

## LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FORWARDS CENTRE

### MEETING HELD AT THE ACADEMY

ON 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 AT 4.00 PM

**Present:** Mr. C. Fielding (Academy Lead), Mrs. C. Fernside, Mrs. L. Williams, Mr. M. Rayner, Ms. K. Shacklady, Ms. L. Douglas and Ms. S. O'Byrne.

**In attendance:** Mrs. A. Appleyard (Clerk), Ms. N. Berry, Ms. V. Gavin

**Ms. Douglas in the Chair in the absence of Ms. Halliwell**

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mrs. D. Crier, Mr. D. Mills, Ms. V. Rudge and Ms. S. Halliwell.

#### 2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

##### 2.1 Declaration of Pecuniary or Conflict of Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

##### 2.2 Declaration of Interest Form

In accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook 2020, entries in the Academy Trust's Register of Business Interests were to be reviewed on a 'regular' basis.

The Clerk noted that the regularity of returns was for the Trust to decide upon; however, as a minimum the Governance Services Team would recommend at least annually.

All Members, Trustees, Local Governors and the Executive Leadership Team were asked to complete the LA model pro-forma and return it to a member of the Executive Leadership Team for retention. It was noted that the entry included:

- relevant business and pecuniary interests
- details of any governance roles in other educational institutions;
- any material interests arising from relationships between Local Governors or relationships between Local Governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)

The Clerk noted all present were required to complete this information and that failure to do so may be in breach of the Trust's Code of Conduct. Any forms not received would be highlighted in the usual manner at the summer term meeting.

**Agreed:**

- i) That Local Governors complete the online version or paper copy of the Register of Business Interest and return these to the school
- ii) That any Local Governors that have not completed the forms be highlighted at the summer term board meeting as per usual process.

**2.3 Membership/Governance Issues**

It was noted that the following terms of office were due to expire at the end of the current academic year:

Ms. C. Fernside	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
Ms. J. Scott	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
Ms. L. Douglas	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023
Ms. S. Halliwell	31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023

It was noted that the four terms of office listed above would be considered at the summer term meeting.

It was noted that a vacancy remained for one Parent Governor. An election would be held during the current academic year.

**2.4 Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent Form**

The form had been circulated with the agenda. Governors were asked to complete the form and return it to the Clerk.

**3. SAFEGUARDING SELF-DECLARATION**

A decision had been taken by the Board that all individuals would complete a self-declaration form to confirm that they had not received any criminal convictions or cautions within the previous 12 months, which had not already been reported to the Chair of the Board.

**Agreed:**

- i) That Local Governors complete the online word version of the Safeguarding Self Declaration form and return these to the school
- ii) That any Local Governors that have not completed the forms be highlighted at the spring term board meeting as per usual process.

The form had been circulated with the agenda. Governors were asked to complete the form and return it to the Academy.

#### **4. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 10 October 2022.

##### **2.3 Governance Issues**

It was reported that the Governance Services databased required updating to reflect the current Terms of Reference, in order show that there were two Staff Governors and two Parent Governors on the Forwards Centre LGB.

**Action:** The Clerk to amend the database.

#### **5. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'**

No items of any other business were notified:

#### **6. ACADEMY LEAD'S REPORT**

Mr. Fielding presented his termly report. Governors had been requested to read the report in advance of this meeting, and to bring any questions. The main headlines were reported.

##### **6.1 Pupil Numbers**

It was explained that as there were now full-time and part-time places at the Forwards Centre, the Local Authority now commissioned 40 full-time places and 12 part-time places. An agreement had been reached where the Local Authority would move to commissioning 43 full-time places and nine part-time places. In reality, this meant that 18 part-time places were available, owing to the nature of part-time places. The Local Authority currently placed 18 full-time students and 15 part-time students at the Forwards Centre. It was noted that the Academy was almost full, despite not being quite halfway through the academic year. There were schools who had expressed an interest in buying places through the traded places system, but this was not currently possible as there was a need to retain the commissioned places for the remainder of the year. A shift in commissioning behaviour had been seen, with another provider also accepting children who had been permanently excluded recently. It was noted that the Forwards Centre did not currently offer provision for Reception age children.

