

**BOLTON IMPACT TRUST
LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF LEVER PARK SCHOOL
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA THE ZOOM PLATFORM
15 JUNE 2020 AT 4.00PM**

Present: Mr M Taylor (MT), Miss H Carr (HC), Mr D Buchanan (DB), Ms S Gulshan (SG), Mr R King (RK), Mr A Lee (AL) and Mr N Woosey (NW).

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

Miss H Carr in the Chair

1. VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL

The Chair welcomed all present to the first virtual meeting of the LGB and referred to the protocols as circulated for this meeting. Governors microphones were requested to be muted and all agreed to raise their hand if wishing to speak.

Agreed: That Governors accept and adopt the protocols as circulated for this and any future virtual meetings

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Mr A Feeley.

3. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

3.1 Meeting Chairing

The Clerk advised that in light of the current Covid 19 Pandemic it was felt to be good practice to have a contingency plan in place should both the Chair and Vice Chair become unable to continue with their Governance role.

Governors discussed this matter and

Agreed: That in these circumstances Mr N Woosey would undertake the role of Chair/Vice as required should the current Chair and Vice Chair become unavailable.

3.2 Notification of Vacancies

The Clerk reported that there remained vacancies for one Parent Governor and three Co-opted Governors.

Parent Governor vacancy

PH reported that it was intended to undertake a Parent Governor election at the earliest opportunity. If more than one Parent put themselves forward it was suggested that Governors consider transferring Mr Feeley, currently in a Parent Governor position to a Co-opted Governor position (currently three vacant positions) to enable both parents to join the Board. This was agreed.

MT noted that he knew of one parent that had expressed an interest.

Co-opted Governor vacancies

PH informed Governors that he had been made aware of a senior official from the DfE who was interested in Governance of alternative provisions (AP). It was noted that there were co-opted vacancies on other Local Governing Boards across the Trust and felt that they would be an asset to them all. It was also felt that there were other interested members of the Community that could be approached to fill the other positions.

PH noted that it would be of benefit to recruit a Governor with skill in the area of special needs but suggested that a review of the skills audit be undertaken initially to ascertain if there was a need for any other specific skills required.

Agreed: That if two Parent Governors put themselves forward consideration be given to both being appointed and Mr Feeley transferring to a Co-opted position.

Action:

- i) MT/PH to make the necessary arrangements to hold a Parent Governor election at the earliest opportunity.
- ii) MT/PH to undertake a review of the skills audit to ascertain any gaps in skills and enable an informed decision to be made.

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 spring term meeting for their review and approval.

Following review, it was agreed that there were no urgent matters arising which were not covered by items on the agenda other than the review and approval of the Invacuation Policy as circulated.

MT noted that whilst the policy had been completed, it had not been tested with staff members or pupils to date due to the current pandemic, closure of the school and lock down rules.

A discussion was held with Governors confirming that they had reviewed and would approve the policy as it currently stood, but felt that this should be presented to staff to establish their thoughts on its content and the procedures to be followed prior to a drill being undertaken at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

Governors discussed that now that school had re-opened and there were currently only a small number of pupils on site, it may be a good opportunity to undertake an invacuation drill to test the effectiveness of the policy noting any areas requiring improvement and amending the Policy if/as required. A further whole school drill could be undertaken as the population of the school increased over the coming weeks.

Agreed:

- i) That Governors approve the invacuation Policy for presentation to staff prior to an invacuation drill being practiced
- ii) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 12 February 2020.

Action: MT to make the necessary arrangements to undertake an invacuation procedure at the earliest opportunity and amend the policy if/as required taking account of any concerns that may be raised.

6. FINANCE REPORT

Governors were guided through the financial monitoring report as circulated and prepared by Mr D Smith in liaison with Mr Moosa, trainee accountant.

DS reported that as per the report, the carry forward figure showed that Lever Park Academy continued to be in a deficit position of £59,000. However, this was £41,000 less than the budgeted figure of £100,000 and therefore the Academy was in a much better position than had been anticipated.

