

Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Minutes of the meeting (held via Microsoft Teams)

Monday, 20 November 2023

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Max Thomas (MT)	Chair – Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	Ap
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor	Yeoford	P
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	Ap
Rebecca (Beki) Richards (RR)	Staff Governor	Across the LAC	P
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	P
Vacancy	Parent Governor	Morchard Bishop	
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 had sent apologies just prior to the meeting due to unexpected circumstances. The Vice-Chair quickly stepped up to lead the meeting, welcoming our new LAC Staff Governor, Beki Richards. BR advised she is a KS2 teacher at Yeoford Primary. DP had sent his apologies due to work commitments. All apologies were accepted .	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: As logged on the Register of Business Interests - nothing further to add pertaining to this meeting.	
3	APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2023 The P1 Minutes were approved and will be signed by the Vice Chair. They will be forwarded to HR to be uploaded onto the Trust website.	Clerk
4	MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere in the Agenda) None.	
5	CLERK UPDATE	
5.1	Appointments/nominations a) Vacancies update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Governor at Morchard Bishop: There had been no nominations. SB advised the vacancy will be readvertised this week. Trustee Appointed Governor: No update. The Clerk reminded everyone to think about anyone active within their community or perhaps any Councillor. 	SB ALL
5.2	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding L2 – statutory: Completed by all but two governors. Clerk will email a reminder about the importance of completing the training. Cyber - one-off statutory training for everyone with a Link Academy Trust 	Clerk to email reminders to

	<p>email address Completed by all but two governors. The Clerk will email the link to access. The Certificate gained on completion to be emailed to the Clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prevent – statutory annual training/refresher leading to a Certificate to be emailed to the Clerk. Three governors yet to complete. The Clerk will email the link. The Certificate gained on completion 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). Three forms to be returned – the Clerk will send a reminder. ▪ DES (Devon Education Services) / Governance Consultancy Team Training New governors encouraged to attend the induction course and all governors encouraged to attend the regular governor update briefing sessions (online). 	<p>governors / links to training outstanding</p> <p>Induction session for new governors Regular briefings for all governors</p>
5.3	<p>Clerk to the Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Checking Link Academy Trust emails/how best to alert governors emails have been sent: WhatsApp group created for all but staff governors to be used in the main to alert governors about emails sent/action needed. Minutes – making them similar across the LACs for more effective/aligned reading by the S&C Committee. Other changes agreed at a recent clerks' meeting include not identifying individual governor questions or comments in order to support collective decisions. Governors' questions to be highlighted in italics and decisions or recommendations in bold. To encourage challenging questions from governors (ie what the impact for children/value for money/relational approach) Ofsted is and SIAMS look for evidence of governance questioning in the Minutes. SB had previously mentioned that challenge is useful. CR suggested the governors think of the questions as being 'curious' questions rather than 'challenging' as it might then seem less confrontational. Questions/delving deeper include, what does this mean/what this looks like – it is a means of information gathering rather than making a judgement. Single Central Record (SCR) – to highlight the checking procedure for LAC governors. The Trust's Safeguarding Lead had advised that LACs should ensure checks have been done by viewing the additional tab that records the checks only. Governors will not have access to the full SCR or staff files. BH referred to Ofsted's requirements regarding the SCR and the importance of it being accurate and up to date and for governors to be knowledgeable in checking. 	
6	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOCUS: Vision and values with a <u>LEARNING WALK</u> to evidence that the vision and values and (for CofE schools) Christian distinctiveness are present.</p> <p>and</p> <p>SEF Overview – An EIT overview of accuracy and effectiveness of school self-evaluation.</p> <p>Feedback from governors on their focus visits.</p> <p>The visit notes were circulated to all governors before the meeting and would accompany these minutes for S&C Trustees' information.</p> <p>Reports from each school received – governors were thanked for the time given and effort made in producing the reports. BH noted that everyone had commented on the SEF Overview in their reports. BH asked if there were questions or anything to anyone wished to highlight. CR asked if everyone had</p>	

	<p>read each other's reports and what thoughts or questions they may have provoked.</p> <p>One governor was thanked for producing his visit report by communicating effectively with the AHT despite there not being a mutually convenient time for them to meet on site. RR encouraged the governor to go into School to talk to the RE lead and to see more about what was going on. The governor agreed to do this and added the new AHT had come into the School with a terrific workload - amazing progress was being made.</p> <p>A governor commented he had been impressed by the honesty in the Cheriton Bishop report regarding children's behaviour and the improvements needed. CR provided an example of how to ask further curious questions: what it looked like – what is being done to address it now – what plans are in place for the future. BH added that Cheriton Bishop had highlighted the need for extra time to work on the Vision and Values as they are the overriding drive behind what they are doing. The School was looking at and working through priorities.</p> <p>It was resolved to move into Part II business to discuss aspects of one of the visit reports further.</p> <p>BH acknowledged a certain level of politeness when commenting or asking questions and the need for governors to become bolder and more confident in asking others to dissect notes or put something in context. A governor stated a personal preference to have reports in paper format to read in depth and annotate. CR and the Clerk suggested that governors would be welcome to use a printer/scanner in their local schools as there is no expectation for them to use their own resources. The Clerk and CB had already discussed contacting AHTs and administrators to discuss matters such as this.</p> <p>CB informed governors she is hoping to organise training for them with Lizzie Lethbridge, Director of Education within the Link Academy Trust and an Ofsted Inspector. Training would include how and what questions to ask. <i>CR asked SB if he thought AHTs were happy to be asked challenging questions.</i> SB replied it would be hard to do the role without receiving such questions. He was happy to answer questions and was sure the other AHTs felt the same. SB added that training, particularly in questions Ofsted may ask, would be very useful for governors and enable them to support AHTs during inspections. CR advised the Trustees had remarked how effectively one of the LAC governors had supported the school during a recent Ofsted Inspection. SB informed governors that Ofsted dig deep by looking at Minutes and, at Morchard Bishop, had looked at newsletters over the last eight months which provided an ongoing snapshot of where the School was at a certain time. Ofsted checked research was up to date and reflected by what was shared with parents and governors.</p>	
7	<p>SCHOOL UPDATES</p> <p>Governors to consider and discuss the Academy Heads' Reports to Governors and to feedback any issues/successes from their school visits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAN (to include pupils joined/left) • Pupil wellbeing • Staff wellbeing and workload • Attendance • Suspensions and permanent exclusions • Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA • ASIP update • Risk assessments/Accident book 	

