

Invited:

Penny Young Clerk

Academy Heads:

Dan Turner Bearness Primary School
Vic Pooler Hennock Primary School
Sam McCarthy-Patmore Ilsington C of E Primary School
Alex Waterman Moretonhampstead Primary School
Des Stokes Widecombe in-the-Moor Primary School

Governors:

Interim Chair Lynda Cooper

Bearness Primary School Peter Reed, Community Governor
Ewa Ziubryniewicz, Parent Governor
Jo Carter, Community Governor

Hennock Primary School Kyle Brook, Parent Governor
Olivia Gentile, Staff Governor
Karen Ayling, Community Governor

Ilsington Primary School Dr Carmel Skinner, Parent Governor
Dr Paul Brassley, Community Governor

Moretonhampstead Primary School Vivienne Hodges, Community Governor
Holly Edgington, Staff Governor

Widecombe Primary School Rob Steemson, Community Governor
Caroline Rolls, Staff Governor
Evie Edworthy, Parent Governor

Attended:

Lynda Cooper, Sam McCarthy-Patmore, Alex Waterman, Des Stokes, Ewa Ziubryniewicz, Vivienne Hodges, Jo Carter, Carmel Skinner, Paul Brassley, Caroline Rolls, Holly Edgington, Olivia Gentile, Kyle Brook

Apologies: Evie Edworthy, Dan Turner, Rob Steemson, Vic Pooler

Welcome

Lynda Cooper (LC) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Declaration of Business Interests

None

Minutes of previous meetings 20.04.21 and 30.06.21 for approval

Both accepted.

1. Strategic Governance

1.1 Focused visits for this half term (ASIP/vision and values).

A brief report on the main findings from each school was given.

Kyle Brook (KB) – Hennock:

Vic Pooler (VP) is currently off sick. Jason Keenan (JK) is interim Academy Head – visit will take place after half-term on account of this, and KB has discussed this with Karen Ayling (KA). KB queried who is handling safeguarding in VP's absence. Olivia Gentile (OG) is the DDSL and is managing this with support from Dan Turner (DT). Plan is for JK to be trained soon too.

Ewa Ziubryniewicz (EZ) – Bearnese:

Peter Reed (PR) will have a call with Dan Turner (DT) next week and will report back to next meeting.

Des Stokes (DS) – Widecombe:

Evie Edworthy (EE) and Rob Steemson (RS) held visit on 11/10/21. EE to send report and no action points that DS was aware of. Went through the ASIP questions, how these were formed using Trust SIP and then fitted to Widecombe

Report from EE received later via email:

Myself and Rob Steemson attended a meeting with Des Stokes on Monday 11th October to discuss Widecombe's ASIP.

There are 6 key priorities which are a mixture of school specific and academy targets.

Throughout the discussion, it was clear that Des clearly understood the aims, the targeted outcomes and how this was going to be achieved. What stands out within the discussion is that the school is working as a team and utilising their teachers wisely with their strengths and realising the school view as a whole.

COVID was the obvious challenge from last year, but thankfully there has not been a massive knock back to the children and the school in general, other than the norm and obvious. The current situation brought to light which is in the ASIP, is closing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. Resources which were made available to them during lockdown have been returned to school, as was the norm before COVID, but it has become obvious that this is a continuous set-back for these children accessing the same home resources as their peers, therefore not being given the opportunity to achieve in the same way.

Overall, we are pleased to see how well the school are providing for the children of Widecombe and that their needs are constantly considered and adapted to.

Vivienne Hodge (VH) – Moretonhampstead:

A visit is arranged for next week and will discuss the ASIP and will report back. Recent call has led to two applicants for the role of Parent Governor. LC spoke to Dominic Course (previous Chair) and hopes one applicant will take the role of Associate Governor. LC hoping to go up to Moretonhampstead to hold visit with VH.

Carmel Skinner (CS) & Paul Brassley (PB) – Ilington:

PB reported they had had a couple of visits, one was just to look around the new school building. Then they had a more formal meeting to discuss the ASIP last week and went through the key points that the school will be looking at this year as well as data on school performance. This is of interest because there is the possibility of an Ofsted visit this year. PB noted that pupils' performance has definitely been affected by the lockdowns (probably the same picture across the Trust). Ilington can demonstrate over the last year that they have made definite improvements – they are not where they want to be but they can demonstrate they are moving in the right direction. CS – it was really encouraging to hear how staff are creating links with other schools and developing knowledge. Nice to see as an Academy, the opportunities available to staff, and that expertise can be shared. LC – was there anything in the ASIP that you were concerned about? PB nothing really springs to mind. CB nothing.

Sam McCarthy-Patmore (SMP) updated on the new build, which is now open. There is a video on the school website. SMP found the meeting with CS and PB really supportive and useful. PB has huge expertise in history, particularly WW2, and he will come in and talk to the children about that too.

