

Totnes Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

MEETING MINUTES: (Thursday 28th September 2023)
(7pm)

This meeting was held in person at Landscope School with the option of online participation via Microsoft 'Teams'

Present: Academy head - Jill Ryder (JR), Chair - Rebecca Sear (RS), Vice Chair-Cat Radford (CR), Grace Coles (GC), Nanya Coles (NC), Lucy Carrol (LC), Jenny Sparkes (JS), Helen Hall (HH), Caroline Lucas (CL), Governance Professional - Charlotte Roe (GP)

Minutes: LAC Clerk-Nicol Bush

No	Item	Action
1.	Welcome and Apologies The Chair opened the meeting, welcoming the new Parent Governors (HH) and (CL) and the new LAC clerk (NB) There were no apologies.	
2.	Declarations of interest There were no Declarations of Interests.	
3.	Approval of meeting minutes from 6th July 2023 For approval: The governors approved minutes from 6th July 2023.	
4.	Matters arising from 6th July 2023 There were no Matters arising.	
5.	Clerk Update (GC & NC Joined at this point) 5.1 Appointments/nominations a) Vacancies Update- The Clerk updated the Governors on the current vacancies to fill - Parent Governor and Foundation Governor. b) Terms of Reference (Circulated with the agenda)- The Clerk provided a summary on the purpose of the Terms of Reference. (Discussed under item 6) 5.2 Training - Update on training The Clerk reminded the Governors they must complete L2 Safeguarding and send the certificates to the Clerk on completion. It was confirmed that the date of the next safeguarding training was 5th October 2023 online (2pm and 7pm) The 2 new Governors to attend the Cyber training on welcome pack email. 5.3 Clerk to Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues. a) Paperwork- The Clerk informed the Governors that most paperwork had been signed and returned but was awaiting the Undertaking EDEN Forms to be signed and sent back. b) Governors Contact- The Clerk informed the group that during a recent Clerks meeting an idea was suggested that a WhatsApp group could be made, or a Text message sent to alert Governors on any urgent matter. <i>The Clerk asked how does the Committee feel about having a group/text message sent for notification?</i> The Governors discussed this, and the following questions were asked <i>What is classed as urgent? and what sort of timeline is urgent?</i> The Governors agreed any urgent notification should be done via Phone Call by the Clerk as most Governors would rather not have another WhatsApp group and that emails are working well.	All Governors to attend and forward certificates to the Clerk on completion. New Governors to complete Cyber Training and send Certificates to the Clerk upon completion. Any Outstanding undertaking EDEN forms are to be signed and sent back to the Clerk. GP to circulate the SoD
6.	Terms of Reference- The Governors reviewed the Terms of Reference circulated with the agenda. The following comments were made: - <i>The Governors asked if the Scheme of Delegation could be provided as it's referenced in TOR?</i>	GP to ask the Chair of Trustees if the scheme

	<p>The Governors asked if Visit notes could be added on to the Communicating and Reporting procedures cycle- (minutes of LAC shared with S&C, circulated back to the LAC meeting for approval from Governors) confirms these will be circulated.</p> <p>The Governors queried (point 5 in the TOR) mentioned S&C committee having approving expenditure but as it's the local boards reference would this affect us? GP clarified that we are part of the S&C committee, but they had overall authority on financial expenditure.</p> <p>It was agreed this would be added to the C&R cycle. All Governors were invited to make any comments, there were no other comments.</p>	<p>of Delegation can be circulated.</p> <p>"Visit notes" to be added to the C&R cycle.</p>
7.	<p>School Updates</p> <p>The Governors asked how it would be best to go through this part of the agenda going forward? It was agreed that the Chair would go through each school update point and Governors could comment any information or data that was found at the school visit.</p> <p>The Governors gave the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>PAN (to include pupils joined/left) -</p> <p><u>Landscape & Broadhempston</u>- JR Explained that Pupil numbers were down as there seems to be a trend across a variety of Schools across the trust, possibly down to an overall national Birth Rate dip. <i>What is pan?</i> JR clarified that PAN stands for PLANNED ADMISSION NUMBER- the number of children the school can take in a year group. EIT- The Executive Improvement team -the level above AH's and who support the academies.</p> <p><u>Diptford</u>- LC shared that Diptford recently had a school open day to encourage new families to join, which was popular. This event was followed up with letter drops, creative ideas and investing lots of time in promoting.</p> <p><u>Harbertonford</u>- CR shared that PAN was down for Reception class but as a whole, the school is at 100%.</p> <p>The following questions were asked: <i>How can we be inclusive for families that do not want CofE schools to help them feel confident to attend?</i> <i>Are there any children at greater depth? and what is being done for children that show greater capability?</i> RS commented that these questions have been asked before but discussions haven't progressed, but they will be reported back in feedback to S&C</p> <p>JR commented that it would be for individual schools to have these sorts of conversations, but also because the schools are small the children take up a large proportion of the cohort.</p> <p>Pupil workload-</p> <p><u>Diptford</u>- LC shared that there were concerns with poor SATS results and mentioned there were some parents concerned by this also.</p> <p>LC asked if <i>this was being discussed with S&C?</i> JR responded that Andy Keays would be visiting the school to analyse the data and work on the next steps. The Governors mentioned there were considerable queries regarding the SATS papers- reading papers found to be more challenging than the previous year and the picture in most schools being that children are not doing as well as predicted and so it's difficult for the schools to prove their data with goalposts being changed.</p> <p><u>Harbertonford</u>- CR shared that SATS results were strong, likely to be down to effective use of TA's and Academy head releasing Teachers in Y3&4 to do mop up maths to support pupils before entering Y5&6. Staff were also reviewing pupil timetables to break up afternoon sessions and lower intensity.</p> <p><u>Broadhempston</u>- This was discussed in the summer 2 meeting.</p> <p>Staff wellbeing and workload-</p> <p>JR explained that there are currently issues with staff recruitment, with very few applicants across the schools. The Governors discussed that the issue with recruitment seems to be a nationwide problem in the public services sector. The Governors asked if <i>this has been flagged up with the S&C committee?</i> JR answered that S&C committee are aware.</p> 	<p>RS to report staffing concerns and PAN responses to S&C, as well as the questions raised by Governors, to be added to the matters arising for the next LAC meeting.</p>

