



## Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

### Minutes of the meeting held via Microsoft Teams

**Monday, 25 November 2024 at 5 pm**

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Joanna (Bidly) Hooper (JH)	Chair – Foundation Governor	Morchard Bishop/across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor – Vice Chair	Yeoford	P
Mat Boulton (MB)	Parent Governor	Cheriton Bishop	P
Sam Butler (SB / AHT)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Catherine Cozens (CC)	Parent 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>Trustee Appointed Governor</b>	<b>Across the LAC</b>	
Pam Down (Clerk)	Clerk	Mid Devon LAC	P
Charlotte Roe (GP)	Governance Professional	Link Academy Trust	P

Present/Apologies/Absent

		ACTION
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> JH, Chair welcomed governors and thanked everyone for attending – a full house!	
<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 30 SEPTEMBER 2024</b> The P1 Minutes were <b>approved</b> and were signed by the Chair. They will be forwarded to HR to be uploaded onto the Trust website.	Chair/Clerk
<b>4</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere in the Agenda)</b> Congratulations relayed to SB regarding his forthcoming move from Morchard Bishop to support other schools within the Trust in an Executive Headship role. SB will be greatly missed both in the Morchard Bishop community and across the Mid-Devon LAC. JH added the realisation that SB was destined for bigger things had always been acknowledged but the promotion has been sooner than expected. SB advised he has been appointed to support rapid improvement to schools in East Devon. His move from Morchard Bishop in February is dependent upon the successful appointment of his successor.	
<b>5</b> <b>5.1</b>	<b>CLERK'S UPDATE</b> <b>Appointments/nominations</b> a) <b>Vacancies update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Trustee Appointed Governor:</b> A potential name was suggested by JH. She will follow this up with a discussion. GP informed a Job Description specific to this role is not available. If there is interest, consideration to be given to JH (in her role as Chair) taking on the Trustee Appointed Governor role with the potential candidate perhaps taking on JH's current Foundation Governor role. <i>Questions were raised about JH then stepping down from Governor Visit reporting and taking on more of an overview role: the</i></li> </ul>	<b>JH to discuss the Trustee Appointed/ Foundation Gov vacancy with a potential applicant</b>

	<p><i>impact would be particularly felt due to the timing of SB's forthcoming move and a new AHT being appointed. Would JH's experience in her current role better support a newly appointed AHT? To be discussed further after ascertaining if the person wishes to apply. It was recognised that JH has vast experience and there would be an expectation that in her role as Chair she would support any changes in any of the schools across the LAC. JH confirmed that she was more than willing to do this.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>AHT Governor Representative:</b> SB will remain in the governor representative role until further discussion at the January 2025 meeting when confirmation about his departure date is expected to be known. SB will discuss handing the role over with the other AHTs – bearing in mind, two are new to the role.</li> </ul> <p><b>5.2 Training:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Christian Distinctiveness &amp; SIAMS update</b> (attended by JH, CC, GP &amp; Clerk) CC remarked that during a visit, she had been able to witness how RE is incorporated within teaching. JH added the training had been useful in helping to hone in on Ethos/wellbeing and an holistic approach as opposed to data. Discussion had provided aspiration even if in reality not everything could be attained.</p> <p>b) <b>New Governor Induction/introduction for local or hub governors</b> : Tues 28 Jan 2025, 17:30-19: 30 (webinar). The Governance Professional had previously reminded everyone that it is a statutory requirement for new governors to attend asap after appointment.</p> <p>c) <b>Governance online briefings DES (Devon Education Services) / Governance Consultancy Team training</b> governors encouraged to attend the useful briefings (Tues 4.2.25 12.30 – 1.30 pm or Wed 5.2.25 4-5 pm).</p> <p>d) <b>Monthly Safeguarding Focus (MSF)</b> previously emailed – governors reminded to watch the important in-house updates provided by Gemma and Alex.</p>	<p>Regular briefings for all governors highlighted and attendance encouraged</p>
<p><b>5.3</b></p>	<p><b>Clerk to the Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues:</b></p> <p>a) <b>Confirmation the new Safeguarding Policy has been read and understood.</b> The clerk had forwarded an email from a governor outlining considerations in relation to the Policy. <b>The GP had advised she will direct the points to the Director of Safeguarding and Trustee with safeguarding responsibility.</b> The governor had raised points with GM, local Safeguarding Lead. In response to the query regarding the meaning of 'appropriately trained', the AHT confirmed that while all staff are trained in Safeguarding to L2, there is a L3 trained staff member on site at all times. The Trust had been satisfied that 'drugs' did not need to be listed separately to alcohol or solvents as it had been decided drugs are encapsulated within this category and not listed separately within CPoms. <b>Governors were asked to email the Clerk to confirm the updated Safeguarding Policy had been read and understood as it is currently written.</b> The governor was thanked for studying the Policy carefully and raising the queries in his email.</p> <p>b) <b>Governor Bio from parent/foundation governors to highlight and promote the role within schools</b> (discussed at previous meetings). The Clerk thanked JH and MB for emailing their bios. Clerk to forward to others as guidance. When received, the Clerk will liaise with Sue Howard, HR about the process for these to be uploaded to each school's website.</p> <p>c) <b>Standards &amp; Curriculum meeting 10.12.24</b> – JH confirmed she would attend.</p>	<p>GP to direct points re the new S/G policy to the DoS and the Trustee with S/G responsibility</p> <p>Governors to confirm the new S/G Policy has been read and understood.</p> <p>Governors to send a brief bio to the Clerk asap (HR to upload to school websites) - clerk to share bios received with other governors</p>

