

Registered number: 10253931

Whinless Down Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2018

Whinless Down Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

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Reference and administrative details
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Members

Mrs Sheila Wilding (resigned 22 November 2017)
Mrs Rhian Potts
Mrs Claire Jones
Mrs Patricia Sherling
Mrs Alison Mackintosh
Mr Gordon Newton (appointed 12 October 2017)

Trustees

Mr Malcolm Bowler
Mrs Alison Mackintosh, Chair of Trustees
Mrs Michelle Noden
Mrs Carol Rayfield
Mrs Patricia Sherling, Vice Chair
Mrs Anne Siggins
Mrs Victoria Smith
Mrs Katie Wratten (resigned 12 October 2017)
Mr David Mellon (appointed 30 November 2017)
Mrs Claudia Sawyers (appointed 30 November 2017)

Company registered number

10253931

Company name

Whinless Down Academy Trust

Principal and registered office

Priory Fields School
Astor Avenue
Dover
Kent
CT17 0FS

Senior management team

Mrs Anne Siggins, Executive Head Teacher
Mrs Michelle Noden, Academy Business Manager
Mrs Helen Seeley, Head of School, Priory Fields School
Mrs Rachel Appleby (Suckling), Head of School St Martin's
Miss Kelly Brown, Head of School Vale View
Mrs Shara Wheeler, Assistant Headteacher Priory Fields
Mrs Helen Thompson, Assistant Headteacher, St Martin's

Independent auditors

Kreston Reeves LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor
37 St Margaret's Street
Canterbury
Kent
CT1 2TU

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Reference and administrative details of the academy, its trustees and advisers
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Advisers (continued)

Bankers

Lloyds Bank plc
25 Gresham Street
London
EC2V 7HN

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Trustees' report
For the year ended 31 August 2018

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the period 1st September 2017 to 31 August 2018. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a director's report under company law.

The trust operates 3 primary academies for pupils aged 4 to 11 in Dover Kent. Priory Fields School has been part of the Priority School's Building Project and the new build was completed in September 2018 when the school transferred from the old building into the new one. Vale View requested to join the Academy and this was achieved in January 2018. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 896 and had a roll of 849 in the school's autumn census 2018.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association dated 28 June 2016 are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust.

The Trustees act as the Trustees for the charitable activities of Whinless Down Academy Trust and are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as Whinless Down Academy Trust.

The Academy Trust also trades under the individual names of each school within the Multi-Academy Trust;

- Priory Fields School
- St Martins School
- Vale View School

Details of the Trustees who served during the period are included in the reference and administrative details on page 1.

Members' Liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charitable company in the event of it being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member as required in the Academy Trust's Funding agreement and memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees' Indemnities

The Academy Trust has opted into the Department of Education's risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where a UK government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects the Trustees and officers from claims, arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000.

Principal Activities

The Academy's main objective is to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing the schools within the Trust. This is achieved by offering a broad and balanced curriculum within settings and providing an ethos where everyone is able to achieve, feel valued and safe and secure.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The Members of the Academy Trust shall comprise the signatories to the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The number of Trustees shall not be less than three, but shall not be subject to a maximum.

The Charity's Articles of Association set out the constitution and method of appointment of the Trustee body, including parent Trustees who are elected in accordance with Department of Education guidelines. Suitability of Trustees is determined by their interest in the work of the charity, eligibility and personal competence and to ensure the Trustee body has the breadth of skills and knowledge necessary to advance the Academy in all areas.

The Board of Trustees is made up of 9 trustees:

- Seven Co-opted Trustee (of which one is a Local Governing Body Chair)
- The Executive Headteacher.
- One staff Trustee,
- (Parent representation is provided on the Local Governing Body).

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees and Governors

The Trustee body and Executive Headteacher believe that it is essential that all directors and governors receive an appropriate induction process. This would include a tour of the academy and a chance to meet staff, pupils, the Head of Schools and the Chair of the Board with a view to ensuring the Trustee has good understanding of the Academies vision and values and the day to day operation. All Trustees and LGB Members are required to complete a Skills audit to enable the board to identify training needs and gaps within our skills base.

Although no formal training programme exists for the Trustees within the Academy they are allocated a 'Buddy' for support. Trustees are encouraged to participate in training programmes, through participation in appropriate and relevant training courses arranged by the Academy. Training that has taken place over the year includes, ISDR training, SEF workshops, understanding data and the Chair has been attending the Training for Chairs provided by the National Governance Association (NGA) and the Clerk to the Trust and LGBs have also been enrolled onto NGA clerk training.

