

Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Minutes of the meeting held at Morchard Bishop Primary School (Microsoft Teams link available)

Monday, 24 June 2024 at 5 pm

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Max Thomas (Chair)	Chair – Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor	Yeoford	P
Sam Butler (SB)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Joanna (Biddy) Hooper (JH)	Foundation Governor	Morchard Bishop	P
Rebecca (Beki) Richards (RR)	Staff Governor	Across the LAC	P
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	Ap
Catherine Cozens (CC)	Prospective Parent Governor (subject to completion of recruitment checks)	Morchard Bishop	P
Mat Boulton (MB)	Prospective Parent Governor (subject to completion of recruitment checks)	Cheriton Bishop	P
Vacancy	Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	
Pam Down (Clerk)	Clerk	Mid Devon LAC	P
Charlotte Roe (CR)	Governance Professional	Link Academy Trust	P *

* In attendance via Teams for a short time only (beginning of item 5) due to poor Internet signal
Present/Apologies/Absent

		ACTION
1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the two prospective parent governors. CR, Governance Professional joined the meeting via Teams. TW had advised the Clerk he had an appointment but hoped to join the meeting at some point if timings allowed.	
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 04 MARCH 2024 The P1 Minutes were approved and were 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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors and the clerk were delighted (and relieved) that the Governance Professional (CR) would be remaining in the role (with reduced hours at her request) and would continue to be present at meetings to offer the valued support and link with the Trustees. Governors were thanked (by CR/Chair, SB & Clerk) for attending schools to support the SATs process. BA remarked it had been a very positive couple of days. The children had been brilliantly put at ease at both Morchard Bishop and Yeoford and provision of a breakfast had helped children to relax and be ready for the tests. SB advised Morchard Bishop had been providing breakfast during SATS prior to him joining the school, as had other schools he had worked in. RR 	

<p>5.3</p> <p>5.4</p> <p>5.5</p>	<p>sessions where possible to gain further insight and have the opportunity to ask questions alongside school staff. The Clerk will contact the AHTs/Administrators to ask when sessions will take place in order to liaise with governors.</p> <p>Clerk to the Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues:</p> <p>a) Single Central Record (SCR) – a reminder about the checking procedure for LAC governors. The Clerk asked governors to ensure this is covered annually during one of their visits. Governors will need to discuss beforehand with the AHTs and/or administrators to ensure a convenient time to factor into diaries.</p> <p>b) Bio from parent/foundation governors to highlight and promote the role within schools (discussed at previous meetings). The Chair confirmed a few short sentences is all that is required, ie name, role, reason for becoming a governor/brief description of what you do. To be emailed to the Clerk/sent via the WhatsApp group. The Clerk will then liaise with Sue Howard, HR about the process for this to be uploaded to each school's website.</p> <p>c) Governance Handbook (circulated 21.05.24) Governors signposted to this useful document.</p> <p>d) Governance Today magazine (circulated 14.06.24) Informative – contains Autumn governance training details.</p> <p>e) Request for Exclusion Panel volunteers (online training to be provided) MT, JH and BA had previously volunteered to undertake training to form part of a pool of governors ready to form a team if/when needed. CR had hoped there would be further volunteers from other LACs in order to organise training for everyone at the same time. CR will contact governors with an update.</p> <p>f) Governors asked to share Ofsted Inspection notes (CR to create a folder for sharing with other governors facing Ofsted). CR's request passed to governors. The Chair advised he had produced governor/AHT visit reports as evidence for Ofsted which had covered what he was asked. He had not found it a daunting experience.</p> <p>g) LAC meeting on 30 September 2024 – agreed the first meeting of the academic year will again be held face-to-face at Morchard Bishop. This will provide an opportunity for governors to complete/sign the annual compliance documents rather than scanning/emailing to the Clerk. A Teams attendance option would also be available. To decide on venue for any further face-to-face meetings next year.</p> <p>Significant changes within the Trust including key personnel CR had provided an update at the LACs previous meeting. In her absence, there was nothing further to report.</p> <p>Risk Registers (see item 10)</p>	<p>joining staff for L2 S/G training during the NPD</p> <p>Governors to diarise an annual SCR check</p> <p>Governors to send a brief bio to the Clerk asap (HR to upload to school websites)</p> <p>CR to contact MT, JH & BA with details of training when known</p> <p>Governors to share Ofsted question notes with Clerk/Gov Prof</p> <p>30.09.24 LAC meeting to be held in person at Morchard Bishop</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>FOCUS: Overview of Curriculum</p> <p>Enrichment curriculum and participation in wider opportunities including our SEND children</p> <p>Governor/AHT visit reports had been received from all four schools and circulated to governors prior to the meeting. Governors were thanked for the time given and effort made in producing the reports. The process of visits/reporting/feedback received by the LAC being shared to the S&C Committee who in turn discussed and provided feedback was explained to the prospective new governors. The value of this process, which had been driven by the Governance Professional, was agreed by all governors to have made a big impact. The Chair remarked the visit notes evidence a good selection and wide range of opportunities, including the children with SEND. Examples ranged from the Trust's organised events, sporting events at QE, inter-school tournaments, climbing and kayaking. Visits included an adventure</p>	

