

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF PARK SCHOOL

**MEETING HELD AT THE BOLTON IMPACT TRUST HEAD OFFICE
ON TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 AT 4.00 PM**

Present: Ms V Coope, Mr M Fay, Ms E Fletcher (Chair), Mr G Webb (Academy Lead), Mr K Heyes, Ms D Mellett, Ms P Patel and Ms S Rothwell

In attendance: Mr P Hodgkinson (Chief Executive Officer), Miss R Leonard (Director of Business Operations) and Mrs E Stoddard (Governance Professional)

Ms Fletcher in the Chair

PART A – NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

Governors congratulated Mr Webb on his appointment as substantive Academy Lead.

2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

2.1 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

2.2 MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

It was noted that 3 Co-opted Governor vacancies remained. The Chair reported that it had previously been agreed that as the LGB was a relatively new Board, this needed to embed before recruiting more governors. Governors agreed that the current board provided a diverse range of skills and experience.

3. MINUTES

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Board on Tuesday 31 January 2023.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising, which were not covered by items on the agenda.

5. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'

No items of 'Any Other Business' were notified at this stage.

6. ACADEMY LEAD'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

Mr Webb presented his termly report.

Key Items:

- Introduction from the Academy Lead
- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership & Management
- Wellbeing
- Safeguarding
- Health & Safety

6.1 Introduction from Academy Lead

Governors were informed that this year the Local Authority (LA) had secured places for 35 students in centre and 5 places on the children's ward at Royal Bolton Hospital. At the end of the spring term there had been 21 LA pupils on roll. Mr Webb advised that although LA referrals continued to be low, the needs of the pupils being referred were very high. A governor asked if there was a sliding scale for funding and if the academy received more for a pupil with significant needs. Mr Webb advised that 3 pupils had been identified who would need significant resources, one to one funding had been requested and 1 pupil had been successful. RL explained that there was a mechanism that the academy could use but it was often very difficult to receive a successful outcome. However, if the correct information was received at the start this meant that funding could be requested earlier. A governor asked why only 1 pupil had received the funding and if this was felt to be a realistic assessment. Mr Webb explained that the successful funding was a reflection of the safeguarding risk, and this was felt to be a fair assessment.

A governor asked if the LA referrals were higher need than those from schools. Miss Leonard explained that the LA had a very high threshold therefore the pupils who were referred usually had very severe needs.

Mr Webb reported that there were a further 18 places filled by traded students from either within Bolton or out of borough. There had been an additional 7 traded referrals this term with 5 traded pupils successfully returning to their mainstream school. The high point for the spring term was 41 pupils on roll; at the end of the spring term last year there had been 44 pupils on roll. Mr Webb stated that this was very positive considering the much smaller venue. Governors were informed that news was still awaited regarding the building next door, which once secured, would enable the academy to manage capacity more efficiently. PH stated that there continued to be a huge demand for traded places.

A governor referred to the context of pupils on roll and asked if the female heavy cohort was typical. It was explained that although this was not typical for the Trust as a whole, it was typical for Park School.

Governors were informed that there had been an increase in the complexity of needs and if all of the pupils currently with EHCPs pending had these granted, approximately 50% of the cohort would have an EHCP. 8 pupils were currently single registered, and this increased the workload of staff in comparison with a dual registered pupil. A governor asked if the academy received more funding for EHCPs. Mr Webb advised that this was not the case as EHCPs worked differently in AP than in schools. In response to questions Miss Leonard confirmed that Park School could be named on an EHCP.

6.2 Quality of Education

Governors were informed that the Quality of Education continued to be judged as good and this was based on observation, 1-1 discussion with staff, work scrutiny and pupil voice.

Mr Webb reported that work around the development of the curriculum had continued this term. Curriculum intent statements were now complete and on the website for English, Maths and PSHE. A new permanent Maths teacher had been appointed. Mr Batty was a very experienced maths specialist who previously performed the role of head of year 11 at a large mainstream school in Bolton. Mr Batty had already had a positive impact with maths data looking increasing strong.

A governor referred to the English data and asked if the academy measured comprehension / phonics or fluency. Mr Webb explained that it was mostly comprehension. Miss Leonard advised that whole Trust phonics training had been delivered but this was not being measured yet and phonics was likely to be an intervention-based strategy.

Governors were informed that reading was always a challenge as some pupils did not feel confident or comfortable in reading out loud. A governor asked how this was being managed. Mr Webb stated that strategies would be put in place for individual children and a software programme from Bedrock Learning had been purchased, which was designed to develop pupils' reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and could be tailored to the curriculum. Miss Leonard added that it was important to create an environment where pupils can participate and break down barriers.

Mr Webb highlighted the priorities for the coming year:

- Ensure that the curriculum intent planning documents are in place for all subjects across the curriculum.
- Investigate ways to increase attendance or minimise the impact of poor attendance.

6.3 Behaviour and Attitudes

Governors were directed to the whole school attendance data. The raw data was 56% and actual data 72%.

