



Mid Devon Local Advisory Committee (LAC)
Minutes of the meeting held via Microsoft Teams
Monday, 20 January 2025 at 5 pm

Name	Role/Type of Governor	School	
Joanna (Bidy) Hooper (JH)	Chair – Foundation Governor	Morchard Bishop/across the LAC	P
Bruce Abbott (BA)	Parent Governor – Vice Chair	Yeoford	P
Mat Boulton (MB)	Parent Governor	Cheriton Bishop	P
Sam Butler (SB / AHT)	Staff (Academy Head) Governor	Across the LAC	P
Catherine Cozens (CC)	Parent Governor	Morchard Bishop	P
Rebecca (Beki) Richards (RR)	Staff Governor	Across the LAC	P
Tom Woodley (TP)	Parent Governor	Tedburn St Mary	P
Vacancy	Trustee Appointed Governor	Across the LAC	
Pam Down (Clerk)	Clerk	Mid Devon LAC	P
Charlotte Roe (GP)	Governance Professional	Link Academy Trust	P

Present/Apologies/Absent

		ACTION
1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES JH, Chair, wished governors a happy new year and thanked everyone for attending – a full house once again!	
2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: As logged on the Register of Business Interests - nothing further to add in relation to this meeting’s agenda.	
3	APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 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.	Chair/Clerk
4	MATTERS ARISING (not covered elsewhere in the Agenda) Nothing to raise.	Chair
5 5.1	CLERK’S UPDATE Vacancies: a) Trustee Appointed Governor: JH had spoken with the potential person she had previously mentioned regarding this vacancy. It is not known whether the person will be interested or have the time to take on the governor role. JH added that she felt Morchard Bishop already had a parent and foundation governor, so perhaps it would be better for a person from a different school community to fill the position. JH (in her role as Chair) had given consideration to taking on the Trustee Appointed Governor role instead of her current Foundation Governor role (as discussed at the November Mid Devon LAC meeting). JH would prefer to remain a Foundation Governor and continue to be fully invested in Morchard Bishop School, particularly with a new AHT soon to be in post. b) AHT Governor Representative: SB confirmed his last working day as AHT at Morchard Bishop would be on 14 February 2025. In news to be shared with the school community later in the week, SB advised Hannah Bancroft, an experienced Headteacher, has been appointed but will not start full time at Morchard Bishop until after Easter. A transition plan is in place with HB hoping to visit weekly with a	Trustee Appointed governor vacancy – governors asked to consider a suitable person to approach in their community

