

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF THE FORWARDS CENTRE

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

ON 13TH JUNE 2022 AT 4.00 PM

Present: Mr. C. Fielding (Academy Lead), Mrs. S. Harulow, Mrs. C. Fernside, Mrs. J. Scott, Mrs. L. Douglas, Mrs. L. Williams, Mrs. D. Crier, Mr. M. Rayner.

In attendance: Mrs. A. Appleyard (Clerk), Mr. P. Hodgkinson (Executive Principal), Mr. D. Smith, Ms. R. Leonard, Ms. A. Woosey, Ms. V. Gavin,

Mrs. Harulow in the Chair

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 Declaration of Pecuniary or Conflict of Interest

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

2.2 Membership/Governance Issues

It was noted that there were no terms of office which were due to expire.

The following vacancies remained:

2x Parent Governor vacancies
1x Co-opted Governor vacancy
1x Staff Governor vacancy

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 7 March 2022.

4. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'

No items of any other business were notified at this stage.

5. 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.

5.1 Pupil Numbers

It was noted that pupil numbers had remained constant, and that there were still very few children attending the Academy in Key Stage One (KS1). Only four KS1 children had attended the Academy throughout the current academic year. No further requests for KS1 children to join the Academy in September had been received. Some requests had been received from other Local Authorities, but there was a need to be cautious with such requests as the needs of the children were not always in line with an SEMH setting. It was therefore essential to ensure that all referrals were appropriate. A robust structure for referrals was in place, and this was highly effective but remained under constant review so that it could be refined, developed and enriched using the latest Ofsted reports which were published during the last academic year in different subject areas. The overall curriculum intent was ready, but there was a need to ensure that the subject reports were at the highest possible standard.

5.2 Self-evaluation Update

It was explained that the Leadership and Management work had included wellbeing work with regard to staff wellbeing. There was now a need to ensure that the same focus was placed upon developing student wellbeing. Individual work was being done with the children, with wellbeing questions asked when the children were in small groups. The children gave some excellent answers, and they all knew who to talk to if they were worried about anything. This work was ongoing.

5.3 Visit by School Improvement Professional

It was explained that the next visit from the School Improvement Professional was due on Thursday 23rd June. The focus would be on Science, as well as some work in the Humanities subjects. The Academy had been preparing for a deep dive in Science. Significant progress had been made with regard to being able to articulate progress within each subject area. It was noted that the report from the previous visit had been shared with the documentation for the meeting.

5.4 Termly Report on Pupil Premium Grant 2021-2022

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

5.5 Termly Report on Academy's Provision for Looked After Children

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

5.6 Termly Report on Attendance and Children Missing Education

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

5.7 Personnel

The Academy Lead explained that it had been arranged that Youth Challenge Primary would move to the Roscow Fold site from September 2022. Park School Teaching Service were due to move to the Wellbeing Centre, and Youth Challenge Primary would move into the space currently used by Park School. It was explained that Youth Challenge Primary provided two-day placements, where the children spent two days of each week at Youth Challenge Primary, and the remaining three days at their usual setting. The staff also conducted outreach work. The current Head of Youth Challenge Primary was due to retire at the end of the current academic year. This move would bring all of the Bolton Impact Trust Primary provision under one roof, and was therefore a very exciting prospect, as the Forwards Centre and Youth Challenge Primary would be able to work together. It was explained that a large proportion of the Youth Challenge Primary children managed to retain their place in their school. A small number did not retain these places, and they would then be able to transfer to the Forwards Centre.

It was explained that the funding formulae for Alternative Provision and Special Schools were often complicated, and schools and academies often did not know how much would be allocated each year. In November last year, it became apparent that the Local Authority wanted to reduce the amount allocated to Park School and increase the amount allocated to Youth Challenge Secondary. This meant that Park School would have a loss of £290,000. £115,000 was found without making adjustments to staffing, but there had also been a need to go through a staffing restructure with some redundancies. It was explained that not all Park School students were taught at the centre owing to their health needs. This situation had meant that there was an opportunity to place all the Bolton Impact Trust primary school age children at the Forwards Centre. In addition to this, there was also a high demand for Key Stage Three provision at Youth Challenge Secondary, and this move would ensure that more space was available. Confirmation had only recently been received that the move would proceed, following both informal and formal consultation processes. The move had been mandated by Trustees, and all interested parties were aware.

A Governor asked whether Youth Challenge Primary would no longer exist.

It was explained that the service would still exist, but it would be under the Forwards Centre name.

