

**Minutes of the first joint Academy Committee Board Meeting  
held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 5.15pm at Bracken Lane Academy**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Governor category</b>	<b>Absence</b>
Mr Alastair Murray	AM	Appointed governor	
Mrs Amanda Palfreyman	AP	Staff governor	
Mrs Christina Wyles	CW	Appointed governor	
Mrs Elizabeth Farrar	EF	Appointed governor	
Mrs Fiona Simpson – <b>Vice Chair of Governors</b>	FS	Appointed governor	A
Mrs Jane Gawthorpe	JS	Appointed governor	
Ms Morag Malcolm – <b>Chair of Governors</b>	MM	Parent governor	
Miss Natalie Ward	NW	Staff governor	
Mrs Rebecca Marshall	RM	Appointed governor	
Mr Simon Baker	SB	Parent governor	A
Ms Siobhan Willows	SIW	Parent governor	

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Absence</b>
Mr Gareth Letton	GL	Executive Principal	
Mrs Helen Cawkill	HC	Principal for Bracken Lane	
Mrs Rebecca Hurley	RH	Principal for Thrumpton	
Mrs Rhianne Chambers	RC	Clerk & Advisor	
Mrs Tracy Blacknell	TB	Vice Principal for BLPA&THPA	

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/when</b>
<b>AC/01/2122</b>	<p><b>Governance Strategy and Scheme of Delegation / Terms of Reference 21/22.</b></p> <p>Mr Letton shared the Scheme of Delegation on the screen and governors were reminded that governance within the Trust is split into 3 areas of responsibility – trustees, local academy committees and the CEO / accounting officer. Ultimately the trustees are answerable for any activities but the local academy committees are responsible for any delegated tasks. The CEO is also responsible for other areas of governance but can also delegate within the organisation.</p> <p>There are 4 key governance priorities which are always embedded into the agendas these are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.</li> <li>2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.</li> <li>3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.</li> <li>4. Engagement with stakeholders; parents/carers, staff and students and wider community.</li> </ol>	



	<p>Governors were made aware that moving forward, agendas will be much more focussed on each individual academy ensuring it suits the need.</p> <p>Mr Letton ran through the tasks of which the academy committee governors are responsible for including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To support and challenge the academy on behalf of the trustees in ensuring the AIP is going to plan.</li> <li>- The importance of holding the senior leaders to account to ensure all children are receiving a quality of education that enables them to be the best they can. Ensuring governors are abreast of information for SEN, disabled, black &amp; ethnic minority and the children with English as an additional language.</li> <li>- The importance of link governors who report back to the committee.</li> <li>- Although trustees get the final say on the finance, governors have the responsibility to challenge the academy on ensuring they are getting value for money and ensuring the money spent is in the best interest of the children.</li> </ul> <p>Governors were also advised that they are advised to provide the Trust board with a view of community and to highlight any local issues. The report to trustees is the best way to do this as well as highlighting any successes.</p> <p>There were no questions from the governors on the Scheme of Delegation but Mr Letton advised he was always happy to answer any questions if anyone had one.</p>	
<b>AC/02/2122</b>	<p><b>Local response following central training - Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The Chair reminded all governors to watch the safeguarding training if they were unable to attend, before asking the safeguarding link governors to provide an update.</p> <p>Mrs Marshall explained that it had been a good update with a strong focus on the Covid fallout and what priorities might be ahead of an Ofsted visit. There was also a focus on any emerging trends including online behaviours <b>before asking</b> whether the academies are seeing any trends when using My Concern as a reporting tool. Mrs Hurley confirmed that online behaviour is an increasing concern as children are spending much longer online and can access more than before. There are also challenges around WhatsApp and social media platforms as although the children may not be watching certain TV series, they are picking it up through TikTok and Youtube. The academies continue to be vigilant and continue to communicate with parents. Mrs Palfreyman added that it is concerning the number of children going to bed with tablets at night. Mrs Hurley advised governors that the academy receive guidance from National Online Safety when new trends come out which is then shared with staff and parents via the weekly newsletter.</p>	



