

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

FORWARD CENTRE ACADEMY

**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA THE ZOOM PLATFORM
MONDAY 8 JUNE 2020 AT 4.00 PM**

Present: Carleen Fernside (CF), Christopher Fielding, Academy Lead (CF), Suzanne Harulow (SH), Damien Mills (DM), Deborah Reynolds (DR), Jenny Scott (JS) and Lynn Williams (LW).

In attendance: Mr D Smith (DS) Finance Director, Ms R Leonard (RL), Executive Vice Principal, Mr M Moosa, Trainee Accountant (observing) and Mrs C Brooks, Clerk, Governance Services.

Mrs S Harulow in the Chair

1. VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL

The Chair welcomed all present to the first virtual meeting of the Local Governing Board (LGB), thanking everyone for making the time to attend during this challenging time. The Chair clarified the protocols to be followed for this meeting. It was agreed that DS would share any documents required on screen.

The Clerk referred to the protocols that had been circulated via the Gateway for this virtual meeting.

Agreed: That Governors adopt the virtual meeting protocols as circulated.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Joanne Blackburn. There had been no communication from Vicky Byrne, Liz Douglas or Charlene Parkinson, it was hoped that they may join the meeting later.

3. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

3.1 Meeting Chairing

Governors noted the arrangements for Chairing summer term meetings should the Chair be unavailable due to the current pandemic situation. In the event that the Chair was unable to continue in her role the Vice Chair would 'step up' and another eligible Governor would be requested to undertake the role during this time.

3.2 Notification of Vacancies

The Clerk reported that there remained a vacancy for one Co-opted Local Governor. Mr Fielding asked that this position remain vacant for the present time. This was agreed.

4. **DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

No declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest were made.

5. **MINUTES AND URGENT MATTERS ARISING**

Governors had received the minutes of the last meeting for their review and approval.

Matters Arising

5.1 Partnership Governor, Minute number 7.3

CF confirmed that unfortunately this position had not yet been filled.

RL reported that it had been discussed at other LGB meetings during the Spring term and also with the Trust that as all LGB's were struggling to appoint to this position it may be more beneficial to appoint one Governor representative to undertake the role of Partnership Governor across all five LGB's providing a written report as required.

RL noted that this was also the intention for the link Governor for training but for the present time she would continue in this role for each of the five LGB's and would maintain the training log until a permanent appointment could be made.

Governors agreed noting that this was a good suggestion.

5.2 Website Compliance, Minute number 13

DS reported that a number of updates had been made to the website, in particular to Governor membership to ensure that all the necessary details were recorded correctly and in line with the GIAS site. CF noted that he had also updated some documents including PPG and Sports Grant.

CF referred to a previous discussion regarding optimisation of the website and the need to ensure that the key search words such as 'SEMH' would also bring up the Forwards Centre. It had been found to cost around £500-£600 to have an audit of the website for search purposes.

SH stated that the Forwards Centre provided some excellent services including the provision of some excellent courses and felt that this service could be maximised to the academies advantage.

CF noted that a discussion had previously been held with SH regarding this matter. It was suggested that the income generated from the course provision could be used to fund the cost of the optimisation.

Governors discussed this matter and agreed that it was worth looking into.

SH commended the work undertaken by CF and his team of staff at the Forwards Centre noting that she felt that optimisation would leverage the skills of CF and his team.

Action: CF/SH to look into a number of agencies and seek three comparative quotes.

Agreed:

- i) That the website continues to be reviewed on a termly basis to ensure continued compliance.
- ii) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 10 February 2020.

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Governors had received the financial monitoring report for the summer term 2020 for their review and information.

DS informed Governors that there were no major concerns and that the financial status of the Forwards Centre was 'on track'. The content of the report was similar to previous reports but that there was a projected surplus of £9,000 which was significantly higher than on previous reports. It was noted that the current Coronavirus pandemic had likely contributed to these savings as there had been less expenditure whilst the centre had been closed.

Governors questions were invited but none were raised.

7. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT

Governors had received the termly report from the Academy Lead which included information relating to the following items. It was noted that the format of the report had changed for this term as requested by Mr Hodgkinson, Executive Principal.

7.1 Spring Term (pre-closure)

CF guided Governors through the report shared on screen discussing the data and the benefits of having target setting in place. It was noted that following regular reviews if the targets were not being met arrangements would be made to put other strategies in place.