It was explained that provision offered nationally had been considered and discussed, and that the decision had been made to move to this model. It was viewed as a positive change, as it could bring the best of the Forwards Centre and Youth Challenge Primary together. There was a need to both improve and keep the best of both provisions, and it was believed that this could be achieved with all of the primary age provision based at the Forwards Centre. It was explained that all concerned were completely committed to keeping the same amount of quality under the one roof. The Academy Lead was due to visit Youth Challenge Primary the day after the LGB meeting in order to spend time with the staff and learn more about the provision offered. It would also create a little more space, so there was the possibility of admitting a small number of additional children, and there would be greater flexibility with regard to pupil numbers with all of the primary provision on one site. It was explained that there was some anxiety across the staff of both the Forwards Centre and Youth Challenge Primary, and they had been reassured that Youth Challenge Primary would not be an add-on to the Forwards Centre. They would be one academy with one URN, under one SLT and with two key functions. The children would wear Forwards Centre uniform, and would be able to travel together. Staffing structure looked very strong, as the skills from across the two academies would be in the one location. The provision would therefore be of the highest standard.

There were some challenges with regard to the curriculum, as the Forwards Centre had a full curriculum, but Youth Challenge Primary offered bespoke curricula to their children. There was the potential to have to merge them, but this would need to be done very carefully as there was the possibility that some children could be exposed to three curricula in one week through the Forwards Centre, Youth Challenge Primary and their own school.

The two groups of children had slightly different success criteria, and the core function of the curriculum was slightly different. The Forwards Centre staff were delighted with the quality of the staff who were joining the Academy from Youth Challenge Primary and the expertise they could bring. They were also looking forward to having more children at the centre. It was stated that the changes would create the capacity to meet more children's needs across the town. It should also safeguard the future of the Youth Challenge Primary provision, which had been close to running at a deficit. This should therefore secure the provision in the longer term. The budget had been re-set, and the changes were financially viable.

It was noted that there was a need to consider the Terms of Reference for both the Forwards Centre and Youth Challenge, as there was a Staff Governor from Youth Challenge Primary on the Youth Challenge LGB. There was therefore a need to consider how that Staff Governor could move to the Forwards Centre LGB.

It was explained that the Forwards Centre curriculum intent would change. A significant amount of work had been completed in order to ensure that the intent matched an outstanding Ofsted curriculum intent. This work had been completed by the Academy Lead and members of the Academy staff, and the curriculum was now considered to have been improved, with a rich depth to the curriculum. The Academy Lead would welcome comments and feedback, as the curriculum was not fixed, and with the combination of part-time and full-time provision on site could lead to further changes being necessary. It would be under constant review, and changes made throughout the next academic year.

5.8 Safeguarding

A Governor asked why all of the children at the Forwards Centre did not have Early Help assessments.

It was explained that not all of the children joined the Academy with Early Help assessments, as some were SEND referrals. There was no value in an ongoing Early Help, as the children were already beyond Early Help. Many SEND students did not have Early Help assessments because they already had an EHCP and were therefore managed differently. All of the children had either an Early Help assessment, or an EHCP, or they were LAC or were supported through Child Protection. There were no children at the Academy without one of these forms of documentation.

5.9 Health and Safety

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

5.10 Evacuation and Invacuation Report

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

5.11 Buildings and Premises Update

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

6. **CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION**

Mr. Smith's report had been shared in advance of the meeting. His report was received and accepted with thanks. No questions were raised.

It was explained that the Academy had budgeted to make a surplus of £5,000, and it was now projected that the surplus would be £30,000. Some vacancies had been covered by agency staff. Traded pupils from other Local Authorities had generated an improved financial position.

7. **NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

7.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair had not attended the Chairs' Briefing which had been held on 9 May 2022. The Clerk therefore reported that the following matters had been highlighted:

- Governance Services Update
- Summer Term Meeting Updates:
- Bolton Governance Conference
- The Schools' White Paper
- Pecuniary and Conflicts of Interest
- Self-evaluating the board's effectiveness
- Feedback on Chairs' Briefings

7.2 Training and Development Lead's Report on Training

In the absence of Ms. Leonard, Mr. Hodgkinson provided an update and shared her report. The key foci were shared, and these were safeguarding and induction. Governor induction was a priority across the Trust. Other key points were the consideration of the role of the Safeguarding Governor, the role of the Board and considering template questions on the topic of safeguarding. Governors were reminded to complete the statutory training regarding Safeguarding Level One and Prevent.

Action: Mr. Hodgkinson to send the report to the Clerk, who would upload it to the Governance Gateway.

7.2.1 Governance Training Programme 2022/23

The Clerk reported that the 2022/23 Governance Training Programme would be available on the Bolton Governance Services website before the end of the current term and that governors would be informed via email when it was available.

7.2.2 Training and Development Governor Briefing Sessions

The Clerk reported that a briefing session was to be held on 20 June 2022. The session had been arranged to consult and share information on the new Governance Training Programme 2022/23 and SLA. In addition, governors would be able to review the new role descriptor for the link governor for Looked After Children.