We see training and development of Trustees and Governors as an important requirement to ensure they are able to undertake their duties which will lead to more effective governance.

The Trust has a comprehensive policy schedule which ensures that policies are reviewed in a timely manner. Statutory policies are available on each of the school's websites and a range of other policies are also available both on the website and via the school office.

Organisational Structure

The management structure of the academy consists of four levels: The Whinless Down Academy Trust Board, The Finance and Strategic Audit Committee (FSAC), The Local Governing Bodies and the Academy Executive and Leadership Teams.

The Board of Trustees role in the Academy Trust is essentially a strategic one acting on advice from the Executive Headteacher and other external monitoring bodies. The Board of Trustees are responsible for setting general policy, adopting an annual plan and budget monitoring for the Academies by the use of budget reports and making strategic decisions about the direction of the Whinless Down Academy Trust, capital expenditure and senior staff appointments.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day to day management of the academies to the Executive Headteacher. The key role of the Executive Headteacher is setting the strategy and vision for the Trust, building its culture and the creation and development of teams that work in and across the Trust. The Board holds the Executive Headteacher to account.

The Trust Board delegate functions to the FSAC committee as per the Scheme of Delegation. They meet at

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

least three times a year and are involved in the monitoring and preparation of the budgets for each school. They ensure that both internal and external audits are completed and actions are promptly addressed.

The Trust Board delegate functions to the Local Governing Bodies as per the Scheme of Delegation. They meet six times a year and are involved in the monitoring of standards, the quality of teaching and learning and personal development, behaviour and welfare. The Local Governing Body feed information to the Trustees via the Trustee with the relevant responsibility.

The Academy Executive and Leadership Team consists of Executive Headteacher, Head of Schools, Assistant Headteachers and the Academy Business Manager. These leaders control the Academy at school level implementing the policies laid down by themselves, the Local Governing Bodies or the Board of Trustees. As a group, the senior leadership team is responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets and the appointment of non-senior staff. Appointments for the post of Executive Headteacher and Academy Business Manager requires trustees authorisation and the Heads of School, will require the Local Governing Body's authorisation.

The Executive Headteacher is the accounting officer.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Trustees will agree the salary level prior to the commencement of the recruitment process of a new Executive Headteacher. Trustees are required to review the Executive Headteacher's performance against previously set targets and to set new targets for the upcoming year. All pay increases must be linked to performance targets. This is delegated to a panel responsible for the Executive Headteacher's appraisal and they will be supported by an external consultant.

Heads of School pay is set using the formula within the pay and conditions document applicable at the time of appointment and within a range set by the Trust Board.

With existing members of the leadership team (including Head of School) the executive headteacher is required to review the leadership's team's performance against previously set targets and set new targets for the coming academic year. The Executive Headteacher may apply an inflationary increase and any discretionary increase as authorised by the Trustees. All pay increases must be linked to performance targets.

The Academy adheres to the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document.

Clear expectations form the basis for all good performance relationships. The executive Headteacher feeds back to the Local Governing Body on pay awards for staff other than senior leaders and feeds back to the Trustees for senior leaders. The committee responsible for the Executive Headteacher's appraisal feeds back to the Trustees regarding any pay decisions having consulted with an external advisor.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
1	242421

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	0
1%-50%	1
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total cost of facility time	£482
The total pay bill	£453,237
The percentage of the total pay bill spent on the facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time ÷ total pay bill) x 100	0.11%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as: (total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during the relevant period ÷ total paid facility time hours) x100	100%
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Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisation

Owing to the nature of the Academy Trust's operations and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from a cross section of the local and wider community, transactions may take place with organisations in which a Trustee has an interest. In the event of any transactions involving such connected organisations, interests are declared and transactions conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Academy Trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Objectives and Activities

The main objective of the Academy during the period ended 31st August 2018 are summarised below;

Objects and Aims

The principal object of the Academy is specifically restricted to the following; to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The goal of the Whinless Down Academy Trust is to improve the quality of education provided to all children in all schools within the trust. The schools within the Trust use each other as a resource to;

- Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- Improving the quality of leadership
- Improving the breadth of curriculum opportunities

These will lead to our ultimate goal: To improve and sustain the best Educational Outcomes for Primary Aged Children in our local communities.

