



# Minutes

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## Meeting of Fir Bank Primary School Local Advisory Committee

Thursday 10th December 2020  
held at 5.00pm via Microsoft Teams

<b>Present:</b>	Dr Rachel Cowen	Committee Member (Chair)
	Mrs Rachael McLaughlin	Co-Headteacher and Committee Member
	Mr Rob Walker	Co-Headteacher and Committee Member
	Mr Philip Deaville	Committee Member
	Miss Jennifer Wright	Committee Member

**Also Present:** Mr David Challen Clerk to the Local Advisory Committee

The Chair welcomed everyone participating in this meeting of the Fir Bank Primary School Local Advisory Committee (LAC).

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

### 2 REGISTER OF BUSINESS, PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

Committee members were invited to declare any additional business, pecuniary or personal interests to those which had been declared previously in the school's 'Register of Declaration of Interest'.

No additional declarations were made.

### 3 CONSULTATION ON THE REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE

The Chair referred LAC members to the documentation, on the proposals for the Trust's Review of Governance, which had been added to GovernorHub. She explained that in order to maintain trust between all parties, the Trust Board had agreed to consult with LACs again, and consider any further feedback, before making a decision in relation to the proposed changes.

The meeting was opened up for general discussion about the proposals and the following views were put forward by LAC members:

3.1 The principles behind the review were welcomed and which include the opportunity to upskill LAC members to offer support to the Co-

Headteachers.

- 3.2 The LAC's future responsibilities will be as outlined in Appendix 6 (paragraph 11.4). The Co-Headteachers will continue to include a brief summary of standards and performance and on finance in their termly report.
- 3.3 It was suggested that wellbeing, standards and curriculum issues are all intertwined, and it would be difficult to separate the lines of accountability in respect of these areas.
- The Co-Headteachers explained that pupil wellbeing, and getting pupils in a position to be successful, is already at the forefront of all the work done by the school. It was felt that within the proposals, there are still significant responsibilities held by the LAC on which the members can challenge school leaders on. Reference was made to the significant focus on pupil wellbeing since the school reopened from lockdown.
- 3.4 It was felt that wellbeing should be an integral part of standards and performance and splitting these responsibilities would not be of benefit to the school or its pupils. The proposals seem to suggest that pupil wellbeing will be a LAC responsibility, and this does not sit comfortably with some members.
- 3.5 The Trust Board want to take on the responsibility for standards as they are accountable and have engaged B11 consultants to work across all three schools in a consistent way.
- 3.6 The responsibility for the wellbeing of staff is also a consideration. It was felt that the LAC might take on an advisory role for wellbeing but not the responsibility. There are some inconsistencies within the different documents in relation to the responsibility for wellbeing.
- 3.7 The Chair referred members to the discussions that took place on the proposals at the Trust Board meeting.
- 3.8 It was suggested that student voice is an important part of what the school is about and that it will be beneficial to further develop the link between stakeholders, the LAC and the Trust. It is whether the members want to use their time and expertise in this way.
- 3.9 It was felt that the proposals should have included arrows, indicating the flow of information between the different bodies, so that this clearly understood by all parties.
- 3.10 Whilst welcoming stakeholder feedback and suggestions, the Co-Headteachers explained that it must be understood that they must make any final decision for the benefit of all within the school community e.g., COVID-19 protocols. The Co-Headteachers were congratulated on the controls in place to keep staff and pupils as safe as possible and recognised that some parents do not always see the overall picture.
- 3.11 With regard to staff feedback/views, the Co-Headteachers explained that the school had moved away from a top-down approach and referred to staff involvement in the writing and development of this year's school development plan (SDP) as an example of how staff are being given ownership of the direction in which the school goes.

- 3.12 In addition, regarding staff health and wellbeing, some staff are finding the current situation in school difficult, due to the pandemic, and measures are being taken to reduce the pressure on staff wherever possible. Staff are not being asked to do over and above their normal duties but what is expected is that what they do, they do properly.
- 3.13 B11 Consultants will carry out a pupil premium review in February 2021 and a whole school review in March 2021. The Co-Headteachers are working with staff to ensure that the school's high standards are evident within the normal day to day working practices.
- 3.14 LAC members need to be kept updated and briefed on future school changes (e.g., homework) and felt that regular meetings between the Co-Headteachers and Chair would be useful.
- 3.15 In response to a question, the Co-Headteachers explained how the absence of volunteers had led to teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) taking back responsibility for Reading. Reading is a priority in the SDP this year and a member of staff has been given a TLR point to lead on this across the school.

In summary, the LAC broadly welcomed the proposals but with the following observations:

- 3.16 There needs to be clarity around the channels of communication between parents and the LAC members.
- 3.17 There appear to be some inconsistencies within the documentation in relation to the responsibility for pupil wellbeing. The LAC feel that pupil wellbeing is an integral part of standards and performance and whilst the LAC can advise the Trust in respect of this aspect and support wellbeing activities embedded within the curriculum, the responsibility for wellbeing should remain with the Trust Board.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contact Mr Ferris and Mrs Fraser, to see if they had anything further to add, before the Chair responds formally to the CEO of the Trust, on behalf of the LAC.

**ACTION:** Chair/Clerk

#### 4 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of other urgent business to consider.

#### 5 **CONFIDENTIALITY**

There were no items of confidentiality.

(There being no further business, Committee members were thanked for their participation and the meeting was declared closed at 5.50pm).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

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