

**The Link Academy Trust**

**Moorland Hub Meeting 2  
Minutes: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021  
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 Kyle Brook, Parent Governor  
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  
Evie Edworthy, Parent Governor

**Attended:**

Lynda Cooper, Dan Turner, Alex Waterman, Des Stokes, Ewa Ziubryniewicz, Paul Brassley, James Gethings, Kate Wellings, Caroline Rolls. Penny Young - Clerk

**Apologies:**

Robert Steemson, Jason Keenan, Jo Carter, Holly Edginton, Carmel Skinner Evie Edworthy, Vivienne Hodges (tried to join but had IT issues)

**Welcome**

LC welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular James Gething and Kate Wellings, who are new governors at Moretonhampstead.

### **Declaration of Business Interests**

None

### **Minutes of previous meetings 13.10.2021 for approval**

Agreed

## **1. Strategic Governance**

1.1 Focused visits for this half term (safeguarding and data) with a brief report on the main findings from each school

### **Moretonhampstead:**

James Gething (JG) – A good meeting with Alex Waterman (AW). JG is a brand new Parent Governor. Everything on safeguarding seems to be in order. A few things raised but they are being addressed. As far as governors are concerned, everything is good. LC attended the meeting and confirmed that everything was in order. Alex Waterman (AW) reported that all safeguarding systems and processes were in place at Moretonhampstead. LC – we were able to do learning walk this time. Went around the school went to every class and spoke to staff and pupils. Able to observe aspects of safeguarding in person, posters around classes etc. Data was covered on a separate visit – JG said this seemed fine. Data shows that Y6 are pretty strong and predicted grades are looking good. Only concerns are Y2-Y4 where writing identified as weak. This appears to be a national trend due to Covid as children have not had much practice. Extra resources allocated to this. LC asked if they got a chance to go around the school? JG said the meeting was face to face with AW but they saw the library. AW mentioned Gifted and Talented and the way data is dropped in the Trust, it is not easy to see this. Alice Eeles has been assigned to do G&T, so hopefully a system will be in place soon. Now the expectation is to go wide rather than up. LC asked in terms of saying wide rather than up, is that Trust or national? AW said if you go wide you can expand more on the subject. You can make it broad and balanced rather than higher and higher up the curriculum. Push for greater depth rather than subject level. LC interested in G&T as a development point and raised this a few months ago. LC said her understanding is that AE's focus is no longer on G&T but on levelling the playing field. Dan Turner (DT) confirmed that AE is working on disadvantaged children for the Trust with Nicky Dunford & DT. LC will find out what is happening long term.

### **Widcombe**

DS gave overview as Evie Edworthy and Rob Steenson were not in attendance. Recent visits had looked at safeguarding and data. DS walked Governors through safeguarding audit and showed them what it looked like then went through the actions that came out of that. Some objectives are for the Trust (for example, development of a Equality and Diversity policy) and some school based. DS noted that a complaint had been made against the school (mentioned in previous minutes). DS was interviewed by the Local Authority and thought that was the end. Ofsted called this week and wanted a chat. Spoke to them this morning alongside Lizzie Lethbridge and Becky Humphreys. HMI said they are confident good safeguarding in place and could see the layers of SEN and safeguarding provision. Hopefully that is the end of it. LC – glad you got support to manage this very difficult situation. What is the next step? DS – a report will go to regional commissioner and direct to me and the Chair of Trustees after Christmas. Positive feedback from Ofsted though.

Data - what we have seen is really good accelerated progress in Y3-Y4. DS thanked Caroline Rolls (CR) for her work on this. Really good picture for this time of the term. Some really good interventions in place, mini classroom that different groups go into which is working well. LC – the progress for Caroline's class is great, well done. Do you know why and what is bringing success at that point? CR – very fortunate to have a newly qualified teacher working alongside me since September. We have had really clear baseline data since beginning of term. Scattered gaps since children came back. While writing is an issue, the team have drilled down to what specifically needs to be addressed, for example Y2 not knowing spellings, also patchy knowledge of phonics, so assessed those children in all those gaps. Concentrating on spelling and handwriting and interventions in the afternoon. Both team teaching, so can hit everything all of the time. Gaps not allowed to widen. We are putting some other things aside so we can accelerate children's progress. It is a particularly challenging cohort so pattern of poor attainment. Doing targeted teaching. LC noted that it is not always about trying to find out what has not worked, but where it has worked and why. What is Y6 data like? DS – looking positive. SPAG assessment only 2 children didn't pass and there are still a few months to go.

