

## The Link Academy Trust

**Moorland Hub Meeting 2**  
**Minutes: Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2022**  
**5.30pm via Teams**

### Invited:

Penny Young Clerk

### Academy Heads:

Dan Turner Bearnese Primary School  
Jason Keenan Hennock Primary School  
Sam McCarthy-Patmore Ilsington C of E Primary School  
Alex Waterman Moretonhampstead Primary School  
Des Stokes Widecombe in-the-Moor Primary School

### Governors:

Chair Lynda Cooper, Community Governor (Hennock)

Bearnese Primary School Peter Reed, Community Governor  
Ewa Ziubryniewicz, Parent Governor  
Jo Carter, Co-opted Governor

Hennock Primary School Olivia Gentile, Staff Governor

Ilsington Primary School Dr Carmel Skinner, Parent Governor  
Dr Paul Brassley, Community Governor

Moretonhampstead Primary School Vivienne Hodges, Community Governor  
James Gething, Parent Governor  
Kate Wellings, Associate Governor  
Holly Edginton, Staff Governor

Widecombe Primary School Rob Steemson, Community Governor  
Caroline Rolls, Staff Governor

Governors are asked to notify the Chair or Clerk at least 5 working days prior to the meeting of any other items they wish to place on the agenda.

### Attended:

Lynda Cooper (LC), Peter Reed (PR), Ewa Ziubryniewicz (EZ), Jo Carter (JC), Paul Brassley (PB), Vivienne Hodges (VH), James Gething (JG), Kate Wellings (KW), Holly Edginton (HE), Caroline Rolls (CR), Olivia Gentile (OG), Alex Waterman (AW), Dan Turner (DT), Sam McCarthy-Patmore (SMP), Des Stokes (DS)  
Penny Young

### Apologies:

Jason Keenan, Robert Steemson, Carmel Skinner

## Welcome

LC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## Declaration of Business Interests

No declarations of business interests.

## Minutes of previous meetings for approval

The minutes were approved.

### Personnel changes within Hub

LC mentioned changes coming up within the Moorland Hub:

- JK is leaving Hennock is leaving at the end of the summer term for personal reasons. He will be much missed by the school community.
- CS has handed in her resignation for Ilsington. CS's input has been valuable and LC will thank her at next meeting.
- DS at Widecombe is also leaving at the end of the summer term. A new Academy Head (AH) has been appointed, he lives locally and parents are aware. Transition work has started.

## 1. Strategic Governance

### 1.1 Focused visits for last half term (SEND/Pupil Premium; Teaching and Learning/ASP) with a brief report on the main findings from each school

#### Moretonhampstead

JG reported that he had been in twice since the last meeting for SEND and PP. The meetings were good and reports put on Teams page for Moorland Hub. No actions. LC asked if he had talked about T&L or is that being picked up this term? JG - this is scheduled for next meeting. JG reported that the biggest issue is with one particular pupil but the staff team are managing well. There was a disruptive incident at the end of February and a couple of parents talked to JG about this. LC asked AW if she is getting the support she needs. AW - everyone is involved who can be involved within the Academy and wider area. The situation is steadily evolving, it is a complex situation. Rebecca Humphreys has been at Moretonhampstead pretty much full time since February half term supporting staff. The 0-25 team very slow currently and lots of waiting lists. Everything we can do is in place and AW has made her views very clear within the system and the Trust. We are doing the best we can and the staff are doing a tremendous job. Great support from the Inclusion Hub. LC asked about staff wellbeing. AW said it had been challenging for them. They had supervision in place. SEND has been a big job to sort out at Moretonhampstead. Lots of children needed EHCPs which were not in place, gradually making progress across the board. JC - I know we are going to talk about this, but all SEND visits culminated in reports of *we don't have enough time*, I am worried to hear that Rebecca Humphreys is "camped" at Moretonhampstead. AW reported that she is actually basing herself at Moretonhampstead rather than Bearnese. AW noted that coming back post-Covid they had a wave of children who are either in the system but the system has paused or are on a 4 year waiting list for ASD referrals. EHCPs running very behind. Schools don't have the same bank of evidence as if children had been in school for the past 2 years. Lots of children come in who are not where they should be academically or emotionally. We need a Rebecca Humphreys in every school. LC - are we doing everything we can, it sounds like we are? Are we supporting other pupils and staff? AW talked about recruitment. Moretonhampstead have been advertising for a 1:1 TA from November 2021 and nobody has applied. All local schools seem to be the same. SMP - what you are seeing is what has been going on in schools for a long time. Massive underfunding and we have to demonstrate we are spending £6k on each child from our SEND budget before requesting more support. The big issue is very few people are trained in managing children with ASD. Large numbers coming up through Ilsington. LC - can you manage the issues you mentioned with the parent community? Are concerns likely to escalate? JG - as a governor I have had several conversations with AW and understand everything that can be done is being done. Parents don't necessarily understand that. AW - parents have been tremendously balanced and raised concerns with JG or myself. They have been very supportive, especially bearing in mind I am new and they don't know me. VH agreed with what JG said. She has concerns about parents not being happy but school is doing its best in difficult circumstances. The way children with SEND is managed is unsatisfactory but we are limited by finances and resources. I hope situation changes in future. LC - we will pass this back up to the S&C meeting.

