

Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Minutes of the meeting (held via Microsoft Teams)

Monday, 22 January 2024 at 5 pm

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Max Thomas (MT)	Chair – Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor	Yeoford	P
Sam Butler (SM)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Joanna (Biddy) Hooper (JH)	Foundation Governor	Morchar Bishop	P
David Pike (DP)	Parent Governor	Cheriton Bishop	P
Rebecca (Beki) Richards (RR)	Staff Governor	Across the LAC	P
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	Ap
Vacancy	Parent Governor	Morchar 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 welcomed everyone to the meeting, wished them a happy new year and thanked everyone for visiting their schools and forwarding their visit reports. TW had sent his apologies due to illness – his 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 20 NOVEMBER 2023 The P1 Minutes were approved and will be signed by the 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 Morchar Bishop: In spite of readvertising the vacancy, SB advised there had been no interest. The vacancy will continue to be advertised and highlighted with parents when possible. CR advised if there is still no interest, then the recruitment field can be widened to parents in the area with children attending other schools. Trustee Appointed Governor: 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. 	SB ALL
5.2	Training:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on governor training: BA was thanked for attending the new governor induction for LAC members. He commented the LAC governor role is different to his previous governor role regarding the level of responsibility and decision making. 	

	<p><i>no staffroom, was there an update on the situation?</i> There was nothing further to report other than plans are in motion to improve the facilities at Yeoford.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A governor asked more about the Safeguarding QR Code - how it worked, whether other LAC schools have it and the cost.</i> The staff governor replied it works well via iPad and enables easier, wider access meaning TAs as well as teaching staff are better informed about Safeguarding. <p>Cheriton Bishop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There was a reported calmness throughout the classrooms. <i>A governor asked if that was perhaps because a governor was in attendance.</i> In response, the author had compared his visit experience to that of last year and confirmed a big difference (acknowledging this visit had taken place in the morning rather than an afternoon). It was believed the difference was due to the current AHT's input. ▪ <i>The governor asked about the role of Wellbeing Champion mentioned in the report: was this an initiative the Trust was supporting across all schools?</i> The answer was not known, but it was believed it would be the aim of the Trust to make further Wellbeing Champion appointments. ▪ <i>A governor noted that 'staff are adapting to a reset with the focus' with clear expectations and communication. This is enabling staff to better interact with parents. The governor asked how parents are responding.</i> The author stated there are always some who do not like change but most seem positive with communication between the school and parents being very much more transparent. <i>Another governor had evidenced the positive change and paid testament to the new AHT.</i> Governors noted and welcomed the positivity of the Report. <p>Tedburn St Mary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A governor referred to the Wellbeing section of the Report and noted, 'Head is very conscious of staff work load, no need for unnecessary paperwork and always finish at 1700 no matter what! Give Back Day is great for staff morale'. The governor liked this philosophy and asked if the staff were able to maintain it?</i> The question will be raised and reviewed at the next meeting. <p>Attendance – across Mid Devon LAC schools: Governors noted that attendance at all the schools is better and pondered the reason. Attendance will always be connected with sickness but also governors hoped the wellbeing of staff and pupils contributed to the improved attendance.</p> <p>Morchard Bishop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A governor asked for clarification regarding 'low persistent absences'.</i> The AHT advised absence under 90% is viewed as low persistent absence. This had been a cause for concern last year for a few families but by working together, there had been a significant, positive change. ▪ <i>A governor asked if low persistent absence was followed up by the EWO; particularly if this was due to term time holidays.</i> The Chair stated the CEO follows the attendance procedure closely. ▪ <i>Another governor understood it was no longer the AHT's prerogative to fine parents for term time holidays: was this the case?</i> The Governance Professional stated the Trust Attendance Officer is in post and follows the policy procedure rigorously across the Trust. 	<p>Question to be raised and reviewed at the next LAC meeting</p>
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	<p>Safeguarding A governor referred to recent events in Lincolnshire and asked a hypothetical question: <i>Should there be a family situation within the local community which had similar potential comparisons, should governors raise this with the AHT and ask if procedures were being followed?</i> The Governance Professional stated in these circumstances always check with the school to ensure a particular concern about a child/family is highlighted in order that everything that needs to be done is being done. The AHT added that issues that fall under 'Neglect' require a bank of evidence. This begins with a 'niggles' list and chronologies which the safeguarding team then review (looking at patterns and names of children raised regularly) and escalate as needed. Should a child not attend school without a reason being given by a parent/carer then the school follows this up very early in the school day by making a telephone call or a home visit if there is a significant concern.</p>	
7	<p>SCHOOL UPDATES</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"> • 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 • Pre-school update <p>The visit reports had covered quite a bit of the above. The Chair asked if there were any highlights or successes to report:</p> <p>The Governance Professional asked governors to make a bit of a focus on parental engagement. This would support the Trust's work around compliance as it would be asked how the Trust knows how/what parents are feeling in individual schools. Evidence to be included in reports to support this includes feedback from parents' evenings/parents' forums/PTAs.</p> <p>Re the PAN - the AHT reported last week was the deadline for school applications. The birth rate for new entrants is currently low across the schools in the Trust. Marketing has been in place and there will shortly be a clearer idea of the Reception class intake numbers.</p> <p><i>A governor had noted the Yeoford Visit Report stated the pre-school (based at the school) would be closing. The governor asked if this would have an impact on the intake number.</i> It was believed the closure would not have an impact on the intake. This is because the other pre-school, a good facility in the village, has been running for many years with most of the children feeding into the school. It will mean that school resources will focus on Reception and Year 1 pupils. There is a good relationship between the school and the village pre-school.</p>	<p>Governors asked to evidence parental engagement in their reports</p>

