

**LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**LEVER PARK SCHOOL**

**VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2020 AT 4.00PM**

**Present:** Mr M Taylor (MT), Miss H Carr (HC), Mrs J Ashworth (JA), Ms S Gulshan (SG), Mr A Lee (AL), Mr N Woosey (NW), Miss S Wynn (SW) and Mr D Yates (DY)

**In Attendance:** Paul Hodgkinson (PH) Executive Principal, Rebecca Leonard (RL) Executive Vice Principal, David Smith (DS), Finance Director, Mubeen Moosa, (Trainee Accountant), Melissa Sharp (Assistant Head Teacher) (Observing) and Carole Brooks (Clerk to the Local Governing Board)

**Miss H Carr in the Chair**

**Virtual Meeting Protocol**

**Governors were reminded of the virtual meeting protocol as had been agreed at a previous meeting.**

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed all present, in particular Jennifer Ashworth, Stephanie Wynn and Dillon Yates as newly appointed Governors and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence had been received from Philip Bold, David Buchanan, Andy Feeley, Richard King and Emma Simpson.

Governors were informed that Siobhan Gulshan had apologised for having to leave the meeting early.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

**2.1 Declaration of Pecuniary or Conflict of Interests**

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

**2.2 Annual Forms for Governors completion**

The Chair referred to the slight change in process for the annual completion and return of the following forms for this year:

- Register of Business Interest
- Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent
- Safeguarding Declaration

- Code of Conduct Acceptance (no change to content)

### Register of Business Interests

In accordance with the academy's financial handbook, entries in the Academy Trust's Register of Business Interests (RBI) were to be reviewed annually. All Trust Members, Local Governors and the Principal were asked to complete the LA model pro-forma and return it to Mr Smith 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 governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)

The Clerk noted that trustees and local governors were required to complete this information and that failure to do so may be in breach of the Trusts Code of Conduct.

DS explained that all Governors would receive a pack of the required forms including Declaration of Eligibility, Code of conduct acceptance, Register of Business Interest and Safeguarding Declaration required for their completion and return to him either via email or post in the stamped addressed envelope whichever was preferred.

**Agreed:** That all governors complete the Declaration of Eligibility, Register of Business Interests, Safeguarding Declaration and Code of Conduct Acceptance forms and return them to David Smith at the earliest opportunity.

**Action:** DS to make the necessary arrangements for a pack of the RBI, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Declaration forms to be forwarded to all Governors for their completion and return at the earliest convenience.

### **3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'**

There were no items of 'Any other Business' notified at this point in the meeting.

### **4. MINUTES/MATTERS ARISING OF THE LAST MEETING**

Governors had received the minutes of the last meeting held virtually on 15 June 2020 for their review and approval.

#### Matters Arising

##### 4.1 Invacuation Policy, minute number 5

MT confirmed that an invacuation drill was carried out last week, there had been some areas highlighted including some of the doors not locking from the inside and the bell not being heard on the South side of the school. Governors were assured that all matters would be addressed, and the policy had been amended accordingly.

#### 4.2 Transition work for Year 6 Pupils moving into Year 7

The Chair referred to the work undertaken to ensure a smooth transition for Year 6 pupils moving into year 7 at Lever Park and asked for an update on how this had gone.

MT confirmed that the transition for these pupils had been successful, in particular those pupils transferring from the Forward Centre where work had been undertaken to prepare the pupils prior to them moving to Lever Park to ensure a smooth transition. Lever Park had also mirrored the best practices and the protocols that were in place at the Forwards Centre.

MT confirmed that the pupils in Year 7 had settled well despite the current restrictions in place. It was noted that in previous years the school had arranged visits and integrated days to enable the new pupils to gain a flavour of the school but due to the circumstances of the Covid Pandemic, this could not be arranged.

DY referred to the transition process for Year 6 Pupils moving to Year 7 and asked if there was a specific programme in place.

MT confirmed that the large majority of pupils joining Lever Park in Year 7 came direct from an Alternative Provision (AP) such as the Forwards Centre which was part of Bolton impact Trust. The school tried to model the good practice used at the Forwards Centre and use their 'blueprint' to replicate year 7 making their first year relaxed and as stress free as possible to aid transition. Staff at the Forwards Centre liaise very closely with the staff at Lever Park, sharing good practices to ensure that as the receiving school they were aware of the most effective learning style and any past issues.