#### Bearnese

JC reported on the recent visit which went well. Governors talked through the SEND strategy for the school, including a focus on supporting younger years. No concerns. Same issues all over again, not enough time to deal with children with SEND issues. Everyone is doing their best. Our schools and the Inclusion Hub are fantastic, trying to make the best of a bad situation. EZ - nothing further to add.

OG – As a new teacher, I was very lucky enough to work alongside Nikki Racey (Inclusion Hub). How I manage my SEND children is now totally different because of what Nikki taught me. Could Nikki do some staff training to help people? AW - Nikki does this as part of her role already, but this is great feedback to hear.

#### Ilstington

PB reported the last visit was back in March when he and CS visited school with SMP. It was an interesting time talking to children about learning and talking to teachers too. PB has had issues getting on to Teams, so no report in the Local Board folders. The main problem has been simply to try and arrange meetings because of Covid and the knock-on effect is that sticking to the list of things we are supposed to do has not happened. We will have another meeting this term but it might well just be PB going into the school as CS won't have time to do it before she leaves and any new governor will not be up to speed before the end of term. SMP reported how pleased she was with the meeting they had had,; Governors had spent two hours talking to the children and staff. Had a list of things that we went through. SMP would like to celebrate the fact that PB and CS have gone out and spoken to parents and got two people who are interested in applying for the Parent Governor role. SMP has tried in the past and not got any interest. LC – this all sounds positive. I will join you for next meeting, hopefully new Governors will be in place by then. PB – that would be really useful.

#### Widecombe

LC reported that RS had sent a report (below) and that this sounded like a positive meeting. DS – It was a good chance for RS to link everything up. It was very useful and RS is now up to speed. Widecombe also have interest from another Parent Governor, as they have a vacancy.

I visited School on 27 April and ran through the questions with Des. In regard to curriculum I was already aware and attended the open art afternoon (along with tea & cakes by School Friends group) earlier in the year with an excellent display of children's work. I was updated and shown how the art has been developed through the school by coordinating teacher Lucy and the resulting PowerPoint presentation was impressive and something very useful to show to others when required. Other teachers have been involved and I visited a class continuing to use their skills with painting and had a chat with some of the pupils and teacher leading the class. Later I was able to chat with Lucy about her role and the wider ethos and experience.

Progress - DS thoroughly explained the data and processes involved.

Learn - mock stat paper, staff meeting & guidance, staff targets & review, talking pupil progress meetings.

Support - the current evolving stats reflect the support and actions taken in autumn term in KS2 - in Feb 2022 Maths 82%, Reading 82%, Writing 70%, now in April figures are 83%, 94%, 88%.

Challenge - Writing was the biggest issue and this has been really progressed due to consistency of pupils being back in the classroom being taught directly by high quality teachers and their ongoing CPD targets.

Fingers crossed my next involvement is on 9 June for a school walk when hopefully I will met the new Head.

#### Hennock

LC held Hennock's SEND visit. Talked through everything with JK. He is receiving the support he needs and strategies are in place to make sure progress is being made. LC moved the T&L meeting so that will happen this term.

Housekeeping: LC asked that when Governors do visits to please let her know the dates. She has to report back on when they happen. There is also a proforma for visit write-ups which governors may find useful. LC will put it on the Local Board area of Teams. There is a prompt list at bottom to capture information. Governors can type up notes in a Word document though, if they prefer, as long as the basic information is captured. The visit notes are a record for Ofsted and a way to track information and progress. It is really good to have something to reflect on and refer to. LC can also make sure she is escalating anything to S&C meeting and Trustees. If you can't get access to the Teams area, let PY and LC know and they will come up with solution.

### **1.2 Focused visits coming up (SATs/ASIP), including overview of questions**

SATS next week. LC asked Academy Heads if they had spoken to Governors and planned cover?