The Trust values children's wellbeing and their education above all else, and puts the needs of children at the centre of its decision making.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

The vision is for all Academies within the Trust to provide an education that prepares each and every child well for the next stage of their learning journey which in turn will ensure success throughout their adult life. To achieve this, the ethos within each academy is every child matters and every lesson counts. To realise this The Whinless Down Academy Trust is:

- Committed to providing a quality first education for pupils in our local area.
- Committed to improving the life chances of every child with whom they work.
- Committed to developing a culture in which the quality of teaching is seen as central.
- Committed to developing school leaders ensuring the highest quality leadership systems that work on drawing expertise across the Academy Trust.
- Committed to ensuring that all staff and children without fear of discrimination will be able to achieve success, feel safe, lead a healthy lifestyle and accomplish beyond original expectations.
- Committed to provide a wide range of sporting, cultural, musical and artistic experiences as well as an absolute understanding of the core skills.

The Whinless Down Academy Trust values diversity and seeks to give everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live free from discrimination or prejudice. We will work together to develop the potential of all pupils across all areas of learning, social, moral and cultural experiences and opportunities.

Pupils will be happy and motivated by the wider curriculum experienced at school. They will become independent learners, aware of how to learn and to manage their emotions to maximise their own learning experiences enabling them to face challenge and difficulty.

All staff will have the opportunity to develop further as self-directed, reflective learners, through working collaboratively with others to enhance their own expertise and to work on their own initiative. Through their passion, teachers will enthuse and inspire others to explore new ideas.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on Public Benefit when reviewing the charity's aim and objectives and in planning future activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

The Trust runs an Academy for pupils in the primary phase (4-11) aspiring towards the highest possible standards for approximately 850 pupils. The schools within the Academy Trust are situated in the centre of Dover which has high social deprivation and many pupils are at the early stages of learning English.

The Academy aims to contribute benefit to the local community and has supported various community events during the year including the following;

- A range of local and national Charity events with donations going to, Race for Life, Sign to Sing, Sport Relief, Children In Need, Porchlight, The Poppy Appeal, Christmas Jumper Day
- Our Christmas and Summer Fairs are open to the local community and stalls are available to sell a variety of gifts and produce.
- Opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of sporting opportunities through The Dover School Games and The Kent School Games.
- The Academy belongs to a wider collaborative group including two other local schools. The range of activities that operate across the collaboration include, a Collaborative School Council tackling local issues such as recycling, dangerous parking in and around schools and litter, multi-various sports competitions, a singing extravaganza, and working with local secondary schools to secure improved transition.
- Links with local churches to support community events such as coffee mornings, carol concerts and harvest festivals.
- Pupils lay Poppy Wreaths at the Memorial in the town centre.
- The Academy supports many local activities organised by a range of different organisations including, The Astor Dance Festival, Christmas singing to the Aged, Music in the Town hall and the Local 'Switch On' event.
- The Academy offers a Holiday Sports Camp for pupils.

The Trust adopts the admission policies of the Local Education Authority in which it works. For full details see the individual school websites.

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

Pupils enter the Schools from a wide range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds; The Academies pride themselves on being inclusive Schools.

All Schools within the Academy achieved floor targets in the 2018 statutory tests and have been achieving floor targets since Acadamising.

EYFS 2017 Attainment Outcomes at Good Level of Development

School	All	Pupil Premium
Priory Fields	75%	68.8%
St Martin's	77.8%	50%
Vale View	67.9%	72.7%

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Year 1 Phonics 2017 Outcomes

School	% Achieving expected (all Children)	% Achieving expected (Pupil Premium)
Priory Field's	72.9%	68.4%
St Martin's	83.3%	66.7%
Vale View	51.7%	33.3%

Key Stage 1 Attainment Outcomes 2017

School	Reading (All)	Writing (All)	Maths (All)	Reading (PP)	Writing (PP)	Maths (PP)
Priory Fields	76.7%	76.7%	80%	70.4%	74.1%	77.8%
St Martin's	79.3%	69%	79.3%	100%	100%	100%
Vale View	73.3%	63.3%	73.3%	58.3%	50%	75%

Key Stage 2 Attainment 2017 Outcomes Combined - Reading, Writing and Mathematics, GPS

School	% Achieving expected (all Children)	% Achieving expected (PP)	GPS (All Children)
Priory Field's	66%	66.7%	76.6%
St Martins's	60%	60%	70%
Vale View	54.2%	54.5%	66.7%

To ensure that standards are continually raised the Academy operate a programme of internal and external reviews of curriculum areas and standards of teaching. This is externally quality assured through a rigorous monitoring programme with our external partners who include educational consultants and headteachers and leadership teams from other schools.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, The Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

Key Performance Indicators

This is the second full year that the Trust has been in operation and early indications show that the schools are on an upward trend.

