

Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Minutes of the meeting (hybrid: Morchard Bishop & Microsoft Teams)

Monday, 25 September 2023

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Max Thomas (MT)	Chair – Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor	Yeoford	Ap
Sam Butler (SM)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Joanna (Biddy) Hooper (JH)	Foundation Governor	Morchard Bishop	P
David Pike (DP)	Parent Governor	Cheriton Bishop	TEAMS
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	P
Vacancy	Parent Governor	Morchard Bishop	
Vacancy	Staff (support) Governor	Across the LAC	
Vacancy	Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	
Pam Down	Clerk	Mid Devon LAC	P
Charlotte Roe (CR)	Governance Professional	Link Academy Trust	P

Present/Apologies/Absent

		ACTION
1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chair commented how good it was to meet together – some for the first time. Introductions were made. The Chair welcomed TW, Parent Governor at Tedburn St Mary and, in his absence, BA, Parent Governor at Yeoford. BA had sent his apologies due to work commitments.	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Ongoing as logged on the Register of Business Interests (JH, Teacher in a local primary school – Clerk also works as a Personnel Officer for a local Trust).	
3	APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 03 July 2023 The P1 Minutes were approved and signed by the Chair. They will be forwarded to HR to be uploaded onto the Trust website.	Clerk
4	MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere in the Agenda) a) Update on the appointment of two new Academy Headteachers: Peter Halford, Cheriton Bishop and Chris Martin, Yeoford. Both are experienced and already work for the Trust. Peter Halford will continue in his role as Executive Academy Headteacher at Drake's CofE Primary alongside the new appointment. Chris Martin was previously the Academy Headteacher at Hennock Primary. SB reported a positive start to the year for both schools. b) Ofsted Report from Cheriton Bishop/letter from ND to parents – had been circulated. MT felt the Report accurately reflected the feedback given by Ofsted. SB reported a new, positive vibe at the School, a relational approach with parents, the right staff in place and things moving in the right direction. The Action Plan, linked to 'good' has been shared with staff and SB felt confident areas identified will move forward. DP agreed the School is moving in a good direction to turn things around prior to the next Ofsted Inspection.	
5	CLERK UPDATE 5.1 Appointments/nominations a) Vice Chair (discussed during the July 2023 meeting). No nominations had been received. JH had considered the role and advised she would be prepared to take	

<p>5.2</p>	<p>it on with guidance from MT. All were in agreement. JH was thanked for stepping up to the Vice Chair role.</p> <p>b) Vacancies update AR had reluctantly resigned from her role as Parent Governor at Morchard Bishop due to work commitments in her new job. CR was thanked for forwarding the Parent Governor vacancy paperwork which SB confirmed had been sent to parents today. CR will speak with ND regarding the vacancies for staff governor and Trustee appointed governor. The Clerk and Governors agreed it would be helpful if these posts could be filled as soon as possible.</p> <p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguarding L2 – statutory The Clerk reminded everyone to let her know if they wished to book on the 2 pm or 7 pm online session on 5 October 23. Clerk to send a reminder to everyone with the links to join. JH to ask the administrator at her school to forward confirmation that she has received the L2 Safeguarding training in September 23. ▪ Cyber - one-off statutory training for everyone with a Link Academy Trust email address The Clerk will send a link which will lead to completion of a Certificate to be emailed to the Clerk (only MT & Clerk completed so far). ▪ Prevent – statutory annual training/refreshers leading to a Certificate to be emailed to the Clerk. ▪ Completion of the Annual Confirmation of Compliance (confirming Safeguarding paperwork has been read and that there are no changes that would affect the DBS clearance). To be completed by all governors and returned to the Clerk asap. ▪ DES (Devon Education Services) / Governance Consultancy Team Training Those who had previously attended any training agreed it was helpful and useful. Training offered face to face and/or via online interactive webinar. New governors encouraged to attend the induction course and all governors encouraged to attend the regular governor update briefing sessions (online). <p>5.3 Terms of Reference for the Local Advisory Committees: (previously circulated) CR was thanked for her work in producing this. All were happy to approve.</p> <p>5.4 Update on any local or national issues:</p> <p>a) Completion of paperwork – to be collated as far as possible after the meeting.</p> <p>b) Checking Link Academy Trust emails/how best to alert governors emails have been sent: A WhatsApp group was suggested by CR – mainly as a means of an email alert. All asked to provide a mobile number if wishing to trial. Clerk to set up.</p>	<p>CR / ND</p> <p>All governors</p> <p>One-off for all governors</p> <p>Annual – all governors</p> <p>Annual – all governors</p> <p>All governors – induction session for new governors Regular briefings for all governors</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>SCHOOL UPDATES</p> <p>SB, representing the three other Academy Headteachers, had been in contact with them all.</p> <p>Morchard Bishop: SB reported the Ofsted Report had been published – he will forward a copy for governors. He was pleased with the positive Report and ‘good’ outcome. The SEN improvement point was already being addressed.</p> <p>Data focus: Cheriton Bishop & Yeoford Academy Headteachers are assessing predictions based on information passed on to them. Andy Keay, Academy Data Lead, has been visiting schools to look at standards and outcomes and to support ambitious and aspirational target-setting.</p> <p>DP provided feedback: the AHT had commented during his visit that it was too early to answer questions regarding data properly. DP commented the first visit was so early, data was still being processed and new AHTs needed time to settle: <i>would it be possible to delay the first governor visit next year?</i></p> <p>CR understood and agreed that timing was very tight this time; particularly for the</p>	