#### Ilstington

SMP – we only have PB and not available much next week. PB reported that he can do Monday-Wednesday, definitely can't do Thursday. LC did ask this question at S&C meeting as the only Hennock governor is LC. There will be some gaps, just do your best. LC mentioned that you can ask other trusted members of the school community.

#### Hennock

OG – what is LC's availability? LC can do Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday but needs to leave at 10:30 on Wednesday. Can't do Thursday. JK will ask PTFA chair.

Bearnes

DT – Currently struggling at present. PR said he can do Wednesday and Thursday. EW can do Wednesday and will see if she can do any other day. JC covering the Woodleigh Hub.

Widcombe

DS – approached RS but not heard back. Approached the vicar and an ex-TA. Will keep LC updated.

Moretonhampstead

AW has JG who can cover all if necessary. KW can do Thursday and might be able to do Wednesday too. AW will confirm with them.

LC - that is looking much more positive. Thank you to all governors. I have sent around some documents about what you are required to do. It is quite straightforward but please look through it. You need to make sure the SATs tests are being stored appropriately and securely and that when testing is underway, pupils not being coached in any way. There should be calm and clear test environments. The Local Authority might do spot checks in schools. There are no reports to write after. If there is a concern, let LC know. There is information in the pack about raising a concern.

ASIP: still working on the 2021-22. AHs should be able to give you RAG-rated documents when you visit. Looking at what has happened through the year. Where objectives were met, what helped? What wasn't achieved and why? Not about grilling the AH but understanding the overall school picture. We can then look for general issues at next Hub meeting and escalate as necessary.

### **1.3 Update from Standards and Curriculum and Local Board Working Party meetings**

S&C meeting happened last week, Working Party meeting tomorrow. JC at S&C meeting too.

There may be a Trust-wide Ofsted. There are a number of schools who are due an Ofsted. LC will be asking whether different preparation is required for this. This will be discussed at the Working Party meeting and LC will share any findings.

There was an update from the Leadership team around further investment. Looking at appointment Trust-wide for SALT and there is a new Attendance Officer in place – this is the Administrator at Otterton. New attendance information has gone out to parents. Look at Otterton's website for up-to-date information. Additional SEND support is now being provided via Katherine at Wolborough. Wolborough has joined Trust as part of a managed partnership. Katherine is experienced with SEND and is working alongside the Inclusion Hub. Interesting to track Wolborough's involvement as they would become part of our Local Board if they join the Trust.

There are a few more schools interested in joining the Trust and also an independent academy. The Trustees were asked about growth plans and resourcing and is there a maximum number of schools before the Trust become too big to manage? The Leadership team gave a well-thought through reply. They carefully consider every request and do not take on schools that would jeopardise the structure. They have to be right for the Trust.

LC received a point of clarification about recruitment and governor involvement. At Academy Head level the Local Board is not involved, Trustees only. Local Board involved at teacher or TA level, at the discretion of Academy Heads. Academy Head can make decision if they want help and that can differ across schools in the Trust. If you have a few candidates, it might make sense to have help. JC mentioned that if interviews are going on, you need to have somebody who has Safer Recruitment training. All Academy Heads should have this. LC would be happy to help support schools in the Local Board. PB – staff recruitment issue seems to be the wrong way around. You are saying the Trust could impose a new Academy Head without the local governors having any input? LC - if we disagree I am more than happy to feedback to S&C. The Board of Trustees are involved in recruitment but we can raise that this does not capture the local picture or view. PB - what is the point of having the local governors if they don't deal with local issues? I have never seen a Trustee and I don't expect to see one anytime soon. I have been a Governor for as long as Ilsington has been part of the Link. LC - I think that there should be more Trustee visibility. I have fed this back previously, and will mention it again. There needs to be a stronger link between Trustees and Local Board. DS – if RS were here he would echo what PB is saying. No Local Board governor was on interview panel when successor at Widcombe was appointed. JC - I agree, we have a new Academy Head at Morchard Bishop and I knew nothing about interviews. Should raise this at S&C. Very strange not to have that input. JG – surely it makes it easier for an incoming AH if the community feel like they have had input? LC - I am happy to raise this knowing this is a shared perspective. I wholeheartedly agree with the comments.

Talked about trust wide ATSIP. Feedback that would move to 3 year cycle, and focus on relational behaviour with supportive strategies. This will include visible learning – pupils taking ownership over learning. Oracy project rolling out across Trust. Gets good feedback. We can ask Academy Heads how they are implementing the ATSIP and how is it working at a local level.

