

**The Link Academy Trust**

**Moorland Hub Meeting 3  
Minutes: Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
5.30pm via Teams**

**Invited:**

Dominic Course	Chair and Trustee
Sarah Clarke	Academy Trust School Improvement Lead (ATSIL)
Penny Young	Clerk

**Academy Heads:**

Des Stokes	Widecombe in-the-Moor Primary School
Sam McCarthy-Patmore	Illington CofE Primary School
Dan Turner	Bearnes Voluntary Primary School
Vic Pooler	Hennock Community Primary School

**Governors:**

Hennock Primary School	Lynda Cooper, Chair
	Kyle Brook, Parent Governor
	Karen Ayling, Community Governor
Bearnes Primary School	Ewa Ziubryniewicz, Parent Governor
	Peter Reed, Community Governor
	Jo Carter, co-opted Governor
Widecombe Primary School	Rob Steemson, Community Governor
	Caroline Rolls, Staff Governor
	Evie Edworthy, Parent Governor
Moretonhampstead Primary School	Shaun Elliott, Parent Governor
	Vivienne Hodges, Community Governor
Illington Primary School	Dr Carmel Skinner, Parent Governor
	Dr Paul Brassley, Community Governor

Attended – Dominic Course, Lynda Cooper, Dan Turner, Vic Pooler, Jo Carter, Evie Edworthy, Vivienne Hodges, Paul Brassley, Penny Young (clerk)

Apologies – Peter Reed, Sarah Clarke, Rob Steemson, Carmel Skinner, Shaun Elliott (also looking to stand down).

**Welcome** – Dominic Course (DC) welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Penny Young as the new clerk.

**Declaration of Business Interests** – None

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Minutes of 21.04.2021 for approval. Paul Brassley (PB) did not receive the minutes. This was discussed and they are usually available on Sharepoint. Lynda Cooper (LC) will find out what other Local Committees do and we will follow suit. The minutes will be circulated via email to PB and carried over to the next meeting to give him a chance to read them.

**Matters arising:** 0-25 Team - dissatisfaction reported from lots of schools throughout lockdown. Service not good enough and children are being let down as it is taking so long to hear back from them. Letter has been written by the Trustees expressing concerns from across the Trust.

## **1.Strategic Governance**

1.1 Focused visits since last meeting (Wellbeing; ASIP review) – A brief report on the main findings from each school to be fed back to the Hub from the Governor responsible.

- **Bearnes Primary School & Hennock Primary School – LC reported:**  
The Wellbeing review was fine. Talked of usefulness of Jigsaw for PSHE. Children returned well to school, staff are a bit tired but at this time of year and given Covid, this is not surprising. Good strategies.  
ASIP – blended learning was a positive for both schools. Writing is a red flag issue and being picked up in next year's plan. Other observations for S&C – LC observed quite how much time Academy Heads spend on estate management or issues not related to teaching. Academy Heads should know to contact the central business unit for estates. Interesting to know if other schools in the Trust are having the same experience. Hennock has a particular issue around catering and there isn't a management structure to support this. Hennock is catering for Bearnes now too. School staff have to help out (making sandwiches etc).  
Staffing – small schools problematic to cover. Recruitment and marketing an issue for both schools – is there more we could do Trust-wide? Are other schools finding this? When LC raised this at S&C LC was told that Academy Heads can go to Sarah Harcourt-Smith (SHS) who does the funding role. Is this working? Dan Turner (DT) has used SHS for funding. Vic Pooler (VP) aware of SHS role but wasn't clear on what/when she works. Jo Carter (JC) - PTAs within the Trust did training recently with SHS and Matt Matthew (MM) on how to write letters and applying for funding.
- **Widcombe-In-The-Moor Primary School – Evie Edworthy (EE) reported:**  
Wellbeing - everything seems good and everyone happy. Anyone that was flagged up as a concern was supported quickly. 100% of Y5/6 took part in online learning during lockdown. All children seemed to be fine when they returned. Des Stokes (DS) doing a great job with teachers and staff, who all seem happy too (Governors were able to speak to staff separately to check this). Jigsaw for PSHE was good for staff wellbeing too. DC asked EE if she had followed up with DS about being SENDCo. This was brought up at last meeting and actions taken already. DS happy to know he has support and can seek more help when needed.  
ASIP – All going well. Generally, all positive and lots of green boxes on sheet and everything progressing as they would expect. Not seen the issues that LC brought up (estate management etc) but will check with DS.
- **Moretonhampstead – DC reported:**  
Wellbeing – no huge surprises that the return to school has been harder for the children who have been in school the whole time. They had become used to the different school atmosphere and learning and much smaller classes etc. Noted that learning behaviour in younger children had taken a step backwards and conflict resolution has also taken a step