Attendance

CF referred to the attendance figure being very positive at 94.6% and remained consistent prior to the Corona Virus 'lock down'.

Exclusions

There had been two fixed term exclusions imposed on one pupil (1 day and then 2 days). These had been on two separate occasions for persistent racial abuse on staff. It was noted that the pupil in question had been very unsettled and had clashed personalities with other pupils in their class. The pupil was therefore moved to a different class and had improved significantly with no other incidents occurring to date.

A Governor asked if the abuse had been to the same member of staff.

CF confirmed that it had, but that the member of staff had not done anything to provoke the pupil, they were just going through an unsettled period.

7.2 Safeguarding pupils during Coronavirus lockdown

CF reported that to safeguard all pupils remotely had been very challenging. Increased workload had been imposed on staff members as social workers had been very stretched and their services limited. However, the high standards of the Forward Centre had been maintained with a very organised system in place. Staff were in regular contact with the pupils and escalations were made as required. CF noted that part of their responsibility included looking after individual families which had been very labour intensive but had worked well.

Governors were informed that CF regularly reviewed the C-POMs report in order to identify those families requiring visits from staff members for their additional support.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

CF reported that the RSE policy had been required to be in place for 1 September 2020 but due to the current pandemic the DfE had allowed some additional time. CF as Safeguarding Lead would ensure that this was completed by the end of the autumn term following consultation with parents to gain their views on the content.

RL noted that the consultation would need to be remotely and that it would likely be the 'new parents' that would be consulted as opposed to the current parents.

Key Worker Support

CF reported that the Forward Centre had remained open for the children of 'Key Workers'. There had only been one child in attendance, but this had not been ideal due to the difficulties in the pupil maintaining the requirements around social distancing. Therefore, as a safeguarding

measure it was felt that alternative arrangements would need to be made. This had been acknowledged and agreed with the family concerned.

LW referred to the escalations made asking what the outcomes had been.

CF explained that both Mrs Varghese, Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Mr Mills had been working from home and therefore had been able to focus and effectively manage this area.

CF explained the process in place should an escalation be required. It was noting that a series of phone calls would be made to communicate with the parents and also the child in question. Home visits would be made by staff members and if necessary, a referral to a Social worker would be made as required.

CF noted that he had also undertaken a home visit and had communicated with the family adhering to the social distancing guidelines. A number of issues had been identified; these had been followed up accordingly resulting in some of the matters being addressed before a repeat visit was made later that week. It was confirmed that escalations were made on a 'needs basis'.

Governors were also informed that Early Help meetings had continued to be arranged involving other agencies as required.

LW asked if the Forwards Centre received a weekly spreadsheet detailing the vulnerable pupils and if so, how many of those pupils had accepted an offer of a place as opposed to keeping their child at home.

CF explained that they did and that there had been six pupils. One pupil had not been able to return due to underlying health issues and the rest had been Looked After children. Discussions with the social workers and carers involved took place and some had returned if it was thought appropriate.

LW asked how many of those pupils fell into the 'red, amber, green' categories.

CF confirmed that there was only one child but that this was the child with the underlying health conditions. CF reported that regular home visits had been made initially on a twice weekly basis, but the social worker supporting the family had requested that the contact from school be reduced as this was having a negative effect on the parents and causing additional anxiety. There was therefore a concern for their well-being.

Governors were assured that the Forwards Centre staff remained in contact with the family with a phone call and home visit just once per week.

RL noted that the vulnerable pupil list that was received was not always up to date but that she was not overly concerned as she was confident that the staff within each academy knew their families very well and knew how to manage them effectively in order to gain the best outcomes.

CF informed Governors that there had been some very positive outcomes with the additional communication and home visits made between the staff and the families. It was also felt that by having closer links with the families, the staff now had a better understanding their needs. CF noted that the increased communication/home visits was a practice that he would like to continue.

7.3 Remote learning strategy and its impact

CF reported that this had been challenging new way of working but on the whole was proving to have positive results. Every pupil had individual targets and work provided for them to best meet their individual needs. In some cases, the work packs were delivered to the respective homes.