	<p>park, museums, swimming, the theatre, time in the woods. Children have had the opportunity to perform at school assemblies and concerts and take part in residentials. Extra-curricular activities offered gardening, cooking and crafts. There were good community links and regular participation in events. A governor commented on the great experience for children across the Trust at Haven Banks - provided free of charge. The staff governor highlighted the cost of transport for rural schools is a big problem. SB agreed – the minimum cost for a coach to the nearest Trust school is £250. To travel by coach to Exeter from Morchard Bishop costs £400+. RR stated parents had supported by driving but this is not always possible and should not need to be relied upon. RR asked whether there was any possibility of the Trust having a minibus which could be used by all schools. A governor suggested it may be worthwhile contacting local churches or other schools owning a minibus as rates may be lower. A governor suggested the name of an experienced driver who may be willing to drive foc.</p>	<p>To raise at S&C: high transport costs for rural schools –any possibility of a Trust minibus?</p>
7	<p>FOCUS: Review of attendance for the academic year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance data compared to Trust and national target <p>Attendance across all schools good in terms of data and national comparisons – the lowest being 95.8%. <i>A governor asked for clarity in one of the reports which had stated ‘anyone below 5 is followed up robustly’.</i> Another governor believed this to mean any individual with a total of five absences.</p>	
8	<p>FOCUS: Behaviour and Relational Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of impact of behaviour policy and practice, impact of relational approach and interventions. Exclusions and suspensions <p><i>A governor questioned why one of the school reports had provided an update on behaviour but there had been no mention of Relational Approach.</i> This will be followed up during the next round of visits and reports.</p> <p><i>A governor referred to the mention in one of the reports that ‘staff training on relational approach is to be scheduled’ – the governor had believed this had already happened.</i> A governor and SB clarified this related to the Pre-School – training was already fully embedded within the school.</p> <p>The Chair referred to previous comments made by the staff governor regarding the additional time the relational approach takes to implement. The Chair advised this was an ongoing conversation with the intention that all would reap reward for the investment later down the line. However, he asked for staff/governors to continue to highlight this issue as necessary and for it to be part of feedback to the S&C if needed.</p> <p><u>Exclusions</u> One school had reported five exclusions. The situation has been addressed. The staff governor remarked there had been a significant positive turnaround since last year. A governor applauded all staff for doing an amazing job in spite of the challenges; they had done everything possible to manage and improve the situation.</p>	<p>Relational approach update requested from one of the schools in the Autumn</p> <p>Governors/staff to continue to highlight issues with time needed to implement RA if needed</p>
9	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY GROUOPS</p> <p>SEG Focus: TBC</p> <p>SB updated the prospective new governors regarding the tragic and difficult situation following the death of the lead teacher and Vicar together with the chapel support worker role vacancy. The core of the group had been pulled apart and the church is yet to appoint a vicar. The good news is the chapel has appointed a support worker and Sharon Lord, Trust’s RE Lead, will support the new Ethos Committee alongside Amber Griffiths, RE Lead Teacher at Morchard Bishop. The Foundation Governor advised strong links with the Church, St Mary’s, continue with a core group attending the monthly family services. SB added there is good</p>	

	<p>communication with the volunteer church representative who is working extremely hard. SB explained the church representative delivered worship in a mini assembly two weeks before the family service. Discussion followed with a group of children who then worked on delivering worship to the school in preparation for the monthly family service. SB reported this process was working well and the children got a lot from it. SB advised RE and the Ethos Committee will be a big focus next year; it is part of the ASIP with a SIAMS inspection due the following year. The school will have all of the next academic year to embed the work of the Ethos Committee.</p> <p><i>The Foundation Governor asked if the prospective governors knew what a SIAMS inspection was. They were aware.</i></p> <p><i>The Chair asked if SB felt there was anything more the Trust could do to help. SB confirmed plans were in place to hold an Ethos Committee launch in September.</i></p> <p>The Chair asked if there was anything else to report from any other schools. Nothing was raised in addition to that mentioned in the visit reports.</p>	
10	<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. In addition, the following points were raised:</p> <p>Staff workload: <i>A governor referred to the heavy workload for teachers: what could be done to help?</i> Another governor (teacher in a different Trust) stated this is a particularly busy and tiring term. The governor advised this was not a negative comment, just busy due to enrichment, productions and fitting everything in before the end of the academic year.</p> <p>SB remarked that he would disagree with concern about the workload being too heavy. The School and the Trust should continually re-evaluate if what is being done has an impact – if not, why is it being done?</p> <p>The Chair suggested additional workload is created when new AHTs are appointed/not in situ very long. Each AHT would naturally bring different ideas and ways of working and this would invariably have an impact on staff and workload. <i>Another governor agreed this was a valid point and this was the case.</i></p> <p><i>The Chair asked if there was any way workload could be more balanced throughout the year to try and avoid heavy-weighted times.</i> The staff governor suggested it would be amazing if a lot more resources/plans could be shared within the Trust. Various schemes were introduced yet individual schools each had to devise their own ways of actually planning daily resources in order to deliver them. The staff governor gave the example of a new Maths scheme which most of the Trust schools are following. The staff governor was still creating her own PowerPoints and other teachers would be doing the same, instead of sharing resources. If such resources were available these could be adapted to fit the needs of the children in</p>	