	<p>Reports had been received from all four AHTs which covered the above points. BH invited questions.</p> <p><i>A governor asked if there was anything further governors needed to be aware of regarding the fixed term suspension mentioned in one of the Reports.</i> CR advised that as the suspension was under 15 days, there was nothing further to report.</p> <p><i>Another governor asked if the child and the school were getting the right support.</i> It was confirmed the school was doing everything to support the child and the school was receiving enough support; positive relationships were being developed with the child which was helping to address the challenging behaviour. As the AHT representative, and having spoken to the three other AHTs today to enquire if there was anything further to raise, SB assured governors the AHTs supported each other and received wider support across the Trust.</p> <p><i>CR asked SB if he felt completing the AHT Report seemed a duplication of the content within the governor visit report.</i> SB replied completion was not at all onerous and, in the main, was a matter of updating information.</p>	
8	<p>CURRENT YEAR'S FOCUS – Relational Approach</p> <p>BH commented that all visit reports had commented on Relational Approach. The Chair had attended the Trustee Away Day on Relational Approach training. He will be asked to update governors via a report or at the next LAC meeting in January 2024. CR had attended and advised it had been brilliant and had helped governors understand what RA was; which would in turn help them support AHTs with it. <i>BH asked if notes had been taken?</i> CR advised notes had not been taken but there had been a PowerPoint presentation which she would send to the Clerk to circulate.</p>	<p>Chair to update via Report of Jan meeting.</p> <p>Governance Professional to forward PowerPoint presentation for the Clerk to circulate</p>
9	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</p> <p>a) Response to draft minutes (confidential until approved). No questions.</p> <p>b) Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&C meeting: CR advised MT had not raised any questions as everything had been discussed during the meeting or raised by the AHTs. CR commented the S&C had been impressed with the amount of governor visit notes (14 or 15). This had given the Committee a good flavour about each school, particularly in terms of data presented and being able to compare this with what they were being told by local governors. This would happen again next time re SIAMS/SEF.</p>	
10	<p>NEXT S&C FOCUS: Wellbeing/PHSE and Safeguarding Audit with a <u>LEARNING WALK</u> to evidence the practice within the school</p> <p>Governors were reminded this is an opportunity to discuss any queries/get clarification in preparation for the next focus, as well as a chance for Governors to share best practice. The Spring Term visit template had previously been sent. No queries were raised. The tight turnaround for completion of visit reports was noted with the Mid Devon LAC meeting on 22 January 2024. Governors to liaise with AHTs to make an appointment now in preparation for January 2024. Clerk to resend the visit note template.</p>	<p>Governors Clerk</p>
11	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS</p> <p>BH reported the Ethos Committee at Morchard Bishop had been put on hold due to the sudden, very sad, death in the community. Arrangements were in place between BH and SB to restart Ethos Committee meetings. A recent FOMBS dinner and dance event had been well attended.</p> <p>BH asked what the non-church schools had to report regarding their community groups. Governors all reported healthy, active PTAs.</p>	<p>SB/BH</p>

12	<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.</p> <p>Governor visits now had a clear focus (thanks to the template provided by the Governance Professional). Governors and AHTs had a clear understanding before the visit about aim and expectation. This gave LACs a more meaningful purpose as reports were fed into the S&C Committee/Trustees and the minutes reflected the feedback. The S&C Committee had been presented with a lot of vital information giving them a wider understanding about what is going on across the Trust.</p> <p>Agreed the suggestion from a governor that newsletters from each LAC school will be circulated to all governors requesting them. The idea was not for every governor to know in depth information about each school but to learn and understand more about each school. Reading each other's newsletters will provide a flavour of individual schools, what they were doing and why and help governors to be aware of each school's journey. CR commented this had been a plan for the future to further develop links within the LAC when the current initiatives had been embedded. Bringing this forward, at the request of governors, was great and evidences the desire governors had to work effectively as a LAC. BH believed sharing newsletters would help prompt everyone to ask questions and share good practice. SB reminded governors that each school's newsletter was already a public document that was shared on school websites and social media. It was agreed that circulating directly would be beneficial and ensure newsletters were brought to the attention of governors more readily. Governors were asked to email the Clerk if they wished to be added to individual school newsletter emailing lists.</p>	<p>Governors Clerk</p>
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The meeting closed at 6.00 pm with governors thanking the Vice Chair for leading the meeting so well at such short notice.

Signed as approved by the Chair, Max Thomas Date: 22 January 2024