	<p><b>d) Governance Today publication</b> (previously circulated) The Clerk highlighted the useful information within the publication, including training opportunities.</p>	
6	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOCUS: Personal Development/ Wellbeing – Relationship Education, PHSE &amp; RHSE</b> Feedback from governors re their focus visits invited.</p> <p>Two reports commented that pupil wellbeing is prioritised through daily check-ins. All reports were positive about pupil wellbeing and referred to the use of Jigsaw to support RHSE. Vision and values supported pupils’ development, together with School Ambassadors, Values Champion Assemblies, Wellbeing Warriors, a School Council, Nurture provision and interventions. Some of these are in the early stage of development.</p>	
7	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOCUS: SEF Overview – The Academy Head’s overview of accuracy and effectiveness of school self-evaluation</b> Feedback from governors re their focus visits invited.</p> <p>Due to there being two new AHTs, SEFs were at a varying stage of development. Review and updating is ongoing due to the nature of the document which reflects the current situation within each individual school.</p>	
8	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOCUS: Christian Distinctiveness/ SIAMS (for CofE Schools) with a learning walk.</b> Feedback from governors re their focus visits invited.</p> <p>The section on Christian Distinctiveness had been completed by Morchard Bishop only as the one CofE school. A huge piece of work on Vision and Values had been completed last year and ‘children have now fully embedded these themes of nurture and equity without being scripted’. There are good links with the Church which support the V&amp;V link to Bible stories, often highlighted through school worship. The SIAMS report is due next year and the ASIP strands tailored to Christian Distinctiveness ensure systems are embedded. Ethos ambassadors are being trained. The Foundation and Parent Governors had both attended recent training on Christian Distinctiveness and SIAMS (item 5.2 a). During the visit they completed a learning walk and the Report details the AHTs responses to extensive questions regarding Christian values. The AHT stated the ‘values are integral to everything; themes run throughout the whole curriculum’. Pupils’ responses regarding a variety of questions relating to Christian Distinctiveness and wellbeing were also contained within the Report.</p>	
9	<p><b>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS</b> Feedback from governors re their focus visits invited.</p> <p>The new church youth leader has directed contractual time to support the school. This will be used to lead Ethos meetings as well as delivering worship. Steps are closer in forming the Ethos Committee.</p> <p>All schools reported parents’ evenings and/or parents’ forum group meetings and good PTFA support.</p>	
10	<p><b>RISK ASSESSMENTS FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>The Chair asked for clarification: <i>was the purpose to check Risk Registers were in place or to check aspects within it (ie SCR)?</i> The GP stated the Trustees/Audit Committee had completed a lot of work on Risk Registers and AHTs had undergone significant training. The GP reminded governors the RR is wide-ranging and covers pupil numbers to a broken door. From the Trustees’ point of view, particular concerns requiring highlighting need to be raised. The Governors’ role is to talk to the AHTs during a visit to ascertain whether risks have been assumed treated or</p>	