7.3 Partnership Forum

The nominated Partnership Governor had been unable to attend the Partnership Meeting held on 23 May 2022. The Clerk therefore reported that the following information had been presented:

- Safeguarding Updates

Jo Nicholson, Education Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding in Education Team
Shona Green, Safeguarding Officer, Bolton Safeguarding Children

- The new SEND Local offer and SEND Updates
 - Sue Cornwell, Head of Service for Children with SEND and PEPs
 - Alison Hart, Strategy & Partnerships Manager

7.4 Link Governor Reports

A number of visits to the school had been completed by Governors, and the visit reports had been shared in advance of the meeting. All were read in advance. The Academy Lead had been delighted to see Governors in the Academy, and the Governors had enjoyed their visits.

The Academy Lead reported that every Governor had visited the Academy during Governor week, and it had been wonderful to meet all of the Governors. It had been very positive to be able to discuss things in person, and links had been established in many of different areas. It was considered to have been the best Governor week held at the Academy.

Governors were delighted that so many positives had come out of the visits and that many positive links had already been established.

7.5 Bolton Governance Conference

The Clerk reported that the Governance Services Team was to hold a Bolton Governance Conference on 12 November 2022 at the Mercure Bolton Georgian House Hotel in Blackrod. The conference, entitled, Beyond Barriers – Achieve, Succeed and Belong in Bolton would pick up on a number of the key strands in the recently published White Paper. Keynote speaker for this year would be Hayley Hughes, former senior leader and responsible for mentoring and development with NPQ and ECT teachers. Further information and booking instructions would be released in due course.

8. GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE

The Clerk reported that in order to address vacancies within the team a number of recruitment rounds had been held successfully and two new Governance Support Officers and two Minute Clerks had been appointed. Schools were to welcome Amy Appleyard as our new Governance Support Officer from April and Rachel Worthington who would join from September.

The Training and Development service continued to operate with a blended approach as per the planned programme. Bespoke Development Sessions and External Reviews of Governance for boards continued to be delivered.

The Governance Services Team could also support with the recruitment of Local Authority Governors for maintained schools and assist for co-opted governors, or, trustees and local governors for academy trusts. An online application was available on the Governance Services Website in order that schools could signpost potential candidates to the site for further information about the role and to complete the online form.

In addition there were three external organisations that worked with Local Authorities or directly with individual schools and academy trusts to help find and place those interested in serving as a governor or trustee, these were Inspiring Governance, Governors for Schools and Academy Ambassadors.

When recruiting any Board should begin by establishing what skills or experience they may require by reference to a skills audit which it is good practice to undertake on an annual basis. Governance Services could assist in undertaking and reviewing a skills audit for your board through the Development service.

9. POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVAL

There were no policies requiring approval at this meeting.

10. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER

It was explained that a greater focus had been upon the Green Paper, as this was more relevant to the provision.

Agreed: To note the information regarding the White Paper.

A Governor asked whether the 32.5 compulsory hours in education each week would apply to the Forwards Centre.

It was explained that this did not apply to the Forwards Centre because it only applied to mainstream schools. However, some adaptations would be made.

A Governor asked whether the Trust was looking to expand, as the White Paper stated that all schools must be academies by 2030.

It was explained that the Trust was in the first stages of opening up a Free School in Worksop, and that they were working with Outwood Grange in that area. Similar work in other parts of the country was also under consideration, and the Trust was looking to grow in a number of areas.

11. 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.

A discussion took place regarding the tone of the current website, as it was felt that it was somewhat clinical and sharper than it should be. It was explained that there would be some new logos and rebranding of the website. Mrs. Crier had gone through the website with the checklist. The SEND Policy required updating. In the future, it was planned that the website would focus more upon the children's activities, and there would be web pages allocated to the different subject areas. This work would continue during the next academic year.

12. PROPOSED DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

12.1 Local Governing Board Meeting

Agreed: That the Local Governing Board meetings for the next academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term: Monday 10th October 2022 at 4.00 pm
Spring Term: Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 4:00pm
Summer Term: Monday 12th June 2023 at 4:00pm

It was noted that it was intended that meetings would return to being held in person, although the option to run meetings in a hybrid way (a mixture of face-to-face and online presence) would be retained if this helped to support Governor attendance.

13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

There were no absent Governors.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governors advised to read the section of the SIP report with the title The Learning Walk, as it was a delight to read.

A Governor explained that a former Youth Challenge student was moving into their third year at college and was looking for a placement of at least 100 hours from September. This was testament to the turn around of a student who had struggled to walk into a school in the past.

It was explained that the RSE Policy had been implemented in a very positive way, and Governors thanked the Academy staff for how this had been done in an age-appropriate and sensitive way.

Governors thanked the academy staff for their hard work throughout the current academic year.

15. 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 4:55pm.

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

Date: _____