	<p>full two days' handover, plus remote handover time. The Senior Teacher, NM, will cover in the interim with three days out of the classroom, support from Andy Keay, Director of School Improvement, together with continued support from SB. SB will speak to the Mid Devon LAC AHTs regarding filling the vacant AHT governor representative position (bearing in mind, two are new to the role) after he leaves Morchard Bishop to work elsewhere in the Trust. Everyone thanked SB for his commitment and attending all Mid Devon LAC meetings during his time as AHT governor representative. SB had provided extremely useful input and had been great at communicating and responding promptly to any queries, plus hosting meetings at Morchard Bishop. SB will be much missed by everyone and all sent their best wishes regarding the promotion to his new role in February.</p> <p>5.2 Training:</p> <p>a) Introduction for local board members – 28.01.25: CC & MB booked to attend.</p> <p>b) Clerk briefing update – 23.01.25: Clerk booked to attend.</p> <p>c) L2 Safeguarding mop-up online – 16.01.25 (2 or 7 pm): All governors had completed the annual L2 Safeguarding but were invited to attend for a refresher should they so wish.</p> <p>d) Link Academy Governor training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 4.30 pm - Data Training with Andy Keay – timely training to support the data focus visit ▪ Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 6.30 pm - SEND Training with FMc - timely training to support the SEND focus visit <p>e) Governor online briefings DES (Devon Education Services) / Governance Consultancy Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tuesday 4 February Live interactive webinar 12.30 - 1.30 pm ▪ Wednesday 5 February Live interactive webinar 4 – 5 pm <p>All governors encouraged to attend if at all possible as the updates and information about new initiatives are valuable and course providers very knowledgeable.</p> <p>f) Cyber training – to be completed annually by all staff, trustees and governors (all with a Trust email address) to be insurance compliant: The clerk will forward the training link after the meeting and all asked to complete urgently and forward the Certificate awarded at the end of the course to the Clerk as evidence for HR. A governor had recently completed this at a different school. The GP advised unless the training had been provided by the same company (check the link/website) then it would need to be done through the providers recognised by the Trust's insurance company.</p> <p>5.3 Clerk to Local Board Committee to update the governors on any local or national issues:</p> <p>a) <u>Governor bios</u> (only two received – a reminder to forward to the clerk either by WhatsApp or email) to highlight and promote the role within schools as discussed at previous meetings. The Clerk thanked JH and MB for emailing their bios. When received, the Clerk will liaise with Sue Howard, HR about the process for these to be uploaded to each school's website.</p> <p>b) <u>Standards & Curriculum meeting 4 February 2025</u> – JH confirmed she would be able to attend.</p> <p>5.4 Significant changes within the Trust including key personnel: The GP was not aware of any update to share, other than what is already known about SB's promotion to work in East Devon.</p>	<p>SB to speak with other Mid Devon LAC heads re filling the vacant AHT rep gov role after he begins his new role within the Trust.</p> <p>Regular briefings for all governors highlighted and attendance encouraged</p> <p><u>Urgent - Cyber training to be completed by all governors asap</u></p> <p>Governors to send a brief bio to the Clerk asap (HR to upload to school websites).</p>
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<p>6</p>	<p>Focus: Wellbeing/PHSE and Safeguarding Audit with a <u>LEARNING WALK</u> to evidence the practice within the school Feedback from governors re their focus visits invited.</p> <p>Governors were thanked for providing reports from three of the four schools. The tight turnaround was acknowledged, together with the fact that it is sometimes not possible for AHTs or governors to have a compatible diary slot – in spite of trying. The GP commented that governors and AHTs are able to meet in the half term prior to the visit should that timing work better. The clerk would email the Spring 2 focus visit template after the meeting.</p> <p><u>Wellbeing – pupils and staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of support for wellbeing – highlighting strengths and plans for schools where this is not yet consistent • To raise any questions passed from any LAC staff member to the Staff Governor <p>1) Wellbeing/Health & Safety: A governor raised an urgent concern re the safety of a classroom ceiling since storm damage in September 2024. The governor spoke passionately about the need to escalate a professional assessment to confirm the room is safe to use. The governor highlighted the Risk Assessment Red Risk and drew attention to the photos that had been shared. <i>Governors asked what was believed to be the stumbling block: finance? Is the school covered by its own insurance to get the roof/ceiling repaired?</i> The governor raising the problem was unsure about the barrier as no updated reports had been received. SB advised there is a process for schools to seek quotes in such circumstances. The GP agreed to talk to Matt Mathew, DCEO, urgently.</p> <p><u>Retrospective update: It transpired the next day that the DCEO, Estate Manager and Storm had already arranged to visit the school on Thursday 23 January to address the problem. A number of works had already been completed to make the roof safe at a previous time.</u></p> <p>2) Questions from staff governors: The staff governor had emailed all staff across the four Mid Devon LAC schools offering a discretionary way to have a voice into the governors. There had not been a huge response. The meeting moved to Part 2 business to discuss points that had been made.</p> <p>Discussion took place about how best could all staff have a voice. A governor suggested the sharing of Governor/AHT visit reports across the LAC schools. This would give all staff the opportunity to read and, if relevant, comment whether or not things referred to in the reports were happening. It was confirmed the LAC & S&C Minutes are uploaded to the Trust website but Governor/AHT visit notes are not shared other than within individual LACs and with the S&C Committee and Trustees. The Chair commented that staff should be encouraged to speak out and she liked the idea of sharing the half-termly visit reports. The GP remarked this would provide transparency and the willingness for it. The GP added it would be to the discretion of each AHT as to whether or not visit reports could be shared outside the Mid Devon LAC.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding Audit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the S175 Audit and have an oversight of the evidence of safeguarding within the school <p>Reports confirmed this had been checked and updated without any points raised.</p>	<p>GP to speak with MM, DCEO urgently regarding the repair and safety of the roof/ceiling of the classroom concerned.</p> <p>Governors to ask if their AHT were happy for the visit reports to be shared with all staff across the LAC</p>
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<p>The GP commented that Safeguarding has been found strong during each of the recent Ofsted Inspections. The Chair remarked the model was implemented, using CPOMS, and was really impressive.</p> <p>A governor stated most children stated they always felt safe in school. The children who said they only felt safe sometimes identified playtime as the time they felt less safe. All knew they would need to talk to the AHT if there was a problem and they believed something would be done.</p> <p><i>In relation to Safeguarding, a governor asked what should be done when a member of the PTA helps out occasionally – what due diligence should take place?</i> The AHT governor representative stated that if volunteering is regular, the person must have a DBS check and Safeguarding training. For irregular visitors, a leaflet is available which summarises key Safeguarding points (the volunteer never to be left unaccompanied or left alone with a child/children). The GP will speak with the Safeguarding Lead, Alex Waterman, to check the rules about non-regular volunteers. Meanwhile, the governor’s suggestion about the PTA receiving a Safeguarding briefing from the AHT prior to visiting would be very useful.</p> <p><u>Mid-year overview of Attendance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from governors on their focus visits. <p>All schools reported attendance in the high 90s. Identified children had support in place.</p> <p><u>Parent and Community Engagement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from governors <p>Lots of evidence of parental and community engagement was recorded. The Chair remarked on the long list of events detailed by Tedburn St Mary; it was good to share good practice and ideas to build stronger links.</p> <p>The GP was interested to know the impact to the school and the children. The Chair gave an example of the group of children who participate in the monthly family service: public speaking skills had improved and the children, parents and community enjoy it! A positive impact.</p> <p>Another governor stated the positive impact in developing community links for children 14+ to provide role models within their community as they mature.</p> <p>The Chair stated engagement helps everyone to recognise the school’s part in the community. The GP added how important the school is within a local community and the difference it makes to the community if there is no longer a school.</p> <p><i>The Chair asked governors if they felt that through parents’ forums, the PTA and events there was enough opportunity for parents to have a voice. Governors affirmed ‘yes’.</i></p> <p><u>Curriculum Subject Focus – English</u></p> <p>Oversight on strengths and areas of development. Update on impact on any interventions around English.</p> <p>All reports were positive and provided good detail. The Chair commented on the</p>	<p>GP to speak with Alex Waterman re the process for Safeguarding awareness for non-regular volunteers</p>
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	<p>amazing sheets created by an English lead which made it easy to recognise exactly where children were working between Y1 and Y6. The Chair asked how the AHT would feel about information being shared across the Trust. The AHT confirmed this piece of work had been shared within the Trust although it was up to each school to decide whether to adopt. The AHT added the perception may be that using this method may increase teacher workload. It does require adapting a sequence, a bolt-on, so it needs care to ensure how it is implemented. It is based on EGG grids which have been tweaked. The Chair reiterated the very robust understanding about where each child is. Another governor remarked that when speaking to some of the older children, they knew their targets and had some ownership.</p>	
7	<p>FEEDBACK FROM ETHOS COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS</p> <p>Initial Ethos Committee meeting planned for 12 February 2025 (clashes with the Link Academy data training but it was hoped there would be a way of accommodating both). A retired headteacher from the Anglican Church would like to be involved within the school. Also, the Children & Youth & Families Worker for the Ringsash Methodist Circuit has been approached in the hope he may like to be part of the Committee. AR (RE Lead) will also be part of the Committee, together with the JH, Foundation Governor. The meeting will be followed by an inset for all staff delivered by Sharon Lord, the Trust’s RE and SIAMS Lead, regarding Christian distinctiveness and spirituality. It is hoped the new AHT will lead the group once settled in.</p>	
8	<p>RISK ASSESSMENT</p> <p>In addition to item 6 1, another governor flagged a red risk which had not yet been actioned. The governor raised concern regarding school site security and fencing needed – the barrier appears to be funding but there had been no feedback. The GP will raise with MM, DCEO.</p> <p>Another risk identified as yellow (but may move to red) is the predicted low pupil intake forecast. MM had been approached regarding the possibility of securing a grant for a separate pre-school building to be built on the school site. However, the grant is aimed at improving and adapting current settings, not providing new ones. It was highlighted that should the school be altered to include a pre-school, with a resulting increase in number, the room would be needed for the bigger intake. <i>A governor asked about the current pre-school in the village – is that run as a business?</i> The governor advised the village pre-school is run as a business but it is not open every day due to other use need in the village hall.</p>	<p>GP to raise school site security with MM, DCEO.</p>
9	<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 • Suspensions and permanent exclusions • Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents’ evenings/PTFA • ASIP update • Pre-school update <p>The visit reports had covered quite a bit of the above. In addition, the following points were raised:</p> <p>PAN Nothing significant to report – none of the schools are at capacity. One school highlighted the September 24 intake was low with a large cohort due to leave Year 6.</p> <p>Pupil wellbeing positive. A survey in one of the schools highlighted that over 98%</p>	

