

## Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

### Minutes of the meeting (held via Microsoft Teams)

**Monday, 13 May 2024 at 5 pm**

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Max Thomas (Chair)	Chair – Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor	Yeoford	P
Sam Butler ( SB)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Joanna (Biddy) Hooper (JH)	Foundation Governor	Morchard Bishop	P
Rebecca (Beki) Richards (RR)	Staff Governor	Across the LAC	P
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	P
<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>Parent Governor</b>	<b>Morchard Bishop</b>	
<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>Parent Governor</b>	<b>Cheriton Bishop</b>	
<b>Vacancy</b>	<b>Trustee Appointed Governor</b>	<b>Across the LAC</b>	
Pam Down (Clerk)	Clerk	Mid Devon LAC	P
Charlotte Roe (CR)	Governance Professional	Link Academy Trust	P

Present/Apologies/Absent

		ACTION
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Governors were aware that DP had resigned on 6.5.24 and, in his absence, the Chair acknowledged and thanked him for his valued contribution as Parent Governor at Cheriton Bishop.	
<b>2</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:</b> As logged on the Register of Business Interests - nothing further to add pertaining to this meeting.	
<b>3</b>	<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 04 MARCH 2024</b> The P1 Minutes were <b>approved</b> and will be signed by the Chair. They will be forwarded to HR to be uploaded onto the Trust website.	Clerk/Chair
<b>4</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere in the Agenda)</b> Nothing further was raised.	
<b>5</b> <b>5.1</b>	<b>CLERK UPDATE</b> <b>Appointments/nominations</b> <b>a) Vacancies update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Parent Governor at Morchard Bishop:</b> SB reported the parent governor vacancy is potentially filled – subject to the usual recruitment checks. The candidate has a good and relevant skillset to contribute and has the necessary paperwork to complete and is excited about becoming involved.</li> <li><b>The Parent Governor vacancy at Cheriton Bishop</b> is being advertised.</li> <li><b>Trustee Appointed Governor:</b> No update. The Clerk reminded everyone to think about anyone active within their community or perhaps any Councillor. Suggestions of any names to be emailed to the Clerk and Chair.</li> <li><b>Governance Professional role:</b> CR advised she had handed in her resignation to the Trust due to family commitments. CR will be leaving at the end of May unless it is possible to split her current role. The clerk had written to ND, CEO and the Chair of the Trust on behalf of the other clerks in the LAC, highlighting</li> </ul>	ALL

