

**Minutes of the joint Academy Committee Board Meeting  
held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 5.15pm at Bracken Lane Primary Academy**

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Governor category</b>	<b>Absence</b>
Mr A Murray	AM	Appointed governor	
Mrs C Wyles	CW	Appointed governor	
Mrs E Farrar	EF	Appointed governor	A
Mrs F Simpson – Vice chair	FS	Appointed governor	
Mrs J Gawthorpe	JS	Appointed governor	
Ms M Malcolm	MM	Parent governor	A
Miss S Garnett – <b>Chair of Governors</b>	SG	Parent governor	A
Mrs S Willows	SW	Parent governor	
Mrs K Cleary	KC	Appointed governor	
Mr M Wintle	MW	Appointed governor	

<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Absence</b>
Mrs L Spacey	LS	Executive Principal	
Mrs H Cawkill	HC	Principal for Bracken Lane	
Mrs R Hurley	RH	Principal for Thrumpton	
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional	

Quorum number	5	Governor's present	7
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<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/when</b>
<b>AC/01/2425</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Miss Garnett (work commitments), Mrs Farrar (recovering from an injury) and Mrs Malcolm (childcare commitments) and these were accepted by the committee.</p> <p>Mrs Simpson, as vice chair, agreed to chair the meeting in Miss Garnett's absence.</p>	
<b>AC/02/2425</b>	<p><b>Governance Report</b> The governance professional (GP) explained the purpose and format of the governance report to the committee.</p> <p>The GP reminded all governors to complete the Declarations of Interest for 2024-2025 if they have not already done so <b>[AP-Govs]</b>.</p> <p>The GP reminded all governors to read and sign the Code of Conduct for 2024-2025 if they have not already done so <b>[AP-Govs]</b>.</p> <p>The GP explained the remaining sections of the governance report contained actions for governors to complete and asked all governors to review the document and complete necessary actions around training and housekeeping.</p>	<p><b>GOVS 06/11/2024</b></p> <p><b>GOVS 06/11/2024</b></p> <p><b>GOVS 06/11/2024</b></p>

	<p><b>Link governors</b></p> <p>All link roles currently assigned were discussed and it was agreed that they would remain the same. Mrs Cawkill suggested that it would be beneficial for both Bracken Lane and Thrumpton to have a link governor to focus on the <a href="#">Voice 21 project</a> around oracy. <i>Governors asked for more information</i> about the project and Mrs Cawkill explained that training has not yet been done but Voice 21 is a project designed to improve skills in oracy across the curriculum at an appropriate level. It has been trialled at The Wainwright Academy with huge success. This will be built into the AIP across the whole of both schools and will become a regular topic for discussion. The GP agreed to share a link to Voice 21 with governors following the meeting [AP-NB]. The GP will amend the school contact information within the Link Governor document [AP-NB].</p> <p><i>Governors were interested to know</i> why there appears to have been a delay bringing other schools on board after the success at Wainwright. Mrs Spacey explained that the initial focus on Wainwright was around specific the Principal working on Oracy as part of their masters. <i>The governors then asked</i> how it will be funded. Mrs Spacey said that it will be paid for by the schools from their budgets and the impact will help improve results across all aspects of learning. <i>The governors wondered whether</i> the project would include any parental involvement. Mrs Spacey said that the project is in its infancy with the initial meeting planned for November. Mrs Hurley added there has been a case study about a school further along in the journey and they are now starting to look at parental involvement, so this should follow further down the line.</p> <p>It was agreed that Mr Wintle will become Link governor for reading and Mrs Cleary will be the Link governor for voice 21. The relevant documents, website etc will be updated to reflect this. [AP-NB]</p>	<p><b>NB</b> <b>09/10/2024</b> <b>NB</b> <b>09/10/2024</b></p> <p><b>NB</b> <b>09/10/2024</b></p>
<b>AC/03/2425</b>	<p><b>Minutes of the last Academy committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the vice chair.</p>	
<b>AC/04/2425</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising:</b></p> <p><b>AC/71/2324</b> The governance professional agreed to populate the action plan with some suggestions for activities and actions that the committee can adopt and all governors agreed to consider the plan and make suggestions moving forwards. [AP-NB/Govs] <b>complete.</b></p> <p><b>AC/72/2324</b> Mr Wintle shared from his experience that he can recommend some programmes where schools have used stages based on parental preference. Mr Wintle will share this information with the Principals. [AP-MW] <b>complete</b></p> <p>There was a confidential discussion [CONFIDENTIAL BLPA THPA Minutes September].</p>	