Governors were informed that Lever Park School was in receipt of place funding for 69 places but had been required to admit nine additional pupils. The additional numbers had therefore benefitted the school financially. It was noted that the current Covid pandemic had reduced some expenditure for items such as Free School Meals and rewards but the income to the Academy had not reduced.

DS confirmed a positive financial picture across the wider Trust who were predicting a surplus of over £300,000 for this year. It was noted that the Trust were now coming close to clearing the previous year's deficit.

Thanks' was conveyed to the Academy Leads and all members of the Leadership Team for their work undertaken in making the necessary savings and efficiencies to date for Lever Park.

HC commended all staff across the Trust for their hard work and dedication in making the necessary savings and continuing to provide such an outstanding provision.

DS also commended the support of Mr Moosa, trainee Accountant, this was very much appreciated.

Questions were invited but none were raised.

7. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT

Governors had received the termly report compiled by MT, Academy Lead for their review and information. MT noted that the current Covid 19 Pandemic had dominated the report on this occasion. However, Governors were guided through the report which had provided information and updates in the following areas:

7.1 Spring Term (pre-closure)

Attendance data

Governors were informed that the attendance figure prior to the Covid 'lock down' stood at 88.74% which was a pleasing improvement on the same period last year. Work would continue to encourage good attendance providing support to the pupils and their families as required.

Behaviour

MT was pleased to report that the number of fixed term exclusions had reduced. There had been 22 exclusions which equated to 59 sessions. It was noted that whilst there were some occasions of disruption, on the whole, the environment now felt much calmer. It was felt that the behaviour policy and other related policies in place were now embedded and that this was reflected in the data provided.

Transition work

MT referred to a significant piece of work that had commenced in January 2020 until mid-March 2020, prior to the Covid 'lock down' with Mr Fielding, Academy Lead at The Forwards Centre. It was noted that work had been undertaken to ensure a smooth transition for pupils moving from the Primary provision to the Secondary provision.

Curriculum

Governors were informed that a review of the curriculum had been undertaken with the addition of Humanities and also providing an extension to the vocational curriculum. It was noted that the Curriculum for individual students would always be under review, making the necessary improvements to better support specific groups of pupils and effectively meet their needs.

MT stated that the recruitment of the Hair and Beauty specialist had made a positive impact on a number of pupils not only by providing education in Hair and Beauty but also as a pastoral member of staff across the Trust. The number of pupils expressing an interest in this area had since increased significantly.

Year 11 – Destinations

MT confirmed that the process in place for post 16 destinations was well underway and that the school in liaison with Connexions would ensure that all Year 11 pupils would have a Post 16 destination in place for September 2020.

Engagement Program

Further to the details presented in the circulated report, Governors were assured that following the closure of the 'Clubs', other outreach provision with the help of Paul Anderson, Jo Barlow and Beth Corby had been put in place for the Pupils at Lever Park School. Thanks was to be conveyed to them for their support; these arrangements were running very effectively and would continue to progress in the future.

Pupil Numbers (confidential item)

The Local Governing Board having designated the details of discussion of this matter as Confidential under the Academies Articles of Association, this information is excluded from these minutes.

7.2 Safeguarding pupils during Coronavirus lockdown

Further to the circulated report MT informed Governors of the safeguarding measures undertaken since lock down and the site being closed to staff and pupils from the 23 March 2020.

Governors were informed that pupils were split into three groups relating to the level of support they would require. Group one being the most vulnerable and group three being the least vulnerable. A slightly different offer of provision was put in place for each group.

MT reported that all pupils were contacted on a daily basis by telephone and home visits undertaken in liaison with the key workers. The level of work was reviewed and amended as required in order to meet the individual needs of the pupil in question.