	<p>Mrs Wyles added that she had recently spoken with a councillor from Track &amp; Trace Sheffield who highlighted there are several parents who are worried with the amount of time children are spending online and not knowing how to remove devices. Since the Covid outbreak there are also high numbers of children who do not want to leave the house due to being scared and anxious. Ms Malcolm added that a lot of Yr6's carry phones which is where a lot of bullying occurs even though you need to be 12 to have WhatsApp. Mrs Cawkill advised that the academy do have upfront conversations with parents if there is an awareness that they are accessing sites they shouldn't as well as having meetings with parents. <b>The governors questioned</b> if the academy offer lessons on online safety and awareness to which both Principals confirmed they did as well as making sure they are clear on the difference between the real world and the online world.</p> <p><b>The governors highlighted</b> a big focus within the Trust on monitoring trends and using tools like My Concern to ensure academies can quickly tackle changes and trends <b>before asking</b> if it easy for governors to check. Mrs Hurley confirmed there is a facility to do so but with being primaries the DSL and DDSL tend to pick up on trends easier than in secondaries. <b>The chair questioned</b> if communication between staff has decreased due to Covid especially around reporting on My Concern to which Mrs Cawkill explained that staff are communicating more as My Concern has been a way to log everything. <b>The chair further asked</b> if this included minor injuries like bruises to which Mrs Cawkill confirmed that everything gets logged. Mrs Wyles confirmed this was a case from both a safeguarding link governor and parent point of view.</p> <p><b>The governors queried</b> if there was an opportunity for a school event for parents to come and get educated on the sites. Mrs Cawkill confirmed that the academy does offer to help with parental settings and have offered an event before but no one turned up. This will continue to be pushed in the best interest of the children.</p>	
<p><b>AC/03/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies had been received in advance from Mrs Simpson due to personal factors. No apologies were received for Mr Baker, Clerk to follow up.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p><b>AC/04/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Declaration of interest</b> There were no declarations of interest, or any changes from the start of the year, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda.</p> <p>Governors were reminded to complete both the Declaration of Interest and the Code of Conduct for the 21/22 academic year.</p>	<p><b>Governors</b></p>
<p><b>AC/05/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the last Academy committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b> The minutes of the meetings, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<p><b>AC/06/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising</b> To note there were no matters arising from the previous minutes.</p>	