### **Ilstington**

Carmel Skinner (CS) had compiled a report but couldn't attend. Please see below:

## ***Safeguarding Update for Ilington Primary School from the governors meeting with Sam McCarthy and Paul Brassley on 8.12.21***

*Absence is an ongoing challenge (staff & pupils) - currently at 94% this term. Generally, this reflects issues related to covid but also winter bugs and chicken pox. There is one child who is not attending due to difficulties associated with emotional well-being. Recent contact with the EWO was made due to the numbers of unauthorised absences.*

*Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased dramatically; there is a nurture room available and strategies in place to support pupils.*

*Skills for Life is going to be available for Year 6 pupils moving to secondary school. Staff are aware that children in small communities such as Ilington are vulnerable due to lack of exposure to substance use and unsafe cyber activity.*

*The school website provides a range of information about safeguarding for parents to access.*

*Jigsaw is the programme being used for Sex and Relationships Education. Staff regard this as a robust programme for developing children's knowledge and understanding.*

*Equality and Diversity is an ongoing challenge for children in a small school such as Ilington. Two virtual visits are being scheduled every term (the children visit a different country each time), to provide opportunities to learn about and reflect on experiences in different countries. They will also have opportunities to meet with Cultural Champions who come from different backgrounds and experiences.*

*Recent GDPR inspection went well; previous objectives have been met.*

PB explained his wife has been in hospital, so the Safeguarding meeting had been on Zoom which was not the optimal experience, as they could not follow up by going around school. LC asked if there were any concerns that school don't have a robust Safeguarding procedure in place? PB said it was a fairly positive meeting. They did spend a lot of time talking over the problems of why absence was a challenge and the problems relating to the particular child with wellbeing issues.

Data – Not done any more on this since 7<sup>th</sup> October and reported this at last meeting. They were due to have another meeting in November but due to staff illness and PB's wife's illness, this had not happened. LC mentioned that she will be picking up on data for Hennock and Bearnese in January so PB & CS could go back and look at this as they would have data for first term.

### **Hennock & Bearnese**

LC – reported she attended both meetings.

**Bearnese** - DT will happily confirm that he is very experienced in safeguarding, and there are no concerns to report. Peter Reed (PR) joined this meeting too. Went through the safeguarding audit. No concerns on the points that DT raised. Very robust procedures. Bearnese has a really high safeguarding need and there is a lot of support in place. DT said it was good to be able to talk through with governors. There is a lot of need at Bearnese, for example the school had heard of four new starters this week and all four of them seemed to be coming with Social Workers.

**Hennock** – Vic Pooler (VP) has now formally resigned as Academy Head, effective from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. LC wanted to minute her thanks to VP. She was a great friend to the governors and did a great job. She always had her door open. Good to have Jason Keenan (JK) on board providing a smooth transition. Hennock have Olivia Gentile (OG) who is the deputy Safeguarding Lead and carrying safeguarding currently. LC would like to thank AW for the help she is also providing to the staff at Hennock. JK is being trained in January in L3 Safeguarding. LC reported from her visit that currently Hennock is dealing with the day to day rather than feeling they can develop things. Hopefully in the New Year this will happen.

A question had been raised around keeping digital files and moving away from print led files, so LC asked other schools what they do. Bearnese has BehaviourWatch but also has safeguarding paper based files too. DT can print out what he needs so can send on to secondary schools.

DS – mainly digital forms, similar to CPOMS but MicrosoftForms version. Classroom chronology, any staff can add to that or report anything. Also have Behaviour and Safeguarding log which is a blueprint of all the paper forms but online. AW –mentioned that there is a set criteria that people must have in school. Know what records to keep and what details are needed. Moretonhampstead has paper system as that is what staff want. Depends on how schools set up. Some electronic systems have needed tweaking to be good enough and be secure enough. Records need to be clearly separated out. Safeguarding separate from bullying and from SEN. Heads have to review what they had and ensure fit for purpose. Very happy to talk to JK about what to use. LC asked if CPOMS was worth it? Trust has got rid of CPOMS as too expensive. Staff fill it in and tick boxes and you don't get the paper to do something with. When AW inherited Moretonhampstead they were on CPOMS, things on the system

were not picked up quickly enough. AW has simplified this right down so safeguarding is really well known and clear. Do what works best for people. AW said that for Hennock, which is small and probably has very few cases, just use paper files.

Data visits for Bearnese and Hennock will happen early next year. Touched on it at Bearnese in previous visits. LC noted for all Governors that it is important that data is about progress and not outcomes. Don't look at hard numbers, talk to AH and give them the chance to explain where progress is being made and to understand that. Happy to attend with you or provide extra notes.

### 1.2 Focused visits coming up (SEND/Pupil Premium), including overview of question

Next term focus on SEND and Pupil Premium. LC sent the focused visit document and Governors should all have access to this and it takes you through a few questions to ask. LC asked Sarah Clarke what she wanted Governors to focus on and got a proforma report and document that you can use as a prompt. Ask to have a general teaching and learning walk too. If it is possible to coincide with an Ofsted preparation day, that would be good. Check with Heads when these are happening.