	<p>each school – at least there would be a starting point. The staff governor added it was particularly difficult and isolating for small rural schools teaching more than one year group and being not working alongside another colleague teaching the same year group. Initially, there had been subject hub meetings which had been useful but these no longer seem to take place. SB stated there are a lot of conversations taking place and there are curriculum overview documents. Leg work behind the curriculum can be done to improve and develop sharing of resources. SB acknowledged there were less curriculum hub meetings as the downside was the amount of time teachers had to take out of the classroom in order to meet. Curriculum days are held – SB gave the example of the re-working of the Science curriculum within the Trust when a Science specialist led the session. It is planned to continue to roll out further days covering other curriculum subjects. The Trust's focus next year is Writing – there will be support with this.</p> <p><i>A governor mentioned that from a parent's perspective, there was a shift in the summer term in the level of classroom teaching (with Y6 SATs completed) and the addition of more activity based teaching and enrichment: is that an accurate picture of the this half term?</i> SB replied there were extra activities yet curriculum content is still covered for Years 5 & 6 even though SATs had been completed. He advised that sometimes specific projects were introduced (ie a Maths project) which would underpin and embed learning covered in a different way. The staff governor added that workload increases as the timetable shifts to accommodate other activities and end of term events while needing to ensure all the curriculum content is being delivered. The governor asking the original question acknowledged the additional juggling needed by teaching staff and thanked them for explaining how things worked.</p> <p><i>A governor asked if there was a specific person within the Trust (aside from the CEO) who led on the curriculum?</i> SB confirmed Lizzie Lethbridge is the Trust's Director of Education. SB advised the structure is changing within the Trust to accommodate the additional schools. SB gave the example of Andy Keay, currently AHT at Tedburn St Mary, who will be stepping up to a Trust-wide role. There are a number of specific lead roles within the Trust, including Safeguarding, Inclusion, SENDCo support. There will be a slightly changing model in terms of supporting the growth of the Trust.</p> <p>Risk Registers: For the benefit of the prospective governors, SB reiterated discussion from the previous meeting. AHTs had undertaken a lot of training with Matt Matthew, Deputy CEO. Risk Registers are not just about H&S but include all compliance (eg pupil numbers/ finance/safeguarding). Using the laptop and screen, SB showed governors the actual 'Every – risk register' online system record with the note section where risks are identified and what is being done to negate the risk for Morchard Bishop. The Register covers all aspects of risk management and there are further supporting compliance documents such as tree inspection (AHTs had received training on this), outdoor play, water inspection/compliance and a record of when checks are due and when they take place. The risk register has suggested areas but can also be adapted and tailored to meet each school's needs. From this, the Deputy CEO and the Health & Safety Lead, Claire Slee, are able to pull reports from across the Trust to allow Trustees to have their fingers on the pulse at any point. Further compliance detail lies behind the extensive lists on display. There were no questions. Governors thanked SB for showing them the Register.</p>	<p>Request for sharing of teacher resources to be raised at S&C</p>
11	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</p> <p>a) Response to draft minutes dated 14.05.2024 previously circulated (confidential until approved) - as below</p> <p>b) Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&C meeting:</p>	

SEND: *Our LAC had identified the level of SEND within the LAC is higher than the national comparison and asked why this is the case.* The newly appointed Director of Inclusion (DoI), Fran McLoughin, said Trust data was ahead of the national data which made it harder to compare. The national figure may be higher when next published. The CEO had stated that having smaller schools and with the Trust's ethos to be inclusive and use relational approach, this attracted families with children with additional needs. The Trustees had added the effective inclusion of SEND pupils provided a more comprehensive education for the other children as well. The DoI advised the Inclusion Hub was looking at how the SENDCos identified children with SEND needs to ensure there was a consistent approach. This was done monthly.

