

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF LEVER PARK SCHOOL

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

ON 8TH JUNE 2022 AT 4.00 PM

Present: Mr. M. Taylor (Academy Lead), Miss H. Carr, Mr. R. King, Mr. A. Lee, Mr. N. Woosey, Miss J. Ashworth, Mr. D. Yates.

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

Miss H. Carr in the Chair

1. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms. S. Gulshan, Ms. R. Leonard and Mr. D. Buchanan.

Mr. A. Feeley, Miss S. Wynn and Ms. E. Simpson were not present at the meeting.

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, and that there were no vacancies on the Local Governing Board.

Mr. D. Smith explained that the Declarations of Interest forms, which all Governors must complete, now formed part of the statutory audit for the Trust. Governors were asked to complete these forms as a matter of urgency if they had not already done so. Office based staff have been asked to contact Governors who had yet to return the forms in order to request that they are completed and returned.

3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The following points were raised regarding the minutes from the previous meeting.

It was explained that the report from the Behaviour Lead to be presented to Governors had been included in the Headteacher's Report

It was noted that the curriculum intent documents for the outreach and engagement programme were included in the Outreach and Engagement brochure, which provided all relevant information relating to the programme. The document had been shared in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the Academy was very pleased with the Engage and Outreach programme, which has

developed very well. The students on the programme had access to the same teaching, resources and support as those attending the main Academy site, and it was recognised that the programme was an active part of school life, and central to the work which has been done. It was explained that the finance for the programme remained at the same level, with no change to the provision provided across the Academy.

As the Academy considered staffing costs, it was noted that the financial position was very healthy.

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 9 February 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. 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 explained that the Academy had faced a challenging situation in February, following a call made to Ofsted regarding Lever Park. The Local Authority had contacted the Academy, and a full report was compiled which found that there was no truth in the allegations which were made. It was recognised that the complaint could not be substantiated, and that the family concerned had made similar complaints in the past and that they were known to Bolton Safeguarding Team. It was recognised that the Academy had an excellent working relationship with Bolton Local Authority and the Safeguarding Team. The Local Authority reported to Ofsted that there were no concerns, and none of the family's accusations were upheld. Ofsted were satisfied with the report which was submitted. However, following this incident, the Academy then requested an external safeguarding review, which had been shared alongside the Headteacher's Report. An action plan has since been created. It was recognised that this had been a very challenging and stressful experience for the Academy. The Governors agreed that they were pleased with the report following the Safeguarding Audit, and were happy with the action plan which had been created.

It was explained that there had been a significant amount of work done at Lever Park to combat smoking and swearing on the school site. It was explained that some small pockets of on-site smoking remained, but this has reduced significantly, and the students were aware of the consequences they would face if they were caught smoking within the school grounds. It was noted that a large number of students who were in year eleven and were smokers have now left the Academy. It was noted that there would always be issues regarding smoking on the school site, but there had been a significant reduction in the number of students who smoked within the school grounds.

A Governor asked whether the consistency in how smoking was dealt with had improved.

It was explained that this was the case, particularly since the area at the back of the school had been cordoned off, as this had been an area which was difficult to manage. There was always a form of discipline for students who had been caught smoking, and this could lead to an exclusion. It was noted that there were fewer smokers on site now. It was noted that the increased drive to address the issue of smoking on the Academy's site had led to an increase in exclusions, 23 exclusions in the spring term related to smoking.

A second issue was with swearing, and swear words being used in lessons. It was explained that a programme has been in operation over the course of the past few weeks, where students were awarded with a raffle ticket for every lesson when they did not swear during the lesson. A raffle was then drawn, and the student with the winning ticket won a voucher worth £20. It was noted by staff that the number of raffle tickets had increased each week, and the students had seen that by not swearing they could earn rewards.

It was explained that a Trust. Improvement Plan had been put in place at Lever Park in order to address issues such as damage and swearing, and a need to create stability. This plan had been in place for six weeks, and the improvement had been excellent. The Academy had responded well to everything which had been asked of them, and the progress made had been very positive.

