

**Minutes of the joint Academy Committee Board Meeting
held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 5.15pm at Thrumpton Primary Academy**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mr A Murray	AMu	Appointed governor	A
Mrs C Wyles	CW	Appointed governor	
Dr E Farrar	EF	Appointed governor	
Mrs F Simpson – Vice chair	FS	Appointed governor	
Mrs J Gawthorpe	JS	Appointed governor	
Ms M Malcolm	MM	Parent governor	
Mrs S Willows	SW	Parent governor	A
Mrs K Cleary	KC	Appointed governor	
Mr M Wintle	MW	Appointed governor	

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs L Spacey	LS	Executive Principal	
Mrs H Cawkill	HC	Principal for Bracken Lane	
Mrs S Kahler	SK	Principal for Thrumpton	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	
Mr Andy Michael	AMi	Governor Applicant - <i>Observing</i>	

Quorum number	5	Governor's present	7
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/36/2425	<p>Introductions The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked all attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of Mr Michael who has applied to become an appointed governor and has attended the meeting to observe.</p> <p>Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mrs Willows, and these were accepted by the committee. No apologies had been received from Mr Murray and the governance professional will follow up with him. [Action]</p>	NB 31/03/25
AC/37/2425	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda.</p> <p>The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Governors confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.</p>	

AC/38/2425	<p>Trust Training</p> <p>- Suspensions and exclusions training event / recording</p> <p>The Governance Professional told the committee that a training session had been delivered on the suspensions and exclusions process for governors who might be interested in supporting with governor discipline panel meetings. The governance professional explained that governors are encouraged to consider supporting other academies within the trust with panels, if it something that they have the time to assist with and if they feel they could add value.</p> <p>- Governance Conference 12th June 2025 at HQ</p> <p>The Governance professional shared the agenda for the governance conference with the committee and encouraged attendance.</p> <p><u>Governors asked</u> if Diverse Academies governors were able to access training at south Normanton this Friday 21st. the governance professional was not aware of the training but agreed to find out. [Action]</p>	<p>NB 31/03/25</p>
AC/39/2425	<p>Governance Report</p> <p>The governance professional reminded all governors to complete any outstanding mandatory training and to confirm when it has been completed. [Action]</p> <p>The governance professional referred to the governance action plan and asked all governors to review the updates. All governors were reminded to complete their governor pen pictures for the website. [Action]</p> <p>The governance professional reminded all governors to arrange and complete link visits and to share reports and noted that both Mr Wintle and Mrs Gawthorpe had completed visits with reports available to review on the portal.</p> <p>The chair invited Mr Wintle and Mrs Gawthorpe to share feedback from their recent visits with the rest of the committee.</p> <p>Mrs Gawthorpe told the committee that she had visited Bracken Lane in January. She'd had a fantastic visit looking at how provision maps translate to the classroom. Children were confident to share their knowledge and to talk to her. Work correlated with the provision map. Learning was adapted to enable access and included a writing toolkit at the top of the page to meet each child's needs and enable independence. She shared that she had seen the academy embracing electronics and other tools to help children with spelling and Mathletics. She noted that there are good partnerships with speech and language therapists and finished by saying that she is looking forward to seeing the training on sensory circuits to support children to help them to move from one transition space to another space and she is looking forward to visiting Thrumpton next term.</p> <p>Mr Wintle told the committee that he has completed two visits at Bracken Lane since the last committee meeting and shared that both were excellent.</p>	<p>AM /SW 20/05/25</p> <p>Govs 07/05/25</p>

He told the committee that he had accompanied early years on a trip to Retford library and said that it was great. Safeguarding was effective and all children behaved exceptionally. Relationships were very good between children and adults and the children were confident and enjoying what they were doing. The library was well prepared for the children which helped them enjoy the visit.

Mr Wintle's second visit at Bracken Lane was to hear some children read, he heard children read from a variety of ability levels and told the committee that their attitudes to learning was very strong, adding that most of the children tried hard and used their phonics. Mr Wintle asked about the use of home school diaries for recording when children have read, and Mrs Cawkill said that all children use diaries, but they aren't shared with governors. Governors shared that having attended celebration assemblies, children receive certificates for reading regularly. **Governors asked Mr Wintle** if it was clear that the children understood what they were reading and Mr Wintle said that they did. **The governors wondered** whether the lower ability pupils should be heard to read every day **and asked** if parents come in to read with children. Mrs Cawkill said that reading parents are coming in and are receiving some training via an induction plan to ensure they get the best out of it but added that they don't write in diaries for data protection reasons. **The governors then asked** what is expected in terms of reading at home. Mrs Cawkill said that children are expected to read at home at least 3 times per week but some children don't have the opportunity to do this at home for a number of reasons and are not penalised for it. **The governors questioned whether** the guide used to train parents coming into school is shared with all parents. Mrs Cawkill said that the guide is adapted for school-based adults. **The governors asked** if all children are given a book bag. Mrs Cawkill said that all children are given a book bag from reception age.