	<p>archived or are there particular concerns on the RR that need further attention. Should an AHT mention a particular issue during the visit, the governors' role would be to check this is included within the RR.</p> <p>During a previous face-to-face LAC meeting, SB had shown governors extracts from Morchard Bishops actual RR, including timescales and, where appropriate, the right time to review (eg following a data drop). Many aspects of H&amp;S are site specific with a review date dependent upon the need or urgency outlined so it would be difficult to produce a list of questions for governors to ask during a visit.</p> <p>GP affirmed the area of Risk Registers is a big and ever-changing one; she acknowledged it was not easy or straightforward. GP added that, if understood and done well, the purpose of the RR is to support AHTs and schools. Visits could be a time to check on progress (ie number of red rags - if reducing, check rather than assume sorted). <i>A governor mentioned the erection of new fences – checking with the AHT the RR had been updated to reflect the change.</i> The GP stated that was a great example of the governor role.</p>	
11	<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> <li>• Suspensions and permanent exclusions</li> <li>• Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA</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>PAN:</b> The Chair reported the S&amp;C Committee had discussed at length the lack of full schools and the importance of marketing.</p> <p><b>Pupil wellbeing:</b> All reports had shone a positive light. <i>A governor had asked if the Trust had a mental health and wellbeing specialist for pupils; someone who could be deployed across the Trust.</i> SB stated that Sue Howard, HR, was the trained staff lead. She sent regular bulletins to staff (also forwarded to governors and trustees). The Inclusion Hub supports pupil wellbeing, including SEMH provision.</p> <p><b>Staff wellbeing and workload:</b> The Chair remarked on the general busyness of this term. <i>A governor raised the issue of unsuccessful recruitment which puts pressure on staff having to cover an additional role: were there any suggestions to help? Another governor agreed this is difficult; the same situation occurs when staff are unwell (sometimes longer-term) which causes cover issues. Mention had been made at some point about floating staff within the Trust who would be able to support: was this sort of cover available?</i> The GP confirmed there had been floating teachers but unfortunately they are snapped up quickly to cover sickness, which can be long-term. With limited funds, it was difficult to balance employment of floating staff with employment of regular contractual need.</p> <p><i>The Staff Governor asked whether governors spoke to other staff aside from the AHT during visits.</i> A governor confirmed regular visits to the staffroom were made prior to completing a visit with the AHT in order to try and find an opportunity to talk to staff members. An example was given: on one occasion (as detailed in the visit report) a concern was raised via email by a staff member. Governors spoke to staff and the AHT later sent a staff questionnaire. Following this, general feedback</p>	

	<p>about the issue was good and the concern related to something that could happen but not what was actually happening. The concern was resolved.</p> <p>The GP advised the Trust were encouraging more governors to talk to staff and pupils. The GP referred to a point made by Christina Mabin at the recent Christian Distinctiveness training: Reassurance can be sought from an AHT, Assurance is gained by talking to pupils to get evidence to back it up.</p> <p>The Chair believed asking about the wellbeing of a staff member could lead to them feeling quite a vulnerable. The Chair felt this would be an easier question to ask if the governor/staff member already knew each other; it would be hard for new governors who did not know staff. The GP agreed, adding it was a much easier with pro-active AHTs who encourage governors to speak to a wider community. The GP suggested the question about staff wellbeing could be asked by staff governors across the LAC. This would be less intrusive. The Chair commented it is more difficult to gauge staff wellbeing when staff are unknown/on site elsewhere. <b>The GP agreed to ask clerks to email staff governors with a request they contact staff throughout their LAC asking about welfare and if there was anything to be brought to a meeting for discussion.</b></p> <p><b>Attendance</b> Positive with no fixed or permanent exclusions reported. The Chair informed governors attendance was the subject of a lengthy discussion during the S&amp;C meeting. Attendance had been a large feature for EIT and a focus at an AHT day. Investigating other Trusts’ approach to improving attendance has been actioned. The DoE had carried out some Ofsted training and had supported AHTs with tracking and analysing attendance.</p> <p><b>Parental Engagement</b> All reports included parental meetings/forums but all agreed it was difficult to engage with all parents and attendance was usually by a regular group of people, heavily supported by the PTA. On a positive note, it was hoped that lack of parental attendance at meetings was be a good sign there are few concerns.</p> <p><b>ASIP</b> All were happy with progress although it was noted that one of the schools had needed to change the focus of some staff meetings to cover unforeseen medical training.</p> <p><b>Pre-School update</b> Cheriton Bishop and Morchard Bishop both have pre-schools which are running well. Very tentative, initial discussions about developing a pre-school are being held at one school. The Chair advised Pre-Schools/Nursery/Wrap-Around care had been discussed at the S&amp;C meeting. GP stated children attending Trust Pre-Schools usually go on to attend the Trust school; it is an area the Trust want to develop and support AHTs with. The Chair stated holding the Toddler Group at the Pre-School had proved very worthwhile and successful at Morchard Bishop.</p>	<p><b>GP to email clerks requesting they contact staff governors asking they liaise with all staff across the LAC and collate anything to be raised at a meeting.</b></p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES’ MEETING</b></p> <p><b>a) Response to draft minutes dated 15.10.2024 previously circulated (confidential until approved)</b> In her new role as Chair, JH had attended the meeting which was quite lengthy, thorough and covered a lot of areas. Although she had not understood everything which had related to previous discussion, the overarching view was positive with developments in measuring progress and impact of ATSIP key priorities being actioned.</p> <p><b>b) Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&amp;C meeting – raised at Mid Devon LAC 30.09.2024:</b></p> <p>1) Could one of the four Trust minibuses be based in the Mid-Devon area? Rural schools are at a disadvantage due to the high cost of transport.</p>	

