

The Moorland Schools/Newton & Teign Local Board Inaugural Meeting
Summary: 16 December 2020
1/20, 5.30pm

The meeting was held online using MS Teams due to the current Government restrictions
The meeting was also recorded

The Link Academy Trust

Present:

Dominic Course	Chair and Trustee
Nicky Dunford	CEO
Sarah Clarke	Academy Trust School Improvement Lead (ATSIL)
Rachel Hill	Clerk

Academy Heads:

Vic Pooler	Hennock Primary School
Dan Turner	Bearnes Primary School
Des Stokes	Widecombe in-the-Moor Primary School
Will Bentall	Moretonhampstead Primary School
Sam McCarthy-Patmore	Ilington CofE Primary School

Local Boards (LBs) & Governors:

Newton & Teign LB	Lynda Cooper, Chair Ewa Ziubrynowicz, Parent Governor
Woodleigh & Newton & Teign LBs Widecombe Primary School	Jo Carter, Chair Woodleigh Rob Steemson, Community Governor Caroline Rolls, Staff Governor Evie Edworthy, Parent Governor
Moretonhampstead Primary School	Shaun Elliott, Parent Governor Maria Howarth, Community Governor Vivienne Hodges, Community Governor

Apologies:

Mike Jeffrey, Moretonhampstead Community Governor
 Becky Ames, Clerk Newton & Teign Local Board

Documents Circulated prior to the Meeting:

- Annual Cycle of Focussed Visits 2020-2021
- Local Board Communication Model
- Principal Role of a Governor on the Local Board
- Woodleigh Local Board Reflections
- Academy Strategic Improvement Priorities (ASIPs) for 2019-2020 for: Widecombe, Moretonhampstead, Ilington, Hennock and Bearnes
- Training Bookings Helpsheet

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1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

The Chair welcomed all to the inaugural meeting of the Moorland Schools & the Newton & Teign Local Board.

Dominic Course (DC) explained that the meeting had been convened to provide Governors with a brief introduction to the Local Board model with the guidance of the CEO and ATSIL who were present. DC established that there were no 'new' governors present – all those attending had been governors in the past.

2. **The Academy Heads delivered short 2-5 minute presentations: What makes my school special!**

2.1 Mr Des Stokes, Academy Head, Widecombe in-the-Moor Primary School

Des Stokes provided a short power-point presentation about the school that included the core principles and purpose of Widecombe. This included the Five Star Pledge which consists of: seeing a lamb being born, bringing pets to school, learning outdoors, travel to a contrasting location and experienced travelling on different modes of public transport, and perform in public as speakers, musicians, dancers and sports people. Their Learning Journey is rich, varied and challenging.

2.2 Ms Vic Pooler, Academy Head, Hennock Primary School.

Vic Pooler provided a short power-point presentation about what makes the school special. Hennock is a small school with a community feel. Outdoor learning is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils celebrate the arts and drama. The key aim to provide big opportunities for the children. There is a focus on emotional learning as well as academic with a Thrive based approach in school.

2.3. Sam McCarthy-Patmore, Academy Head, Ilsington C of E Primary School

Sam provided a short power-point presentation. Ilsington is new to the Link and it is also her first term at school. There are three classes and a pre-school. Sam has found great benefit from working with the pre-school Manager. Ilsington is a Christian school and was awarded Outstanding by SIAMS in 2018 and they want to maintain standards. The Christian values chosen are friendship, kindness, honesty, resilience, respect and compassion. Equity underpins the whole approach of the school. Outdoor education is important to their families. They are working to meet curriculum objectives through outdoor learning. They are also focusing on improving writing and promoting published writing. An exciting new development for Ilsington is that they have funding to extend part of the school which will hugely benefit the children.

2.4. Will Bentall, Academy Head, Moretonhampstead Primary School

The age range at Moretonhampstead has increased from 2-11. They are a proud Dartmoor school with supportive, close contact with parents and they cherish this. They pride themselves on the opportunities offered to the children and the school has a positive and committed team. Their vision, mission and values are to be re-established in the new year. The school has a fantastic building to support learning and the facilities for outdoor learning and sport are fabulous. Moretonhampstead is looking forward to welcoming other schools. The school strives to make learning engaging and real and is always looking at the next steps. They are proud to be a community and caring school.

2.5. Dan Turner, Academy Head, Bearnas

Dan provided a short power-point presentation. Bearnas has 96 children on roll of which 51% are Pupil Premium. The school is all about the experiences children can be offered. The opportunities are to Belong, Engage, Aspire, Respect, Nurture, Enrich and Shine. Bearnas is a special community school. It could be described as a small school with a big heart. There is a Pre-school onsite. The Inclusion Hub is based in the AH office. All staff are hugely skilled.

The Chair noted that it was interesting to see the same values shining throughout all the schools and that the specific issues to Bearnas would be useful to this Local Board.