Mrs Spacey explained that some children really struggle with the daily slog of reading, and it is important that the next stage of the journey looks at how to engage all learners. Some children need a different approach to ensure that they develop the same level of passion for reading. Mrs Cawkill added that the library is now in place at Bracken Lane and all children get the opportunity to go and find a book.

Mrs Cawkill said that [fresh start](#) gives the older readers the opportunity to get books aimed at their age group.

Mrs Spacey expressed to the governors that the LINK role isn't about making judgements about the schools explaining that both Mr Wintle and Mrs Gawthorpe come from educational backgrounds which enables them to share their feedback from an educational perspective, but this shouldn't deter other governors from making visits to the school. Mr Wintle agreed and said that whilst governors might not be able to comment on quality of teaching they can talk to the children and feedback on the behaviour and relationships with the staff for example.

	<p>Mrs Malcolm told the committee that she had attended a year 6 trip to Perlethorpe as part of the World War II topic and the behaviour was excellent.</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill and Mrs Kahler told governors that they are always welcome to come along on the trips.</p>	
AC/40/2425	<p>Minutes of the last Academy committee meeting on 22nd January 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the vice chair.</p>	
AC/41/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>AC/24/2425 all governors to consider whether they might be interested in taking the role of chair of governors. Carried forward</p> <p>AC/26/2425 NB to update the cyber security training records for TW and MM complete</p> <p>AC/27/2425 All Governors to review the governance action plan and provide the NB with their bio / pen portrait for the website. Carried forward</p>	<p>Govs 07/04/25</p> <p>Govs 07/04/25</p>
AC/42/2425	<p>Bracken Lane Principals Report</p> <p>AIR summary</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill explained that the Academy Improvement Review is not yet available but will be shared before the next meeting.</p> <p>SEND – in a nutshell</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill told the committee that Bracken Lane is under national average levels for SEND and asked if there were any questions on the document shared. No questions were asked.</p> <p>Attendance Summary report</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill shared the department for education attendance summary report on screen and explained that the report is for the first spring half term, up to 18th Feb. The report is cumulative for the year, and it is hoped that the percentage will be higher by the end of the year. Attendance figures for Bracken Lane are above the national average and persistent absence is below which is positive. However, the national average figures do not take into account the context of the schools. Mrs Spacey added that the DfE are not comparing schools against national averages anymore and will be looking at averages based on schools with a similar context. <u>The governors wondered</u> if it might be worth having a Link Governor to focus on attendance. Mrs Spacey said that principals report and agendas for Local Academy Committees always cover attendance to ensure it is discussed regularly with governors. Mrs Wyles confirmed that as Safeguarding governor, she has been asked to discuss poor attendance as a safeguarding issue, and it is formally acknowledged as such. Academies are working with families to see what can be done to overcome this. Governors were keen to ensure that pupil premium is regularly reviewed as a key measure when reviewing attendance data.</p>	

Mrs Spacey told governors that there is a robust response to attendance which is driven by the school. Attendance is discussed at executive leadership meetings and all attendance leads in schools feed into the discussions. **Governors asked** if the schools have parent liaison officers and Mrs Spacey confirmed that family support advisors all feed into this. **Governors further asked** if there is focus on children being on time and ready to learn. Mrs Spacey confirmed that that this is taking a significant focus, and more clarity is being put around the impact of poor attendance on life earnings, careers and prospects etc. Mrs Cawkill added that arriving late has an impact if it occurs regularly and more is being done to demonstrate this.

Autumn term evaluation of AIP

Mrs Cawkill shared the Academy Improvement Plan on screen and told the committee that most of the work this term has been around the Personal Development strategy. This will be finished by Easter and will be shared at the next committee meeting. A new PSHE curriculum has been launched using a resource called jigsaw which forms the basis of the PSHE curriculum. The Voice 21 programme is going well and to receive feedback from two governors that children are speaking confidently to visitors is very positive.

Safeguarding

Mrs Cawkill confirmed that the safeguarding template was shared as part of the principals' report and told governors that a suspension was issued last week which occurred after the report had been shared.

Risk report

Mrs Cawkill told the committee that the risk report has been updated as a result of changes to the building.

Stakeholders

Feedback from the recent parents evening was very good with positive comments and much appreciation from parents for the work that has been done to the building. **Governors commented** on how impressive the new library is **and then asked** if behaviour has improved now that there is more room. Mrs Cawkill said the issue was more around organisation due to lack of space such as coats and bags on the floor and children bumping into one another and said that those issues have gone. Mrs Spacey said that the new building enables the school to meet the needs of the children that need time out or a quiet space.

