

**LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF PARK SCHOOL**  
**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**  
**ON 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022 AT 4.00 PM**

**Present:** Mrs K. Ingham (Chair), Mr H. Cooper, Mrs K. Peart (Academy Lead), Mr M. Fay and Mrs. N. Elias.

**In attendance:** Mrs R. Leonard (Vice Principal BIT), Mr D. Smith (Finance Director), Mr. P. Hodgkinson (Executive Principal), Mrs. A. Woosey, Ms. V. Gavin and Mrs. A. Appleyard (Clerk).

**Mrs Ingham in the Chair**

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Ms. S. Jiwa, Ms. J. Parkinson and Ms. E. Fletcher.

It was noted that Ms. E. Bamber had left the Academy at the end of the previous half term, and had therefore relinquished her position on the Local Governing Board.

**2. PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**2.1 Declaration of Pecuniary or Conflict of Interest**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

**2.2 Membership/Governance Issues**

Governors were informed that two terms of office were due to expire shortly after the autumn term meeting:

Mrs. Karen Ingham	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
Mrs. Nicola Elias	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2022

Mrs. Ingham informed the Local Governing Board that she would like to continue in her role as Co-opted Governor.

Governors were informed there remained two Parent Governor vacancies and two Co-opted Governor vacancies. It was noted that there was also now a vacancy for a Staff Governor following the resignation of Ms. E. Bamber.

It was noted that the positions of Chair and Vice Chair remained vacant. A discussion took place regarding the need to recruit new Governors to the Local Governing Board in order to increase the size of the Board. Because of this, it was agreed to defer the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair until the autumn term meeting, as the Academy would actively seek a new Governor who could take on the role of Chair. Governors thanked Mrs. Ingham for the work she had done in chairing the meetings whilst the position of Chair remained vacant. It was noted that the role of Chair in a Local Governing Board was a little different

to the role of Chair in a maintained school, as many of the business-critical decisions were made at Trust level.

**Agreed:** to defer the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair to the autumn term meeting.

### **3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

#### Minute number 5.2

Mr. Smith explained that the Declaration of Business Interests was now a statutory part of the Trust audit, and it was therefore essential that these forms were completed by Governors. It was noted that some Governors had also yet to complete the Governor Skills Audit and the Safeguarding Self Declaration. Governors were asked to complete any outstanding documentation and to submit this to Collette Unsworth as a matter of urgency. It was also explained that Collette Unsworth would approach Governors who had yet to complete any of this documentation directly in order to request that it is completed. Governors were informed that if they required a paper copy of the documentation, this could be provided.

**Action:** All Governors to complete all outstanding documentation and submit to Collette Unsworth as a matter of urgency.

#### Minute number 5.2

It was noted that there was a typing error in minute number 5.2, where “it was no known” should read “it was not known”. The Clerk agreed to amend this error.

It was noted that the Health and Safety audit had been completed at the Wellbeing Centre, but as Park School was due to relocate, this audit would need to be complete again.

**Action:** Clerk to amend the typing error in minute number 5.2

**Action:** Health and Safety audit to be completed in the autumn term.

#### Minute number 5.6

It was noted that Mrs. Bamber had agreed to check the policies on the Academy website. As she had subsequently left the Academy, this work had been undertaken by Mrs. V. Gavin.

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 1 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**

Mrs Peart presented her 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 noted that there had been a significant improvement in pupil progress in Maths.

It was also explained that there was a notable gap in achievement between boys and girls. The boys were making more progress than the girls, and the Academy was attempting to ascertain why this situation had arisen. It was possible that the mental health of girls had been affected more significantly than that of the boys. It was also possible that the boys had responded more positively to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The reading agenda remained a key part of the Academy's work. The work undertaken to close the reading gap and improve reading ages had been very successful. The Academy was now at a point where observations in all subject areas would consider how reading was incorporated within each subject area. It was agreed that this must be addressed constantly, as it was a very high priority within the Academy.

**A Governor requested clarification regarding the progress in Maths at the Roscow Fold site compared with at the Wellbeing Centre.**

It was explained that Maths at the Roscow Fold site was taught up to higher level GCSE standard. At the Wellbeing Centre, the students were not ready to access the academic level required for higher level GCSE study. Students at the Wellbeing Centre therefore completed courses in Functional Skills Maths and foundation tier GCSE Maths where appropriate.