It was noted that in past years in the July of each year, prior to the summer break, the new Year 7 pupils would always be invited on site to spend a few days as a Lever Park Pupil and the staff at Lever Park would spend a similar time at the Forwards Centre to enable relationships to be built and aid a better transition, but this had been hindered this year due to the Covid restrictions in place.

PH confirmed the excellent offer of provision and SMSE principals that are practiced at the Forwards Centre, noting that the behaviour of the students was exemplary. PH concurred with MT in respect of how Lever Park School tries to recreate this same environment for the new Year 7 intake.

PH suggested that DY and all other newly appointed Governors liaise with PH after the meeting to arrange a visit to the Forwards Centre in order to better understand the context of the provision. Governors welcomed this opportunity.

MT asked the newly appointed Governors visiting the Forwards Centre to note the good practices observed and compare these with the practices observed at Lever Park to see if they were all replicated. Any feed-back would be welcomed.

#### **Action:**

- i) PH to circulate the SEMH Principals practiced at the Forwards Centre to all newly appointed Governors.
- ii) PH to make the necessary arrangements with the newly appointed Governors to have a chaperoned visit to the Forwards Centre.

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Board held on 15 June 2020.

## 5. NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES

### 5.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair reported that she had attended the virtual live event of the autumn term Chairs' Briefing meeting held on Monday 28 September 2020.

The Clerk noted that the following points had been highlighted:

- Autumn term updates:
  - Changes to the School Exclusion Process During the Pandemic
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education Update
  - Academies Financial Handbook
  - Financial Transparency in schools and academies
  - Ofsted Monitoring Visits
- Governance in the Years Ahead – 'Keeping our Board's vision at the core of our planning'

The Clerk noted that PH and DS had confirmed that the finance related updates would be shared at Trust level.

**Agreed:** That Governors receive and note the details on the Chairs Report.

S Gulshan left the meeting at this point.

### 5.2 Link Governors Report on Training / Recent Training undertaken

RL referred to her circulated report explaining for the benefit of the newly appointed Governors, that she had taken on the role as Link Governor for training across the Trust. RL confirmed that she had attended the Link Governor briefing held virtually on 14 September 2020 where it had been reported that in addition to the usual courses offered in the 2020/21 programme, there were a number of new training opportunities available to assist governors in their role, taking into account national initiatives and changes in legislation.

RL recommended that Governors access as many courses that they could to enhance their Governance role, particularly whilst these were all being presented virtually. It was noted that these could be accessed at a convenient time to suit each individual. Once completed, Governors were asked to advise RL to enable her to maintain accurate Governor training records.

RL referred to the National Induction course for the new Governors noting that this was a very beneficial course to undertake. It was noted that RL would direct the new Governors to any other courses that she felt would be beneficial.

Governors were informed that following a meeting with the Human Resources Adviser regarding the maintenance of the Single Central Record (SCR) it was realised that there was a need across the trust for additional monitoring in this area. Therefore, training would be made available for governors to attend, in particular the Governor/s with any safeguarding responsibilities.

RL referred to Safeguarding and the recent updates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020 Document and the LA Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Governors were informed that once all the LGB meetings had taken place for this term RL would forward Part 1 of this document to all Governors requesting that they read the document and return a signed declaration to confirm that they had read and understood it. It was noted that a short quiz may also be undertaken to confirm Governors understanding.

RL noted that a review of the Governor skills audit would also be undertaken in liaison with DS to inform any gaps in skills across the Trust, with Governors being directed to access related courses.

Governors were also asked to advise RL of any external courses attended and to ask for training to be sourced for any other Link Governor role related training that they felt would be beneficial to them.

PH noted that whilst there were a vast number of excellent courses made available by the LA, not all were as relevant to Alternative Provision (AP). Governors were requested to consider any training needs in order to up-skill and enhance their Governance role to further discuss with PH or RL who would endeavour to source courses to best meet their needs.

RL concurred with the comments made by PH noting that it was vital that Governors were adequately trained in order to best fulfil their role.

The Clerk encouraged all Governors to access as much training as was possible, in particular whilst it was being offered virtually.