LC asked Jo Carter (JC) how have visits gone for the Woodleigh hub. JC reported that she had been to Cheriton Bishop and Yeoford a couple of times. Everyone wants to get the children back on track. JC advised that the local boards have an issue with Teams and currently can't store files on it but Limbtec looking into it. Use Sharepoint for now.

1.2 Focused visits coming up (safeguarding/ASP) Overview of questions

Safeguarding is due November/December. Everyone should have the updated cycle of visits with prompt questions. Safeguarding – Academy Heads have to complete an audit at this time of year. Some will want to complete the audit and then talk it through with governors, and some would rather do it while governors sit with them. Please contact the Academy Heads and ask how they want to approach things. There are prompt questions you can use alongside the audit. The deadline for the audit is the last day of term in December Alex Waterman (AW) will be providing central advice on the audit, so advises that Governor visits would best take place at the end of November/early December. JC mentioned that during the Safeguarding audit, it is important to also go into class and talk to the children. Need to have the right questions for the right age group.

ACTION: All Local Board Governors to speak to pupils as part of next focused visit.

Next half-term we also have to cover ASP (Analyse School Performance). The data drop is around 9th December. LC asked if Academy Heads need time to look through data before meeting with Governors. Academy Heads confirmed they need time to process it and later in December would be a better time to visit.

LC noted that these time constraints may mean only one visit can happen next half-term, but that it will be demanding to cover safeguarding and the ASP at the same time.

ACTION: LC will raise next half-term's visits with Sarah Clarke, for advice on how to prioritise time. All Local Board Governors to book these visits in with Academy Heads.

1.3 Update from Standards and Curriculum and Local Board Working Party meetings

LC reported back from the Standards and Curriculum meeting. This happened early in the term, and she circulated notes at the time.

Ofsted: preparation days at Bearnas and Ilsington are due this term. SMP said Ilsington had already had their day and another one booked on 9th December. SMP said she really wanted to make sure they were totally prepared for Ofsted. Lots of staff have not experienced an Ofsted before. She found it hugely supportive, and a massive learning experience. The questions that Lizzie Lethbridge and Sarah Clarke used had a fantastic way of helping staff grow professionally. SMP was able to move "in and out of" role and ask "how should I answer the question"? Next time they will do the initial phonecall where Ofsted announce a visit in a formal way as practice. LC asked CB & PB if they were involved, but they were not this time. Bearnas has a preparation day booked in for 1st December.

At S&C there was a discussion around the role that Local Board Governors would play in an Ofsted inspection. The new Ofsted framework leaves it open to interpretation who the inspectors should meet, so the Trust will make its own recommendation. It's intended that inspectors should meet with a Trustee (likely Cheryl Mathieson, current Chair), alongside at least one Local Board Governor would attend too. We need to identify who is the best placed person to try and get hold of for each school. **ACTION:** LC to identify named Governor for Ofsted visit for each school.

CS asked whether there was any guidance about the nature of Ofsted questions? LC said there was nothing for the new framework as yet. **ACTION:** LC will ask Sarah Clarke for an Ofsted crib sheet for governors. LC asked if any other governors had been through an Ofsted. VH had one at Moretonhampstead a while ago. Governor input was welcomed, although things have changed with new framework. JC noted that the usual areas of questioning for Governors were the sports premium grant, 'deep dives' that schools are doing into non-core subjects and (now) how COVID gaps have been filled. They will ask about catching up and the recovery curriculum etc.

LC said that having a crib sheet of what things might be asked safeguarding, SEN, sports grant etc would be useful. The Trust will do a review after an Ofsted at any of the schools and use that to inform governors throughout the Trust.

SENDCo: LC said that queries around SENDCO responsibilities had been discussed. Nicky Dunford said that concerns were being taken on board and being looked into. She will come back with a framework showing who is responsible for what. LC will update when she hears more.

Handyman: this had come up in a few comments from Academy Heads and LC queried whether the role is working successfully. It was noted that the role may be being recruited again. It will be useful to know of any issues so that LC can pass back.

LC noted that the data picture from the end of last year is mixed across the Trust. Nicky Dunford had reported that regression not as bad as expected. As there isn't national data for comparison, analysis is very much on a school-by-school level for now.

JC mentioned swimming, and how this is being handled across the Trust as swimming is part of the curriculum. Bearnas can go to Dyrons, Hennock uses the minibus to take children down to Dyrons too. VH - they have an outdoor pool at Moretonhampstead which runs Easter-Autumn. All the children go down for lessons. Not sure if there is capacity for any other schools to use it. Pool upgraded. Now very pleasant with changing rooms and showers etc. Ilsington go to Bovey. Y5/6 went swimming in the summer term. Got a minibus and can take a small group effectively. DS said Widecombe have their own pool on site. Children swimming once or twice a week in the summer term. Still had the lifeguards coming in when the pool was closed and they did some life-saving with the children. This does not seem like a problem area for the Moorland Hub.