<p>new AHTs. She reminded governors about the reasoning for the timing of visits. Governor visits need to take place prior to the LAC meetings in order that Reports can be shared, relevant points highlighted and for there to be an opportunity to raise any questions. Following that, relevant highlights can then be shared with the Standards and Curriculum Committee for their discussion and passed on to the Board of Trustees where appropriate. In order to fit in six governor visits per annum, the first one has to be early in the term. The best she would be able to do would be to delay the first visit of the year by one week. JH remarked that she had a good visit with SB but if that had been last year, when he had just started in his AHT role at Morchard Bishop, she imagined he would not have been in a position to have had time to work through the data himself. CR agreed and stated if any question ever presents a problem (due to timing or other factors) then it is not desperate to obtain an answer. In this case, she suggested to DP that if it was too early to get answers about the data, that would have been the answer.</p> <p>Grounds Maintenance: Each School is sharing the current main bugbear – the grounds are not being maintained to the contractual standard. CR advised an Estates Manager has been employed by the Trust and the situation is being investigated.</p> <p>Attendance: <i>CR highlighted there is a nationwide focus regarding poor attendance and asked if this was a problem within the LAC schools.</i> SB replied that the Trust have ensured a significant focus has been on attendance and as a result are defying the nationwide position. He believed the relational approach supports conversation with families; holding parents to account yet in a non-threatening, positive way working together.</p> <p>Pupil wellbeing: CR noted reports were positive.</p> <p>Positives to celebrate: For the next meeting or further reports, governors/ Academy Heads were invited to highlight positives/areas to celebrate as well as areas creating a challenge or needing improvement. JH and SB were pleased to report a new library area with some new books.</p> <p>PAN (Published Admission Number) It was explained this is the maximum number of pupils in each year group that has been agreed will be admitted without causing problems for the school. SM stated the PAN for Morchard Bishop is 20 which is actually potentially a difficult number - if full as this would mean a class of 40. Numbers are good with 19 entering this year and last year 18 (current Y1). While it is good to reach PAN, it creates challenge in how to manage a large number of children in a class. <i>JH asked whether one of the options would be to add another class, although she was aware this would have big implications and massive changes to the rolling programme.</i> SB explained the need to look at the bigger picture and future forecasts. Following year intakes are currently set to be smaller. Any action taken needs to be sustainable as costs to maintain a different staffing structure would be significant. JH remarked on the difficulties of split year group classes which sometimes happens depending on the number in each year group. SB highlighted the importance of having good links with the community to be able to accurately forecast future numbers. Administrative staff have close contact with the community and with the Toddler Group now running on site, this really helps to maintain accurate data.</p> <p>TM advised there was a Reception intake of 13 at Tedburn St Mary in September – the small Reception class is a positive for parents, staff and the children.</p> <p>Parent Forums <i>CR asked if there was any feedback from meetings that may have been held at the end of the July term.</i> There was nothing to report from last term.</p>	<p>Governors/AHTs</p>
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	<p>TW advised Tedburn St Mary offered Open Afternoons and a Parents' Evening (9/10 people had attended which was good). MT reported there had been an opportunity to meet the teachers at Cheriton Bishop and this had been well attended.</p> <p><i>The Clerk asked when Academy Headteachers would be required to complete a written report for the LAC.</i> CR advised there will be three per year (rather than two a term). Reports will be requested for the November meeting.</p> <p>School Sports Premium <i>MT questioned whether governors need to ask AHTs about this. JH had thought the same as the role of a local governor is not connected with finance.</i> CR advised that everyone is accountable for the correct usage of spending, hearing how the money was spent and the impact it has had on the children. This is the same for PP funding. <i>JH asked SB if he gets to choose how funding is spent or is this done centrally?</i> SB advised part of the budget is spent on the PE Coach/Teacher, Sam Luxa. SB could choose to spend the budget elsewhere but Sam Luxa offers a good service and staff CPD. So, that part of the budget is ringfenced. A group decision was agreed on spending some of the remaining funding on sports events. The remainder of the money last year was spent on sports equipment, including a screen in the hall for dance coaching/choreography via Teams.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any other questions. No further matters were raised.</p>	
7	<p>CURRENT YEAR'S TRUST FOCUS - RELATIONAL APPROACH</p> <p>SB informed governors the whole of the Trust had received intensive CPD with initial input from Matt Jones, DES. Support staff had further workshop training. The Trust has a two school pilot, a Trust model. SB gave an example re an oracy project where clear anchor documents had been created. This had in the main been developed by the Inclusion Hub – Harbertonford and Bearnese – with the relational approach to be developed and incorporated within each school's ASIP. <i>CR asked what a relational approach actually means.</i> SB stated it is about interactions around children; behaviour/change/consequence and how to support positive change within really tight boundaries in a relational way. It is about building on relationships. CR added, connection before correction. JH stated it looks at why a child is upset. MT likened it to gentle parenting. SB advised it is about being reflective – what to do about a certain situation with staff and children being accountable about how to make a difference. CR added the relational approach also applies within the staffing structure. <i>MT asked if the relational approach is being reported/explained to parents.</i> SB advised it will be introduced with shared language. Each school will decide how they will do this, perhaps through Parent Forums. SB felt that at Morchard Bishop, a relational approach was not a huge shift, conversations with parents already hold great importance. BH noted the new behavioural system had been shared with parents at the beginning of the term. TW's report from Tedburn St Mary had advised this will be implemented from Easter next year. MT advised it was ongoing at Cheriton Bishop.</p> <p>CR emphasised that Relational Approach is the Trust focus for the year and it will continue to be included within Governor Visit Reports and AHT Reports.</p>	
8	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETINGS</p> <p>The S&C draft Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 had been circulated. CR highlighted the reporting mechanism for the LACs. Last term's trial with governor visit notes going to the S&C had been successful; the Trustees had liked it and had asked questions. CR briefly outlined the structure of the Trust for the</p>	