**Action:**

- i) Newly appointed Governors to access the National Induction Training and any other Governance related courses required to enhance their role.
- ii) All Governors to make the necessary arrangements to access suitable courses to widen their knowledge and enhance their Governance role.
- iii) RL to forward part 1 of the KCSiE document for Governors review together with a declaration for Governors completion and return.
- iv) Governors to read Part 1 of the KCSiE document and return a signed copy of the declaration to confirm that they had read and understood it.

**5.3 Nominated Link Governor Visits**

The Chair thanked Governors for making the time to undertake a monitoring visit to their link area and for the provision of the detailed reports as circulated for Governors review and information.

HC referred to the report submitted by AF and asked for clarification regarding the Maths skills and the changes needed to the Curriculum.

MT explained that the discussion held with AF had been around the volume of work that the pupils had missed and the impact that this had made on their subject knowledge and potential

GCSE results. It was noted that once the gaps had been identified for each student the required strategies would be put in place. It was further noted that the majority of pupils attending Lever Park School had gaps in their learning for a variety of reasons and that the school would always do their very best to address these and help the pupils reach their full potential.

Governors were assured that the initial priority was to ensure that the Year 11 students were ready for the next year and Class teachers were addressing this on an individual basis.

At this point in the meeting and for the benefit of the newly appointed Governors PH explained the process involved for Link Governor monitoring visits to Lever Park. Governors were informed that a once per term as Governor week was arranged two or three weeks in advance of the termly Board meeting for Governors to visit/virtually visit their area of responsibility with a specific line of enquiry. It was noted that the staff welcomed this and were very appreciative of the challenge.

MT confirmed that Governor week had proved to be very successful and that a specific agenda would be circulated to all involved beforehand. It was noted that this process also fed into the SEF/SDP.

PH commented that governance was very important to the Trust and that good governance was not just about attending termly meetings, it was also about becoming involved and having an active role within the setting. PH commended the support from governors and impact made from the visits undertaken and thanked them for their active and valued contribution.

MT thanked Governors for their time and on-going commitment. It was noted that most visits had been undertaken virtually and whilst these had been very successful, he looked forward to returning to physical visits from Governors when that was made possible.

JA discussed the report provided by AF noting that to enable her to gain more information in this area of her responsibility it would be useful to arrange a meeting to further discuss.

MT confirmed that he was happy to arrange a meeting with JA and any other Governor who wished to further discuss their link area of responsibility.

PH explained that Governors were not limited to visiting the School during Governor week, they were welcomed to visit anytime by prior arrangement with MT.

RL referred to a Trust wide project in relation to the Curriculum and would be undertaking a number of 'deep dives' into specific areas. It was suggested that JA may like to join and review the process undertaken and also gain a better understanding of the Curriculum offer.

**Action:** JA to make the necessary arrangements with RL to join the team when any 'deep dives' into the curriculum are carried out.

## 5.2 Link Governor Roles and Responsibilities

Further to the circulated report, MT confirmed that he had allocated the Link Governor roles and any further updates would be made to ensure that the report was up to date and that the roles and responsibilities detailed, linked back to the SEF.

**Agreed:** That Governors delegate the responsibility of making the necessary link Governor appointments to MT.

### **Action:**

- i) MT to further update the report in respect of the Link Governor roles and responsibilities assigned and the links with the SEF.
- ii) MT to circulate the updated report to all Governors.

## 6. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT TO GOVERNORS

Governors were informed that for the Autumn term 2020 Local Governing Body meetings, the Academy Leads had all been asked to write their reports with slightly different contents and in a different format. The circulated report had therefore been adapted to reflect the changes in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

MT guided Governors through the following key items:

- Summer Term 2020
- Preparing for September 2020
- Results and Destinations 2019/20
- Updates since we have re-opened fully in September 2020
- Current pupil numbers
- Safeguarding

MT highlighted the following aspects of the report:

### Results and Destinations

MT confirmed that the school had developed a broader Curriculum to offer a wider range of qualifications for the Students to choose from. A positive impact had been seen, and it was felt that the needs of all students had been met.

MT commended the staff team for the support provided to all students and for the constant tracking of data. Students were also to be commended for their achievements. MT noted a special thanks to the Connexions Adviser who had worked tirelessly in ensuring that all Students had Post 16 destination.

HC reported that she had been very impressed with the outcomes and results gained given the challenges faced in regarding the circumstances of the pandemic. Congratulations on behalf of the LGB were conveyed to the students and staff team concerned.