Local Board Working Party – LC reported back on this. It is a meeting with Sarah Clarke and Hub Chairs, but anyone is welcome.

Learning walks: this is something LC is keen to build knowledge around. With the questions LC feels comfortable to do a visit with Academy Heads now, but it would be helpful to have more guidance on general walks (by which we mean a c.20 minute walk round classrooms after a visit) . What does “looking at a book mean”? What are we checking for? We will be asking for guidance on this throughout the year. LC noted that prompts would be put in to support governors, not to be prescriptive.

Sports GrantL Matt Tanner joined the working party to speak about this. Matt is employed by the Trust. The Sports grant is used to pay for Matt and his team. They run sessions in schools and provide resources and support staff. All schools contribute to central fund to pay for PE staff. Anything left over Matt works with Academy Head to see what it can be spent on, making sure the grant is spent in the best possible way. Funding is not shared between schools. Matt’s team will write the plan for how funding is spent and prepare the impact statement at the end of the year. Governors should be aware of where the money is going, see how its working, check that it is being spent in the way intended and look through the impact statement. It was a really useful update. Matt would be more than happy to answer any other questions.

Staff Governors: LC noted that she asked about this role at the Working Party as she feels it is not really capitalised properly. There are vacancies at Ilsington and Bearnas currently. JC mentioned that the Woodleigh Hub had trouble trying to recruit staff Governors. They do it on an annual basis so staff are not tied in for a long period. They need to be quite comfortable talking in the Governor meeting. Staff Governors need to be asked to talk about the staff wellbeing and workload rather than leave that to the Academy Head. Try and gradually build on the role depending on how comfortable members are talking. How could the role be developed? CR will comment on what feels relevant. It is an ‘in between position’. Different perspective on data etc to Academy Head, it would be nice to have clarity. CR sits at the meetings and thinks “what can I contribute”? Some ideas would be really useful. OG agreed with what JC suggested and thought that prompts would be very useful. Some staff have been doing it for a while, whereas others new to it or a TA would not be so comfortable speaking in a meeting with governors and Academy Heads. **ACTION:** JC to email LC with details of how she has involved staff Governors for Woodleigh. Holly Edgington (HE) – this is her first meeting. She has been a staff governor before but the role has changed. Would always be happy to offer a perspective from staff point of view.

Staff recruitment: LC said that there was a question about whether Local Board governors are involved in staff recruitment and how. This needs to be a clearer and written into the Governor role description. LC has escalated to Sarah Clarke.

1.4 Governor training

Safeguarding training with AW tomorrow. Sessions at 2pm and 7pm. All governors have to do this. CS asked if you have L2 Safeguarding outside the Trust, is that sufficient? It is through Babcock for children and young people. **ACTION:** AW will check with Babcock and about best practice for L2 training. There will be another “mop up” in the spring term for staff and governors who cannot attend.

2. Procedural matters (if not covered above)

2.1. Safeguarding

KCSiE Part 2: PR, KA and RS still not confirmed. PB had questions which LC has raised. LC will share the questions and answers when she has them.

Safeguarding issues. OG mentioned she had an ongoing safeguarding issue. It has been MASHED and come back as not requiring that level but needing Early Help. LC asked if she is supported enough as VP is off-site? DT is supporting her and will provide ongoing support. AW also offered support.

DS mentioned that Widecombe had had a complaint directly to Ofsted from a former parent about the school leadership. Jonathan Galling, the Devon Safeguarding lead came and did a visit and wrote back to Ofsted. He said the school had robust safeguarding procedures. EE & RS aware of this.

AW mentioned that Moretonhampstead was off CPOMS and using other systems. OG mentioned that VP had set up her own version of CPOMS but OG can’t access the spreadsheet **ACTION:** DS to help OG with spreadsheet. AW mentioned that the Trust buy into three visits. Diptford, Bearnas and Mortchard Bishop are due this year. AW does a pre-audit audit. She is happy to support anyone who needs it.

2.2. SEND

AW reported that SEND processes are incredibly slow across Devon. Becky Humphreys is doing a fantastic job with the Inclusion Hub. Jon Couch, who is an Educational Psychologist, is supporting where needed. Things are in place as a Trust but funding very frustrating. Inclusion Hub – courses started for the year. LC asked if schools are feeding into that

and is it successful? AW mentioned that at Moretonhampstead they are very well supported. Nikki Racey comes up once a week.

2.3. Sports Premium grant, Pupil Premium grants

Covered earlier.