	benefit of the new governors. MT added that input from the LACs to S&C had led to deeper questions. It will be interesting to see how it develops – he believes the local governor role will change and have a greater impact. All were asked to read the Minutes and challenge if not happy about anything.	
9	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOCUS – Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes and targets for the year and Academy Improvement Planning (Governor visit note – Autumn 1)</p> <p>The Clerk and CR thanked governors for completing and returning their visit reports. As mentioned in Item 6 above, it was a tight turnaround and having a report from a Governor from each School is brilliant (particularly due to there being two new governors and two new AHTs). Discussion following visits had partially been dealt with in Item 6. MT asked if anyone had anything further to highlight or share.</p> <p>The information below is an amalgamation of verbal feedback at the meeting and information from the governors' visit notes on this focus:</p> <p>Morchard Bishop - JH highlighted that last year's focus had been Maths and children are already showing higher attainment across the School. In English, the focus is raising the standard of writing, the oracy roll out and embedding. SB stated data is in a good place. The challenge of the low Y6 cohort is known but the staff culture is ambitious. The shift in culture is reflected in staff asking how SB will organise/start/support an intervention. It has not yet been possible to fill the Senior Pre-School Lead vacancy which means the Pre-School staff are struggling. There has been a 'Massive injection of new books' to support love of reading and reading schemes with FOMBS money ringfenced for a book wishlist.</p> <p>Yeoford – MT remarked how things are moving forward – as outlined in detail in BA's Report. Barriers to learning for the pupils were identified as behavioural, a high percentage of children with SEN, staffing and low staff morale last year. Staff wellbeing is already improving and workload will reduce slightly by the impending additional staff member. The governor suggestion would be to have one point of communication that all parents could access (rather than three separate WhatsApp groups for each of the three classes). CM, AHT, will investigate an emergency text messaging system for all parents and carers.</p> <p>Cheriton Bishop – DP commented that with the new AHT in place and a positive Ofsted Action Plan, things are positive. Targets for the year to be set in conjunction with the Action Plan following the Ofsted result of requires improvement. The Action Plan will include assessment of pupils, parental engagement, a review of the School's Vision and Values and Health and Safety. Focus on staff wellbeing is a priority this year. Pupils have made a great start to the new year with KS2 attending the Trust Cross Country event.</p> <p>Tedburn St Mary – TW's report highlighted pupils had achieved projected targets last year with PP pupils/Non-PP pupils targets achieved. An identified barrier to learning for pupils was funding with the AHT stating his greatest challenge last year was time. Feedback from parents' drop in session excellent – a very open door policy with parents aware they can talk to teachers.</p> <p>Discussion took place about the sort of questions governors should ask (in addition or alongside those suggested in CR's visit templates). CR stated that last year, the focus was on getting governance organised. This year, it will be a matter of training and drilling down. <i>JH asked whether there was additional training re asking questions (particularly for Ofsted or SIAMS).</i> CR did not want to be prescriptive regarding questions governors should ask and remarked that good</p>	