8	<p>CURRENT YEAR'S FOCUS – Relational Approach</p> <p>The AHT, reported that each school is in a different place regarding relational approach, particularly due to the appointment of the two new AHTs this year at Cheriton Bishop and Yeoford. SB's initial year at Morchard Bishop had been focused on setting expectation, behaviour boundaries and consistency which now allows him to concentrate on this year's focus. Tedburn St Mary is further ahead again as the AHT has been in role for some time. The Trust is good at supporting individual schools to adapt their priorities. The Trust has produced an anchor document with resources available from the Trust and the County (Matt Jones who is key in developing and facilitating the relational approach). This provides a strong model to aid school improvement.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked if any resources will be given to parents and carers.</i> The AHT advised that when approaches are in place, they will be shared. This will include sharing of conversation with scripts and phrases which will form the bedrock in this approach and provide parental support which would also help with communication between parents and the school.</p>	
9	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</p> <p>a) Response to draft minutes previously circulated (confidential until approved). No questions.</p> <p>b) Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&C meeting: CR emphasised the Local Advisory Committees were playing a big part in the S&C meetings, minutes and feedback. The visit reports provided detailed information from individual schools. She encouraged governors to raise anything they wanted to discuss or highlight – it was worthwhile and would be seen by the S&C Committee.</p>	
10	<p>NEXT S&C FOCUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A detailed analysis of nationally reported data on EYFS, Y1 Phonic check, Y4 multiplication check, KS1 SATS and KS2 SATS, SEND and PPG analysis ▪ Broad overview of other groups on their progress and expectations to targets ▪ Progress on the ASIP <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. Governors to liaise with AHTs to make an appointment now in preparation for the next round of visits – our next LAC will be held on 4 March 2024. The Clerk will resend the visit note template. Governors agreed the visit template is working well.</p>	Governors Clerk
11	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEE AND COMMUNITY GROUPS</p> <p>BH reported the Ethos Committee at Morchard Bishop is in the process of rebuilding following the sudden and very sad death of the Vicar. A plan was in place between BH and SB to restart Ethos Committee meetings.</p>	SB/BH

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>Sharing/circulation of newsletters from each LAC school to governors requesting them had been agreed at our November meeting but not yet actioned. The idea was not for every governor to know in depth information about each school but to learn and understand more about each school, what they were doing and why – to help governors to be aware of each school’s journey. Governors wishing to receive newsletters from other schools were advised to email the school directly with their request. Governors were reminded that Newsletters from each school were available from the websites and also Facebook groups.</p> <p>A governor had checked school information on the Gov.UK website. Correct and updated information about the school was in place except for the tab re governance which gave no information. The Governance Professional advised she had recently spent a lot of time updating the information required. However, Governance information would be found under the Link Academy Trust website. The Chair, with the Clerk, would like to produce a brief couple of sentences about the role of each LAC governor and what the LAC does and will email each governor regarding this with a view to sharing with parents when complete. The Governance Professional reiterated the importance of the role of LAC governors. It was acknowledged the role involves less direct responsibility but it is still a very, very important one and a vital link between individual schools and the Trustees – helping them to make informed decisions.</p> <p>The Governance Professional summarised the very good sharing of information and practice which had made this meeting effective with a positive impact for the pupils, staff and the Trust.</p> <p>Questions are always welcomed and encouraged and the Chair thanked governors for their really useful questions which clearly evidenced their interest and knowledge about each other’s schools.</p> <p>The Chair would like to arrange another face-to-face meeting at some point either for the May or June meeting. He asked governors to consider and this will be discussed at our March meeting.</p>	<p>Chair and Clerk to produce a brief profile for each governor about their role.</p> <p>March Agenda: To consider a face-to-face meeting in May or June 2024.</p>
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The meeting closed at 5.45 pm

Signed as approved by the Chair, Max Thomas Date: 4 March 2024