

## LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF LEVER PARK SCHOOL

### MEETING HELD AT THE ACADEMY

ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 4.00 PM

**Present:** Mr. M. Taylor (Academy Lead), Miss H. Carr, Mr. R. King, Mr. A. Lee, Mr. N. Woosey, Ms. J. Ronson, Ms. M. Farnworth, Mr. D. Yates, Ms. K. Brady.

**In attendance:** Mrs. A. Appleyard (Clerk), Ms. R. Leonard, Mrs. V. Gavin, Ms M. Smith

**Miss H. Carr in the Chair**

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr. A. Feeley, Ms. J. Ashworth and Ms. V. Anthony.

It was noted that Ms. S. Gulshan (Staff Governor) was on maternity leave at the time of the meeting.

#### 2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

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

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

##### 2.2 Declaration of Interests 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 spring term board meeting as per usual process.

**2.3 Membership/Governance Issues**

It was noted that there was one vacancy for a Co-opted Governor, following the resignation of Mr. D. Buchanan. It was noted that he had been the Link Governor for Health and Safety. As it was anticipated that there may be some movement in link responsibilities at the summer term meeting, it was explained any issues relating to Health and Safety would be addressed at a Trust level until the summer term meeting when link roles would be considered.

It was noted that no terms of office were due to expire before the end of the academic year, but that the following five terms of office were due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023:

Miss H. Carr	Co-opted Governor
Mr. R. King	Co-opted Governor
Mr. A. Lee	Co-opted Governor
Mr. N. Woosey	Co-opted Governor
Ms. S. Gulshan	Staff Governor

A discussion took place regarding Governor attendance.

Miss Carr had informed the Academy Lead of her intention to step down from the LGB at the end of her term of office. This would mean that a new Chair would be required from September 2023. The Academy Lead thanked Miss Carr for her many years of service to the school. Some discussions had taken place regarding appointing a new Governor who may wish to be the Chair, and all current Governors were invited to nominate themselves as Chair from September 2023 if they wished to do so.

**Action:** Any Governor interested in becoming the Chair to contact the Academy Lead.

**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 Governance Services.

The Clerk advised that Governors were required to complete the Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent Forms following appointment or re-appointment:

**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 summer 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 19 October 2022.

SEND Policy

It was confirmed that an amendment had been made to the SEND Policy in order to clarify that it related to all Lever Park students, both those in school and those who accessed the outreach programme.

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

No items of any other business were notified.

**6. ACADEMY LEAD'S REPORT**

Mr. Taylor 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.

It was reported that the data dashboard which showed the students' progress appeared to show a dip in progress. It was explained that there had been a change in how the students' levels in English and Maths were reported, as staff now used Bolton Impact Trust levels, and these were standardised across the Trust. This meant that moderation could take place across the Trust. The creation of these levels had been a significant task, and staff had worked very hard to achieve this. It was explained that flight paths had also been created as part of this documentation, which meant that students could be assessed using baseline assessments, and their progress trajectory could then be planned. It was explained that whilst it appeared as though progress had dipped, there was now absolute confidence in the accuracy of the data. The Bolton Impact Trust levels were used across the Trust, including with the students who accessed the outreach programme. They enabled students to see their progress, and students were also aware of how they could improve. It was recognised that students who had not attended school for a significant period of time had made very significant progress by simply attending a small number of lessons in specific subject areas. It was recognised that it was of paramount importance that the staff knew every child very well, and this was one of the strongest features of the Trust.

A Governor asked why the levels were considered, and why staff considered that the previous levels may not have been fully accurate.

It was explained that this had been a Trust-wide initiative, as staff across the four academies could work together to standardise assessment, as there had been some inconsistencies. This was understandable as there were many subject areas where the number of teaching staff was very small, and standardisation was challenging with very small staff teams. It was recognised that this was a positive change across the Trust.

A Governor asked whether an effect had been seen on behaviour, attendance and engagement.

It was explained that a significant quantifiable effect had not yet been seen, but it had been noted that there had been an improvement in behaviour at Lever Park. The quality of teaching had also improved, which had led to increased engagement during lessons.