	<p>of children were happy to come to school and 100% felt safe. Another school reported that overall pupil wellbeing is excellent with one safeguarding concern being addressed. One school reported challenges regarding EHCP decisions – ongoing.</p> <p>Fixed term/permanent exclusion One fixed term exclusion – the school is desperately trying to get the right support for the child and doing everything possible. There is a negative impact on the rest of the pupils following an incident. The two Trust SENDCos are often in the school. Outside of school, there is an ongoing battle for support and with the high number of SEND need it is often a case of ‘he who shouts the loudest’ which is very frustrating.</p> <p>ASIP All were happy with progress although it was noted that one of the schools had needed to change the focus of some staff meetings to cover unforeseen medical training, snow days and staff absences.</p> <p>Pre-school in addition to item 8, one school reported good links with the privately run village pre-school, including transition sessions.</p>	
10	<p>STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM TRUSTEES’ MEETING</p> <p>a & b) Response to draft minutes dated 10.12.2024 (confidential until approved) / Feedback on any issues raised from local board Chairs in S&C meeting – raised at Mid Devon LAC 25.11.2024: The GP confirmed the S&C draft minutes from 10.12.2024 have not been circulated as they have yet to be agreed by the Chair of S&C. JH apologised for not being able to join the meeting due to a gap between previous and new internet providers. The Clerk referred to the email dated 18.12.24 (from the GP, forwarded by the Clerk) where answers had been provided to questions raised by LAC governors. Governors reviewed answers to their questions listed at the Mid Devon LAC on 25 November 2024:</p> <p>Minibus sharing</p> <p>Q: The provision of a Trust minibus in Mid-Devon had been raised. Rural schools are at a disadvantage due to high transport costs. This had also been identified by the Link PE team looking at how to support the equal spread of Sports Premium as a large part of rural schools’ money is spent on transport. It had been noted the four Trust minibuses are all in the Newton Abbot area – could one of them be based in the Mid Devon area? Are there not enough schools to warrant this?</p> <p>A: “This can be looked at but as most minibuses have been purchased by funds raised or donations, normally by PTFAs, then there tends to be a feeling of proprietary ownership at school level. We can look at banding PTFAs together for a fundraising mission?”</p> <p>Now knowing PTFAs had fundraised for the minibuses, governors understood why they were located in certain areas. Further points were raised by governors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the minibuses paid for in full or were they subsidised? ▪ Who pays for the insurance and maintenance of the minibuses? <p>The GP will speak to MM, DCEO to pursue further answers and to look at how PTFAs can work out a model of working together. <i>A governor mentioned that Cheriton Bishop and Tedburn St Mary are investigating PTA links. The governor will endeavour to attend the meeting to research further.</i></p> <p>iPad / IT login This is an ongoing Trust-wide issue which is still being worked through. The AHT</p>	<p>GP to investigate further minibus finance queries with MM and will look at possibilities of how PTFAs can work and fundraise together</p> <p>A governor to investigate local PTA links already being pursued</p>