back as children had not had to deal with this during lockdown. New behaviour policy is underway and is seeing good results. Increased the number of TA meetings working with SENDCo, children being identified for more therapeutic support and meetings with parents when children struggling. Bounce-back provision map for most children and relational behaviour policy. Sharing/caring side. Introducing role models with older children to help the younger children (Play leaders etc) but because of bubbles can't use currently. ASIP – noted immediately that they have an acting Academy Head so she was reporting on an ASIP she hadn't written. Significant work on subject leadership- previously it was quite hard to identify who was responsible for what. Much more work on who owns what, a definite curriculum lead for all subjects. Helping with focusing on key areas. Talked about reviewing the way Teams was used, this has been adopted through more training. PE lead is currently the freelance PE team member who covers the Moorland Hub – Tayler Pierce. Is that the same for other schools within our Hub? JC said that one of the PE team comes in to school, teachers should be there and learning what PE teacher is teaching. Under no circumstances should teachers use that time for PPA. Teachers can then teach the skills that they've learnt – PE observation becomes a form of CPD. Not sure if there is PE lead in each school? DC asked how does that fit with monitoring of PE budget? How do they report on the impact of this? JC – a big chunk of PE grant goes towards the PE team. What's left, the school spends on equipment that they need – can use it for iPads too. PE team only recently in place. They set up their own PE ASIP, what they intend to do in September and then do an impact statement at end of year. These need to be on the schools' websites. Local board working party looked at where to place the Sports Grant/PE visits in the annual cycle. ASIP – writing slipped the most. Hardest thing to teach and for parents to teach. SPAG also needing a lot more attention. Y6s to do some mock SATS.

- Ilington Church of England Primary School – PB reported:  
One meeting in which we looked at recovery and spent all our time on that. Not looked at ASIP. Will review in next meeting in about 3 wks. Thought it would make more sense as final data for this year should be available then. Gave us lots of time to discuss recovery curriculum. In addition to Covid, had a couple of issues. First year of new Academy Head, embedding with staff and also new staff. Also new building works, so operating on split site since January – some in school and some in village hall., which is causing additional issues. Academy Head made the point to staff and children that over lockdown and coming back from lockdown that it was 'ok not to feel ok'. Talked quite a lot to the staff about this and staff do feel supported by Academy Head. Positive feedback from staff. Lockdown did create additional problems, a number of parental separations which clearly created issues for staff to deal with. Coming back after lockdown for children on the autism spectrum, has resulted in age related performance lower than would be expected. Clearly that is an issue that will need to be dealt with next year. Academy Head is making initial attempts to deal with recovery for all pupils - parent meetings; emphasis on children getting to know each other again after lockdown. Putting House system in operation and quite a lot of effort to deal with sports arrangements. Change creates problems for autistic children so they will be given a special introduction to new building so they won't feel challenged when they return in September. Overall reasonably confident everything is being dealt with. DC asked how the building is going? PB said it still looks like a building site but it is on schedule to be finished by the end of term.

Other issues addressed

- Staff wellbeing – raised at S&C and Trustee level. A staff survey has been sent out. Emphasised that staff do have clear lines for expressing grievances. Will pass results back down to Governors when received.
- DC - PE and PP money needs to be planned at beginning of year and not get to end of year before using it up. DT reported that this year we can carry forward PE money because of Covid as long as there is a ring-fenced plan for it. There is no guarantee it will be in place forever, we need to make the most of it whilst we have it, and monitor impact and

experience. LC asked is it the case that there is not a PE lead named staff member in each school? DT – there is a PE lead at Bearnas and she works alongside Tayler. It is not the case that we have to have one. VP – there is not a staff member who is responsible for PE at Hennock as this would cause staffing problems; the PE lead role is taken up by Tayler Pierce. There is a lot of PE expertise across the rest of the teaching team, so this could be picked up as needed. VP was under the impression that the 3 PE subject leads were responsible for writing the impact statement etc. There is accountability for purchasing as all requisitions need to go through Academy Head. Subject leads are needed for all subjects, so to have the PE team in place helps hugely. LC asked about succession planning: of we lost the PE team, do we have someone who is closely involved to be able to run with this? Both Hennock and Bearnas are covered, but need to check how other schools are placed regarding this.

### 1.2 Focused visits coming up (recovery curriculum; final data picture)

LC – has done her report with Hennock already. LC asked if EE and PB have the questions that Sarah Clarke circulated for visits. They do.

EE - Data drop not happened yet but good picture from doing SATS, Y5s gained GD in Y6 papers and really pleased with how it's looking. Two Y2 children who had dropped down. Recovery curriculum really positive. Be interesting to see if the actual results reflect projections. Good communication and team work, everyone on the same page.

LC – Hennock recovery curriculum raised no causes for concern. Data very strong projected for Y6s. Identified any issues for other year groups and VP explained the patterns. Nothing immediately sending up red flags.