A discussion took place regarding pupil progress data, which had been considered to be low during the autumn term where 47% of the pupils were meeting or exceeding their targets in English and 59% who were meeting or exceeding their targets in Maths. This had been further exacerbated by Covid-19 related absences amongst both staff and students. However, since stability in staff attendance had returned, progress had improved dramatically and at the time of the meeting in both subjects over 70% of the students were meeting or exceeding their targets. Academy staff were very pleased with this progress.

It was explained that there had been some very positive work undertaken regarding assessment data and the way in which assessment was completed, particularly in English where progress had always lower than progress in Maths. The Academy had therefore implemented a clearer way of measuring progress in English, and this had since been rolled out across the Trust. English level descriptors had been developed, and these ensured that everyone marked to the same standard. As a Trust, decisions had been made regarding what good progress looked like. The increased stability in staff attendance following the Covid-19 pandemic had helped with the improvements in progress, but the strategies had also played a highly significant role, and the data was now much more accurate.

It was explained that the Trust had placed significant pressure on the schools against the expectations of the Ofsted handbook, which was used to create robust systems. It was felt that curriculum was now in a strong position and was highly innovative. The Central Team was very pleased with the progress made at Lever Park. It was agreed that it was very easy to focus on some of the negative aspects of school life such as smoking on site, but there were many positives aspects and the school had made significant progress. Some of the work being done was highly innovative. It was recognised that the work done in the background was having a significant impact. The return from maternity leave of a member of the Senior Leadership Team at Lever Park had further strengthened the leadership at the Academy.

It was agreed that it had been a delight to see Governors able to return to visiting the Academy, and all Governor visits had been very positive. It was agreed that everyone had enjoyed and benefited from being able to meet in person again following the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. REPORT ON ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

It was explained that the Engagement and Outreach programme was based around the principal of a ladder, where students who may have been schools refusers in the past were able to climb the ladder, so that they could benefit from a blended learning offer. This meant that they may attend both sites, and they could engage with the full package offered by the Academy. It was explained that moving a student from the bottom of the ladder to the top was very challenging. It was shared that during the spring term, 68% of the children were on the top three rungs of the

ladder, and by the start of the summer term this had increased to 81%. The children had therefore moved up the ladder as they had progressed through the year. The Academy staff were delighted with this progress. With regard to the students at the bottom of the ladder, 18% were in this position during the spring term, and this had reduced to only 10% during the summer term. This demonstrated that the programme was working well, and the progress was very positive with staff working incredibly hard to support the students and ensuring that the needs of the children are being met. It was recognised that it was essential that the students were in the correct environment in order for this progress to be made.

The Executive Principal asked whether there was a Governor assigned as the Engagement and Outreach link Governor.

It was explained that this was not the case, but it was agreed that this was a good idea. It was also agreed that it offered a good opportunity to consider the link roles for all Governors.

Agreed: The Academy Lead to review all Governor roles, and speak to individual Governors as appropriate to discuss any changes which may need to be made.

Action: The Clerk to ensure that Governor roles are included on the agenda for the autumn term meeting.

A Governor explained that they had been involved with many engagement and outreach programmes. It was shared that attendance would need to be considered carefully as progress from the students' starting points was an essential point to explain to any external observers. It was agreed that all those involved in such conversations should be able to show an excellent understanding of this, as it was known that questions would be asked about attendance and engagement. It was agreed that the provision offered was excellent, and that a formal report was perhaps now needed in order to explain the programme to external observers. It was agreed that a case study for each child attending the provision would be a very positive document which could be shown to Governors and also any external organisations such as Ofsted. The case study would show a student's point of entry and would include behaviour, progress and attitude, as well as other items of key information. This would enable the academy to show a student's starting point, the work done and the impact in a clear way. It was noted that the key performance indicators were very positive, and it was recognised that the provision was a key part of Lever Park. Mr. D. Yates offered to help to compile a report about the provision, and his offer was received with thanks.

7. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

Mr. Smith presented his 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 explained that Lever Park was now projecting a surplus, which was significantly better than had been budgeted. This was because the number of pupils attending the site had increased more than was budgeted for. It was noted that some students attending the provision were from within the Bolton Local Authority area, and some were from neighbouring authorities. The increase in the number of students attending from neighbouring authorities had meant that the income had increased.

Governors were pleased by this significant improvement, and it was agreed that it showed the benefit of the strategy now being used as the Trust charged more for students from outside of the Local Authority area. It was recognised that the provision was excellent. It was explained that the high needs provision within the Bolton area was under significant financial pressure, and this had helped to balance that picture.