	<p>how CR had made a significant impact during her time in the role through the processes she had put in place - particularly with the cycle of governor/AHT visits with a clear focus facilitating feedback between LACs and the Trustees and the support she gave clerks and governors. The clerks expressed their hope there would be a way for CR to continue if a different structure could be introduced to support this. CR will keep everyone informed.</p>	
5.2	<p><b>Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Prevent – statutory annual training/refresher</b> leading to a Certificate to be emailed to the Clerk. One governor yet to complete. The Certificate gained on completion to be emailed to the Clerk.</li> <li>▪ <b>Safeguarding</b> – annual training completed by all governors and the clerk.</li> <li>▪ <b>Feedback re the LAC training on 23.04.24 delivered by Lizzie Lethbridge, focusing on how to ask questions</b> – attended by CR, TW, JH &amp; Clerk. A very useful and helpful session. CR was thanked for organising and, if she had continued in the role, had planned to expand in-house online training. A recording of this session has been circulated – governors encouraged to watch it.</li> <li>▪ <b>DES (Devon Education Services) / Governance Consultancy Team Training:</b> Both new parent governors had attended the online induction course. All governors were encouraged to attend the regular governor update briefing sessions (online) – as detailed in the weekly Governance Alerts. Lots of useful information is shared at the sessions, including detail about new initiatives and how governors are best able to support their schools.</li> <li>▪ <b>Clerks’ briefing</b> – attended by the clerk on 30.04.24 had provided a lot of helpful information.</li> </ul>	<p>Regular briefings for all governors highlighted and attendance encouraged</p>
5.3	<p><b>Clerk to the Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>Single Central Record (SCR) – a reminder about the checking procedure for LAC governors.</b> The Clerk suggested governors ensure this is covered annually during one of their visits. Governors will need to discuss beforehand with the AHTs and/or administrators to ensure a convenient time to factor into diaries.</li> <li>b) <b>Exeter Diocesan Education Network (EDEN) Undertaking forms all completed.</b> Clerk to hold the forms and send the list to CR.</li> <li>c) <b>Bio from parent/foundation governors to highlight and promote the role within schools.</b> (Mid Devon LAC minutes, 04.03.24, item 5.3 e) Governors to draft a brief bio and description of their role and forward to the Chair and Clerk to collate by 24.05.24. The Clerk will then liaise with Sue Howard, HR about the process for this to be uploaded to each school’s website.</li> <li>d) <b>Request for Exclusion Panel volunteers (online training to be provided)</b> MT, JH and BA had previously volunteered to undertake training to form part of a pool of governors ready to form a team if/when needed. CR had hoped there would be further volunteers from other LACs in order to organise training for everyone at the same time. CR will contact governors with an update.</li> <li>e) <b>SATs volunteer helpers</b> Governors were thanked for helping in their schools. SB expressed huge thanks to BA and CR for arranging to be available at Morchard Bishop to oversee the SATs process. The first day was out of the way and had gone smoothly. BA praised the whole environment at Morchard Bishop School which was lovely. The pupils were well cared for and supported; it had been a great experience. RR asked for thanks from Yeoford Primary to be passed to the catering staff at Morchard. The SATs breakfast treats had been much appreciated. SB will ensure the Kitchen Manager and Assistant will be thanked – they had come into work early to make it happen.</li> </ol>	<p>Governors to diarise an annual SCR check</p> <p>Clerk to send Eden Undertaking list to CR</p> <p>Governors to send a brief bio to the Chair and Clerk by 24.05.24</p> <p>CR to contact MT, JH &amp; BA with details of training when known</p> <p>SB to pass on thanks to the Kitchen for the SATs breakfast treats</p>

	<p><b>g) LAC meeting on 24 June 2024 will be held face-to-face at Morchard Bishop Primary</b> - SB and BA to liaise re childcare arrangements on site. The Chair reminded everyone the Teams option would also be available should they be unable to attend in person.</p>	
<b>5.4</b>	<p><b>Significant changes within the Trust including key personnel</b> CR advised four new AHTs have been appointed by the Trust to start in September 2024. Two new appointments are within the Mid Devon LAC – one to replace AK who will be leaving Tedburn St Mary for a role in the Central Team and a new AHT had been appointed at Cheriton Bishop. The other new appointments are at Ilsington C of E and Harbertonford C of E. The Trust is growing with Littleham C of E, near Exmouth having joined the Trust (East Devon LAC) this term. Other schools have due diligence underway with a view to joining the Trust in the Autumn Term. CR advised the Trust needs to grow and keep strong to protect small village schools and to avoid being taken over by a bigger MAT. SB reiterated the need to ensure sustainability of the Trust and explained the significance between pupil numbers over a collective number of schools with Government ambition of a Trust's size (indicating 10 schools = 3,000 pupils – obviously not in rural areas with small schools). ND, CEO, is doing a lot of work advocating for small schools nationally and supporting a number of other Trusts. CR highlighted the importance of ND being involved in this way and stated her voice is being heard!</p>	
<b>5.5</b>	<p><b>Parental Engagement</b> The new Governance Handbook states trusts need to show they are obtaining stakeholder opinion: 3 Core Roles – Role 3 - the board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement. When Ofsted visit schools, they look into the whole trust. CR had amended the visit report template slightly to accommodate a more formal collection of evidence together with any outcomes if relevant. CR encouraged governors to have this in mind when talking to AHTs – how do parents know/how do they feel/feedback to evidence (parents' evenings/forums/PTAs) – to show Ofsted parents' views are important. MT had noted when reading the reports that each had said a similar thing: there was an open door policy/opportunity to speak with staff.</p>	
<b>5.6</b>	<p><b>Risk Registers</b> CR stated AHTs had undertaken a lot of training with MM, Deputy CEO. Risk Registers are not just about H&amp;S but include everything (eg pupil numbers/ finance/safeguarding). CR provided the example that should only two pupils be forecast to join a school, governors should ask if that has been added to the RA – what strategies are around it (triangulation) - ie finance/sustainability. Local governors are the eyes and ears in their local schools supporting the Trustees and are in a good position to ask the relevant questions. Governors were asked to talk to their AHTs re Risk Registers. During the June face-to-face LAC, SB will show governors aspects of the 'Every' system and talk about risks and how to adapt and tailor to individual schools.</p>	<p><b>LAC Governors and AHTs to discuss Risk Registers. SB to show governors the 'Every' system and discuss at the June LAC.</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>FOCUS: Provision and impact for SEND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trends over time of prime needs, pupils moving on and off SEND registers, meeting progress targets and EHCP objectives</li> <li>• Pupil and parent voice</li> </ul> <p>Reports had been received from three schools and circulated to all governors prior to the meeting. Governors were thanked for the time given and effort made in producing the reports. The Chair noted reports highlight a high level of SEND compared to National numbers with more pupils going on than off the registers (and with those going off the register sometimes due to a higher level of need</p>	