The Bridge had started the year with low pupil numbers, but this had increased rapidly with more schools seeking to place children within the provision. It was noted that two children had moved to the full-time provision following permanent exclusions from mainstream settings.

**A Governor asked whether places at The Bridge were commissioned through the Local Authority or whether schools bought into traded places.**

It was explained that the response to this was a hybrid response, with the Local Authority panel determining which children would access the places they commissioned. The Local Authority paid a lump sum upfront, and then the child's school paid the remaining cost for their place. If a child was permanently excluded, the Local Authority funded the full-time place. It was explained that whilst the Academy worked with all children, the provision offered was not always the most appropriate provision for every child.

**A Governor asked whether the part-time provision was offered only to Bolton children.**

It was confirmed that there were no children from neighbouring local authorities who attended the part-time provision at the Academy.

**A Governor requested information regarding the other alternative provision settings within Bolton which supported primary school age children.**

The Academy Lead explained the different alternative provision offered across Bolton. It was recognised that there was a significant need for there to be increased provision within the local area, and that whilst new provision would be welcomed, this would need to be considered from a business development perspective.

## **6.2 Self-evaluation Update**

It was explained that the curriculum development area of the website had been updated, and Governors agreed that this was an excellent change to the website. The curriculum structure had developed significantly, and Academy staff were pleased with the progress made in this area. Curriculum mapping and examples of students' work would be added to this part of the website.

It was explained that PSHE delivery had become much more consistent, and this had been a positive area of progress.

It was explained that it was evidenced in the SIP report that the full-time and part-time provision had been brought together, and the two provisions would become more aligned as the year progressed. The tracking of reading was now in place. Science had also developed well.

Significant work had been completed with regard to trauma-informed practice. This had ensured that there was consistency across all four of the Bolton Impact Trust academies. A trained counsellor had worked with staff and also with parents and carers.

**A Governor requested clarification regarding the KPI tables in the report.**

It was explained that one table presented information regarding the full-time children, and the other table presented information regarding the part-time children.

**A Governor requested further information regarding attainment.**

It was explained that attainment was mixed, with only a small number of children reaching age-related expectations, particularly at the end of year six.

**A Governor asked whether the year six children took the SATs tests at the end of year six.**

It was confirmed that they did, where this was appropriate and possible for the children in line with their needs. All of the children were entered for the SATs, but some did not complete them. As an alternative provision setting, the Forwards Centre was not required to ensure all year six children undertook the SATs process, and they were not included in any analysis such as league tables or data dashboards. Children were prepared for the SATs in order to support those who did sit the tests. A number of children wanted to sit the tests, as SATs were often seen as a rite of passage for year six children, and the children at the Forwards Centre wished to experience this as their peers in mainstream schools experienced the SATs process. It was explained that teacher assessments were of a very high standard. The small class sizes meant that staff knew the children very well, and were able to provide highly accurate assessment information.

It was explained that some challenging situations had arisen at the Forwards Centre, particularly with regard to the language being used by children, including homophobic and racist language, as well as children who were struggling with their identity, including gender identity. Staff were working very hard to develop resources to support the children and help them to learn about appropriate language. Some of the children concerned lived within the same locality, and the issues the Academy currently faced were also issues outside of school, and also on the transport provided by the Local Authority Transport Service.

It was explained that some consideration was being given to the use of the building, as since Park School Teaching Service had moved to the Wellbeing Centre, the Academy had a larger space. Consideration was being given to adding fob controls to some doors, and to where different groups of children would be based.

**A Governor asked how the Academy responded to new challenges such as the recent increase in issues as outlined above.**

It was explained that there was a daily staff meeting, and that issues and concerns were shared and highlighted. The response meant that the Academy reinforced rules and routines. Concerns and issues were monitored closely at all times. The temptation was to clamp down on the children's behaviour, but this was not always the most appropriate response. The children responded well to the requirements being simplified, and significant praise being given to the children who did the right thing.

**A Governor asked where the threshold was for suspensions.**

It was explained that physical violence would almost always lead to a suspension. It was for the Academy Lead to determine when a child would be suspended.