AC/05/2425	<p><b>Thrumpton Principals report</b></p> <p>Mrs Hurley displayed the Principals report on screen and talked through the document.</p> <p>The Safeguarding checklist was shared as part of the report, there were no questions from governors.</p> <p><b>ERM – Educational Review Meeting</b></p> <p>Mrs Spacey gave governors some background to the ERM and explained that usually the ERM would be produced as part of a meeting between herself and Mrs Hurley, normally they will discuss the report and then Mrs Spacey will take the report to Cat Thornton (primary) and Neil Holmes (secondaries), the CEO and the COO. Mrs Spacey will present the top line data to them and discuss any trends, areas for concern etc. This time the format was more like a pupil progress meeting which happens with all principals to identify common threads and best practice.</p> <p><b>AIP</b> objectives were explained in more depth.</p> <p><b>Oracy – Voice 21</b> is a 3 year programme which will include upskilling staff on what oracy means, shared language across schools, baseline survey and recommendations for a listening walk and trying to unpick what the everyday experience of children looks like to identify the direction that the project will be steered. <u>Governors were concerned that</u> the hard work of staff and children in school might be reversed at home if parents aren't aware of or bought into the project. Mrs Hurley explained it is about developing the skills to behave and talk to each other in the appropriate way in every environment.</p> <p><b>Behaviour</b></p> <p>Mrs Hurley shared analysis from last year with regards behaviour and said that when the children were brought back together at Thrumpton there was a spike in incidents which had been anticipated. This year there will be a focus on the winter months and ensuring project play can continue.</p> <p><b>Attendance report</b></p> <p>Mrs Hurley explained that the Department for Education system is being used to produce an attendance dashboard. There is a slight lag with the data, and it is not a perfect system at the moment however it does show how the school are performing. She went on to say that attendance is looking ok compared to national figures. The governors responded that Thrumpton's attendance figures are very high, and it what is an encouraging indicator is that SEND children are clearly enjoying coming to school. Mrs Hurley thanked governors for their positive response and added that the school will continue to strive for better figures as they have not yet returned to pre pandemic levels.</p> <p><b>Staff survey</b></p> <p>Mrs Hurley shared the results from the staff survey explaining that data was collected at a trust level and then has been filtered down. The staff</p>	
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	<p>nobody gets left behind from their own starting point. This is assured by assessment, looking at work, quizzes, checking on learning and good quality AFL (Assessment for Learning). Mrs Spacey added that the curriculum sequencing needs to be right to show teachers where the gaps are and enable them to fill the gaps to move on at the appropriate pace.</p> <p>Objective 3: Oracy Voice 21 - discussed earlier.</p> <p><b>Behaviour</b> The behaviour incidents recorded at Bracken Lane involve a handful of children and Helen Skelton (family support advisor) is working with the families to understand why these behaviours occur and how school can support those children to manage their behaviour.</p> <p><b>Attendance</b> Mrs Cawkill shared the attendance data and told the committee that Bracken Lane attendance is above national average but not where Bracken Lane would like to be. Mrs Cawkill added that guidance on authorised absences is changing so the number of unauthorised absences is likely to rise going forwards, she explained that too many of the children that need to be in school are the ones that aren't in school and this needs to be tackled. At Bracken Lane 27 pupils are currently classed as persistently absent, however as the year goes on many of them will disappear as many of them have resulted from holidays taken early in September.</p> <p>There was a confidential discussion [CONFIDENTIAL BLPA THPA Minutes September].</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill went on to share that attendance for children of non-statutory school age is much improved already this year.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b> The safeguarding checklist has been shared and there were no questions from governors.</p> <p><b>SEND</b> Mrs Cawkill will arrange to go through the SEND documents in detail with Mrs Gawthorpe, meeting to be arranged. [AP - HC/JG]</p> <p><b>Staff Survey</b> Mrs Cawkill shared the results from the staff survey and echoed comments from Mrs Hurley in that Trust perception had improved which is likely a result of staff having spent the final half term at HQ. Also, the building work has been a good way to demonstrate the level of trust support. Mrs Spacey explained that because Bracken Lane children tend to do well, staff can sometimes feel like they don't need to see what else is on offer within the trust, this perception has really improved with communication and encouragement from Mrs Cawkill. Mrs Cawkill explained that all staff meetings are CPD and sometimes it's shared development following the</p>	<p>HC / JG 06/11/2024</p>
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	<p>principal going on courses and sharing and presenting back to staff which is not always perceived by staff as CPD.</p> <p>As identified by the Thrumpton staff survey, workload is a problem and the survey was issued at a pinch point when staff were packing up the school, report writing, preparing for the end of term etc. Mrs Cawkill said that helping staff to understand that there are pinch points and that's the way it is and sometimes telling staff that they need to stop is important. <u>The governors asked</u> if they ever lock up and send staff home. Mrs Hurley said that they have had discussions around this at Thrumpton but staff all have different home commitments and balances and a deadline to the day might add more stress than avoid it for some.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b>          The ECT has moved into early years from KS1 and she feels settled and supported. Staff and children are loving the building now as it enables them to be tidy.</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill told the committee that the parents' evenings have been pushed back until the hall is finished to make better use of the space. She added that all key diary dates are contained within the newsletters and asked governors to confirm that they are receiving them. Some governors said that they see them, but others do not. The GP reminded governors that all newsletters are placed in the Governor Portal on SharePoint and agreed to hold a training session in advance of the next meeting for any governors struggling to navigate the system. <b>[AP-NB]</b>          Mrs Cawkill added that there is an open invitation for all governors to attend events at the academy.</p> <p><b>Cat C Trips</b>          Governors were asked to approve the Cat C trips planned for the year. All activities were approved by governors.</p> <p>The admissions policies for both Academies were shared for information. The policies across the trust have been brought in line so that all oversubscription criteria are the same. These changes are still to go to consultation and have been shared for information at this stage and will be ratified later in the year.</p>	<p><b>NB</b>  <b>06/11/2024</b></p>
<b>AC/06/2425</b>	<p><b>Budget summary 2024/25</b>          Mrs Spacey explained that a summary has been produced which needs to be discussed with the Chair at the next agenda setting meeting to decide if it would be useful to share with the wider committee. She went to add that some chairs within the Trust have requested a summary of the trust wide financial performance for context. Financial performance remains the responsibility of the Trustees. At a local committee level, governors are required to consider such things as how Pupil Premium funding is spent. <u>The governors asked</u> if the trustees are happy to provide this information and wondered why it had not been shared before. Mrs Spacey said that it was taken away previously as it is not within the scheme of delegation for</p>	