advised there is not a huge amount of change. It is hoped that updating filters and monitoring may help to provide more live information and protection.

Nurture space in each Hub – following on from the S&C Minutes dated 09.07.24 with reference to a request to consider an Inclusion Hub in the Mid Devon area:

Qs:

- What exactly would be offered in each Nurture space?
- What time frame is being considered (governors appreciated this initiative was in the early stages)?
- How would this work in relation to children from other schools potentially joining and being temporarily added to one of the Trust schools to enable funding? Would this be for part of a day/part of a week?
- The need identified by schools is for more SEND support within the mainstream areas. A separate nurture hub may not support a ‘silent sufferer’ within the classroom – someone not as loud but requiring equal support.
- Nurture groups constantly change due to their nature: how would this be managed?
- Enrichment days are held too far away – can they be arranged closer to Mid-Devon?
- Some special events or days seemed primarily aimed towards SEMH but the picture is much wider, what broader SEND support is being considered within schools?
- How will East Devon schools that have recently joined the Trust be able to interact with the Inclusion Hub? How will SEND need and provision be spread?

Answers:

“I think there has been an amalgamation of several ideas here. If you mean development of a Resource Base, the one at Littleham is under development by FMc alongside ND and the LA. Currently we have an ad out to staff the RB. FMc has been to visit one of good practice. This is to develop over this year, intent is that it will represent what we consider to be a sound model for other schools to replicate. LA is guiding where/what, not the trust.

Nurture spaces are different – the intent there is to replicate the Woodland Wolves/nurture course approach in each geographical hub. There is no action plan for this currently.

SEND provision is developing – the trust hub model now offers SEND leads across each hub, and a wealth of additional support.

All schools across the trust has an Inclusion Review led by the IIH and all schools (including new) have access to support.