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

LC updated from S&C meeting.

LC has sent notes which all Governors should have received. Did Ofsted preparation day practice. Jo Carter (JC) and LC did role play for Ofsted answers. Not a masterclass but an indication of what might come up and what answers you could give. This is on the shared drive but will get a proper link to send over. Talked about the role of safeguarding governor, should there be one for each school or each hub? Will probably move away from this as Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If anyone feels uncomfortable about this please let LC know. Giving responsibility to one individual is a big task for that individual to take on. Also runs the risk of making it siloed to one person but it should be part of the culture of the school and all involved in it.

The Totnes Hub raised concerns over music provision across the schools. LC would like to hear from any governors about the provision in their schools.

JG – personally music provision appears good at Moretonhampstead. They have piano lessons and a school choir, who recently went on a tour too. Andrew Downton teaches music too. AW said there was music curriculum in place. Music Hub provided multicultural instruments. They also did an inset day at Moretonhampstead for all Trust staff.

PB said he had just been watching the Ilstington children signing carols outside the shop to parents and grandparents and the community. PB will raise it when we next have a meeting. How does one get Andrew Downton? AW explained that schools budgeted for music teachers.. DS – we use somebody else and just got Music Mark. Kate Wellings (KW) – they also have drum teaching and have a good provision at Moretonhampstead. Good guitar teacher.

CR - you need to separate the music curriculum and peripatetic teachers. They are different.

EZ – She can't comment on Bearnese.

DT – the music lead at Bearnese is run by Helena Malpas (teacher). Bearnese has just obtained Music Mark. Helena went to the Moretonhampstead inset. Got equipment from the Music Hub. Use Charanga (an online programme) too as part of music curriculum. This is paid for through Devon music funding. All schools have access to this. S&C mentioned about G&T so LC will make sure she has understood correctly what is happening (as noted above).

Other topics covered at S&C: staff wellbeing, the Trust response to Covid including an update from Nicky Dunford and steps put in place. Nicky also updated on schools joining the Academy. There is a funding bid in to grow the Central team. Andy Tranter (H&S officer) resigned. LC would like to hear the impact on that, do we need to feedback this is proving problematic?

DS & DT reported that toolboxes live in the back of their cars and come out regularly! Costing more as need to get contractors to do things that Andy used to do. AW has been cleaning toilets and getting involved in sorting school out. Moretonhampstead can't get a cleaner, although not for the want of trying. Matt and Nicky have been chasing companies, advertising on FB, but nobody wants to do it. They also advertised for a TA role and had no applications.

LC reported that there are new Trustees pending, two vacancies being filled, one a school improvement person. Applications strong. Supportive link through the S&C committee.

At the Local Board Working Party, there was a talk through SIMS and PowerBI. Very interesting to see how that worked and how much granular detail can be provided. This has put a lot of information at Head's fingertips so Governors should feel happy to ask informed questions about what is coming up. Specific briefing which happened in the working party group was recorded so LC will circulate.

### 1.4 Governor training

Governor training – safeguarding mop up 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 with AW. If not L2 trained then 2pm or 7pm via Teams. Email AW and she will do invitations after Christmas.

Any training requests Governors want? Nothing requested.

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

2.1. Safeguarding – nothing extra raised

2.2. SEND – nothing to raise. SEND will be focus next term, so can do a deep dive on what is in place.

2.3. Sports Premium grant, Pupil Premium grants

Sports or PP grant – no concerns. Hennock doing Rudolph Run tomorrow.

2.4. Health & Safety/Risk Assessments

H&S risk assessments. DT issues about trying to secure the perimeter. Looking at security grant currently through RPA/DfE. Awaiting 3<sup>rd</sup> quote to send off and see if we get anything. Perimeter secure but more CCTV and lighting needed. Bearnas has been identified as a high risk area.

Hennock also looking to secure the front more successfully. Don't have keypad gate. Would like to have this in place.

AW left the meeting.

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

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

Personnel – wellbeing. How can we support staff, what is the mood, what needs to be done?

LC asked CR as the only staff governor to feedback. CR happy to talk but only my view. Generally at Widecombe the challenges have been illness, children's illness, anxiety around people being ill. As a staff people are utterly exhausted. Day to day situation is you can't let up, it just continues. Everyone pulls together and that makes it ok.

Wellbeing has been talked about all the time and staff support each other. It has been very challenging.

Maintaining that positivity and keeping everyone going.