### **1.4 Governor training**

Nothing presented or requested

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

### **2.1. Safeguarding**

Only outstanding point was the issue at Widecombe and LC asked DS if the report had come through. DS - yes it has come through and everything is ok. LC - we are continuing the conversation about whether a Local Board Governor needs to be appointed as a safeguarding lead for the Hub. Will ask this at Working Party meeting and will come back with a clear remit about what that might involve. No issues raised at school level.

### **2.2. SEND**

No updates other than those mentioned above.

### **2.3. Sports Premium grant, Pupil Premium grants**

No concerns.

### **2.4. Health & Safety/Risk Assessments**

DT - Most schools have had the H&S audit through RPA. JC –was this done online? DT reported that it was a very thorough meeting and Claire Slee (H&S Lead) and administrators uploaded all information prior to the meeting and then if further information required, schools were given 48 hours to produce this.

LC – Hennock ongoing concern about front fencing. Any update? OG - no update but will check. AW – had a safeguarding audit this afternoon at Hennock. JK reported that a secondary gate will be put in between emergency exit before the end of term. Agreed by Trust.

### **2.5 Attendance**

LC – I have added this so we are all aware and think about how individual schools are performing. Attendance at all schools is a priority.

Ilington – SMP said this was discussed in detail as a Trust. Huge priority for all of us. Understandably during Covid there was a social change with families working at home. Parents worried about letting children go to school, and this did affect attendance hugely. All schools have had a push on improving. There are now Trust expectations for all families and this has really helped as we all have good relationships with families and they know we aren't being difficult. On each school's website there is an Attendance tab with full details and now an Attendance newsletter is going out regularly from the Trust. Those families drifting in late have now improved. Extended Preschool hours to coincide with school and that has helped. Will have a regular update from our administrators (week 3 and week 6) and that is due soon. LC asked if this was a similar picture across schools? Widecombe – DS said this was the same as Ilington. Reduced the number of late pupils by opening up breakfast club. Offer full wraparound care except Monday and Friday afternoon. A number of parents have had holidays rearranged due to Covid but none authorised, and that's affecting attendance too. Meeting with EWO shortly. Moretonhampstead – AW - cancelled holidays has been difficult. They are not authorised but not fining either. Hopefully coming to the end now and attendance will improve.

JC – is the Trust fining or DCC? PY confirmed that DCC fine, as long as the correct procedures have been followed. The Trust is not sending out fines this summer term, but this will start again from September 2022.

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

### **3.1. Staffing: staff wellbeing and workload, including feedback and observations on term from Staff Governors**

CR –SATs this year is an interesting process as going back to pre-Covid levels of expectation. High levels of anxiety with children and parents, could be normal but could just be Widecombe. Managing SATs at this time when everything has been so inconsistent has put huge pressure on staff. No acknowledgement nationally for what has happened. Just underlying pressure again. Will be interesting when they set thresholds again. Expectations the same but journey not the same whatsoever. Trying to support particularly the Y5/6 teacher but all staff too.

LC – raised question following previous meeting around subject hub system and staff feeling particularly under pressure. Fed back at S&C and was told there have been some amendments to that system to try and address interim meetings and help with prioritising. CR – From talking to DS this was discussed at Academy Heads' meeting and going to be a change next year. Prioritising and focussing on particular subject rather than trying to tackle every subject; improvement in every subject across whole academy is not manageable. Logistics of trying to find cover. LC – that is the message we were given too. Great that that is what is filtering through.

HE - echoing what CR said. Talked last time about issues with subject hubs and pleased to hear that will be addressed next year. Same with SATs, such a hard term before Easter, so difficult for everyone. Even though national picture that Covid rates are going down this has not been the picture at Moretonhampstead. Luckily we have a brilliant team but

everyone on their knees. Expectations of where children going to get to are exactly the same. We keep doing what we do.

OG – Nothing else to add. Hearing things we can echo at Hennock. All staff are stepping in and filling in where necessary.

LC thank you for everything you are doing. Hope that effort is recognised in wider community too. Nicky Dunford said at the S&C meeting that the Trust came through Covid with no school closures. That is phenomenal and is a staggering achievement. Staff support throughout has been appreciated and recognised.

### **3.2. Parents: parent forum meetings, PTFA, areas for concern/complaints**

Hennock – disappointment JK leaving but this will be eased as soon as replacement announced. He wrote a great letter to parents clarifying that his departure has nothing to do with school or Trust.

LC thanked governors for accommodating the change of meeting date this time.

**Close at 6:56pm**

**Next meeting: 29 June 2022**