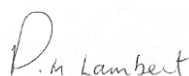
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56/24	Any other business referred from item 41/24 There was no other urgent business discussed.	
57/24	Dates for the next meetings (meetings to start at 16:15): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, 2 June 2025 - PAT HO with school visits to Miriam Lord and Westbourne Monday, 14 July 2025 - online via Teams <p>The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 18:00.</p>	

Outstanding actions:

Agenda Item	Action	By who	By when	Completed
44/24	FAR Committee to review CIF bids – added to next agenda	Gov Prof	19.05.2025	
53/24	Details of FAR Committee Chair to be updated on next School Resource Management Self-Assessment Checklist	CFO	Next review of checklist	
54/24	To obtain latest attendance figure and comparison to national average	CEO	02.06.2025	

Signed:



Name: Peter Lambert

Date:

2 June 2025