	<p>Broadhempston-NC shared that they have a high proportion of part-time staff members which provided many challenges on communication between teachers and Academy Heads, <i>asked the group for any ideas on tackling this?</i> JR added that Landscope hold fortnightly staff meetings to cover all staff (including part-time) rather than weekly, this has been effective.</p> <p>Stoke Gabriel-HH commented that they have 2 classes with 4 part-time teachers <i>and so would ask how this practice works.</i></p> <p>Harbertonford-CR shared that they had some staff changes at the school and RAK (random acts of kindness) is in place to boost staff morale.</p> <p>Landscope- GC raised that one thing she took away and was quite struck by was numbers of hands in the school and the challenges faced particularly in the lower end of the school's cohort, there is a need for flexibility around staffing across the school rather than having a set number of TA's and depending on the needs of the school. RS raised that she has picked this up from GC visit notes and had put this in her notes to take to the S&C meeting this also makes way for lots of discussions and questions such as- <i>Was there a pool of bank staff to draw on and what does this look like?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance- Harbertonford- The school had a few unauthorised absences which are being tackled by letters going home to the families. Another child refused to attend but this was down to a SEN/Sensory issue- being managed by SENDCO Becky Humphries. Landscope- End of last year - 95%. So far this year 97.4% Sparkwell-Last year 95.65 Broadhempston- 96.7% at end of last year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suspensions and permanent exclusions- No comments ● Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA- Harbertonford- Have had PTFA meeting but no results of this just yet. Broadhempston-RS has stood down as School Life Group chair and this had been handed over to NC. NC to set up this year's meetings. ● ASIP update- Harbertonford- A new ASIP was done in July and both AH and Senior Teacher looked over it, which a draft was then shared with the whole staff to familiarise with it, ASIP is being sent to Gov to look in more depth. Landscope- Focused on writing in the context of trust KP3, using talk 4 writing to embed language and self-regulated learning. Sparkwell- Please refer to visit notes for clarification. ● Risk assessments/Accident book- Harbertonford- The school have dealt with 2 local families affected by flooding which both the church and community helped with donations etc. Recent head bump to child but all relevant reports were filled in. Landscope- Risk Register has been updated and was on every system. Broadhempston- All up to date, every term the safeguarding summary is sent to the Director of Safeguarding. ● Pre-school update- Harbertonford- CR shared that numbers were good, rebuilding "Fledglings" a charity run Play group. <p>At this point of the meeting RS pointed out that this section of the agenda was repetitive and was covering the section 10 "visit notes" GP mentioned that in the other area LAC meeting, the group agreed to switch up the agenda and after 5) Clerks Update they would go straight onto 10) The focus and will follow this agenda structure going forward. She also added that previous LAC meetings also felt that 10) Focus- should be 7) School updates. And school updates should be more of a mop up. <i>The Governors asked GP- Could you let us know what school updates are intended to do?</i> GP responded by explaining that the function on the school updates is for us to keep a light touch/track on what is going on and can flag anything up if it is becoming an issue. <i>The Chair asked the governors if they felt that they should follow this amendment of the agenda going forward?</i> The Governors agreed to this change of agenda going forward.</p>	
8.	<p>Current Year's Trust Focus – Relational Approach The Academy Head explained that in September the entire Trust (including admin) came together for training on this new approach, which is about removing authoritarian approaches in place of building positive relationships with the children and adults too. JR mentioned that some schools have trialled this, but most were just starting out on</p>	