The new system the EIT have developed is that DoE/DOSIs are leading termly planning meetings to identify where the needs are and allocate resources accordingly.”

The AHT advised there is currently a pause in connection with the Inclusion Hub due to a medical incident. The Trust is looking at how to continue to support families.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Specialist

Q: Does the Trust have a mental health and wellbeing specialist for pupils; someone who could be deployed across the Trust?

A: “From Director of Inclusion: -

	<p>Many schools have a member of staff who did the mental health lead training when it was funded a couple of years ago. We have Nikki and Sibi who are part of the IIH and are trained in trauma and counselling and they support schools in a therapeutic way and can advise SENDCos or AH if requested. “</p> <p>The GP suggested that during visits, governors check with their AHTs the names of the mental health lead staff within individual LAC schools.</p>	<p>When visiting, Governors to check with their AHT the name/s of the mental health lead staff</p>								
11	<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 • Provision of PPG & LAC • Curriculum subject - EYFS <p>Governors to discuss the next S&C focus in preparation for their next round of visits. Governors to share best practice and raise any questions for clarification.</p> <p>As mentioned in item 6, the clerk to forward the Spring 2 focus visit template after the meeting in order for governors and AHT’s to book or hold a visit meeting at any time – it does not need to wait until next half term. The next Mid Devon LAC meeting will be on 10 March 2025 with completed reports to be returned by Thursday, 6 March 2025.</p>	<p>Governors reminded about the data training session by Andy Key on 12.2.25 to support this focus (item 5.2)</p> <p>Clerk to forward Spring 2 focus visit template – Governors and AHT to book/hold meetings at any point</p>								
12	<p>QUESTIONS TO BE ESCALATED TO S&C</p> <p><i>The GP advised that due to the volume of questions arising from governor/AHT visit reports, the way forward will be to try and streamline questions and for the GP to advise on signposting questions in the first instance. Should there not be a satisfactory answer, then the question would be raised with the S&C.</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Roof/ceiling urgent Risk Assessment Red Risk (item 6.1)</td> <td> <p>GP to discuss urgently with MM, DCEO. To be raised at S&C if answer/action not satisfactory.</p> <p>Retrospective update: <u>It transpired a meeting with the DCEO, Estates Manager and Storm had already been arranged for 23.1.25</u></p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Item 6.2) Discussed in Part 2</td> <td>To be escalated directly to S&C to ensure Trustees are informed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td> <p>Minibus (item 10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the minibuses paid for in full or were they subsidised? ▪ Who pays for the insurance and maintenance of the minibuses? </td> <td> <p>GP to discuss minibus finance queries with MM and will explore whether PTFAs can consider a way of working together. A Mid Devon LAC governor to attend a PTFA meeting where links are already being pursued.</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>(Item 8) A governor flagged a red risk which had not yet been actioned regarding school site security and fencing needed– the barrier appears to be funding but there had been no feedback.</td> <td>The GP will raise with MM, DCEO</td> </tr> </table>	Roof/ceiling urgent Risk Assessment Red Risk (item 6.1)	<p>GP to discuss urgently with MM, DCEO. To be raised at S&C if answer/action not satisfactory.</p> <p>Retrospective update: <u>It transpired a meeting with the DCEO, Estates Manager and Storm had already been arranged for 23.1.25</u></p>	(Item 6.2) Discussed in Part 2	To be escalated directly to S&C to ensure Trustees are informed.	<p>Minibus (item 10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the minibuses paid for in full or were they subsidised? ▪ Who pays for the insurance and maintenance of the minibuses? 	<p>GP to discuss minibus finance queries with MM and will explore whether PTFAs can consider a way of working together. A Mid Devon LAC governor to attend a PTFA meeting where links are already being pursued.</p>	(Item 8) A governor flagged a red risk which had not yet been actioned regarding school site security and fencing needed– the barrier appears to be funding but there had been no feedback.	The GP will raise with MM, DCEO	<p>One question to be escalated directly to S&C as Trustees to be made aware.</p> <p>Other questions to be dealt with by the GP – if no satisfactory answer, to be escalated to S&C</p>
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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. Governors to seek Assurance from the AHT and get Reassurance (evidence) eg by talking to staff and children, digging deep and asking ‘how do you know’.</p> <p>The GP asked if anyone felt uncomfortable about doing this. The Chair stated that staff at Morchard Bishop are open and encouraging and easy to speak to. The GP encouraged all governors that they had ticked the Assurance and Reassurance boxes by their reports and throughout the meeting as minuted.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 6.35 pm

Signed as approved by the Chair, Joanna Hooper Date: 10 March 2025