

Totnes Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Meeting minutes

Thursday 7th May 2026

6pm

Online via Microsoft 'Teams'

Attended:

Parent Governors: Nanya Coles (Broadhempston)

Lucy Gibson (Landscape)

Jonathon Nicholls (Diptford) (**Stand-in Chair for this meeting**)

Staff Governor- Kate Wilson

Academy Headteacher- Thomas Cole

In attendance:

CEO- Rachael Sharpe (**For the first 10 minutes of the meeting**)

Governance Professional- Charlotte Roe

Minutes: Nicol Bush- LAC Clerk

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and apologies The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome to Governors and the CEO Rachael Sharpe. Apologies were received and accepted from KB and CL	
2.	Declarations of interest - NC is a business proprietor of Chocolate Batik, has a company directorship of Ashwick Consulting and Works at SafeLives Uk, a Domestic Abuse Charity. - CR is Director of Blind Ditch Limited – Arts and Cultural organisation - KB has a company directorship of Bob Burch Ltd. There were no new declarations brought to the meeting.	
3.	CEO update The CEO to provide a general update on the Trust, share any significant changes within the Trust including key personnel and answer any questions that Governors may have. 3.1 CEO to confirm the purpose of the staff governor role was discussed at the recent AH meeting. (Matters arising from 12.02.26)- The CEO confirmed the matter was discussed at the	
4.	Approval of meeting minutes from 12th March 2026. For approval: Part I minutes- These minutes were reviewed before the meeting and approved as a true record and were signed accordingly.	
5.	Matters arising from 12th March 2026 (not on the agenda) 5.1 Governors to review the responses to the questions raised at the previous LAC and confirm if any supplementary questions	

6.	Clerk Update 6.1 Appointments/nominations- The Clerk said that there was a vacancy for a Foundation Governor at Harbertonford and Diptford Schools. The Clerk raised that there was also a vacancy for a Sustainability Governor on the Local Advisory Committee (LAC). The meeting discussed the Sustainability Governor vacancy and whether this could be combined with forthcoming communications regarding the Chair position. It was agreed that any communication could reference both roles, as the Sustainability Governor role could potentially be filled by a person from the wider community, such as the parish. It was noted that the vacancy at Harbertonford and Diptford Schools could not be included within this combined communication; however, the Sustainability Governor role could be promoted separately. 6.2 Training The Clerk said that an Introduction to School Governance training session was scheduled to take place online on Wednesday 10 June 2026 from 10:00 to 12:00 and she would email new Governors to book them on. 6.3 Clerk to Local Board Committee update The Clerk said that Governors were reminded to liaise with their Academy Headteachers regarding support with SATs invigilation, should they be available to assist. The Governance Professional provided an update on a number of forthcoming policy and regulatory changes, including the School Food Standards Consultation, due to close in mid-May, which proposed stricter requirements around sugar, salt, processed foods, limits on cheese as a main ingredient, and a ban on deep-fat frying; she noted that while primary schools were largely already compliant, secondary schools were expected to be more significantly affected, with pilot schools reporting increased costs and no current confirmation of additional funding to cover free school meal shortfalls. The Governance Professional noted the changes under the Children's Wellbeing Act aimed at reducing uniform costs, limiting schools to three branded items (including bags but excluding ties) and requiring schools to highlight cheaper alternatives, prompting a review of the school uniform policy. The GP also advised governors of a new policy relating to pupils with medical needs accessing school, increased estates reporting responsibilities now falling more formally within governance oversight, and the introduction of additional funding through the Inclusive Mainstream Fund to support the SEND White Paper, with further updates to follow as guidance becomes available.	
6.	Focus: Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes and targets for the year <i>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</i> <i>Governors raised highlights from their reports) The following notes are taken from those reports:</i> Broadhempston- Changes in number of children in EYFS had changed from 2 children to 6 which made some changes to the data. 9 children started since December. Landscope- It was noted that the Academy Head would retire at the end of the Summer 2 term, with a new Headteacher in post from the next academic year. Governors recognised the significance of this change for Landscope and agreed that targets for next year would be set before her departure to support continuity. Challenges were identified in Years 3/4 around gap-filling and pupil independence, with the AH exploring possible actions, including staffing adjustments. The continued development of Strong Foundations (Reading, Writing and Maths) and OAIP adaptive practice remained an ASIP priority next year, and continuity with Broadhempston School which would be supported by involving the incoming Headteacher early and documenting expectations for handover. Sparkwell- Current attainment data showed a mixed picture, with Reception GLD above national expectations, while phonics and writing were below target. Writing was identified as a consistent concern in both Year 2 and Year 6, and phonics outcomes were affected by cohort variation, including new starters. Previous issues with assessment accuracy, particularly in Year 2, were noted, alongside some pupils needing support to access the MTC. In response, actions included strengthened assessment moderation, targeted staff training, focused writing INSET, phonics	