	<p>questions had been raised this evening. SB stated it was helpful for AHTs to be questioned/held to account, it helped to reflect on practice. Questions need to be purposeful. CR will feed this back to LL and ND with a view to this being shared with AHTs. The culture should be an expectation that governors and trustees will ask them questions. <i>JH suggested asking, 'How do you know that?' to support evidence within governor visit reports.</i></p> <p>CR stated the process has started well in collating information from the governor visits – with potentially up to 17 visit notes to share with the S&C Committee. The EIT, AK, will be making a presentation on Data to the Trustees – the information provided in the Reports will inform the Trustees. The Clerk added the new, purposeful structure with governors collating focussed information, feeding this to the S&C and Trustees and then governors knowing how this was discussed/outcomes via the S&C minutes, gives much more purpose to the work of the governors and LACs which will result in far greater impact.</p>	
10	<p>NEXT STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM FOCUS: Vision, values and SIAMS with a LEARNING WALK to evidence the values and (for CoE schools) Christian Distinctiveness, are present and SEF Overview – Governors to discuss the academy's self-evaluation with the Academy Head (Visit note Autumn 2)</p> <p><i>MT queried why this item was on the Agenda.</i> CR explained it was on the agenda in order to discuss and prepare for the next focus and to enable governors to share best practice and raise any queries for clarification.</p> <p><i>JH asked if SIAMS was applicable to Morchard Bishop only.</i> CR confirmed this was the case due to it being a Church School (SIAMS being the Diocese equivalent of Ofsted). <i>JH noted a SIAMS Inspection will probably take place next year. She wondered how best to prepare as Foundation Governor.</i> CR advised JH to contact Sharon Lord, the Trust's SIAMS Lead, and to ask what a SIAMS Inspection will look for. SB confirmed preparation for the Inspection is in hand after a difficult period of readjustment following the death of the SIAMS Lead teacher. SIAMS will look for evidence of Christian Distinctiveness and theology rooted Vision and Values. Ofsted had highlighted the new Vision and Values had been embedded well with children having a deep understanding. SB added the Vision and Values should be the golden thread in all areas of School life. SB had produced a SWAY on the steps towards creating the new V&Vs in order to capture the evidence.</p> <p>CR asked governors if they knew the Vision and Values of the schools. She explained that each school has their own. Often they are noticeable when entering or walking around a school. SB stated the V&Vs should be on all the websites.</p> <p><i>DP had discussed Vision and Values with PH, AHT.</i> PH is planning to focus on creating a new Vision and Values to support the Ofsted Action Plan. CB suggested when the new V&Vs are known, DP could ask how they will be embedded. MT agreed this was of great importance – how will the School be embedding V&V/relational approach (no longer referring to Covid) but moving forward.</p> <p>CR suggested TW asks AK, AHT where the V&Vs are displayed and to talk to the children about what they know about them. CR believed one of the best ways to evidence this, and gain a general overview of each school, is to undertake a Learning Walk, physically walking around the school. TW had already done this with AK showing him around and outlining a number of things. TW will add this to future governor visit reports. TW had also attended the Harvest Festival. CR and the Clerk remarked how much TW had managed to achieve in his short time as a governor. Really getting to know the School is such an important part of the role</p>	