**A Governor noted how pleasing it was that progress was back on track, and asked whether this was specific to Maths.**

It was confirmed that this was the case, as the Academy had seen a more significant decline in progress in Maths than in English. A learning walk was therefore completed in order to ensure that progress in Maths was improving. Consideration was now being given to specific areas of the Maths curriculum where it was felt that further improvements could be made. Strategies had been developed with the Head of Maths in order to support students who were struggling in Maths. It was also recognised that student attendance had an impact on progress. The strategies implemented were under constant review, and would be considered again at the end of the summer term in order to determine whether a positive impact had been made.

**A Governor asked whether any students had accessed support through the National Tutoring Programme.**

It was confirmed that support from the National Tutoring Programme had been accessed, and some one-to-one tutoring support had been put in place where appropriate.

It was agreed that there were many positive aspects across the work being done, and it was recognised that the students' academic progress had improved over the course of the current academic year. There had been a significant increase in exceptional progress at the Wellbeing Centre. It was noted that Functional Skills in English and Maths were essential at the Wellbeing Centre in order to support students in overcoming barriers to learning.

**A Governor asked what else could be done to support student engagement.**

It was explained that attendance was crucial to engagement and progress, whether this was at Roscow Fold, the Wellbeing Centre or through outreach work in the student's home. The Academy was also trying to work more closely with the schools which the students attended prior to joining Park School, and some excellent work was being completed in order to develop strategies to support students which may have been missed in the past. It was noted that some children found attendance incredibly difficult, and this was very challenging with the mental health issues faced by the students. The Academy's links with external agencies and the students' previous schools remained very strong. It was agreed that action points were needed on Early Help documentation so that everyone concerned was able to support attendance. It was explained that when the students joined the Academy, their attendance was often very low. This meant that whilst an attendance figure of 30% attendance would be considered low in a mainstream setting, this would represent a significant improvement when compared to that student's previous attendance. Attendance at the Academy has been analysed, and the raw figure was 59.85%. However, when this was calculated against the sessions offered, as some students attended on a part time basis, the actual figure was closer to 77%. This represented a significant improvement. It was noted that it would be worth considering the swing between attendance at previous settings and the change when attending the Academy.

Mr. H. Cooper left the meeting at this point owing to technology issues.

It was explained that the swing data in attendance had been considered in depth. It was noted that it was important to remember that some of the students at Park School were simply too unwell to attend an education setting. Governors congratulated the Academy staff on the hard work which had been done and continued to be done to support attendance and engagement.

It was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had presented significant challenges, and it was recognised that the students had coped admirably as they had returned to a normal routine. A wide range of activities had taken place in order to develop cultural capital and SMSC. It was agreed that there were many positive activities and initiatives taking place.

The Governors thanked the Academy Lead for her report.

A discussion took place regarding Governor training and also the terminology used within the setting and the Trust. The invitation was made for Governors who felt that they perhaps lacked some knowledge and experience to visit the setting and to be talked through some of the specialist terminology. This was of particular significance as Park School as different and highly specialist terminology could be used at times in Alternative Provision settings.

## **6. FINANCE UPDATE**

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 it was projected that the Academy would end the current year with a surplus of £96,000 which was higher than anticipated. However, significant financial challenges were anticipated as the Academy moved into the new academic year, as the Local Authority had reduced the number of funded places, and a significant number of year eleven students were due to leave at the end of the current academic year, which would also lead to a drop in funding. A shortfall of £290,000 was predicted. Despite considering options for saving money which would not impact upon staffing, this situation has led to a staff restructuring process in order to save money. Some vacant posts would be removed from the staffing structure. It was explained that the restructuring process has been very stressful for the staff, and it will be implemented by the end of August. The current financial picture was positive, but it was recognised that there was a need to address the future financial challenges.

A Governor requested further information regarding the restructuring process, and asked whether the statutory consultation was completed with trade unions.

It was confirmed that the statutory consultation took place, and that all due processes were followed.