Staff would meet on a daily basis to discuss students' wellbeing and the conversations held with them with revised support plans being put in place if/as required. Governors were informed that this process was on-going and would continue into the summer break to ensure that an 'eyes on' approach was maintained.

MT referred to the provision of other phase 1 work that had been provided for the pupils and their families including:

- Ways to support engagement
- Keeping positive
- Maintaining communication
- Ensuring that good behaviour at home was maintained and that the work set was completed as required.

MT reported that the welfare and safeguarding arrangements for the pupils had increased under these circumstances to ensure that the pupils and their families were well supported and coping under such different circumstances and working environments. It was noted that there were a significant number of vulnerable families with children attending Lever Park School and therefore work had been undertaken with external agencies in ensuring that the eligible families were provided with vouchers to access their child/ren's free school meal and food parcels delivered.

HC asked how the current working arrangements had worked out and if there was any way to measure or quantify how successful it had been.

MT explained that there was nothing to measure against as schools had never experienced this type of situation before. It had been thought that the pupils wouldn't have adapted to the situation as well as they had and that there might have been more instances requiring Police involvement. However, for the majority of the time the pupils had responded well, but on occasions parents had called the school for additional support to which the staff had responded to without question.

MT referred to a report shared with Governors that could be used as a measure noting that the level of contact made with the pupils and their families had been invaluable and parents had also been very positive. MT confirmed that whilst there had been some incidents to manage, on the whole was pleased with the pupils conduct in the community under these circumstances.

HC thanked MT and his team of staff for all the additional work undertaken during the Pandemic crisis and for working above and beyond the call of duty on many occasions. It was felt that the effective management of this situation should be celebrated.

7.3 Remote learning strategy and its impact

MT noted that he felt very proud of the staff and pupils in how they had adapted to such a different way of working. Lever Park had maintained a strong presence in the lives of the pupils and their families despite the need for distanced learning and socially distance contact. Staff had undertaken socially distanced home visits and listened to pupils reacting to their needs as required. It was further noted that in some cases the work provided had proved too much for some pupils and therefore a review was undertaken, the level of academic work reduced and the Phase 1 support increased by setting challenges for the pupils such as helping the family undertake certain jobs and tasks around the home.

Governors were to be assured that the strong presence of Lever Park would continue, and any concerns identified would be addressed.

7.4 Staffing during the Coronavirus lockdown

MT reported that those staff with underlying health issues had self-isolated, however, there were currently no shielding staff.

Staff meetings both formal and informal had been held on a regular basis to ensure all staff were updated. Arrangements had also been made for staff to take part in virtual team gatherings, quizzes and Coffee mornings in order to maintain links and keep the team together.

MT confirmed that individual staff assessments had been undertaken for every member of staff to ensure that they were happy and felt in a strong position when they return to the school site. It was noted that a large majority of staff members were very keen to return to work but that a number of staff remained quietly worried. These members of staff would be supported with different work routines than they had previously.

Governors were advised that one member of staff lived out of borough and therefore were undertaking visits for the pupils living close to that area.

7.5 Daily contact

Further to the circulated report MT confirmed that the offer of provision had increased for all pupils. A restructured timetable had been completed by Melissa Sharp for which he conveyed his thanks to MS for her support in this area. This included:

- Every pupil to spend one half day in school
- Every pupil to receive at least 1 home visit per week
- The remaining three days pupils would receive a phone call to keep in touch and maintain the strong presence of Lever Park

Those pupils in the higher risk group would benefit from additional support.

MT advised Governors that he had been very pleased with the outcome so far in respect of the pupils that had returned to school. It was felt that parents could see the benefits of their children returning and were confident with the safeguarding strategies that had been put in place. It was felt that other parents would gain confidence in returning their children to school as the weeks progress prior to the end of the summer term, so that there would hopefully be a full complement in September 2020.

7.6 Staff guidelines for re-opening the School

MT reported that the school had re-opened earlier today noting that he was very proud of the way that they had effectively managed the pupils in their care. They all had presented a positive attitude and demonstrated professionalism in respect of adhering to social distancing and the actions undertaken.