	<p>rather than no need). <i>The Chair asked why the level of SEND was higher than national comparison.</i> It was noted from the previous S&amp;C meeting minutes that further discussion on this subject would be taking place so governors will revisit at the June meeting.</p> <p><i>A governor noted one school in particular had a very high level of SEND: is the school able to cope? Are there other things to explore to support the school and staff? The governor asked if the small size of the school was attracting SEND admission - did parents believe a smaller setting to be beneficial for their children? CR asked how the high level of SEND is affecting other children: are parents removing their children?</i></p> <p>The author of the visit report emphasised the AHT and every member of staff are doing their absolute best for all the children, with or without SEND. The governor believed staff deserved gold medals for going way above and beyond in what they were doing for everyone. The governor has a lot of faith in the way the school is being led.</p> <p><i>A governor asked at what point should the school say it is not in a position to meet all of the needs?</i> The governor replied that was a valid question and reiterated the need for everyone to know the staff are doing everything they can. More help is always useful!</p> <p><i>Another governor asked, from a staff perspective, what support is available (for staff and parents)? What is the effect on staff wellbeing, particularly for those at the brunt end of the challenging behaviour?</i> The governor will ask further questions when visiting. Resources are available but was there time to access them?</p> <p><i>A governor raised the suggestion about an additional Inclusion Hub closer to Mid-Devon. Is there any pathway for it? The Inclusion Hub is great but how accessible is it?</i> CR advised this would be raised at S&amp;C with Fran McLoughlin, Director of Inclusion.</p> <p><i>The Chair referred to the new EHCP document mentioned in the Morchard Bishop visit report: what is it? Is it something only used at Morchard Bishop?</i> The author replied it is a document produced by SB and the SENDCo; they have taken a lot of time to draw out the most useful targets. SB stated that as the EHCP is not very user-friendly he and the SENDCo had produced a document identifying the key outcomes, then broken down umbrella terms to detail how provision and needs are met (what does it look like/what do we do?). The document had been passed to the inclusion and improvement hub with a view to hopefully roll out across the Trust.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated SB and the SENDCo and commented that success and good news is sometimes not shared enough - sharing good practice is so important.</p> <p><i>A governor asked about the watch list mentioned in the Tedburn St Mary visit report: what is it and how does it work?</i> The author replied it is a list of pupils not on the SEND register, yet needing additional support.</p>	<p><b>June LAC – to review latest S&amp;C minutes re further SEND information</b></p> <p><b>To raise with S&amp;C</b></p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>FOCUS: Oversight of pupil premium strategies and their impact</b></p> <p>Quality teaching had been identified. There would be an update on PP after tomorrow's S&amp;C meeting.</p>	<p><b>PP update in the next S&amp;C Minutes</b></p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>SCHOOL UPDATES</b></p> <p>Governors to consider and discuss feedback on any issues/successes from their school visits or visit notes completed by the AHT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PAN (to include pupils joined/left)</li> <li>• Pupil wellbeing</li> <li>• Staff wellbeing and workload</li> <li>• Attendance</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspensions and permanent exclusions</li> <li>• Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA</li> <li>• ASIP update</li> <li>• Risk assessments/Accident book</li> <li>• Pre-school update</li> </ul> <p>The visit reports had covered quite a bit of the above. In addition, the following points were raised:</p> <p><b>Visits to schools by Trustees?</b>  CR advised the question about occasional visits to schools from the Trustees had been discussed at S&amp;C. One LAC had requested visits but the other had not. CR asked governors to let the Chair know their views.  <i>A governor asked what the thinking had been regarding the request.</i> CR stated that although she was a conduit between the Trust and the LAC, they wanted to see a Trustee. She believed it was a matter of putting a face to a name, being able to feel closer to and understand the Trustees' roles further.  <i>Another governor asked what the benefit of a visit would be?</i> The Chair commented that before more recent changes in reporting and feedback, there had been minimal communication. At that point, he believed Trustee visits would have been helpful. However, with the current structure in place, he felt visits, although nice, would not be necessary.  <i>A further governor commented on seeing both sides but added as the current system is not broken, why fix it? Everyone is tight on time so it needed to be spent wisely. The governor felt the relationship on the ground floor with the school and AHT is important and that worked well.</i>  A governor stated that should Trustee visits take place, it would be important not to make a Trustee feel they were in front of a firing squad and that we are part of a team.  