It was explained that a bid had been submitted for capital resources from the capital infrastructure fund which would fund a replacement roof for Lever Park. This bid had been successful, and meant that the school would pay part of the cost of the roof, and the bid would fund the remainder of the cost. The roof would then be installed towards the end of the year. It was explained that the school would pay back their part of the funding through a low interest loan. The new roof would complement the heating and cooling system in the building, which should help to maximise efficiency in the use of electricity and gas.

Mr. N. Woosey explained that he had met with the Academy Lead and the Chief Financial Officer, and that he had been pleased with the financial position of the Academy. It was agreed that the Academy should not end up in a position when there was no incentive to perform well financially because of regulations regarding clawback. It was therefore essential that consideration was given across the Trust when the different academies made a profit, so that consideration could be given to how the money could be reinvested in the school, or how it could be made to be even more profitable. The surplus generated by Lever Park had allowed a confidence to commit to projects such as the roof and to reinvest money across the academy. It was recognised that there had been deficits in the past which had been covered elsewhere within the Trust. It was recognised that funding was used to provide support across the Trust, and to give benefits where possible, although it was difficult to create incentives with public funding. It was agreed that creating an incentive for the future across all of the settings was something the Trust would like to consider. It was also recognised that at the time of the meeting demand for places in provision such as that offered at Lever Park was very high.

8. NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES

8.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair attended the Chairs' Briefing held on 9th May 2022, and had shared her notes in advance of the meeting. It was 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

8.2 Training and Development Lead's Report on Training

It was explained that Ms. Leonard coordinated Governor training and development across the Trust. She had sent a report to the Executive Principal, as she was not present at the meeting. The Executive Principal shared the following key points, and more detail was included in the report.

- The role of the Safeguarding Governor.
- The role of the Board with regard to safeguarding.
- A reminder that Safeguarding Level 1 and Prevent training were compulsory for all Governors, and Governors were asked to complete this as a matter of urgency if they had not already done so, and to send copies of their training certificates to Ms. Leonard.

The Executive Principal asked the Clerk to upload the report to the Governance Gateway so that Governors could read it in full.

Action: Clerk to upload the report on training and development to the Governance Gateway.

8.2.1 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.

8.2.2 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.

8.3 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

8.4 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 staff had been delighted to see Governors return to visiting the school in person. The Trust was very pleased with the work done by the LGB at Lever Park, and it was stated that there was strong governance from an excellent Governing Board at the Academy. The Governors who had visited the school agreed that they had very much enjoyed the opportunity to visit the Academy following the Covid-19 pandemic.

9. POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVAL

There were no policies to be reviewed or approved at this meeting.

It was noted that there was a need to review the Health and Safety Policy, and the Academy Lead was developing this with the staff at the Academy. It was agreed that this would be circulated to Governors as soon as it had been completed.

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 agreed that the website was fully compliant, and that Governors were satisfied with the content. It was noted that it would be reviewed on a regular basis.

11. PROPOSED DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

14.1 Local Governing Board Meeting

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

Autumn Term: Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 4.00 pm
Spring Term: Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 4:00pm
Summer Term: Wednesday 7th 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

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Ms. S. Gulshan, Mrs. R. Leonard, Mr. D. Buchanan, Mr. A. Feeley, Miss S. Wynn and Ms. E. Simpson.

It was noted that Ms. Gulshan would be on maternity leave from September 2023. The Clerk agreed to check the protocol regarding staff attendance at LGB meetings for the period of Ms. Gulshan's maternity leave.

It was noted that there would be a vacancy for a Parent Governor in the near future.

14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

A discussion took place regarding the Impact Statement, and it was agreed that this would be completed in July. This used to form a part of every LGB meeting, but it was now discussed and completed once during the academic year.

Agreed: to discuss and complete the Impact Statement outside of the meeting, and to discuss its content at the autumn term meeting.

15. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Agreed: That in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the following matter(s) be designated as confidential, thereby excluding the information from that which is to be made available to any interested persons:-

- the matter(s) covered in Minute Number five above in relation to the complaint made to Ofsted.

The meeting closed at 5:05pm.

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

Date: _____