**A Governor asked whether there were opportunities for partnership work with other schools in order to support the concerns regarding the language some children were using.**

It was agreed that this was a good idea. It was agreed that it may also be a good idea to work with external providers.

With regard to personal development, it was reported that the Academy Lead had met with a Governor who worked at another school. Work was being done across the Trust to focus upon personal development. It was anticipated that personal development would be embedded across the curriculum.

It was reported that The Bridge was now fully established within the provision, and this was working well.

**A Governor asked whether the transition of The Bridge staff from the Youth Challenge site had proceeded smoothly.**

It was confirmed that this was the case, and the staff were working across the provision.

**A Governor asked whether the fact that there was now an Assistant Headteacher in place had changed the ISR (the leadership salary scale).**

It was confirmed that this was the case, and there was parity across the Trust. The Assistant Headteacher was very experienced, and they were responsible for running the part-time provision. In the long-term, it was anticipated that they would have responsibility for the curriculum.

### 6.3 Visit by School Improvement Professional (SIP)

It was explained that the SIP visit had taken place, and the SIP was very familiar with Youth Challenge Primary from previous academic years. The visit had been very positive, with strong feedback. Further information was included in the Academy Lead's report.

### 6.4 Termly Report on Academy's Provision regarding the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and provision for Looked After Children (LAC)

No further update beyond that within the Academy Lead's report was given at the meeting.

### 6.5 Termly Report on Attendance and Children Missing Education

No further update beyond that within the Academy Lead's report was given at the meeting.

### 6.6 Personnel

No further update beyond that within the Academy Lead's report was given at the meeting.

### 6.7 Safeguarding

No further update beyond that within the Academy Lead's report was given at the meeting.

### 6.8 Health and Safety

It was reported that Mrs. Crier had visited the Academy to consider work done to repair a staircase in The Bridge. It was confirmed that all necessary work had been completed to a high standard.

### 6.9 Evacuation and Invacuation Report

No further update beyond that within the Academy Lead's report was given at the meeting.

### 6.10 Buildings and Premises Update

It was explained that this would be discussed further under agenda item seven.

## 7. **CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Finance Report had been shared in advance of the meeting. The following key points were highlighted.

It was explained that it was projected that the Forwards Centre would end the academic year in a deficit position. This reflected the position of many other schools and academies nationally. The reasons were acknowledged and could be resolved. One key issue was the fact that the

part-time provision had been fully staffed, but not all student places had been filled. The increase in staff salaries had also had a significant impact upon the budget.

The costs of the building were now fully met by the Academy, which had not been the case in the past. It was recognised that there were some unused rooms, and these would be brought into use in a careful way in order to ensure that growth was sustainable. One classroom had already been opened, which meant that an additional nine children could attend the provision. It was anticipated that the additional children would be from neighbouring local authorities. The Trust traded with a number of neighbouring local authorities who placed students at other academies within the Trust, and the system worked well.

It was recognised that the pupil numbers increased and decreased throughout the year, and additional staffing were recruited through agency staff. As it was anticipated that the number of children would increase during the year, additional staff had been recruited to work at the Academy. An additional mentor had also been recruited, who was not based in a classroom and could work with children across the provision.

It was also noted that the premises costs had increased.

A Governor noted that they worked with schools in a neighbouring local authority who had set up an enterprise department where staff and year six students worked to develop enterprise initiatives which brought funding into schools. It was agreed that this could be considered, although there was a need to develop the knowledge of staff regarding social enterprise and its associated funding.

It was recognised that finance across the Trust could support all four academies within the Trust.

## **8. NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

### **8.1 Chairs' Briefing**

The Chair was not present at the LGB meeting, and the Vice Chair had not attended the Chairs' Briefing held on 30 January 2023. The Clerk therefore reported that the following matters had been highlighted, and the Chair would provide further information following access to the recording.

- Governance Services update
- Spring term meeting updates
- Meeting procedures – committees and delegation
- Development segment: New Year review

### **8.2 Training and Development Lead's Report on Training**

The Clerk reported that the 2022/23 Governance Training Programme was available on the Governance Services website. It was noted that there were a number of new training opportunities available in the programme to assist governors in their role, taking into account national initiatives and changes in legislation.