A governor added that having CR in attendance at LAC meetings was very informative and made meetings much more useful by bridging the gap between the LAC and the Trustees.  <i>A governor asked if casual, social evenings were ever held between the Trustees and the LACs.</i> CR advised an away day (evening) had been held last year but only the LAC Chairs had been invited. It was something to consider. Meanwhile, CR will circulate the Governance Handbook which contains bios and photographs.</p> <p><b>iPAD/login/security issue</b>  Governors had raised the issues relating to security due to it not being possible for pupils to individually log on to the iPads. It is possible to know if anyone has tried to access inappropriate material but not possible to pinpoint or identify the individual (this issue had been resolved for staff members). This will be raised at the S&amp;C meeting.</p> <p><b>Social Media / unofficial complaint</b>  A governor reported a couple of grievances made about a school by a parent via Social Media. This was not posted on the School's timeline but the School had been linked on a personal post. <i>A governor asked what had been done about the situation.</i> The AHT had dealt with the issue but the governor felt Social Media means the School/staff are open to abuse. Other governors raised concern for the staff wellbeing. <i>The clerk asked what social media policies were in place.</i> CR advised that everyone should adhere to the Code of Conduct and ICT Acceptable Use agreement.</p>	<p><b>CR/Chair to feed back thoughts re Trustees' visits to S&amp;C</b></p> <p><b>To consider a Social/informal evening between Trustees and LAC governors. CR to circulate the Governance Handbook</b></p> <p><b>iPad/login/security to raise at S&amp;C</b></p> <p><b>To ensure safeguarding is in place to protect staff with everyone adhering to the policies</b></p>
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9	<p><b>CURRENT YEAR'S FOCUS – Relational Approach</b></p> <p>SB confirmed this remains at the forefront of everything that is done and will be at the embedding stage in the next academic year. The Chair commented that each school is on a journey with this. During meetings he had attended, the Trust follows the relational approach throughout.</p> <p>The staff governor commented on the challenge of adapting and adopting the relational approach with the high SEND number. It takes a lot of teacher time to follow through and impacts on everyone. Another governor agreed this was a valid point. <i>The Chair asked when more information about Relational Approach will be cascaded to parents and carers? He felt it important for parents to know more to be able to understand and follow at home.</i> CR believed sharing Relational Approach information would help parents to discuss and explain the principles to children with good behaviour who perhaps needed to understand the approach with children with challenging behaviour.</p>	<p>To consider cascading information about the Relational Approach with parents/carers</p>
10	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</b></p> <p>a) Response to <b>draft</b> minutes dated 19.03.2024 previously circulated (confidential until approved). As below:</p> <p>b) Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&amp;C meeting:</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair had raised the question about the ongoing strategic recruitment plan for the Trust in view of the general difficulty in recruiting- 4 March 2024 LAC meeting (item 7). The CEO had said that there was a workforce strategy group who were researching efficient ways of advertising and looking at job descriptions. Retention was also a focus within the group – making the Trust an employer of choice. The Trust has students from various local colleges and universities to encourage strong links into the upcoming workforce.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CEO had been tasked to deliver the more difficult news, leaving the AHT communication with parents to be more positive.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair stated it had been a good meeting and encouraged governors to read the minutes if they had not already done so.</p>	
11	<p><b>NEXT S&amp;C FOCUS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Overview of curriculum</b></li> <li><b>Attendance</b></li> <li><b>Behaviour and relational approach</b></li> </ul> <p>Governors were reminded this is an opportunity to discuss any queries/get clarification in preparation for the next focus. Governors were also encouraged to ask other questions than detailed on the visit template should conversations lead elsewhere, the report sheet is not prescriptive (reference made again to the recorded session delivered by Lizzie Lethbridge). CR reiterated the Trustees' feedback to the LACs is positive. They are confident the standard of information is high.</p>	
12	<p><b>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS – SEG Focus: RE</b></p> <p>SB reported this will be a big focus next year; it is part of the ASIP with a SIAMS inspection due the following year. There are strong links with the Church but due to there being no vicar in place currently then it is not the right time to place additional pressure on the volunteer church representative who regularly comes into school.</p> <p>The Chair asked if there was anything else to report from any other schools. Nothing was raised in addition to that mentioned in the visit reports.</p>	