It was explained that the statutory resignation date for teachers was 31<sup>st</sup> May. Two members of the teaching staff had requested voluntary severance. The trade unions were involved throughout the process, and wellbeing support was also brought in for staff as the process was very stressful.

A Governor asked whether support was given to staff who were applying for roles in other schools or settings, such as mock interviews and support with written applications.

It was explained that some members of staff had already left the provision, and others had secured alternative posts. Such support could certainly be considered for other staff where appropriate.

It was explained that two vacant positions were being removed from the staffing structure. A highly significant change was made to the role of Senior Learning Mentor, where the position was being downgraded to a Learning Mentor post. This meant that the position would still exist, but would have a one grade reduction.

It was recognised that this process was very challenging, and it was of paramount importance that staff were supported. The Academy and the Trust were doing everything possible to provide this support.

It was explained that it was essential that the Park School Teaching Service needed to place itself in a very strong position during the next academic year. Many mainstream schools were in the process of establishing provision for children with mental health illness, so Park School needed to ensure that it was evident that the offer from the Academy was bespoke, unique and specialist with good outcomes and a strong Ofsted report so that the unique offer from the Academy was recognised as essential both within and beyond the Local Authority area. A suggestion was made that Park School staff could provide training in mainstream settings, which was recognised as a good idea but would not bring in enough income for the Academy and the Trust. It was essential that the Academy needed to be in a place where the service was needed and in demand.

Mr. H. Cooper re-joined the meeting at this point.

## **7. NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

### **7.1 Chairs' Briefing**

The Chair was unable to attend the Chairs' Briefing held on 9 May 2022. The Clerk therefore 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

### **7.2 Training and Development Lead's Report on Training**

It was explained that Ms. Leonard coordinated Governor training and development across the Trust, but she encouraged others to consider undertaking the role of Training and Development Lead. It was explained that a lot of support was available for the role.

It was explained that the role of Safeguarding Governor was a pivotal role, as it involved checking all aspects of safeguarding across the Academy, including the Single Central Record as well as records of training.

It was explained that that Ms. Leonard completed a report for the Trust regarding safeguarding, and included a section on each Academy. It was agreed that Ms. Leonard would extract each Academy's section from her report for Trustees, and would share this

with each Local Governing Board. This would ensure that there was a link between the Local Governing Boards and the Trustees.

It was explained that Mrs. Peart had completed that Section 175 Audit with Ms. Parkinson– It was explained that this was an audit tool with checks to ensure that as a school everything was being done as it should be. Ms. Leonard would then report on this outcome at Trust level. It was agreed that she would share what was said at Trust level with the Local Governing Board.

It was agreed that Governor induction was an area for development.

It was noted that the training offered by Governance Services was highly recommended. It was explained that Governors needed to book training through the Governance Gateway, and that there would never be an issue regarding funding as it was part of the Service Level Agreement (SLA). It was explained that the Academy and the Trust would always agree to Governor training, and that they would try to support Governors if they wished to undertake training offered through a provider other than Governance Services.

**Action:** It was noted that all Governors needed to undertake the Level One Safeguarding Training and the Prevent Training.

#### 7.2.1 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.

#### 7.2.2 Training and Development Governor Briefing Sessions

The Clerk reported that a briefing session was to be held/ had been 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.

### 7.3 Partnership Forum

The Clerk reported that the following information had been presented at the Partnership Meeting held on 23 May 2022.

- 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

A short explanation was given regarding the role of Partnership Governor and the Partnership Forum.

#### 7.4 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.

Mrs. Ingham had completed a visit where the focus was on attendance. She had met with Mrs. Peart and Ms. Elias, and spoke about the work being done to support student attendance. Positive links had been established with the students' families. The visit had been very positive with no concerns raised.

Ms. Elias had completed a visit where the focus was on careers and post-16 options for the students. She had met with the advisor from Connexions, where the options were considered for the year eleven students who were due to leave. At the time of the meeting, only three students were at risk of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). It was explained that if any students were NEET when they left the setting, they were transferred to a specialist team with Connexions who would provide monitoring and support until they reached the age of 18. It was explained that this programme had been successful in the past. It was explained that the careers programme would be introduced to the current year ten cohort initially, and then to other year groups. Apprenticeships would also be discussed, as well as business and entrepreneurial prospects. It was important that the students understood that there were alternatives to a college-based education available to them after they reached the age of 16. It was noted that it was very positive that the students were able to access options from different providers of post-16 provision.