	of a Parent Governor.	
11	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS</p> <p>Morchard Bishop: SB advised the Ethos Committee had not met since the death of the Lead teacher. Plans are in place to re-establish the Ethos Committee and JH will be supporting this. SB had been engaging in positive conversation with the Church – both the Vicar and the local Church Warden. The Vicar supports ten churches so the local Church Warden plays an important role. Together, they have created a development plan of support. There is a monthly family service but preparation for this had needed improvement. A good plan has been agreed whereby the Vicar and/or Church Warden will come into School two weeks' prior to the family service. There will be a time of Collective Worship and development with children and staff to plan the role of the children within the family service. The children will then deliver what is prepared to the School prior to going to the church for the family service. The plan will need to embed but SB was enthusiastic about the way forward. JH commented that services were not well attended at the start but are becoming better attended: it is a mutually beneficial relationship. SB added the children's contribution had been reworked with the children choosing songs and taking more ownership which in turn leads to more interest for the Sunday service.</p>	
12	<p>SAFEGUARDING</p> <p>Academy Heads and governors to feedback any safeguarding updates or concerns:</p> <p>No concerns were highlighted.</p>	
13	<p>EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IMPACT - To review performance and value of the meeting – to summarise the effectiveness of the meeting and how this will positively impact on our pupils, staff and Trust. Governors to consider during the meeting where their understanding/decisions have had an impact and share a sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governor visit reports had been produced for each of the LAC schools! These will be fed into the S&C Committee – governors feel they will serve a stronger and more effective purpose. Outcomes to be reflected in the S&C Minutes. ▪ Governor visits had been focussed (thanks to CR for her role in providing the detailed 'awesome' template reports/questions to raise) and had given governors the opportunity to find out more about the schools – including a Learning Walk for a new governor. ▪ The new governance structure has been implemented with two new governors on board. It is hoped recruitment for the three remaining governor vacancies will have a further positive impact across the LAC for both the children and the staff. ▪ Discussion on the type of questions governors can ask should instil confidence and be useful in the next round of governor visits and reports. 	CR/ND

Meeting closed at 6.35 pm

Signed as approved by the Vice Chair, Joanna Hooper _____

Date: 20 November 2023