All Schools met the floor targets set by the government in 2018

School	Combined	Reading Progress	Writing Progress	Mathematics Progress	Floor Targets Met
Priory Fields	66%	-2.1	0.1	-0.7	Yes
St Martin's	60%	-2.2	0.2	-3.5	Yes
Vale View	54.2%	2.1	5.1	3.2	Yes

Rising roles demonstrate that schools within the MAT are increasing in popularity as parents choose to send their children to one of the schools within the MAT with all of the schools having a waiting list in some or all year groups. The appointment of Sports Coaches and music specialists demonstrates the Trust's commitments to ensuring pupils are able to access quality first teaching in these areas. This can be evaluated by the successes at both musical and sporting events in school and at both local and Kent level.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Key Financial Performance Indicators

The Trustees are of the opinion that the following are key financial performance indicators for the Trust:

- Percentage of income received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) spent on teaching staff and total staff costs being 91%
- Pupil numbers which leads directly to the ESFA funding level, and;
- General funding expenditure.

Financial Review

Most of the Academy's income is obtained from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Local Authority in the form of recurrent grants, some of which are restricted to particular purposes. In addition the schools receive funds through lettings and funds raised by parents. The budgets for the schools are prepared by the FSAC and approved by the Trust Board. The budgets reflect the priorities of each school and The Trust. The financial position of each school is monitored by the Board's Finance Strategic and Audit Committee and thereafter the Trustee Board. The financial policies and procedures which have been approved by the Trustees comply with the Academies Financial Handbook and are implemented by the Trust and the schools.

When the accounts are consolidated, there is surplus of £3,982,314. This is following a actuarial valuation of pension deficit figure for the local government pension service. When the donated fixed assets, assets on conversion, the loss on disposal of the Priory Fields School building and actuarial gains are removed from the surplus, there is an overall deficit of £585,864.

A loan of £250,000 from KCC was transferred to the Academy on conversion to contribute to additional facilities as part of the PSBP for Priory Fields and is currently held in a 'short-term' investment bank account in preparation for the commencement of the repayment schedule. Repayments for the loan commenced in August 2016 which is reducing the capital borrowed and will continue to do so to a period of 10 years.

The new building has been completed although demolition works still continue. Funds will be required in stages over the next academic year to pay for the additional facilities agreed in 2013.

Reserves Policy

The Academy aims to maintain a level of reserves sufficient to provide a buffer against future funding uncertainties and to provide a fund to pay for any unexpected or unplanned for asset or maintenance need. The Trust will always ensure that they stay within the ESFA guidelines on levels and appropriate use of reserves.

The Trust's level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) at the end of 31st August 2018 is £318,999.

The Academy Trust has a pension liability of £1,873,000 as at 31 August 2018 which is included in restricted reserves. The disclosure does not mean that the liability is already committed and is no longer available to the Trustees to further the Academy Trust's objectives. Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013. In the short term, the cash flow impact of having a pension scheme liability may be that employer contributions may increase to reduce the liability. The Academy Trust will always pay the employer contribution rates set by the pension scheme administrators.

Investment Policy

Investments must be made only when approved by the Trustees. The Trustees' policy is to invest surplus funds in low risk short term bank deposits that are easily accessible.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2018

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Governors have assessed the major risks to which the Academy is exposed, in particular those relating to teaching, provision of facilities and other operational areas of the Academy and its finances. Appropriate systems, policies, procedures and controls have been put in place so as to ensure that the various risks do not impact adversely on the Academy's operations including any operational procedures and internal financial controls. Appropriate insurances are in place.