Thrumpton Principals Report

ERM Report

Mrs Kahler explained that the Educational Review Meeting report is not yet available but will be shared before the next meeting.

	<p>SEND – in a nutshell</p> <p>Mrs Kahler explained that due to administration issues, she had been unable to share the SEND in a nutshell document but that it is now available, and the governance professional will share it with all governors following the meeting. [Action]</p> <p>Attendance Summary report</p> <p>Mrs Kahler told governors that attendance at Thrumpton is an area that is now a priority. Persistent Absence is far greater than Bracken Lane and a rigorous plan has been put in place. Mrs Kahler went on to say that she has come in with a fresh pair of eyes. The strategy is aligned with the trust but with a different emphasis on the rigor. Mrs Spacey added that this isn't a new trend and attendance at Thrumpton has been declining for about 18 months to 2 years and Mrs Kahler has been spending a lot of time on this. Governors asked whether attendance was in line with comparative schools and Mrs Kahler said that the Persistent Absence level is higher and doesn't really reflect the work that is being done. She went on to tell governors that the February inset day was used as an opportunity to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities to put attendance back as a team responsibility and to ensure that the structures and philosophy is right. The trust wide processes are all there and staff at the academy need to ensure they are being used. The school will continue to pursue parents with penalty notices where needed but will also make day to day contact home.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> if there were particular blocks in the calendar affected by poor attendance. Mrs Kahler said holidays at the start of the year means that the academy starts at a poor position. There are also individuals that have random time off school. <u>The governors asked</u> if the action plan around attendance is being monitored. Mrs Kahler told the committee that all the right people, (inclusion team, teachers, parents, family support team, office admin, SENDCO etc.) are involved to ensure a joined-up approach and issues can be unpicked with forensic detail. She added that both family support advisors at Bracken Lane and Thrumpton work closely together. <u>Governors wanted to know</u> if attendance is visible in school. Mrs Kahler said that it is part of the plan and said there is a mixed view about making attendance more visible. It is a delicate issue as you don't want to make children feel bad about their attendance, so the focus must be more around being pleased and positive to see the children in school. <u>Governors then questioned</u> whether the attendance data for SEND children with medical needs considers time away for appointments etc. Mrs Spacey explained that the school specific data takes all of this into account but it cannot be reflected in the DfE figures.</p> <p><u>The governors asked</u> how often the action plan is being monitored. What's the timeline, how often is it being monitored. Mrs Kahler told the committee that some are reviewed daily, some weekly, some half termly and this is dependent upon the individual circumstances. Those children just under and just over the persistent absence threshold are also a focus to try and make the most difference for those children.</p>	<p>NB 31/03/25</p>
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	<p>Autumn term evaluation of AIP</p> <p>Mrs Kahler told the committee that she has altered the objectives based on her time as principal at Thrumpton. The first objective was around at the curriculum, and she has shifted the focus to SEND and the teaching of adaptive methods to support all children. Governors commended Mrs Kahler on this approach.</p> <p>With regards the oracy objective, in person whole school assemblies have increased and they are making good use of the microphone in assemblies enabling children to talk more and use sentence stems.</p> <p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Mrs Kahler said that there has been an increase in MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) referrals this term and there was a GDPR breach which has been logged appropriately.</p> <p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Mr Murray has been into both academies and completed a health and safety link visit.</p> <p>Mrs Kahler told the committee that she has just returned from a two day residential with year 4 to Rand Farm and shared that she found it to be a different offer to the usual residential trips, it was less adventurous and more about from farm to fork. The children had a wonderful time and allowed her to get to know the children in a more informal setting. Governors thanked Mrs Kahler for going on the trip with the children.</p>	
AC/43/2425	<p>How has the AC held senior leaders to account?</p> <p>Challenges from the governors have included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good challenge on Attendance, - Detailed discussion and challenge in Reading - Discussion around SEND 	
AC/44/2425	<p>How have the VMV of Trust / Equality been upheld?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust & Equality has been upheld. The academy committee members felt that there had been a respectful and positive discussion with all committee members involved in the discussions. 	
AC/45/2425	<p>Complete report to Trustees</p> <p>The report to trustees was completed and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The report to Trustees was completed and submitted with input from all members of the committee. 	
AC/46/2425	<p>Determination of Confidentiality</p> <p>Equalities Act consideration</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"> - There were no confidential discussions. - There had been no Equalities Act implications. 	

	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Academy Committee meeting Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 5.15pm at Bracken Lane.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:47</p>	

Signed by Chair: *Fiona Simpson* Date: 25th March 2025

Fiona Simpson, Vice Chair of Governors