It was explained that the teaching staff had not been given the students' target levels from the flight path the first time the staff used the level descriptors in order to support staff in using the levels. This had worked well. The system continued to be embedded, and would be reviewed throughout the year.

It was reported that the current number on roll at the Academy was 89. It was anticipated that this would increase further in September 2023. Discussions had taken place regarding capacity on the school site. The demand for places at Lever Park was very high, but the Trust recognised the financial risk involved in increasing student numbers significantly. It was explained that there was no further classroom space available at the Academy, so student numbers therefore could not increase at this point. It was noted that there was a need to ensure that space was available as the school was a special school, and the students needed space in order to support their needs. It was agreed that the current position was very positive, and it was imperative that the Academy did not become too big, which would dilute the current very strong offer and could have an adverse impact across many areas. It was recognised that a new school building would not be built at the current time.

It was explained that student attendance had increased to 83% during the autumn term, and this was very pleasing progress. Staff had been very persistent in supporting students in attending school. A small number of students did not attend the Academy owing to significant mental health needs. Attendance had yet to return to pre-pandemic levels, and this was in line with the national picture. It was also noted that because the number of students on roll was much lower than the number on roll in mainstream settings, one absentee had a more significant impact upon attendance data. It was explained that a small number of year eleven students currently refused to attend the Academy owing to specific circumstances, which included involvement with the criminal justice system.

It was explained that the curriculum development work had continued throughout the autumn term, with individual curriculum statements from each subject area now being developed. This work now connected to curriculum development across the Trust, and the information would be uploaded to the Trust website. Work was also being done to prepare staff for conversations with Ofsted inspectors. It was noted that the Academy was due to be inspected by Ofsted from April 2024, although they could inspect at any time. It was explained that the curriculum development work was being done across both the academic and vocational subject areas.

It was reported that the number of suspensions had reduced to 14. There had been no suspensions during the current term. It was believed across the Academy that suspensions were not usually the best possible solution, as the students made the most significant progress whilst on the Academy site.

**A Governor asked why students may be suspended from the Academy.**

It was explained that unprovoked attacks of a violent and/or sexual nature, or drug related incidents would usually lead to a suspension, although each incident was considered separately, and decisions were highly individualised.

**A Governor asked whether the Police could visit the Academy to discuss the issues which may have led to, or could lead to, a suspension.**

It was explained that the local PCSOs attended the Academy site regularly in order to support breaking down barriers between the students and the Police. It was noted that the Police rarely had an impact upon student behaviour, and the most significant impact was when Academy staff who knew the students well worked alongside them to support them in resolving the issues which had arisen.

**A Governor asked whether it would be possible to include information regarding repeat suspensions (where the same student had received more than one suspension) in the behaviour data.**

It was explained that this was already included in the report, but could be highlighted.

It was explained that the demographic of the Academy was changing to include more students with an autism diagnosis, and a reduction in the number of students with EBD and SEMH issues.

A Governor observed that the work done by the staff had also improved the behaviour and working environment within the Academy.

**A Governor asked whether the Local Authority requested information regarding student progress and suspensions.**

It was explained that this was sent to the Local Authority, although it was not requested in the same way as it was for the other academies within the Trust. Information was also sent for EHCP reviews. Ofsted inspection outcomes were also considered by the Local Authority. The data was also presented to other Local Authorities who entered into agreements through the traded places system.

It was explained that a bid had been submitted for funding for a horticultural project, which would enable the Academy to undertake significant horticultural work. Plans were fully prepared, and the Academy had presented a bid for £41,000 to support this work.

It was noted that the work on the boiler had almost been completed, and the work on the roof was due to commence in the near future.

**A Governor asked whether the roof work encompassed all layers of the roof or just the top skin.**

It was confirmed that it would mainly be replacement of the top skin, but there were some areas where more significant work was required. It was reported that the contractors who had completed the work on the boiler had at times worked in the evening when the students were not on site, and this may also be possible with some aspects of the roofing work.