A briefing event for Training & Development Leads was held on 25 January 2023 at which the 2022-23 Governance Training and Development Programme was highlighted.

It was reported that Ms. D. Smith would maintain a register of Governor training.

Governors were reminded of the importance of completing training in line with their Governor roles. Governors were reminded of the need to complete statutory Safeguarding and Prevent training.

It was explained that a Headteachers' Briefing had taken place, where Headteachers had been informed that the Local Authority was due to have an inspection of the SEND provision. It was reported that alternative provision may be considered as part of this process. It was noted that the inspection framework had changed recently, and Bolton was likely to be one of the first local authorities to be inspected under this framework. There was a specific need for schools to be able to demonstrate that they quality assured all off-site provision.

### 8.3 Partnership Forum

It was noted that the Spring Term Partnership Forum was due to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023. The Clerk had shared a document providing further details through the Governance Gateway.

Mrs. Douglas stated that she had booked to attend the Partnership Forum.

### 8.4 Link Governor Reports

It was noted that all Governors had participated in Governor Week.

It was reported that Academy Analysis meetings took place once each term with the Trust Central Team. The Academy Lead explained that these were very in-depth meetings, and these had led to the lines of enquiry for Governor visits.

**Action:** The Academy Lead to send the Clerk all of the Governor reports, which would be uploaded to the Governance Gateway.

It was reported that a Governor had reviewed the website, and had suggested that a welcome video would be a positive addition to the website to support children who were due to join the provision.

A Governor asked whether the Youth Challenge Primary provision had brought the Youth Challenge Ofsted grading of Outstanding with them when they moved to the Forwards Centre site.

It was reported that they had contributed to the report, but the report reflected all of the Youth Challenge provision at the time of the inspection. It was explained that YC Primary had never had its own URN, and that the change was that a Key Stage had moved locations, and that provision was now included in the Forwards Centre provision and under the Forwards Centre URL.

A Governor asked whether the Forwards Centre completed day six visits.

It was confirmed that this was the case.



## **9. POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVALS**

The following policies were presented for approval:

### **9.1 First Aid Policy**

It was confirmed that this had not changed, other than the names of the responsible members of staff.

### **9.2 Health and Safety Policy**

It was explained that this policy was from The Key, and adapted for the Forwards Centre.

### **9.1 RSE Policy**

It was explained that the RSE provision at the Academy was very strong. A change which had been made during the current year was the use of materials from other providers.

**Agreed:** To consult with parents and carers regarding the RSE Policy after the LGB meeting.

**Agreed:** To approve all of the above policies.

## **10. PUBLICATION OF STATUTORY INFORMATION ON ACADEMY WEBSITE**

The Clerk reported that all academies and free schools should check their funding agreement to establish what information they must publish on their website. In addition, there were publishing requirements set out within the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014, with which Academy Trusts must comply.

The accompanying agenda note gives an overview of those requirements and the further information that the Department for Education (DfE) recommends that are published on the website. Many academy trusts are under a duty to publish much of this information, due to clauses within their funding agreements. The information provided related to the DfE guidance of 'What Academies, Free Schools and Colleges should Publish Online', last updated in February 2021.

It was noted that there may be a requirement to ensure Facilities Time for staff who acted as Trade Union representatives.

It was noted that there was a requirement to publish information regarding swimming and the children's progress and ability in this area. It was noted it was planned that the Academy would return to taking children for swimming lessons.

It was noted that there was a requirement to publish how uniform was cost-effective.

It was noted that as an alternative provision setting, the Forwards Centre was not required to state how the children accessed 32.5 hours of provision.

**11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**11.1 Local Governing Board Meeting**

**Agreed:** That the remaining Local Governing Board meetings for the current academic year be held as follows:

Summer Term: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 4:00pm

**12. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence of Mrs. D. Crier, Mr. D. Mills, Ms. V. Rudge, Ms. J. Scott and Ms. S. Halliwell.

It was noted that Ms. J. Scott had stated her intention to resign from her position as Governor at the end of the academic year.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other business.

**14. CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Agreed:** That none of the matters reported in the minutes of this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The meeting closed at 5:40pm.

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Governors)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_