	governors, depending upon how the summaries are received, they may be shared going forwards.  <u>Governors felt that</u> understanding if there is likely to be a deficit was important to them <u>and asked</u> if this information would be brought to every meeting. Mrs Spacey said it would be shared cyclically and for information.	
<b>AC/07/2425</b>	<b>How has the AC held senior leaders to account?</b> Challenges from the governors have included. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AIP priorities and objectives and ensuring they benefit all children</li> <li>- Timing and frequency of Staff survey</li> <li>- Staff workload and how this is monitored / managed</li> <li>- Voice 21 project, cost and funding, benefit and speed of uptake</li> <li>- Parental engagement</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/08/2425</b>	<b>How have the VMV of Trust / Equality been upheld?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was agreed that the VMV of the Trust &amp; Equality has been upheld. The academy committee members felt that there had been a respectful and positive discussion, high expectations and aspirations.</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/09/2425</b>	<b>Complete report to Trustees</b> The report to trustees was completed and noted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Celebration on outcomes for both schools</li> <li>- Celebration of Staff development</li> <li>- Attendance figures are good</li> <li>- Outcomes are good, given the amount of disruption</li> </ul>	
<b>AC/10/2425</b>	<b>Determination of Confidentiality</b> <b>Equalities Act consideration</b> AC members considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confidential items were discussed AC/04/2425 (Page 2) and AC/05/2425 (Page 5) and these have been acknowledged and removed from the minutes.</li> <li>- There had been no Equalities Act implications.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Academy Committee meeting <b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 5.15pm</b> at Thrumpton.  The meeting closed at 18:45	

Signed by Vice Chair: *F Simpson*

Date: 02/10/2024

Fiona Simpson, Vice Chair of Governors