3. **An Introduction from the Link Academy Trust by ATSIL Sarah Clarke and CEO Nicky Dunford**

Sarah Clarke gave a short power-point presentation showing how LBs operate and what comes with the role of governor, explaining how the premise of learn, support and challenge is strong for LBs with a deep focus on supporting teaching and learning. The ATSIL also provided further information about the LB focused visits and the communication model.

Nicky Dunford the CEO spoke about the governance structure of the Trust and the roles of Trustees and Members. This included the four committees formed by Trustees, namely Finance & General Purposes, Standards & Curriculum, Audit and Remuneration. Nicky then explained the Executive Improvement Team structure and described each staff member's role. Nicky spoke about the role of the Local Boards and their relationship with the Standards & Curriculum committee and how they inform Trustees and how Trustees respond adding that the Scheme of Delegation explains the Terms of Reference for Local Boards.

[Shaun Elliott asked what the proposed make up of Local Boards was?](#) The CEO explained that it was as per the Scheme of Delegation which can be found on the Link website. Nicky added that the Trust would never turn people away who were interested in governorship and explained the role of the associate governor. DC added that a member (usually the Chair) of the Local Board would also sit on the Standards & Curriculum committee which then feeds up into Trustees.

DC advised that it was anticipated that this group would meet as a Local Board every other meeting and normally during the second half of term. The first half term of every term the schools would meet individually.

Lynda Cooper, Chair of Newton & Teign, flagged up that the Working Group is key and the heart and soul of where governance happens and also offers practical advice for LBs.

[Des Stokes asked what is the role of the Staff Governor?](#) The CEO responded that the staff governor is somebody who sits on the Board who is the voice of the school. Sarah added that the staff governor is the perfect balance between the inward and outward approach.

Jo Carter, Chair of the Woodleigh Local Board explained the positive aspect staff governors can bring to LBs. Being a staff governor on an LB affords the staff governor an understanding of the role the LB can have and in return they can bring refreshing and positive ideas and information to the LB.

4. School Governors discuss what their current priorities are within their schools

The Chair advised that ASIPS had been circulated to all present.

Rob Steemson from Widecombe Primary School explained that for him the outside learning experience was key. In his community role with the Dartmoor National Trust and as a school Governor he wanted to support Des Stokes with outdoor learning and what children could experience in the wider moorland area. [DC asked how many governors Widecombe had?](#) Rob explained there was him, Evie Edworthy and Caroline Rolls the staff governor.

The Chair noted that Ilsington Primary School does not have any representatives at present.

Lynda Cooper explained that she was the Chair of the Newton & Teign LB and a parent governor at Hennock. From a governance perspective Hennock is a small school with composite classes. As a governor she needs to understand the school at a micro level. Bearnas has issues around Safeguarding and SEND and requires time and support. Linked to this it is important to understand how staff are coping alongside Covid. The schools are embedding the IT structure and online learning. Ewa, a Parent Governor at Bearnas explained that a class had had to stay at home this week due to Covid and there had been a good transition from school to home learning. There are vacancies for community governors at both of these schools.

Vivienne Hodges the Moretonhampstead Safeguarding governor explained that the school had worked well through difficult times. Maria Howarth added that she thought it would be a challenge with only three governors. DC explained that all governors were welcomed to join the Local Board if they were interested and the CEO backed this up adding that the Trust was flexible with the make-up of LBs. It was more

important to have a workable number of people on an LB who could represent the schools well. Shaun Elliott added that he had been impressed with the delivery of teaching at Moretonhampstead during lockdown last week.

DC advised that Hennock had had an Ofsted focus virtual visit. Vic Pooler gave an inside view of what these visits were like. They were particularly interested in curriculum. The Ofsted letter is posted on the school website if anyone wanted to read their comments.

5. **Next Steps**

The CEO advised that in terms of the annual cycle of focused visits, Local Boards will be ensuring that the Safeguarding Audit Visits are completed next term. They will also be looking at the new data from PowerBI.

The Chair asked Caroline Rolls, the Staff Governor for Widecombe, how the data in-putting for PowerBI was going? Caroline explained that the system was user friendly but the emotional aspects of children required addressing as well. The CEO backed up this comment explaining that it was about the children as well as the data.

The ATSil added that at the most recent LB working party they had looked at data and how LBs can support the AHs with this and that she had documentation that could be passed on to those present.

Jo Carter strongly recommended that if governors couldn't get into schools they could still take part in online visits. It wasn't perfect but gave an understanding of how the school was operating and kept the rapport going.

The Chair thanked all for attending. The next meeting will be held on 21 April 2021. He urged Governors to visit schools if they could and if not, to visit virtually.

Next Meeting Dates

Wednesday 21 April 2021

Wednesday 30 June 2021