	<p>their journey, there would be an input from the Inclusion Hub who would help do an audit tool for how to start out.</p> <p>Some staff in schools had relational approach STEM sentences on the back of their lanyards to support their conversations with pupils.</p> <p><i>The Governors asked if this was similar to the thrive approach they had previously seen in other schools? JR confirmed that this approach was very similar to Thrive but is less about age/stage and more about relationships.</i></p>	
9.	<p>Standards and Curriculum Trustees Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The governors asked the following questions about the S&C minutes: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) There were no questions. The Chair confirmed that she had attended the last S&C Meeting in July <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) There were no comments. RS feedback outcomes at the previous LAC board meeting. 	
10.	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee Focus: Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes and targets for the year and Academy Improvement Planning</p> <p>4 Governors attended their schools and gathered the following information:</p> <p>Broadhempston- NC found that there were some changes in children this year and there was some catching up to do. Targets were set and were generally maintaining levels but some were rising from last year- the Academy Head believed this to be both realistic and aspirational.</p> <p>GD writing – would be modulated as some identified that may not have been. Monitoring 3 schools together (Broadhempston, Landscope and Harbertonford)</p> <p>Sparkwell- CL found that Year 2 data was well below average, but this was expected due to high SEND and level of needs.</p> <p>Year 6 data had some improvements compared to previous years, but the maths area is on their improvement plan and would receive support from the Trust with this.</p> <p>The main issue for Sparkwell has been the reduction of T.A support which had affected the financial budget and put more pressure on other staff.</p> <p>Landscape- GC Shared that the AH has completed data analysis, and had used this to set targets with staff, that data was then used in teacher appraisals and targets would be monitored through pupil progress meetings. Targets were aspirational but also realistic.</p> <p>All data was also shared with TAs and explained it was important to share with them as they were running interventions. Informal catch ups regularly with teachers and then official pupil progress meetings at the end of each term.</p> <p>One issue was the high levels of need in EYFS and Y1. This was a challenge for staffing capacity and there was a need for flexibility in TA provision across the trust, meetings were needed in each school rather than having a fixed approach.</p> <p><i>JS queried how her role as staff appointed Governor works with school visits? GP responded that the role at the LAC was to represent the staff and give an update on how staff are doing, which would develop as she made relationships across the trust, and she could also ask questions on behalf of the staff.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked all the Governors for going into the schools for their visits and gathering/sharing the information.</p>	GP to add Sparkwell school to the Handbook and Website.
11.	<p>Next S&C Focus: Vision, values and SIAMS with a <u>LEARNING WALK</u> to evidence that the values and (for CofE schools) Christian distinctiveness are present and SEF Overview – Governors to discuss the academy’s self-evaluation with Academy Head</p> <p>The Governors were invited to discuss the following visit and to ask any questions of clarification.</p> <p>The Governors asked the following: <i>what was SEF?</i> JR clarified that SEF - School Self Evaluation.</p> <p><i>Were Sparkwell and Stoke Gabriel CofE?</i> The Governors confirmed that they are not CofE, but Harbertonford, Diptford and Landscope were.</p> <p>The following questions were raised-</p> <p><i>How does the EDEN form affect a non-church school?</i></p> <p><i>Who was the Diocese of Exeter and what was their agenda? Could the topics important to our school be overridden by the EDEN?</i> GP confirmed that this was not the case, whether the school is a CofE or not, all governors across the Trust must sign the form.</p>	

	<p>CR also added that while the Governors are linked to their individual schools, they do have an oversight across all of them and there is nothing untoward about the British Values and Diversity etc.</p> <p>There were no further questions and all governors were happy with the next visit focus.</p>	
12.	<p>Feedback from Ethos Committees and Community Groups</p> <p>GP explained that from a governance point of view parent governors do not sit on the ETHOS group - Foundation Governors only- they were the link between the ETHOS committee and LAC. It was noted that in the Totnes LAC there were 3 Church schools so this could be time consuming for one Foundation Governor.</p> <p>It was noted that to reduce the number of visits for AH's, to trial a joint visit with Ethos Group & Parent Governor with the AH of that school and asked whether this would be possible going forward?</p> <p>The following questions were asked; <i>How the SIAMS process would work, as they were expected to have a foundation Governor on the LAC, but Totnes do not have one?</i> GP mentioned that they were actively trying to fill the Foundation Governor vacancy and had approached several people such as the Diocese.</p> <p><i>GP asked if anyone knew of anyone that would make a good Foundation Governor to put them forward if possible?</i></p> <p>CR informed that this terms "pillar" was "How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is new guidance focused around values (open the book) for support with content. ● Areas for reflection- big questions and spiritual questions, using children's idea. <p>Suggested actions were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities for children to show visitors around the school and be included in recruitment processes through pupil parliament. ● Ask Rev David to trial new monitoring visit- vision & values focus. 	<p>GP to discuss the confusion on the monitoring visits with Sharon Lord.</p>
13.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>There were no concerns.</p>	
14.	<p>Evaluation of governance impact</p> <p>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. Governors to consider during the meeting where their understanding/decisions have had an impact and share a sentence.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked if Governors could take this away and have a think about if they felt that what the LAC were doing was having an impact on the children and the staff of the Trust? and could we bring our thoughts to the next meeting?</i></p>	<p>All Governors to reflect on this and to be added to the next agenda for discussion.</p>

The meeting ended at: 8.40 pm.

Approved by the Chair Rebecca Sear.