### 1.3 Update from S&C.

DC: our feedback and minutes go to S&C and anything they can't deal with goes to full Trustees. Two way process as it comes back down. Feedback on capacity of Inclusion Hub. This is a great facility but now with 15 schools and Trust expanding by one more school by October, will Inclusion Hub be expanded? Hours of staff will be increased and there will be additions to the team. Concerns raised about Gifted and Talented pupils were discussed, Alice Eeles (Academy Head at Stoke Gabriel) will identify G&T pupils and plan interventions. Talked about MASH referrals and concerns about DCC Children's services which have now been formally raised. Trust staff surveys are underway.

DC noted that some issues get sorted quickly, some take longer as may need to go to Trustees.

Academy Heads being named SENDCo is an example of a more difficult question to resolve. This has raised some issues and LC has looked at it in some detail. Is it best practice to have the Academy Head as SENDCo? SEN Code of Practice says there is a need to have a qualified SENDCo in setting. Qualified SENDCo could cover a group of schools, if in a small school setting. LC did an analysis, majority of SENDCos don't hold the qualification and are not due to do it, which is in contravention of the SEN Code of Practice. Asking for feedback about how we could move towards a position where we are compliant. Brought up at S&C, and it has gone to be looked into and hopefully we will hear back at beginning of September.

Whole host of issues around resourcing and staffing and financial costs. How do we manage the relationship if we were to be compliant? We don't want to lose a sense of individual school knowledge for individual SEN pupils because we were implementing a SENDCo shared across schools. We need to weigh it up and what is right for Trust. Feels it is quite complicated, communicated the query and now waiting to hear back.

DC asked VP and DT for feedback. There is an expectation for Academy Heads to know their SEN children and keep their interests to the fore. Is it useful to have another person in the room when discussing this?

VP – I am the SENDCo for Hennock. Time is an issue. I have three full time teachers, and I also have a teaching role. You need to have a passion for SEND to do the job, otherwise it falls on to Academy Head. Time consuming at some points in the year. VP enjoys SENDCo role. All staff need to be clear on what SENDCo does and what they need to do. It is a

support and guidance role if staff have queries about their pupils. SENDCos apply for EHCPs if necessary but other staff should provide the information as they are the ones on the ground teaching. Got Inclusion Hub and also got SEND Hub and we know we can go to people for support. Got 1 x EHCP and nothing complex, it is manageable currently. Need to weigh up responsibilities for Academy Head role, as they are also DSL (a big role) and SEND, it could become unmanageable if needs grow.

LC – it is fine for Academy Head' to be SENDCo, not best practice but not non-compliant. If the Academy Head is SENDCo do you need formal training? This is a separate issue. VP – looked at this in Academy Heads meeting and at SEN Hub. If you are SENDCo and have been in post for 12 months or less you don't need to start the qualification yet but need to do it by the end of 3 yrs. It is worded very ambiguously. Alex Waterman (SEND Lead) is going to contact 0-25 Team to get clarification and find out what we should be doing as a Trust, and make sure we are following the guidelines correctly. LC – this is great. Having the reassurance that it's been formally looked at would help us answer any questions from Ofsted.

EE – DS had been told that he has 3 years to do the qualification. He had quite a few EHCPs which has caused a large workload. Possibly two in September which is manageable. He agrees that knowing his children is great as he can talk about them. Clarification is needed.

DT – Rebecca Humphreys (Inclusion Hub lead) and DT looked at this and it needs clarification. Very different for Bearness, DT has a SENDCo because of the high level of need. Safeguarding takes up more of DT's time. The SENDCo has been in post for a couple of years now and needs to know if she has to do the qualification. Bearness currently have 6 EHCPs and 2/3 in pipeline with significant need. DT works with the SENDCo but we need to know each person's responsibility. Currently left to SENDCo to write EHCPs and provide evidence which is time consuming. Our SENDCo has 1 day per week which is not enough, but gets released at extra times if possible.

DC – communication around a child is very important. JC – added that when the 0-25 improves, that might free up a bit of time for annual reviews, and this will massively help everyone. Keep monitoring.

PB – Sam McCarthy-Patmore is SENDCo and it takes an enormous part of her time. Can be up to 1/3 of her time. Seems that there is this balance between being on the spot and knowing children, and having special expertise. Being on the spot and knowing the children worth a lot, more than official qualification. DC said that 1/3 is a lot of her time, especially as a new Head. It has been recognised and is being looked at.

Other issues:

Volunteers – can be welcomed back in schools. VP said that Hennock have two of them back in, and it is good to see them in school. DC - Moreton had sports day yesterday (no parents) and great to be back in some form at school.

Will also come back with national data on SEND comparison with trust performance. Point has been made that this might not be accurate. It is under review.