## Remote Learning

DY asked for clarification regarding the details recorded within the circulated report in respect of remote learning and its links to behaviour issues and what this involved.

MT explained that for the first three weeks of the new academic year, all pupils had adhered to the social distancing guidelines in place and the school had remained very calm. However, since then a number of pupils through a variety of incidences had led to the need for Covid safe practices to be imposed and for them to be subjected to home learning for a set period of time. This was in the safety of all concerned.

Governors were informed that pupils who could not adhere to social distancing and the safe practices put in place at the school were given three chances to improve and if after the third time they continued to oppose the guidelines in place then a discussion was held with their parents/carers and were required to stay at home with a home learning package provided. The pupils would be gradually re-integrated into the school over the following weeks and reminded of the guidelines in place.

Governors were assured that the safety of the building, staff and pupils was the schools' priority and steps had to be taken for anyone unable to follow the procedures required. MT noted that this process had worked well for some students who had failed to comply but that there were a small number who continued to be non-compliant.

PH referred to the challenges faced by the staff team in these circumstances noting that the strategies employed previously to meet the needs of the pupils had been removed as a result of Covid. It was thought that some pupils responded better to remote learning and that this was a consideration for future investment.

PH referred to the need to enhance blended learning opportunities in order to be best prepared in the event of another full 'lockdown'

Governors were informed that during the 'lockdown' earlier in the year staff members had responded well to delivering home learning packs. Consideration would be given to the continuation of this as a supplement or an additional learning resource. PH noted that this matter would be further discussed with MT and the School Improvement Professional at their next meeting.

RL reported that she had discussed the provision of 'paper/hard copy learning packs having been very successful with a number of pupils. It was noted that the opportunity to further develop remote learning was there and would better meet the needs of many pupils. It was noted that sometimes ICT could be an issue for pupils in AP's but that the Trust were looking at ways of sourcing additional ICT hardware and using Microsoft Teams.

MT referred to a number of pupils having barriers to learning and in some cases the barrier was entering the school building. The circumstances of the pandemic had hindered any progress made and it was therefore felt that if this situation continued alternative learning styles were required to ensure that they continue to receive the high-quality standard of education provided by the School.

PH confirmed that the school had not yet had any positive cases, but it was felt that they had to be prepared should these circumstances arise.

MT referred to a number of pupils already receiving a blended learning package due to the nature of the pupil and their attendance issues.



PH referred to the challenges faced by staff and the need to continue with 'eyes on' visits should another lockdown be put in place. Providing Community support was vital and the need to keep in touch with the students and their families was paramount in respect of safeguarding.

RL confirmed that any further updates in the development of remote learning would be provided at the spring term 2021 meeting.

### Pupil Destinations

NW referred to the circulated report commending the section provided on pupil destinations noting that it was pleasing to see that all students had secured a positive post 16 destination.

NW asked if any past pupils returned to the school to update staff members on their progress.

MT confirmed that this happened very regularly but only on an informal basis. Consideration would be given to arranging a more formal visit with past students being invited back to talk to the current students and encourage them to value their education in order for them to see the rewards. It was thought that this would also be a way to enhance community relationships.

PH referred to two ex-students now employed by the Trust as Learning Mentors. It was noted that both had experienced difficulties when growing up but had since become successful and valued members of staff. It was noted that they could resonate with the students and the messages, guidance and support that they gave to pupils was very powerful.

Governors commended the staff team for the additional support provided to students and their families. Delivering home learning packs and building relationships with pupils and the community was the key to success.

### ICT Grants

SW referred to the availability of ICT grants for the provision of IT equipment for eligible families. It was noted that an application had to be completed and submitted for consideration but that this may be worth sharing with other Parents who may be eligible to apply.

**Action:** SW and MT to further discuss this matter after this meeting.

**Agreed:** That Governors receive and note the contents of the Academy Leads report with thanks.

## **7. FINANCE PRESENTATION**

Governors had received a financial presentation compiled by DS detailing the financial position of Lever Park School.

DS shared an on-screen copy of the presentation noting that this report was in a slightly different format than on previous occasions guiding Governors through each of the following sections:

- Anticipated Outturn 2019/20
- Variances between budget and outturn
- Budgeted surplus 2020/2021

- Pupil numbers September 2020 (including financial impact)
- Mitigation in place

Governors were reminded that the financial year for Academies was from September to August.