Further to the circulated report MT explained that a small number of pupils had returned and been placed in a 'bubble' set by year group. It was planned that the pupil numbers returning would

increase gradually over the coming weeks, enabling the size of the bubble to expand. Governors were assured that this would be completed very gradually in line with the required safeguarding practices and Government guidelines.

A Governor asked how many pupils had returned.

MT explained that only the most vulnerable pupils had been invited to return at this stage and out of those 36 pupils there had been 18 parents happy to return their children.

PH referred to the pupils requiring intimate care and very close contact noting that there had been very little guidance in these circumstances. However, a risk assessment had been undertaken and the school had been advised that due to safeguarding requirements these children would be unable to return at this time.

PH assured Governors that following a walk around the school last week with Rebecca Leonard, Vice Principal he was confident that the necessary processes and safeguarding measures were in place and that MT would be able to open the school safely as of 15 June 2020. PH noted that Dr Helen Lowey at the LA had confirmed that the school had a very solid plan in place.

HC expressed her thanks to MT and his staff team on behalf of the LGB for all the additional work undertaken in preparation for school re-opening noting that they all felt very re-assured that the pupils and staff were being safely cared for at such a difficult time.

7.7 Risk Assessment report and Contact log

A copy of the risk assessment report and contact log had been circulated for Governors review and information. Questions were invited but none were raised of either report.

Agreed: That Governors receive and note the details provided on both reports.

8. GOVERNOR VISITS

A number of virtual visits had been undertaken by Governors in relation to their area of responsibility. A copy of the reports compiled following each visit had been circulated for Governors review and information.

MT and HC thanked all Governors for undertaking the visits particularly under such unusual circumstances. MT noted that the support from Governors was very much appreciated.

PH concurred with the comments made by MT noting that the quality of the reports submitted were of a very high standard and included some very challenging detail. Thanks was conveyed to all Governors.

9. **BUILDINGS AND PREMISES**

9.1 Building Matters/Urgent Work

Further to the details recorded within his circulated report MT noted that the Services of AA projects, experts in writing bids for schools had been commissioned to write a bid for the school. This would be for a wide selection of updates, modifications and maintenance jobs that were required including: the School roof, Boiler and Shower areas.

MT informed Governors that on-going maintenance of the school had been undertaken over the last few weeks such as ensuring the school was decorated whilst the school was empty and fresh for September 2020.

10. **SUPPORT FOR GOVERNANCE**

The Chair referred to the briefing note that had been circulated with the agenda for Governors information.

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 the academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term: Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 4.00pm
Spring Term: Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 4.00pm
Summer Term: Monday 21 June 2021 at 4.00pm

Governor updates

At this point in the meeting HC suggested that during this exceptional period and as Governors would not be meeting until the autumn term meeting in October 2020, it would be useful for Governors to receive a short update on the progress of re-opening the school and plans in place for September 2020. This was agreed.

Action: MT/PH to provide an update report via email to all Governors in September 2020

Summer School

HC commented that there had been some reports that schools could be open during the summer break and asked if the school had any plans to provide a summer school for the pupils to help maintain pupils engagement.

DS confirmed that this was currently under discussion. The Government had confirmed that schools opening during the summer break would receive £750 per pupil for the provision of summer holiday interventions. A program would therefore be compiled for the pupils. DS noted that this was to be completed across the Trust and the Year 11 students at Lever Park School would be included in any plans made.

PH confirmed that this matter was an item for discussion on the agenda for the next Academy Management Team Meeting planned for 19 June 2020. It was also noted that the LA were aware that pupils needed to be kept engaged over the summer break and with this in mind, it was hoped that they may contribute to its provision.

12. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Mr A Feeley

13. 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 relating to pupil numbers and capacity covered in Minute number 7.1

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm

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

Date: _____