Mr Webb informed governors that attendance was typically low due to the medical nature of pupils and the loss of the outreach arm had negatively affected some pupil's attendance. Mr Hodgkinson stated that 72% actual data was high for AP, and this could present huge swings from the pupil's mainstream setting. Governors were advised that due to the low numbers of pupils, individual absence could have a significant impact.

A governor asked if the hospital attendance was 100%. Mr Webb explained that this was not included in the figures, but this could be reviewed moving forwards.

Two members of staff were currently on long term sickness absence, so a hybrid model had needed to be put in place to manage this.

6.4 Personal Development

Mr Webb reported that there had been a noticeable improvement in pupils receiving work placements, but this was not yet school wide. Miss Leonard stated that alternative options and routes needed to be considered for pupils who would struggle to attend a workplace, and this was an on-going piece of work for the Trust.

6.5 Safeguarding

The LA had recently conducted a Safeguarding Audit. Mr Webb reported that the feedback was excellent, and any recommendations were mainly at Trust level. Following advice an additional information document had been created to help monitor closely any meetings/reviews students may have and when they are due. This would also help identify what level children are at on the framework for action.

Mr Webb explained the Encompass process. A governor asked if the reported incidents were due to a child being involved. Miss Leonard explained that school would be informed if a child had been present when an incident had taken place. A governor asked if the incident was discussed with the child. Mr Webb explained that a key worker would be allocated to the child but often the reports were received some time after the incident had taken place.

6.6 Health & Safety – Evacuation and Invacuation

A fire evacuation took place on the 23 March 2023 with the building being evacuated in 1 minute 25 seconds.

It had been identified that the existing assembly point was not suitable due to the number of vehicles in the parking area, so this had been relocated this to the side of the building. There were issues regarding the automatic release of the fire doors and the updating of the Inventory system. Both of these were being rectified.

A whole school health and safety audit was scheduled for 27th June 2023.

Agreed: That the termly report be accepted with thanks.

7. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Mr Webb circulated 3 case studies which highlighted the safeguarding protocols for increased risk being presented in students. Governors were informed that there were increasingly challenging levels of complexity and the case studies provided examples of some of these cases. A governor asked what training was available to staff to support them in dealing with such cases. Mr Webb advised that in-house training was provided every Friday and he was also looking at re-introducing Mental Health First Aid training for new staff. A governor commented that staff seemed to be working as borderline practitioners. Mr Webb advised that some staff had previously worked for external agencies and had a broad range of experience. A governor suggested that this expertise could be shared amongst the other staff. Miss Leonard added that staff at Lever Park would be providing Team Teach training, which included issues such as trauma. Miss Leonard reported that the Trust Therapist was very skilled, and a Hub system had been set up to work with interested staff to provide a tool kit called 'Trauma Informed'. It was noted that Ladywood and CAMHS also delivered training sessions.

In response to questions, it was noted that areas of need and actions could be identified in the SEF.

A governor suggested that the academy consider the SENCO NPQ qualification. Miss Leonard explained that the provision was not legally required to have a SENCO, but the academy did have one in place. The SLT would be looking staff development in this area.

A governor referred to the case studies and asked if other pupils observed these behaviours first hand. It was explained that some pupils would inevitably witness these behaviours; however, pupils were usually very understanding if a child was in crisis and in some cases alerted staff if they were concerned about another pupil and helped to regulate the environment. Staff also knew the pupils extremely well and were constantly surveying for triggers. The behaviour data evidenced very low bullying figures and there was a caring culture within the academy.

8. ACADEMY SEF

Mr Hodgkinson reported that the academy SEFs had been frozen to allow them to be analysed and create lines of enquiry. Once the process was completed the SEF would be presented to the LGB and the Trust Standards Committee. Mr Hodgkinson advised that a priority for Park School would be to look at areas where the school could be judged as solidly good.

A governor was invited to attend this session.

Action: CEO (share SEF with LGB once process complete)

9. FINANCE UPDATE AND ACADEMY BUDGET

Mr Hodgkinson reported that the new Trust Chief Finance Officer (Kate Connelly) had been appointed. She was currently working hard to finalise the budget, which would be available by the end of June and sent out to governors. It was noted that Mrs Connelly had had an initial budget meeting with Mr Webb, which had been positive.

Mr Hodgkinson reported that DPS prices were currently under review, LA referrals would be increased to £85 per day and direct trading would be increased to £109 per day.

A governor asked if the building next door would enable numbers to increase. Governors were informed that 2-3 more pupils would be needed to pay for the building; however, the aim of securing this space was to manage the capacity more efficiently and improve the provision rather than a significant increase in numbers. A governor asked if more staff would be needed. Mr Webb advised that this would not be the case as the numbers would not sharply increase. Moving forward there would be an emphasis on a more fluid staffing structure that could increase or decrease according to need using supply staff.

Action: CEO / CFO (share budget with LGB)

10. ACADEMY RISK REGISTER

A copy of the Park School Risk Register had been uploaded to the Gateway. Identified risks had been included in the report and this would be presented at each LGB meeting. Miss Leonard stated that the aim of having a local Risk Register was that this was a collective responsibility with governor input. This was a live document, which would evolve.