EE – Do we need a safeguarding lead governor? Do we still need that if Ofsted come along?

JC – we have a safeguarding governor at Woodleigh, who was previously L3 trained, and SG officer at her school. It is something that we always ask about at every visit and discuss at local board. Safeguarding visit should be the audit so don't duplicate. If nobody specifically safeguarding governor I don't think it's the end of the world but handy to have someone especially if they know the L3 bits. JC did the Babcock training for governors L3 and it was very good. Talked about trying to co-ordinate training for SEND and Safeguarding to tie in with safeguarding audit. EE has done L3 training so has insight.

#### 1.4 Governor training.

Safeguarding training carried out at Trust level, all governors need L2 training kept up to date. Any other training needed? DC – there should be Trust wide local governor training on Learning Walks now we are allowed back in school, on what to look at and how to look at it? LC – has also asked for more clarification around staff governor role. Staff governors attend

meetings but don't have a specific role. In some of the other Hubs it is rotated between staff and classed as CPD. Staff governors as a shared role can be really useful. DC: worth stressing it doesn't need to be teaching staff, can be TAs as well, which can be very useful. PB – in the previous academy we did have a staff governor and formal meetings whereas most meetings now seem to be the two non-staff governors talking to Academy Head. We need to make sure there is staff governor input. DC it is best practice that when doing focussed visits it is not just two governors and Head but other staff too, if practical. LC – would like to address this in school next year doing proper visits. PB reported on the online training Babcock course he did. It was not useful and didn't really provide new knowledge. He did initial governor training a few years ago for a full day and that was much better. DC said governors have access to Babcock training. JC said the Safeguarding training is with "people", but the SEND is more PowerPoint training. Informative but already done L3 so had a feel for it and has done L2 for years. If coming in new, not as useful. Doing new governor training online is not good. If you are new to it all and have lots of questions to ask, it is not useful. DC quality of in person training can vary. New governor training is really useful as you can have discussions with other new governors, if it is face to face.

## **2. Procedural matters (if not covered above)**

- 2.1 Safeguarding – had audits within the year. Nothing further to report.
- 2.2 SEND – covered above.
- 2.3 Sports Premium grant, Pupil Premium grants – got impact statements and should be available imminently. JC mentioned the PP grant. The funding doesn't come through until November time. So the Trust have shifted this focused visit to be in first spring term, so we know what funding is and what is going on. VP mentioned that all schools will be getting a reduced amount next year for PP. Discussed briefly at AH meeting. Don't know how that will impact PP spend reviews.
- 2.4 Health & Safety/Risk assessments  
LC – Hennock not successful in CIF bid. Ongoing H&S concerns about fire alarm system and security of the perimeter. This is estates rather than teaching and learning but keeping it on the agenda as ongoing issue.  
DC – the fire system was raised at S&C. If it was condemned by local fire brigade or fire safety officer you will get a CIF bid. DC stated it had been passed as adequate. VP not aware of this. Hennock is a split site and now catering for Bearnese. VP will speak to MM and Andy Tranter (Premises Officer). MM in the process of organising summer holiday maintenance and that is Hennock's main priority.  
DT – Bearnese - a tree needs to come down in staff car park. Also flooding issues with new build. MM working through that with architect and builders.

## **3. Personnel (if not covered above)**

- 3.1 Staffing: staff wellbeing and workload – Demands of SENDCo if also Academy Head discussed. Wellbeing after lockdown discussed.  
VH – what responsibility do governors have towards wellbeing of staff? What is the relationship between the Moorland Hub and school staff? DC – we are not responsible for staffing structure. Issues of wellbeing may come up when we go into school and discuss curriculum. If staff are having issues implementing curriculum then raised to S&C. VH - what stage do we get reply from S&C or Trustees? DC - if it can be sorted by S&C, it would come after next S&C meeting. Everything fairly formalised but concerns can be raised. Decisions can't be made at this level.
- 3.2 Parents: parent forum meetings, PTA, areas for concern/complaints  
DC - Moreton had summer fete which was great. No parents but children had a great time. Nice to see some normality.

Complaints and how they are dealt with. Academy Head should deal with these in the first instance.

**Appointment of new Chair/Vice Chair** – DC - as a Trustee I need to step down as a local governor. LC has put herself forward to stand. Formal election would be held in September at first meeting. LC will act as interim chair from now until meeting in September so there is a formal channel open over the holidays. DC proposed, EE & PB seconded. LC explained role of chair and vice chair, and confirmed her availability over the summer should anyone want to discuss either role.

**Dates of Local Board Meetings 2021-22**

LC will check these as they seem to be after the S&C meetings. A discussion with all governors and Clerk will be held to check the best days/timings for these Hub meetings.

**Close**

The meeting closed at 7.02pm