13	<p><b>EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE IMPACT</b> - 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work on creating governor bios and description about the LAC governor role should raise the profile of governors which may help towards succession planning.</li> <li>▪ Risk Registers further explained and SB will show governors aspects of the 'Every' system and talk about risks and how to adapt and tailor to individual schools during the face to face LAC meeting to be held at Morchard Bishop Primary on 24 June 2024.</li> <li>▪ A detailed, informative discussion on the high level of SEND within the LAC. More information to follow after the next S&amp;C meeting.</li> </ul>	
14	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</b>  <b>Summary of questions from governors to be raised at the S&amp;C meeting:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>iPads:</b> Individual logins/security – being able to identify any pupil trying to access inappropriate material .</li> <li>2) <b>To feedback on the question of need for Trustee visits to schools</b> (not necessary now the visit cycle/LAC and S&amp;C feedback is good).</li> <li>3) <b>Inclusion Hub:</b> Any pathway to have an Inclusion Hub closer to Mid-Devon – how accessible is the current hub in this area?</li> <li>4) <b>Social Media:</b> To ensure safeguarding is in place to protect staff with everyone adhering to the Code of Conduct and ICT Acceptable Use policy.</li> <li>5) <b>SEND:</b> Why the level of SEND within the LAC is higher than national comparison?</li> </ol>	<p><b>Questions for the LAC Chair to raise at the S&amp;C meeting</b></p>

The meeting closed at 6.10 pm

Signed as approved by the Chair, Max Thomas ..... Date: 24 June 2024