	<p>2) iPads/IT resources: Continuing issues with logins. 3) Nurture space in each Hub</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged she had not found the right opportunity to raise these points during the meeting but she would do so next time. GP, in the Chair's defence, agreed that time for LAC Chairs' questions tended to get swallowed up with other focus areas; the S&amp;C is a full-on meeting. The GP will raise the importance of time for LAC questions to be heard and discussed. The issue with the iPads had been raised and the S&amp;C meeting had been informed the DCEO had this in hand. The AHT confirmed there are still login problems. It was agreed to hold further questions at this point and to review progress in this area at the January 2025 LAC.</p> <p>The AHT commented the PE Link team is investigating how to support the equal spread of Sports Premium funding as a large part of rural schools' money is spent on transport. Raising this ongoing issue would support the PE team.</p>	<p><b>Agenda item for 20.01.25 – review of iPad log in issue</b></p> <p><b>Questions for S&amp;C – see item 15 for further detail</b></p>
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>NEXT S&amp;C FOCUS: Staff Wellbeing, Safeguarding Audit with a Learning Walk, Mid-year attendance overview, Parent and Community Engagement, Curriculum Subject – English</b></p> <p>Governors had the opportunity to discuss the next S&amp;C focus in preparation for their next round of visits. Governors to share best practice and raise any questions for clarification.</p> <p>Following discussion in item 11, it was suggested that governors try to speak with staff members, as well as the AHT. Providing the AHTs are happy, governors to continue speaking with the children.</p>	
<p><b>14</b></p>	<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>■ Following on from the staff governor's point about governors speaking to staff members in addition to the AHT (particularly in relation to wellbeing and to gain a wider whole school picture) a governor remarked on the benefit of sharing discussion together. It was believed this would enable governors to gain more confidence which will, in turn, offer staff a louder voice.</li> <li>■ Further work on creating governor bios and description about the LAC governor role will raise the profile of governors and help towards succession planning.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</b> <b>Summary of questions from governors to be raised at the S&amp;C meeting on 10.12.24:</b></p> <p><b>1) Transport costs/provision of a Trust minibus in Mid-Devon?</b> Rural schools are at a disadvantage due to the high cost of transport. This had also been identified by the Link PE team who are investing how to support the equal spread of PP as a large part of rural schools' money is spent on transport. <i>The four Trust minibuses are all in the Newton Abbot area – could one of them be based in the Mid Devon area: are there not enough schools to warrant this?</i></p> <p><b>2) Nurture space in each Hub:</b> Following on from the S&amp;C Minutes dated 09.07.24 with reference to a request to consider an Inclusion Hub in the Mid Devon area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What exactly would be offered in each Nurture space?</i></li> <li>• <i>What time frame is being considered (governors appreciated this initiative was in the early stages)?</i></li> <li>• <i>How would this work in relation to children from other schools potentially</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions for the LAC Chair to raise at the December S&amp;C meeting</b></p>

	<p><i>joining and being temporarily added to one of the Trust schools to enable funding? Would this be for part of a day/part of a week?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The need identified by schools is for more SEND support within the mainstream areas. A separate nurture hub may not support a 'silent sufferer' within the classroom – someone not as loud but requiring equal support.</i></li> <li>• <i>Nurture groups constantly change due to their nature: how would this be managed?</i></li> <li>• <i>Enrichment days are held too far away – can they be arranged closer to Mid-Devon?</i></li> <li>• <i>Some special events or days seemed primarily aimed towards SEMH but the picture is much wider, what broader SEND support is being considered within schools?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>A governor also asked how will East Devon schools who have recently joined the Trust be able to interact with the Inclusion Hub? How will SEND need and provision be spread?</i></p> <p><b>3)</b> <i>Does the Trust have a mental health and wellbeing specialist for pupils; someone who could be deployed across the Trust?</i></p>	
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**The meeting closed at 6.05 pm**

**Signed as approved by the Chair, Joanna Hooper ..... Date: 20 January 2025**