The principal Risks to the Whinless Down Academy Trust have been identified as:

- 1) Failure to achieve the highest quality standards for children. In order to mitigate this risk Trustees ensure high quality recruitment and appraisal systems for all staff. Rigorous monitoring and accountability systems identify concerns promptly allowing for rapid interventions and swift actions to make the required changes.
- 2) Pupil numbers particularly should the EU Migrant Workers return to their homelands following Brexit. The Trustees are aware of fluctuations in pupil numbers and the ratios of teachers to pupils and regular reports ensure that these are kept within the parameters to prevent any future financial difficulties.
- 3) Maintenance budget for St Martin's School – Trustees are aware of the age of building and the need to ensure that a quality first education can be provided in a building designed for a 19century system. Regular site walks and a maintenance programme support the upkeep. Application for CIF funding to be initiated in a timely manner should major works be required.
- 4) Health and Safety issues for Vale View School – Risks have been identified and an application for CIF funding to be initiated to remedy any major works required.
- 5) The effect of changes to future funding methodologies and general reductions in educational budgets. The Trustees produce and maintain budgets on a regular basis so that should any anticipated funding shortfalls occur suitable plans can be put in place to mitigate their effect.
- 6) The recruitment and retention of Local Governors with the necessary skills for the role.
- 7) The recruitment and retention of high quality teaching staff and support staff.
- 8) Technological risks from outside organisations particularly around GDPR.

Fundraising

All Schools within the Whinless Down Academy Trust engage in local fund-raising activities such as Christmas and Summer Fairs and activities initiated by the school council. This is complemented with several national events such as Children in Need, Red Nose Day and Christmas Jumper Day. Engagement for parents is voluntary which ensures there is no expectation that parents will contribute if they prefer not to or have hardship problems, this does not preclude pupils from participating. Monies collected are carefully monitored and counted conforming to standards to ensure that there is a rigorous process for collection and distributing as required. Receipts for monies donated are always received and displayed; this is also announced in the individual schools' newsletters. The Trust does not work with any commercial participators or professional fundraisers. At Vale View the process of fundraising is managed by a parent teacher association and documentation is in place to ensure that the process is as rigorous as the internal systems.

Plans for Future Periods

The Trust is not planning to grow in the near future. The Trust has considered becoming a sponsor academy, but has rejected this currently to allow for a period of consolidation following the addition of Vale View to the MAT in January 2018. This is to ensure that good practice is embedded and leadership growth can be maximised enabling the MAT the capacity before expansion. This will help when the decision is reversed to be well prepared, well planned and to have the capacity to ensure success.

The Senior Leadership Team of the Academy Trust provides all Trustees with a copy of each of the individual school's Improvement Plan which is a working document with seasonal milestones and Key Performance Indicators for the Trustees to benchmark against their own strategic plans for each school within the Multi-Academy Trust enabling them to assess achievements and next steps.

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Each of the schools knows their strengths and areas of development based on continual self-assessment and the School Improvement plans are developed through the self-assessment process. Individual subject leaders assess their outcomes and plan developments accordingly.

The Trust will continue striving to improve the levels of performance for all its pupils at all levels and continue to prepare pupils for the next steps in their learning journey.

The culture is one of openness and senior staff, teaching staff and support staff is clear about the need to collaborate and commit to their own professional development.

Funds held as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others

The Academy Trust does not hold such funds.

Provision of information to auditor

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditor, Kreston Reeves LLP, has indicated its willingness to continue in office. The Trustees will propose a motion re-appointing the auditor at a meeting of the Trustees.

This report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the board of Trustees, as the company's directors, on 6th December 2018 and signed on its behalf by:



Alison Mackintosh
Chair of Trustees

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Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Whinless Down Academy Trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Executive Headteacher, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Whinless Down Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' report and in the Statement of Trustees' responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 4 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mrs Alison Mackintosh, Chair of Trustees	4	4
Mrs Patricia Sherling, Vice Chair	4	4
Mrs Carol Rayfield	3	4
Mrs Victoria Smith	3	4
Mr Malcolm Bowler	1	4
Mrs Anne Siggins	4	4
Mrs Michelle Noden	4	4
Mrs Claudia Sawyers	3	3
Mr David Mellon	2	3

Currently there are no vacancies on the Trust Board.

Although improved over the year, The Board are aware that the separation of duties between the Trust and Local Governor committees requires further work to strengthen the governance structure and this is still an aim for the coming year. The Board are aware of the skills required for the Board and are resolute to ensure that any appointment to the Trust Board will only be selected if the necessary skill set is evident. It is the continued recruitment of highly skilled Trustees that will support the development of the Trust.