	interventions, and appropriate assessment adaptations. As a result, the ASIP was refined to prioritise writing and assessment accuracy.	
7.	Focus: EYFS <i>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</i> Governors raised highlights from their reports) The following notes are taken from those reports: Broadhempston- The Headteacher reported that the quality of provision had been assessed as good. It was noted that the school faced challenges due to pupils joining at different points during the academic year, although this was viewed positively in terms of increasing overall pupil numbers. The school was managing a range of needs across year groups, with some pupils awaiting assessments and experiencing lengthy waiting times of up to 2.5 years; parents were being encouraged to pursue alternative pathways, including occupational health, where these were quicker. Landscove- Early Years provision was strong, led by an experienced EYFS subject lead, with well-planned, progressive provision that effectively links learning across EYFS areas. Strong foundations were evident through SSP phonics with additional support, a rigorous handwriting programme, and early writing and mathematics firmly embedded, supported by up-to-date staff practice and CPD. Relationships with families were reported as strong. A key limitation identified was outdoor provision, due to the lack of a covered area and weather-related impact. The use of two part-time teachers was working well due to effective communication and collaboration. SEND needs, including significant behavioural challenges, were being well managed with targeted interventions in place; however, some pupils may not reach GLD due to PSED, while pupil premium children were expected to achieve GLD. Sparkwell- EYFS provision is underpinned by strong teaching, reflective practice, and responsive intervention. The key next steps focus on enhancing curriculum ambition, strengthening outdoor provision, and improving access to speech and language support to further improve outcomes for all pupils.	
8.	Focus: Attendance Overview <i>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</i> Governors raised highlights from their reports) The following notes are taken from those reports: Broadhempston- There were no official complaints, Attendance was on target at 96.6% and was improving. Landscove- There were no official complaints, attendance was at 95.02% Sparkwell- The low number of formal complaints, combined with the school's responsive and reflective approach, indicated that systems for managing concerns were effective. The strong open-door culture supported early resolution and contributes to positive relationships with families. While attendance was slightly below the Trust target, it remained above national averages and reflected specific, well-understood pupil needs rather than systemic concerns. The school's proactive monitoring, strong communication with families, and flexible support strategies were having a positive impact in maintaining engagement and supporting pupils to attend. The school's current attendance figure was 94.6%	
9.	Focus: Ethos Committees and Community Groups Diptford: RE Today, was a subject focus for this cycle's ethos visits. It was believed that the RE Today approach was having a positive impact on pupil outcomes. The school used the assessment materials provided through RE Today, accessed via NATRE, as an integral part of the curriculum. Baseline assessments at the beginning of each unit, alongside end of unit assessments, were used to monitor the development of pupils' knowledge as they progressed through the school. There had been a noticeable improvement. The PowerPoints included elicitation tasks and structured questioning, as well as opportunities to revisit and reinforce prior learning. This supported the embedding of knowledge over time. While the overall structure of RE lessons remained similar to previous practice, the use of these materials enhanced consistency and clarity. Previously, there had been greater flexibility for teachers to interpret objectives in their own way. However, the curriculum was now more structured and secure, ensuring that progression was clearly mapped and consistently delivered across the school.	
10.	Staff Feedback (to be reported to the Remuneration and People Committee)	

	• Staff Governor Update: The Staff Governor advised the meeting that she had emailed staff to invite feedback and raise any issues but had not received any responses. • Academy Head Report: Part II was taken	
10.	School Updates • <u>PAN (to include pupils joined/left)</u> ▫ Broadhempston- 49 – 3 joined since last governor visit ▫ Landscope- PAN 15, Current 93 ▫ Sparkwell- 3 joined since spring meeting, 97 children (104 for September) • <u>Pupil workload</u> • <u>Suspensions and permanent exclusions</u> • <u>Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA</u> ▫ Broadhempston- It was noted that a School Life Group meeting was to be arranged for a Tuesday or Wednesday for ASC, the governor circulate a Doodle poll to confirm availability. Governors were also informed that the "Love Your School" day had taken place. ▫ Landscope- Parents evenings were held in autumn & spring term ▫ Sparkwell- Parent engagement was reported as a strength of the school, with positive relationships and high levels of parental satisfaction. Feedback from parents had been used constructively to refine communication systems, with clear actions in place to improve information sharing and responsiveness • <u>ASIP update</u> ▫ Broadhempston- Progress was positive, with no changes to the ASIP. Writing remained the main area of concern and would continue as a focus into next year. A review day with Landscope had been planned, and a new spelling programme developed by the Trust English Lead had been implemented to support improvement. • <u>Sustainability Strategy</u> ▫ Broadhempston- A Climate Action Plan was in place and reviewed half-termly, with actions including a switch-off campaign, food-waste reduction, biodiversity surveys, and recycling and plastic reduction. Recycling workshops were delivered in the Spring term, with a waste workshop planned this half term, and work towards maintaining the Green Flag Award was ongoing. ▫ Landscope- It was reported that the school was on track to meet its objectives, although the volume of activity was challenging. Pupils had a sound understanding of eco-awareness, demonstrating knowledge of how they could make a positive difference to the world around them. ▫ Sparkwell- The school demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability, supported by a range of practical and engaging initiatives, and recognised sustainability as an ongoing and integral part of the curriculum. It was noted that the next step would be to strengthen this work through a more strategic, whole-school approach, with clearer direction and resourcing to maximise longer-term impact. • <u>Safeguarding (to be reported to Board of Trustees)</u> • <u>Buildings (to be reported to Finance and General-Purpose Committee)</u>	
11.	Standards and Curriculum Trustees Meeting The Chair invited Governors to ask any questions on the S&C meeting, there were no comments or questions raised.	
12.	Next S&C Focus: Focus: ○ Overview of curriculum ○ Behaviour and relational approach The Chair notified Governors of the next S&C focus, there were no comments brought forward.	
13.	Evaluation of governance impact Assurance v Reassurance Governors discussed how reassurance was gained during visits through triangulation of evidence, including speaking with staff and pupils, observing classroom practice, and reviewing learning environments (such as wall displays).	
14.	Questions to be dealt with at LAC level (Governance Professional)	

	• Governors asked whether communications could combine the request for a Chair with the recruitment of a sustainability governor.	Clerk
15.	Questions to be escalated to S&C for Trustee consideration (Clerk) There were no questions raised	

The meeting ended at 7.22pm

Signed by the Chair of the committee..... on

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