Mr. Fay offered to speak to students about the possibilities which existed for them when they left the setting, and particularly the non-academic routes. He was very happy to share his own experiences. His offer was received with thanks, and was advised that this would be appreciated across the Trust. It was agreed that this could possibly be extended to offering to check student CVs and conducting mock interviews etc.

#### 8. **GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE**

The Clerk reported that in order to address vacancies within the team a number of recruitment rounds had been held successfully and two new Governance Support Officers and two Minute Clerks had been appointed. Schools were to welcome Amy Appleyard as our new Governance Support Officer from April and Rachel Worthington who would join from September.

The Training and Development service continued to operate with a blended approach as per the planned programme. Bespoke Development Sessions and External Reviews of Governance for boards continued to be delivered.

The Governance Services Team could also support with the recruitment of Local Authority Governors for maintained schools and assist for co-opted governors, or, trustees and local governors for academy trusts. An online application was available on the Governance Services Website in order that schools could signpost potential candidates to the site for further information about the role and to complete the online form.

In addition there were three external organisations that worked with Local Authorities or directly with individual schools and academy trusts to help find and place those interested in serving as a governor or trustee, these were Inspiring Governance, Governors for Schools and Academy Ambassadors.

When recruiting any Board should begin by establishing what skills or experience they may require by reference to a skills audit which it is good practice to undertake on an annual basis. Governance Services could assist in undertaking and reviewing a skills audit for your board through the Development service.

## **9. POLICY REVIEWS AND APPROVAL**

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

## **10. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER**

Bolton Governance Services as a corporate partner of the National Governors Association had enclosed with documents for this meeting a summary report provided by the NGA. The recently published schools white paper entitled “Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child” set out the government’s vision for the future of education, and included:

- A range of programmes for teacher development and recruitment
- Additional support for schools to secure the fundamentals of behaviour, attendance and wellbeing for all
- Various interventions to target support to those who need it most
- Introducing a fully trust-led system with a singular regulatory body

This comprehensive document summarised what can be expected in education for the future.

The Department for Education (DfE) would be consulting from a range of views on different proposals outlined in the paper. Boards and school leaders may wish to share their views and contribute to upcoming consultations as detailed on the accompanying agenda note.

A discussion took place regarding the White Paper and its implications, including the fact that all schools were expected to be part of a Multi-Academy Trust by the year 2030, and that there would be a minimum Trust size. Significant importance was also placed on training and development for school staff.

**Agreed:** to note the information in the Schools White Paper.

It was also noted that the Academy and the Trust were awaiting the end of the consultation period regarding the SEND Green Paper, as this was highly applicable to the settings across the Trust. As the consultation period remained open at the time of the meeting, no final documentation was available. However, it was recognised that a significant number of changes to SEND provision were likely to be implemented.



## **11. PUBLICATION OF STATUTORY INFORMATION ON ACADEMY WEBSITE**

The Clerk reported that all academies and free schools should check their funding agreement to establish what information they must publish on their website. In addition, there were publishing requirements set out within the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014, with which Academy Trusts must comply.

The accompanying agenda note gives an overview of those requirements and the further information that the Department for Education (DfE) recommends that are published on the website. Many academy trusts are under a duty to publish much of this information, due to clauses within their funding agreements. The information provided related to the DfE guidance of 'What Academies, Free Schools and Colleges should Publish Online', last updated in February 2021.

It was explained that as Ms. Bamber had undertaken this work, Ms. Gavin had worked closely with the Academy following Ms. Bamber's resignation. It was noted that the website was fully compliant with the statutory requirements, and that it was reviewed on a regular basis. It was explained that most of the statutory items were at Trust level and was checked by a central team, and that the individual Academy pages were checked each term.

## **12. 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: Tuesday 11 October 2022 at 4.00 pm  
Spring Term: Tuesday 31 January 2023 at 4:00pm  
Summer Term: Tuesday 6 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. Jiwa, Ms. J. Parkinson and Ms. E. Fletcher.

## **14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

## **15. CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

The meeting closed at 5:30pm

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

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