Presentation and format of data has needed to be adapted throughout the year with the third school joining the MAT to recognise the performance of the whole MAT as opposed to the individual schools data. This enables Trustees to understand the position of each school within the Trust and the Trust as a whole. Trustees are aware of where significant improvement needs to be realised and the data helps to channel staff to secure the improvements. Financial reports are prepared for the individual schools but presented to allow analysis, discussion and challenge across the schools supporting the MAT as a whole.

Governance Statement Reviews:

- The Trust Board uses the Competency Framework for Governance Matrix to ensure that we are able to provide appropriate training and to recruit Trustees with skills that have been highlighted as requirement or desirable by the Trust Board.
- Following the governance self-evaluation in May 2018 Trustees were not fully understanding of their specific roles within the organisation. Subsequently, The Trust Board have devised a comprehensive Roles and Responsibilities document to ensure these are clearly understood and are now aware of both their specific role within the Trust , the wider implications and the duties of others.
- The Chair of the Trust Board has embarked on a Chair's National Training programme.
- The Clerk to the Trust Board and the Clerks to the Local Governing Body Committees have embarked on a clerk's National Training programme.
- The Trust Board will complete its governance self-evaluation in May 2019.

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Governance Statement (continued)

The Finance Strategy and Audit Committee (FSAC) is a sub-committee of the Trust Board and with Members from the LGB. Its purpose is to:

- To Prepare and set the Budget for the schools within the MAT.
- To monitor expenditure and income in line with set budget and school priorities as agreed within the individual school improvement plans.
- To challenge decisions and agree procurement routes through the consideration of competitive quotations and tendering process ensuring Best Value.
- To Benchmark school performance (both financial and academic) with local and national data and with 'like schools.'
- To be strategic in future planning and to assess potential risks to enable both sustainability and to plan for any funding implications.

During the year the Finance Strategy and Audit Committee had 3 meetings in the year.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Mrs Carol Rayfield, (Chair of FSAC)	2	3
Mrs Anne Siggins	3	3
Mrs Michelle Noden	3	3
Mrs Alison Mackintosh, (Chair of Trustees)	3	3
Mrs Victoria Smith	3	3

Review of Value for Money

As Accounting Officer, the Executive Headteacher has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the Academy Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Applying the principles of Best Value through challenging, comparing, consulting and competing.
- Using finance staff across schools to eliminate the need to employ external support.
- Purchasing ICT solutions across all schools.
- Using ICT staff/premises staff/sports coaches/EYFS lead to support across all schools
- Redistributing good furniture and resources following the move of Priory Fields School
- Sharing Resources such as the Mini-Buses
- Working in teams to reduce the workload of staff.
- Regular resource audit to ensure purchases are 'need based.'
- Delivering CPD opportunities across all schools in the MAT and providing small group opportunities for individuals – reducing the cost involved in attending courses.

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Governance Statement (continued)

Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Academy Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Whinless Down Academy Trust for the year 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks, that has been in place for the year 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2018 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The Risk and Control Framework

The Academy Trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the Finance Strategy and Audit Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines.
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks.

The Board of Trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided to appoint Kreston Reeves LLP as internal auditor.

The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

- testing of payroll systems
- testing of purchase systems
- testing of income systems
- testing of control account/bank reconciliations

On a termly basis, the auditor reports to the Board of Trustees through the Finance Strategy and Audit Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

The internal auditor undertook visits during the year ending 31 August 2018, in which they carried out checks as detailed above. Although no serious weaknesses in the internal control systems were identified, a small number of recommendations were made and appropriate persons have been assigned to address these recommendations and report back to the internal auditor and Board. These recommendations will be followed up during the year ending 31 August 2019 and a report will be made to the Board of Trustees to confirm they have been addressed.

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Governance Statement (continued)
Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Executive Headteacher has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:

- the work of the internal auditor;
- the work of the external auditors;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process;
- the work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the Finance Strategy and Audit Committee and a plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 6 December 2018 and signed on their behalf, by:



Alison Mackintosh
Chair of Trustees



Anne Siggins
Accounting Officer

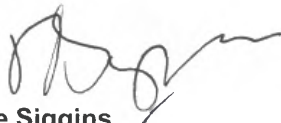
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Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As Accounting Officer of Whinless Down Academy Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding received by the academy trust, under the funding agreement in place between the academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2017.

I confirm that I and the academy trust board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook 2017.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the board of trustees and ESFA.



Anne Siggins
Accounting Officer

Date: 6 December 2018