Teachers found it hard to get the message that they would not get a pay rise this year. You accept you love the job, do it well but teachers found it quite deflating. They got a "well done" but no recognition in terms of pay. They support each other and everyone is in a positive place. LC asked if there was a better way of capturing this feedback/more routes to raise concerns. CR said the Trust have put support in place and staff probably rely on each other. CR reiterated that this was just her experience. You support each other and step up and then support and step up and this keeps on going. Teachers put that pressure on themselves to do their very best and want children to achieve. In terms of how you address it as Governors, you just need to be aware of it. On a practical level the pay aspect was difficult to take. It's understood that those decisions are made taking account of a whole range of factors, but still hard to take. Felt difficult for people to accept.

PB – am I right in thinking that teachers' pay is decided nationally? CR – my understanding is that the pay rise awarded by Government and then Trust then decide whether to implement it. Awards not funded so Trust would have to find the money from each school's budget.

DT – I would echo what CR said. Tough term and everyone works as a team, picks each other up and drags each other along. Had staff illnesses, had to move staff around, people taking on extra responsibility but there is a limit to what everyone can do. Everyone is exhausted as we go forward. Staff have concerns around illness over Christmas and having their Christmas ruined. Staff have done everything they can for two years.

PB – are the very understandable feelings you are articulating Covid-specific or part of a broader situation regarding teachers and education? If in next three to four years we find better ways to deal with Covid, will pressure reduce or is this something that will go on and on?

DT said it was linked at present to Covid. Need to close the gaps as soon as possible, but when you think about it, it is going to take time to close children's gaps. Went on children's recovery first, but definite link between the two. Want children to get life chances and do well but put pressure on ourselves. Changes in Ofsted etc, pressures always be there. Correlation between the two.

CR definitely intertwined and linked together. Can't predict what will happen. External pressures too, Ofsted expectations. You try and meet those challenges. External pressures within families and in society at present.

DT – part comes from the unknown, don't know what next term looks like. Staff already beginning to worry about the uncertainty.

JG – queries the teacher payrise. Is this just the Link who have not raised salaries or is it national? LC – there is a remuneration committee that sits at Trustee level. Local committee have no impact. They make final decision.

JG – think this is really poor with everything teachers have been done. LC – will pass this feedback back to S&C. LC asked CR what she does with people coming to her saying how unhappy they are? CR said that the reaction she saw is difficult when everyone is giving everything. People don't teach for the money. Probably because it is such a challenging year.

PB – made the point that this decision is taken at Trustee level, do they consult with the Unions? Do Unions talk to Link teachers? This seems to be the obvious role of the Union? Are teachers in the Unions? CR - you can raise it with the Union, and in the past teachers have gone on strike. This is a national picture, nurses not had pay rise either, it is one of those additional pressures. A lot of people are not receiving pay rises. I am just one voice from across the academy reflecting how our teaching staff felt. There are many many layers to these decisions, I understand that and that budgets are allocated in different ways.

LC said this is relevant. Can't have a conversation around wellbeing if we can't feed back this kind of feeling. This is another piece of the puzzle.

PB – Ilsington struggling to replace their administrator who started in September, but has resigned and leaves on 17<sup>th</sup> December. An advert is out and interviews will hopefully be held during the first week of term.

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

Parents - JG asked as a new Governor 'what is the sort of mechanism for parents sharing views with Governors'? LC – this is agreed at school level. Best practice is to ensure that other parents know who Governors are. So, for example, contribute to newsletters, have governors pictures etc up in school. Note that we need to be clear around what we can action – our focus is on teaching and learning. In person Hennock has held coffee mornings, etc, to bring people in. Get parents in and gather at ground level what feedback is.

EZ – starting Mini Police programme at Bearnas which is great. EZ instigated this. DT reported that the Police contacted Bearnas and this is starting after Christmas. PC Steve has been in to see the Y4 and Y5 children and talked to them about taking responsibility within their communities. Children come up with a project they want to do within the community. They learn about anti social behaviour and other topics. During the last assembly they will bring in a specialist team as a treat for the children. Children all had to apply for it and explain why they want to be part of the Mini Police. DT also mentioned that 46 hampers going out to our FSM/PP/vulnerable families, part of the HAF fund. All schools got this funding - £100 for each pupil. Each school has done something different. Bearnas are doing £15 cinema voucher, £30 Lemon Jelli voucher and a £55 hamper. The Salvation Army had organised presents and they have used the Household Support Fund for food and heating for some families and hampers from HITS and THAT. Lots happening at Bearnas to make sure our families are covered over Christmas.

Hennock – Rudolph Run, PTFA really active. Always been involved with school but there is a new Chair and she is really taking it and running with it. Wreath making raised nearly £1000. The PTFA Chairs are in contact around the Trust.

Next meeting Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022. LC will send notes in the New Year.

Meeting closed at 7:00pm