A governor stated that staff resources could be a risk as pupils were being referred with increasingly challenging needs and staff burnout also needed to be considered. Miss Leonard stated that although this could be risk there was a lot of mitigation in place to prevent this, but

this would need to be monitored closely if more and more complex cases continued to be received.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that a Wellbeing Charter was in place and a copy would be emailed to governors.

A governor asked how it was decided as to which pupils would be admitted. Mr Webb stated that there was not a written criteria for entry. Any evidence submitted with the referral was examined, safety was the first priority and consideration would be given to staffing and resources available at the time. Mr Webb added that the provision worked closely with schools and often were aware of the child's needs before a referral was made. Miss Leonard stressed the importance of receiving accurate information at the point of referral as some schools had tried to refer pupils with behaviour issues as other provisions had been full. A governor asked if this was the same process for LA referrals. Mr Webb explained that often very little information was provided; however, the place could be withdrawn after a trial period if it was clear that the pupil was in the wrong provision or if their needs could not be met. A governor commented that it was important that emphasis be placed on receiving accurate information in the first place to avoid pupils feeling rejected if a place needed to be withdrawn.

Governors agreed that the following items should be added to the Risk Register:

- Complexities of pupils
- Staffing resources
- Staff burnout
- Admissions / referrals

Action: RL (update Risk Register / email Wellbeing Charter)
Clerk (include Risk Register as a standard agenda item)

11. NOMINATED GOVERNOR REPORTS

11.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair reported that she had not received an invite for the summer term Chairs' Briefing held on 9 May 2023.

Action: Clerk (check Chair is listed to receive emails)

11.2 Training and Development Lead Governors Report on Training / Recent Training undertaken.

Miss Leonard advised that the Trust purchased the Governance Services Training SLA and encouraged governors to book on any courses available.

The Trust was holding Equality Training on 13 July and all governors were invited to attend.

It was reported that all governors had completed the Level 1 Safeguarding and PREVENT training.

11.3. Training and Development Governor Briefing Sessions

It was noted that several governor visits had taken place. Governors were asked to complete a Governor Visit Pro-Forma following each visit.

Action: Miss Leonard (email pro-forma)

12. SEND AND ALTERNATIVE PROVISION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In response to the SEND Review Green Paper Consultation, the Government had published its SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan: Right support, right place, right time.

The SEND and AP Improvement Plan outlined the first steps that the government would take in addressing issues raised. The plan set out a roadmap to transform the SEND and AP system which had been detailed on the accompanying agenda note and uploaded to Gateway.

Mr Hodgkinson stated that he welcomed the proposed changes.

Agreed: That the Board note the report.

Mr Fay offered his apologies and left the meeting at this point.

13. COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF BOARD DIVERSITY DATA

The DfE (Department for Education) had updated guidance on what maintained schools and academy trusts must or should publish online. In order to help boards be reflective of the communities they serve, the DfE was encouraging schools and trusts to publish diversity data on their website.

Miss Leonard stated that this would be completed as part of the Trust work on the Equality Objectives. A form would be emailed to governors to gather the required diversity data; however, governors could opt out of sharing their information, including protected characteristics, at any given time including after publication.

Agreed: That the Board collect and share diversity data on the website, ensuring that individuals cannot be identified.

Action: RL (email form)

14. GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE

14.1 Governance Services Staffing 2023/24

An update had been provided on the accompanying agenda note which had been uploaded to Gateway. Details of the current staff vacancies and recruitment process had been provided.

The Team had said farewell to Marie Ahmad, Governance Development Officer and Amy Appleyard, Governance Support Officer; both of whom have secured new roles outside the Authority. The Clerk advised that a new Governance Support Officer had been recruited and would be allocated to the Local Governing Boards.

15. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 Local Governing Board Meeting

Agreed: That the next Local Governing Board meetings for the 2023/24 academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term: Tuesday 10 October 2023 at 4.00 pm
Spring Term: Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 4.00 pm
Summer Term: Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 4.00 pm

16. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

It was noted that Miss S Jiva had been absent from several LGB meetings. It was agreed that Mr Hodgkinson would contact Miss Jiva informally to ascertain if there was a reason for absence.

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Miss S Jiva.

Action: PH

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 Parent Governor Position

A Parent Governor stated that her child was due to leave Park School and asked if she could continue in her role as Parent Governor or if she could change to a Co-opted Governor. The Clerk advised that the Parent Governor would be able to continue in this role if she wished until her term of office expired. At that point she would no longer be eligible to stand again in this position but could assume another position on the Board. Alternatively, the governor could step down as Parent Governor when her child left and be considered as Co-opted Governor (due to there being 3 vacancies). The Clerk advised that this would leave a Parent Governor vacancy and consideration should be given as to whether this was likely to be filled.

17.2 Exam Update

A governor asked for an update on the exams. Mr Webb stated that attendance in the exams had been as expected or slightly better. Some pupils had sat the exams who the school had not expected to attend, so this was positive.

18. CONFIDENTIALITY

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

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm.

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

Date: _____