The Chair acknowledged there had been a lot of movement around who is doing what and some of the questions raised were not able to be fully answered at the current time as the relevant processes, data collection and analysis needed to be put in place. The Chair highlighted the useful, honest and open conversation with areas for improvement and development identified. The CEO had stated the DoI was only a part time role, consideration would be given to increasing capacity to support the growing Trust. The issue of the lack of support and services outside the Trust was raised. The question was raised about whether the Trust could consider employing in-house S&L support as the waiting list was now over a year and long term support was rarely offered.

A governor liked the idea of recruiting a S&L specialist – it was the governor's opinion this was one of the biggest problems having a major impact on children's development.

Inclusion Hub: *Our LAC had asked if there was any possibility of having an Inclusion Hub closer to Mid Devon raising the question about how accessible the current hub is in this area.* The Chair advised this matter will continue to be reviewed. The DoE had stated the benefit of having a DoI was to ensure there was Trust alignment and a cohesive approach (by the DoI talking with AHTs and the DoI feeding into the EIT).

iPAD/login/security issue *Our LAC had raised the issues relating to security due to it not being possible for pupils to individually log on to the iPads. It is possible to know if anyone has tried to access inappropriate material but not possible to pinpoint or identify the individual (this issue had been resolved for staff members).* The S&C Committee had passed this matter to the DCEO who had made contact with our LAC governors who had raised the concern. The staff governor and SB were both frustrated with the tech resources issues and little progress had been made although IT support had been involved. Sign in was taking far too long and wasting too much valuable lesson time and having negative impact on accelerated reading which required quick access. The staff governor reiterated how WiFi and tech problems, due to lack of resources, really let our children down. The comparison between what rural and urban schools are able to offer is huge. City schools have banks of resources and it is so frustrating that we are not able to facilitate the same learning provision. The Chair encouraged governors to continue to ask challenging questions and to let the Trustees know and ask for feedback. On a more positive note, SB was pleased to inform governors that he believes funding has been secured to replace the Morchard Bishop's current Internet connection with a satellite system. This should make a massive improvement.

Staff workload and wellbeing

- SB had been supporting another school while the AHT was on medical leave. He had been splitting his time between the two schools. Plans had been put in place to enable this with staff at Morchard Bishop stepping up to fulfil the leadership role. Support of an additional school will continue into the next

	<p>academic year. It had been a test of systems and processes that had been put in place to cover such an eventuality or significant change. The systems and processes had been set in place to hold the school safe in time of change without having to begin at square one. SB reported the change had been positive and was working well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Media – a concern had been raised by our LAC re what safeguarding was in place to protect staff. The matter raised had already been resolved prior to the S&C meeting. It had been agreed that parents would be able to continue being able to comment yet the filter option was available as appropriate. It had been agreed that parents would continue to contact staff through the school's admin email address and that boundary had not been crossed. Positive comments were made by other governors about the use of Dojo (a digital platform that connects teachers, pupils and families in one space). Some governors and SB stated Dojo works well enabling easy communication and sharing. 	
12	<p>NEXT S&C FOCUS: TBC</p> <p>In the absence of CR, there was no update regarding the focus. The Clerk will inform governors when she receives information from CR.</p>	Gov Professional /clerk will update when known
13	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on creating governor bios and description about the LAC governor role to raise the profile of governors and help towards succession planning. ▪ Risk Registers had been shown and explained which will enable governors to be better informed when discussing with AHTs during visits (or Ofsted). ▪ Since the current process of governor/AHT focussed visits, followed by feedback to the S&C Committee with responses available to governors via the Minutes (and attendance of the Chair as a link at the meeting), governors felt this had provided a much more effective line of communication and purpose. It was good to give and receive feedback which did not happen as effectively prior to introduction of the current system. ▪ To create a folder containing any tips/list of questions governors had been asked by Ofsted (allowing quick access when the Ofsted call is received). 	
14	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES' MEETING</p> <p>Summary of questions from governors to be raised at the S&C meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Transport costs/provision of a Trust minibus? Rural schools are at a disadvantage due to the high cost of transport. Is there any possibility the Trust would be able to consider purchasing a minibus to be used by all schools? 2) Sharing of teaching resources (a Twinkle for the Trust!) Effective sharing of resources to support the new systems introduced (ie Maths) would massively ease teacher workload. If PP presentations could be shared, these could be adapted for daily use specific to each classroom's need. 3) iPads/IT resources: Still causing frustration and having an impact on the children's learning. 4) Inclusion Hub: Is there any plan for an Inclusion Hub closer to Mid-Devon – how accessible is the current hub in this area? 	Questions for the LAC Chair to raise at the S&C meeting

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

Signed as approved by the Chair, Joanna Hooper Date: 30 September 2024