It was explained that some work was due to take place to improve the entrance area at the Academy so that the students would access the building through an alternative entrance. The current entrance would only be for staff and visitors.

It was reported that one of the goats on the Academy's farm had given birth to two baby goats. The students were due to name the goats at the end of the current week.

6.1 Review and Approval of the Academies' Joint SEF / Improvement and Development Plan

It was noted that this was covered under agenda item seven.

6.2 Visit by School Improvement Professional

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented.

6.3 Termly Report on the Academy's Provision for Children Looked After

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented.

6.4 Termly Report on Attendance and Children Missing Education

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented.

6.5 Termly Report on Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) Funding and Allocation

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented.

6.6 Termly Report on Evacuation and Invacuation

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented.

**7. ACADEMY SELF-EVALUATION FORM (SEF)**

The SEF document was distributed at the meeting.

It was explained that this was a new SEF, and that it was an essential document which focused upon improvement across the Academy. This would be used in preparation for an Ofsted inspection, and was also essential to support Academy improvement and development.

**A Governor asked whether all staff saw the SEF.**

It was explained that it was shared with the Senior Team. It had been shared with all staff in the past, and it was anticipated that the current SEF would be shared with all staff in the near future.

It was noted that it was important that all staff and Governors would need to be familiar with the SEF in order to ensure consistency during quality assurance discussions. It was anticipated that Academy Leads across the Trust would prepare a condensed version of the SEF for Governors to use for reference.

**Action:** The SEF to be shared with the staff team.

## **8. REPORT ON ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH**

It was noted that this had been included in the Academy Lead's report. No further update was presented. It was agreed to remove this as a separate agenda item for future meetings, as the information would be included in the Academy Lead's report.

## **9. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Finance Report had been shared in advance of the meeting. Governors had been requested to read the report in advance of this meeting, and to bring any questions. The main headlines were reported.

It was explained that Lever Park continued to operate at a surplus. It was anticipated that the Academy would end the year with a surplus of £64,000. The current projection was £62,000, which was a variance of £2,000. The costs which had had an impact upon the budget included the appointment of additional staff, and the teaching staff and support staff pay award.

It was explained that the third party spend had not reduced because some additional Learning Mentors were currently working at the Academy on a supply basis from a supply agency. This was because of increased student numbers.

It was anticipated that there would be a number of maternity leaves taking place in the coming months.

A Governor reported that they had completed a Governor visit with Finance as the visit focus, and they had been impressed with the financial control which they observed. It was noted that there would always be variances within any business, and the current position was therefore positive.

## **10. NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

### **10.1 Chairs' Briefing**

The Chair had attended the Chairs' Briefing held on 30 January 2023, and shared a written summary in advance of the meeting. There was no further update given.

### **10.2 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.

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 if Governors accessed the training through the Governance Gateway, the Prevent training to be completed was course one on the Home Office website which was accessed through the link on the Governance Gateway, or the refresher course if Governors had completed Prevent training within the past two years.

### 10.3 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.

### 10.4 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. The Academy Lead expressed his thanks to all Governors for their visits to the Academy.

A Governor asked whether the student visit to the Town Hall during the visit from the King and Queen Consort had been a positive experience.

It was confirmed that this had been an incredibly positive experience for all concerned, and that one student who had been able to shake the King's hand stated how very special the experience had been.

A Governor commented upon the sense of order they had experienced when visiting the Academy, and wished to commend the Academy Lead for the consistent work which was done to lead and manage the work across the Academy.

A Governor who had completed a visit with the focus of safeguarding had recommended that there be a Prevent Lead as well as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as this would support the DSL in being able to manage their workload.

## 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.



## **12. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

### **12.1 Local Governing Board Meeting**

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

Summer Term: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 4:00pm

## **13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence from this meeting of Mr. A. Feeley, Ms. J. Ashworth and Ms. V. Anthony.

It was confirmed that the Academy Lead would contact Ms. Anthony.

## **14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other business.

## **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 5:35pm.

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

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