2.4. Health & Safety/Risk Assessments

LC has seen Hennock's H&S audit. Work to be done over half term around the fire alarm. H&S contained a statement about Local Board governors having a check list that it would address with the school. LC has asked for this list, and clarification on where HS sits alongside teaching and learning responsibilities?

AW said that Moreton had a H&S audit today, held by DCC. Fiona, the Administrator, had done a great job.

LC asked if any other governors had seen audits? She will get clarification on this role. It is worth checking with the Academy Head if there is anything from a H&S perspective they are concerned about that is not being dealt with centrally.

Widecombe – had an audit done in 2019

SMP mentioned that the Academy Head have responsibility for asbestos, checking fire systems etc. Any issues then get passed up the line and Governors don't need to hold responsibility for this. LC agreed, and noted that the Governor role may be around helping to flag areas of concern that aren't being dealt with, especially where they relate to safety.

3. Personnel (if not covered above)

3.1. Staffing: staff wellbeing and workload

LC asked the staff governors for any comments. CR – wellbeing is ok, people are supporting each other. Teachers are finding it difficult to address the gaps in children's learning; it's not a neat picture. They need to address in a way which will make enough difference in what is a short amount of time. Staff put that pressure on themselves. Still an expectation that Y6s sit SATs. Children haven't managed to achieve what they need to and the picture is patchy (spelling is an issue for some, for example). Potentially impacts on how you are feeling. Ok at Widecombe but something to consider.

HE – we need to take measured approach to data. Can appear stark if looking from outside if children aren't ARE. We need to look at wider picture, what has actually happened there? Data shouldn't just be end of term marks as you don't always see the progress. As teachers you are being judged on data but you want everyone to know the full picture.

AW – biggest weight on teachers is mental health and wellbeing of children. Having to teach social interaction and play before even getting to gaps. Children have been off, children in bubbles not played together. SEMH is huge.

Particularly in younger children, many of whom have never even sat through an assembly. Not had a full proper year at school. Huge impact for staff.

OG – staff absences are not helping. Grateful that a new teacher has been employed and JK is Acting Head. At Hennock staff trust each other to do their jobs and give themselves time if needed. LC says Hennock feels stable and that a smooth face is being shown to parents. KB – from a social perspective think we will see the repercussions of COVID for a while longer. Harvest festival showed how strong the school is and what a great community it is.

LC noted that Governors should not underestimate the challenges staff are facing at this time.

ACTION: All Local Board Governors to speak to staff alongside pupils in the next half term visits. Just a chat in the playground is fine. How are people feeling, what is the picture, any problems or concerns?

3.2. Parents: parent forum meetings, PTFA, areas for concern/complaints

DS – Widecombe. Parents really keen to get back into school. Widecombe had a PTFA meeting recently, the PTFA had been about to fold but it was a really successful meeting and the PTFA have paid for the whole of the forest school facility. The new Chair is great and very pro-active. They are having a "Love our school" day the first Sunday of every month. Aside from the odd grumble, it is great. Community at the heart of the school. Finally start getting parents in school again.

CS – Ilington. Very similar to DS. Parents eager to get into school. When she met informally with SMP they talked about how to offer opportunities to re-engage. Lots of change in school, how can the relationships be created? SMP wants parents to come to assemblies etc. Do outside events which would bring people together. She will speak to the Friends and arrange something on the field every now and then. A social thing to bring people together rather than meeting inside. CS – how do we capture parent's voices. Just having different channels of communication with parents. Can we do a schoolwide, Trust wide parent survey? **ACTION:** LC to raise at S&C.

EZ – Bearnas. Classes working on the Dojo app. Used this during lockdown and continue to use this. Teachers let parents know what is going on and keep them informed. Had the curriculum topics sent through via email and Dojo. Also quite a lot of activity on Facebook page and updates for parents. Bearnas does not have a PTFA.

LC: how is blended learning being handled across the Hub? Teams used for homework at Ilington and Moretonhampstead. Widecombe don't but use for homework but in class sometimes. Moved from screens for a while after COVID, but may return in future. OG: Dojo is used by one class at Hennock.

AOB

EZ mentioned that during the summer she approached Newton Abbot police station as she wanted a talk about safety for her children. The Police have a programme for schools, which is already booked up until December. They will email Academy Heads and ask if interested. LC asked EZ to forward the contact details and she will share with the Academy Head's. **ACTION**: LC to circulate contact details for police outreach team to Academy Heads.

Appointment of new Chair/vice-Chair

LC was the only applicant for the role of Chair. LC appointed by unanimous vote. Nobody volunteered for vice chair. If Governors have any issues or questions around their role, please go to LC directly. If any concerns about LC as a Chair during the course of the year, please go to Penny Young (Clerk) to raise these.

Close 19:10pm

Next meeting: Wednesday 24th November 2021