AC/07/2122	<p><b>Principal's report.</b> Governors were sent the ERM report and Principal's report in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>AIP</b> Mrs Hurley advised the governors that the AIPs for both BLPA and THPA look very similar and both links strongly to the PP plan. Thrumpton's key areas of focus are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oracy and communication to ensure children can express themselves clearly. Governors were made aware that children entering nursery are mostly below expected so there is a focus to ensure they have sentence stems as well as the confidence to articulate their thinking before going to reception.</li> <li>2. To offer a good SEND offer for children with special needs. The academy wants to improve further on the scaffolding as well as the support and intervention for those who may not have 1-1 or funded hours. In Thrumpton, 50% of the SEND children are also PP so there is a close link.</li> <li>3. Curriculum implementation which follows on from the work the academy has done on the curriculum development. The academy needs to ensure they implement in each classroom in the best way. Children tend to lack experiences beyond their locality which impacts their knowledge of a wide range of aspects. It was noted that this is being linked in with the PP strategy.</li> </ol> <p><b>The chair asked</b> how the academy are finding extra staff to implement more SEND help, to which Mrs Hurley explained it is more around upskilling the staff that the academy have. There is a large focus on making sure it is clear what each child needs to thrive and investigating strategies that could be put into place to help them achieve. <b>The chair further asked</b> if this meant more work for the staff involved. It was noted that it is more around the quality of teaching in supporting the children. Staff often feel demoralised if they do not feel like they are meeting the needs of all the children. Mrs Gawthorpe added that it can be beneficial in upskilling the staff on early identification so intervention strategies can be put into place earlier. Mrs Hurley explained that there is always a desire to look at the children individually rather than a whole class. A child may not always need academic support, but they may require social, emotional, and mental health support which then helps them to thrive in class. Mrs Cawkill agreed and added that it is often about identifying the actual problem rather than the perceived problem.</p> <p><b>The staff governor noted</b> that both academies have SEND as an objective within the AIP, however the current SENDco is split between the two schools. <b>It was then questioned</b> that from looking at the figures including the number of parents and staff needing her support, does she have capacity to offer the quality support to fulfil both AIPs when she is a teacher as well. <b>It was also asked</b> how her time is split. Mrs Cawkill confirmed that the SENDco is based at THPA and goes to BLPA one day a week and the provision is managed strategically by this lead. BLPA have an inclusion manager who is on site each day. Governors were informed that</p>	
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	<p>to be a named SENDco you must be a teacher but you can delegate responsibilities and that there is also a family support worker at THPA to help but it is a challenge. It was noted that the academies are currently trying to both future proof and succession plan on how the role will look when the inclusion manager retires in a couple of years. The staff governor added that it is a lot of work for one person to do, especially as the number of children with special educational needs continues to rise.</p> <p>Governors were highlighted to the structure across the two academies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helen Crampton – SENDco based at THPA and classroom based. Helen mostly does the data and oversees the SEND provision.</li> <li>- Helen Skelton – Inclusion manager based at BLPA and not in a classroom. Helen has a strategic role rather than being hands on and often does the bids.</li> <li>- Debbie Morton – Family support advisor based at THPA, and not in classroom so fully dedicated to family support. Just a case of working out. Helen Skelton is a strategic one and not hands on.</li> </ul> <p>Mr Letton added that it is important to remember that SENDco’s are not responsible for the education, this is still the class teacher. The SENDco role is more of an advisory and supporting role however there is difficulty with succession planning, as it is not a desirable role.</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill advised governors that the 3 key areas of focus for BLPA are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Oracy and language acquisition</li> <li>2. SEND</li> <li>3. Curriculum with focus on developing the curriculum learning.</li> </ol> <p><b>Safeguarding</b> Governors were made aware of the following acronyms. SO – Supervision order YC – Young carer LAC – Looked after child. There were no further questions from governors on safeguarding following the discussion in agenda item AC/02/2122</p> <p><b>Statutory compliance, local offer, information report, annual review inc. all vulnerable groups.</b> Both Principal’s confirmed that all statutory compliance is up to date and both websites have all the correct reports on.</p> <p><b>Behaviour and attendance</b> Mrs Hurley advised that the attendance figures within the Principal report was based on figures up to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September and is now sitting at 94% due to an increase in Covid as well as the flu &amp; sickness bug. <b>The governors questioned</b> the persistent absence, to which it was confirmed that 8.73% of students had had 90% attendance or less. The academies do investigate the triggers for PA including any trends on certain days as well as the reasons behind unexplained absences.</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill confirmed that attendance at BLPA was slightly lower this week due to cold, sickness and Covid however it is still sitting at 96%.</p>	
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Mr Letton advised that the national average in attendance at primaries was 92% so both academies do have good attendance rates even though they are lower than usual. Mrs Cawkill also confirmed that there are no behaviour issues within the academy and the children are very settled.

**Identified academy risks inc. education, Health & Safety, Staff & Pupil wellbeing, GDPR, complaints.**

Mrs Hurley advised governors that a current risk for THPA is the nursery numbers which are lower than anticipated. There had been a healthy waiting list but there have been more families decline places than previously and opting to keep children at home. It is believed to be a Covid related impact with parents having more flexible working patterns but it is something the academy are keeping an eye on. Governors were made aware of another risk for Thrumpton, that a good Teacher is due to go on maternity leave in January so the academy want to ensure they get the recruitment right. The academy is hoping to make an appointment by October half term.

Mrs Cawkill advised governors that the nursery numbers for BLPA are as expected for the Autumn term. It was added that the succession for the SENDco is not classed as a risk as there is 2 years for this plan to be confirmed.

**SEF**

Governors were advised that the SEF shows why both academies consider to be a good school and are constantly being tweaked to reflect this. There were no questions from the governors on the SEF.