#### Anticipated out-turn for 2019/20

DS reported that Lever Park had faced a number of financial challenges over recent years but was pleased to report that at the end of August 2020 a surplus had been made on the closing balance.

DS commended the work of MT and his staff team for the savings and efficiencies made noting that this had been a very strong contribution along with the income generated from the additional pupils joining the school.

Governors were informed that less money had been spent towards the end of the year as a result of Covid.

#### 2020/21 Budget

DS reported that as of 1 September 2020, the Trust had approved a slight deficit to the budget of £45,000 but that this formed a wider picture within the Trust.

Governors were informed that Lever Park school were currently operating in excess of the 69 funded places. This issue was reflected across the wider trust with some settings not receiving the same number of referrals as they had previously, resulting in a loss of income.

Governors were informed that a vast amount of work had been undertaken and on-going discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the LA had been held to mitigate these circumstances including:

- Lobbying for additional funding
- Increased trading
- Reducing uncommitted spends

DS noted that it had been discussed that schools would receive funding based on previous years numbers but that impacted negatively on BIT as they had 49 less pupils at the end of last year. It was noted that this equated to around £800,000 and if continued would be a significant loss.

DS confirmed that work was being done to address the concerns raised and savings and efficiencies were being made across the Trust where possible.

PH referred to the current funding agreement in place with the LA and the related pressures on both sides. However, the Trust held a good working relationship with the LA, and it was hoped that a fair agreement regarding funding could be reached in the very near future.

PH asked DY how the LA in his locality were managing this area.

DY explained that pupil numbers were lower in the AP he worked in but that they had an agreement and guarantee with their LA regarding funding being based on the previous year. It was noted that no top funding would be received which was the same as Bolton.

PH confirmed that many businesses were facing similar issues and that it was felt that this issue could be worked through. Governors would be updated as the year progressed.

**Agreed:** That the details within the financial report be received with thanks.

## **8. GOVERNOR QUESTIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Agreed:** That Governors had no further questions of the Leadership Team than had already been raised.

## **9. POLICY APPROVALS AND REVIEW OF PROCESS**

Governors had received the following policies for their review and approval:

### **9.1 Behaviour Policy**

Governors confirmed that they had read and approved the updates made.

**Agreed:** That Governors approve the updated Behaviour Policy.

### **9.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection (Model) Policy**

RL noted that the model Safeguarding, and Child Protection Policy had been updated by the LA in line with the 2020 updates that had been made to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Document. The updated Policy had been circulated to schools for their review and to be personalised to their school. RL confirmed that this had now been completed for Governors approval.

RL reminded Governors as discussed earlier, once all LGB meetings had been completed for this term she would circulate Part 1 of the KCSiE Document 2020 to all Governors for their review together with a declaration form to sign and confirm their understanding.

**Agreed:** That the updates made to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2020 be approved.

**Action:** RL to circulate Part 1 of the KCSiE document 2020 to all Governors to read and return the signed declaration to confirm their understanding.

## **10. GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE**

Governors had received a briefing note detailing the recent updates and virtual events planned from by the Governance Services Team including:

- Clerking and Support – Continued virtual arrangements
- Governor Training and Development - Virtual arrangements
- Governance Services staff update

## 11. **IMPACT STATEMENT**

Governors discussed the impact made at this meeting from the discussions and agreements that had been made as follows:

- Appointment of new Governors to ensure a broad skill set is maintained across the LGB in particular the skills of the Parent Governor
- Review and appointment of the Link Governor roles to ensure effective challenge and monitoring is maintained
- Governor visit reports very reflective of the challenge and support in place

PH noted that the majority of the impact was made during Governor week and all monitoring visits undertaken. Governors were thanked for their support and commitment.

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

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

Spring Term:     Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 4.00pm  
 Summer Term:   Monday 21 June 2021 at 4.00pm

All meetings to continue to be held virtually unless otherwise informed.

## 13. **CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence from this meeting of all absentees.

## 14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of 'Any Other Business' reported.

## 15. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

PH asked that Governors exercised confidentiality in respect of some of the Finance related discussions held.

The Chair and MT thanked Governors for their contribution to the meeting and for their on-going commitment as Governors of Lever Park LGB. It was recognised that Governors time was

limited due to their own individual work commitments and the dedication shown was very much appreciated.

Governors also wished Melissa Sharp well with her pregnancy.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm

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

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