Governors were assured that the pupils continued to be tracked and their engagement registered. With alternative strategies being provided for those pupils who were not engaging with the work set. CF noted that around 50% of pupils were well engaged, 25% were working well but had more need of personal and social activities. The remaining 25% of pupils needing additional support and further encouragement. It was further noted that all pupils are allocated a member of staff to ensure that learning/work packs are delivered to them.

7.4 Staffing during the Coronavirus 'lockdown'

CF reported that individual risk assessments were to be finalised for each member of staff. It was noted that there was not much more on the guidance and documents received that had not already been done. However, it was felt that a Trust wide approach would be very beneficial and that a meeting with Mr Hodgkinson would be arranged to further discuss this matter.

Governors were informed that 50% staff are currently working in the Centre and 50% were working from home. It was noted that virtual meetings had been held via Zoom with those at home but it was harder to make contact as a team and was therefore looking into arranging a more effective way to pull the staff back together as one team.

CF noted that since re-opening, the reduced staff were managing effectively with the pupil numbers in school. It was noted that whilst there were pupils wanting to return it was felt better to remain with the pupil numbers in place and not introduce any additional pupils at this point.

CF commended the ability of a mentor who was leaving the Forwards Centre at the end of term to commence teacher training. It was noted that she had been a stalwart of the Centre over a number of years. CF also noted that he was very proud of her achievements.

School Improvement Report (SIP)

CF referred to the SIP Report that had been circulated via the Governance Gateway. Governors were informed that the School Improvement professional had visited the Forwards Centre prior to 'lock down' and the outcome report had been circulated for Governors review and information. It was noted that a further visit would be undertaken in two weeks' time to quality assure Teaching and Learning work. Case studies were currently being completed over an eight-week period. Lis Fenwick would undertake a review of these prior to the visit taking place.

8. GOVERNOR VISIT REPORTS

Governors had received the following visit reports detailing information from the virtual visits to their individual link areas:

- Teaching and Learning – Jenny Scott
- Leadership and Management – Liz Douglas
- Forwards Centre update – Suzanne Harulow
Including: Covid-19, staff/pupil well-being and re-opening of the Forwards Centre.

CF thanked Governors for undertaking their visits noting that he had felt very supported as always but especially in light of the current pandemic situation.

9. BUILDINGS AND PREMISES

9.1 Building Matters/Urgent Work

CF reported that the Site Manager in place at the Forwards Centre had worked very effectively to ensure that all DfE Guidance was followed as required.

LW asked if all the necessary checks had been undertaken such as appliance safety checks and legionella testing.

CF confirmed that they had.

Invacuation/Evacuation procedures

CF confirmed that an evacuation had been successfully undertaken on 26 February 2020 and that an invacuation had been undertaken on 2 March 2020.

It was noted that arrangements were to be made with Park School to complete summer term procedures prior to the end of the current term.

10. SUPPORT FOR GOVERNANCE

The Clerk reported in recognition that schools and academies were not currently operating in the usual way the Service would continue to be available to provide support, advice and guidance virtually, by email and by telephone.

Clerks would be assisting boards on undertaking virtual meetings and meeting statutory duties with documentation shared securely via the Bolton Governance Gateway.

For information, the Service had put together guidance on virtual meetings which could be found on the Governance Services website. This guidance would be updated throughout the term in order to provide additional information to support boards with their meetings.

During social distancing, isolation and shielding, it was important to provide some normality in services and we would therefore offer a suite of virtual training and development for governors

and trustees to access. This would replace planned face-to-face sessions for this term and further information about the sessions available had been issued via an additional e brief.

The NGA Learning Link, brokered through our Training and Development Service Level Agreement, remained available for access. Further information on e-learning can be found on our website.

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Agreed: That the Local Governing Board meetings for the 2020/21 academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term: Thursday 15 October 2020 at 4.00pm

Spring Term: Monday 1 February 2021 at 4.00pm

Summer Term: Monday 14 June 2021 at 4.00pm

12. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Joanne Blackburn.

It was noted that Vicky Byrne, Liz Douglas and Charlene Parkinson had not attended as had been hoped as the meeting progressed, but that Governors would consent to their absence on this occasion.

13. 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 Chair closed the meeting at 5.00pm expressing her thanks to CF and his team at the Forwards Centre for all the work undertaken and especially during this challenging time.

The Chair noted that she had recently attended an assembly and noted that the staff morale was also very positive given the circumstances of the pandemic.

Signed as a correct record: _____

(Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Governors)

Date: _____