**Targets for 2022.**

Mrs Hurley confirmed that the academy will be happy if targets are achieved. **The governors asked** if the targets are achieved is there an indication where the academy will sit nationally, to which it was confirmed that it would be hard to know but based on previous years then will be roughly around national. Mrs Blacknell confirmed the academy have submitted their data to the LA, along with 115 other schools, to see how the academies fit locally. Mr Letton added that the academies are due to get the IDSR back but this will not include the KS2 league tables in 2022.

Mrs Cawkill added that greater depth at BLPA is looking strong for yr2 and yr6 with the baseline deadline before half term. **The Chair questioned** if the committee would receive these results with Mrs Cawkill confirming that the reports are based on individual children and are put away until they hit Yr6 so that the academy can see if they have made the progress required.

**The Chair queried** if both Principals are confident on the figures and if their targets are ambitious or realistic. Mrs Cawkill advised the figures are ambitious due to the 18 months of lockdown. There are some children that need focussed interventions. Governors were made aware that if BLPA received 77% combined score this will be a 13% increase from 2019.



	<p><b>The governors asked</b> if the academies still qualify for any Covid catch up funds. It was advised there is support available but there are strict stipulations on how the funding can be used so the academies are going to investigate this.</p> <p><b>The governors queried</b> if BLPA are still running the extra nurture group which Mrs Cawkill confirmed this group was running 3 times a week as part of the curriculum.</p>	
AC/08/2122	<p><b>Admissions 2023/24 local appendix approval (referral to Trustees if changes to be made &amp; consultation proposals if required).</b> Governors received the 23/24 admissions policy in advance of the meeting. It was noted that there is now an overarching Trust policy which is much better so this is now just a local appendix confirming the oversubscription criteria and the feeder school. Both schools have made no changes from the 22/23 policies. Governors approved the policies. Principals to send to NCC for any feedback.</p>	HC / RH
AC/09/2122	<p><b>Any academy specific items including policy appendix ratification, audits, and Cat C trip approval</b> There were no Cat C trips to be approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p><b>BLPA – Anti-Bullying, Attendance, Behaviour, Sex &amp; Relationships, Safeguarding, EVC, Online Safety</b> The above appendices were updated by the Bracken Lane throughout September 2021 and are available on the Academy website. Governors were informed of these updates on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 and were all ratified in the governor meeting.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>THPA – Homework, Sex &amp; Relationships, Safeguarding, Single Equality, Uniform</b> The above appendices were updated by the Thrumpton throughout September 2021 and are available on the Academy website. Governors were informed of these updates on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 and were all ratified in the governor meeting.</p> </li> <li> <p><b>Updated Admissions policy for both academies for 21/22 and 22/23.</b> Governors were advised that the Admissions policies for 21/22 and 22/23 for both academies had been updated following the terminology surrounding LAC being updated in the Schools Admissions Code 2021. Governors approved these changes.</p> </li> </ul> <p><b>Other policy updates (Pay &amp; Reward, Debt Recovery, Whistleblowing and Staff Grievance)</b> The above Diverse Academies policies were updated by the Trust on the 28th of September and are available on the Trust website. Governors were informed of these updates on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021.</p>	
AC/10/2122	<p><b>Link governors</b></p>	



	<p>Mr Murray advised he is planning on doing a H&amp;S link governor visit to both BLPA and THPA. Clerk advised Mr Baker had recently been into THPA so a visit to BLPA would be appreciated.</p> <p>Governors were advised that link governors can be done back in the academies and it was agreed that any visits are to be recorded and documents to be sent to the Clerk to keep a record. Clerk to resend visit form. The Principal's requested that governors complete link visits to both schools at once so any feedback can be given in the next governor meeting. Governors agreed.</p> <p>The safeguarding link governors were also made aware that the NCC audits will need to be completed in the next half term.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>CW / RM</b></p>
<b>AC/11/2122</b>	<p><b>Complete report to Trustees</b></p> <p>- Beneficial to understand roles of trustees and LAC. Good refresher.</p>	
<b>AC/12/2122</b>	<p><b>Determination of Confidentiality</b></p> <p><b>Equalities Act consideration</b></p> <p>AC members considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no confidential items discussed</li> <li>• There had been no Equalities Act implications</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b></p> <p>Academy Committee meeting Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 at 5.15pm</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18.57pm</p>	

Signed by Chair:

Date: