

**Summary of discussions of the Local Academy Committee meeting
held on Wednesday 18th March at Thrumpton Primary Academy**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mr A Murray Chair	AMU	Appointed	
Mrs F Simpson Vice	FS	Appointed	
Mrs C Wyles	CW	Appointed	
Mrs J Gawthorpe	JG	Appointed	
Dr E Farrar	EF	Appointed	Teams
Mr M Wintle	MW	Appointed	
Mrs M Malcolm	MM	Appointed Parent	A
Mrs S Willows	SW	Appointed	
Mrs K Clearly	KC	Appointed Parent	
Mr A Michael	AMI	Appointed	AL*

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs H Cawkill	HC	Principal - Bracken Lane	
Mrs V Read	VR	Vice Principal – Bracken Lane	
Mrs L Spacey	LS	Executive Principal	A
Mrs E Kerr	EK	Teacher	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional (GP)	

Quorum	5	Governor's present	8
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*Arrived Late

Outstanding Actions Log

C	= Complete	CF	= Carried forward	I	= Incomplete (carried forward more than once)
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Agenda item	Meeting Ref	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline	Update	Status
AC/14/2526	2526 - 2	Contact governors individually regarding outstanding mandatory training.	NB	26/11/2025	Still outstanding for SW and KC. All reminded to complete ASAP.	I
AC/23/2526	2526 - 3	Contact KC and SW to ensure they are able to access information and ensure they are aware of future meeting dates.	NB	28/01/2026	emails sent to KC and SW - awaiting responses. No responses received however both were in attendance	C

AC/24/2526	2526 - 3	MW will be delivering a lecture to the PGCE students on 2nd Feb at Bishop Grossette University on Assessment For Learning. NB to check if there is a conflict of interest.	NB	28/01/2026	No conflicts - closed	C
AC/26/2526	2526 - 3	Invite EK to the next meeting to present on English and Voice 21	NB / HC	05/02/2026	EK attended and delivered an in depth training session	C
AC/27/2526	2526 - 3	Arrange H&S link meeting with Amu for both BL and TH	HC	05/02/2026		CF
AC/27/2526	2526 - 3	Confirm dates for Safeguarding link visit with CW	HC	05/02/2026	See new action AC/40/2526	C
AC/40/2526	2526 - 4	Schedule SEND Link visits before the next LAC meeting.	JG	13/05/2026		NEW
AC/40/2526	2526 - 4	Schedule Safeguarding Link visits before the next LAC meeting	CW	13/05/2026		NEW

Notes of meeting:

Blue text = academy committee governor check and challenge

Green text = academy committee governor decision-making / approval

Q = Question from Governors

A = Answer from senior leaders

Agenda item	Key points / Summary	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline
AC/37/2526	Apologies for absence - EF joined via Teams link. - AMI may be arriving late due to work commitments. - Apologies received and accepted from MM.			
AC/38/2526	Declaration of Interests No new declarations made.			

	No declarations in relation to items on the agenda.			
AC/39/2526	<p>Training / Presentation English and Voice 21 Ellie Kerr, Year 6 teacher and English Lead across both academies, introduced the session.</p> <p><u>Early Reading: EYFS Pre-reading & Pre-writing</u> HC explained the 10 elements of both approaches. Hand strength, dexterity and pencil grip are increasingly important as children now use iPads, phones, and remote controls more frequently.</p> <p><i>Q: Is it wrong that the government approach doesn't allow children to lie on the floor to write?</i> A: No, but staff must understand developmental stages and the wide age range within Reception. EYFS skills are revisited later in the journey where needed.</p> <p><u>Reading Approach Across the Academies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Texts are engaging and include traditional tales, as many pupils have limited exposure at home. - Read Write Inc (RWI) is used to teach phonics at the right level for each child. - When children finish RWI, fluency practice becomes the priority. - Each term includes one key text taught in depth. - Reciprocal reading has been used for years; last year the approach was strengthened and reading sessions revisited. <p><u>Weekly Reading Structure</u> Day 1: Vocabulary exploration, first read and fluency. Day 2: Further fluency, paired reading, vocabulary recap, retrieval practice, applying skills.</p>			

	<p>Day 3: Comprehension questions, by this stage children fully understand the text.</p> <p>Days 4 & 5: Exploration of additional texts.</p> <p>Both schools use the ELS library service, providing a wide range of resources.</p> <p><u>Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1:1 baseline assessment at the start of the year. - Star Reader (iPad-based) identifies reading age, tracks progress and highlights strategies for support. - Staff also listen to children read individually which is similar in principle to RWI. <p>BL are currently ahead of Thrumpton and using Fresh Start for older pupils still developing phonics. Fresh Start has enabled older children to access reading successfully.</p> <p>MW: Government is correct that all children should develop phonics-based reading.</p> <p>Q: <i>Are you introducing phonics in Nursery?</i></p> <p>A: Pre-phonics is taught; this is the teaching of readiness skills.</p> <p>Q: <i>What phonics system do you use (letter, sound, action)?</i></p> <p>A: RWI phonics.</p> <p>Q: <i>Do you work with parents? Some teach distorted sounds.</i></p> <p>A: Yes. QR codes are sent home so parents hear the correct sounds; phonics meetings are held early in the year. Early parental involvement is important.</p> <p><u>Phonics Teaching Quality</u></p>			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Phonics teaching is strong across both schools, this is reflected in outcomes (MW). - Trained TAs support phonics across KS2. - Groups are fluid and based on half-termly assessments. - Staff access RWI CPD to maintain high-quality practice. - Condensed sessions are provided for children needing additional support. <p>Q: How are in-depth study texts selected?</p> <p>A: Various schemes reviewed, pupil voice considered. Previously matched texts to topics, but this was less effective. Trust support and involvement in the EEF trial have offered further guidance.</p> <p>Q: How are more able readers stretched?</p> <p>A: Through fluent groups, targeted questioning, carefully chosen text extracts, and access to Trust resources (e.g., Pathway). Staff adapt questions if children struggle with the text so that learning continues without removing them from the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both academies promote reading for pleasure, exposing pupils to varied texts. - New teachers receive support to deliver reading effectively. <p>Writing</p> <p>Time has been spent reviewing and strengthening the writing curriculum to expose children to a wider range of writing styles. The Taught for Writing approach is used, where oral rehearsal helps children gain confidence and engage with texts. This is effective both in early stages and as pupils progress.</p> <p>Where appropriate, writing units link to high-quality texts from reading sessions. Units begin with oral rehearsal, exploring characters, marking up example texts,</p>			
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	<p>and understanding structure. Teachers then model the planning process so children develop independence.</p> <p>Grammar is embedded within each writing unit. Teaching is broken into manageable chunks, supported by <i>WAGOLLS</i> (“What A Good One Looks Like”), and pupils are given opportunities to edit, improve and showcase their work.</p> <p>Writing trackers, based on DfE expected standards, are used half-termly. They are progressive, ensuring children are not expected to meet every standard at once. This supports both staff and pupils in understanding next steps. Moderation happens within schools, across schools, across the Trust, and with partner schools. Moderation is supportive and ensures assessment judgements are accurate.</p> <p>Q: <i>What does standardisation look like? Is it a deep dive or collaborative?</i> A: Collaborative work across all classes, developing secure understanding of expected and greater-depth standards.</p> <p>Spelling Schools are reviewing how spelling is taught. A programme called Active Spelling (Years 2–6) is being explored. It aligns with the RWI phonics approach but does not rely on weekly spelling tests. The focus is ensuring spelling and grammar are applied consistently in children’s writing, not memorised for a test. The aim is to develop the craft of writing, choosing appropriate vocabulary, structures and grammar. In Year 1, foundational skills (sitting correctly, writing fluently, early composition skills) remain vital.</p> <p>Q: <i>Do you teach cursive writing?</i> A: Letter formation is taught first; both schools use the Nelson Handwriting scheme for joined-up writing.</p> <p>Q: <i>Which year group begins cursive?</i> A: When children are secure in letter formation so timing depends on individual readiness and motor skills.</p>			
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	<p>Q: How does assessment work when using online tools alongside paper books?</p> <p>A: Adjustments such as overlays or paper-based reading are used for children with dyslexia. Online tools are valuable, but teachers still assess reading and writing directly. Staff receive CPD from Pat Evans to ensure confidence and accuracy.</p> <p>Voice 21 (Oracy)</p> <p>The academies are now in their second year of the Voice 21 oracy programme (V21). EK joined in year 2.</p> <p>V21 helps children articulate their ideas clearly and speak confidently. Year 1 focused on building engagement and introducing oracy skills gradually. Discussion guidelines have been created and used across the curriculum.</p> <p>V21 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two in-depth CPD days - Ongoing network sessions and development days - “Listening walks” to see oracy in practice - Teaching children to listen as well as speak (e.g., nesting time, oracy framework) <p>The programme continues to develop, and staff will build further understanding of when to use specific strategies.</p> <p>HC shared that both academies achieved 100% engagement in Year 1 (target was 60%). The “Elevate” phase focuses on using the right oracy strategy at the right time (e.g., talk tokens). The programme offers strong value for money and is being embedded across all subjects.</p> <p>Q: How do we know RWI and V21 are the best packages?</p> <p>A: Decisions are research based; both programmes are well regarded and supported through QA, monitoring and assessment.</p> <p>Q: Do staff feel supported through CPD in English?</p>			
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	<p>A: Yes, all staff are supported.</p> <p>Q: Do children have spelling tests?</p> <p>A: No. Spelling is taught, checked and assessed through writing, rather than formal weekly tests.</p> <p>Governors thanked Ellie for attending the meeting and giving her presentation.</p>			
AC/40/2526	<p>Link governor visits and reports and agree visits for next term in relation to training held</p> <p>JG asked if she could begin scheduling SEND link visits again. HC confirmed that meetings with Helen Crampton would need to be arranged on either Thursdays or Fridays.</p> <p>[ACTION – JG] – schedule SEND link visits</p> <p>CW confirmed that she will schedule a Safeguarding link visit with HC.</p> <p>[ACTION – CW] – schedule Safeguarding link visits</p> <p>MW fed back from his visits to both schools’ parents evening having spoken with a number of parents that the quality of teaching was very high and at Thrumpton English was mentioned three times as a specific strength. Governors requested that this feedback be passed on to EK.</p> <p>Governors noted that teaching in both schools was very strong.</p>	<p>Schedule LINK Visits</p> <p>Schedule LINK visits</p>	<p>JG</p> <p>CW</p>	<p>13/05/26</p> <p>13/05/26</p>
AC/41/2526	<p>Update Governance Action plan</p> <p>The governance action plan was discussed and updated. Governors agreed that hearing from staff had been extremely valuable and agreed that for the next training session they would welcome a deeper discussion on Maths.</p>			

	There was some discussion about the white paper and it was confirmed that something will be delivered across all LACs at a later date as the message will be the same across the trust.			
AC/42/2526	<p>Complete report to Trustees The report to trustees was completed with input from all attendees.</p> <p>Response from last report Trustees acknowledge the governors' appreciation of the leadership team during a difficult period and join the LAC in sending best wishes to Sarah. We note the positive indicators across reading, attendance, and behaviour. We are pleased to hear that governors are attending parents evenings and would also welcome your feedback on any community insights gained from governors' attending the parents' evenings.</p>			
AC/43/2526	<p>Determine Confidentiality Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was agreed that there were no confidential items discussed - It was agreed that there had been no Equality Act implications. 			
AC/44/2526	<p>Next meeting Wednesday 20th May at 5:15 pm at Bracken Lane Primary Academy</p> <p>Meeting closed at 6:45pm</p>			

Signed by Chair: <i>Alastair Murray</i>	Date: 21.04.26
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