

Summary of discussions of the Local Academy Committee meeting

held on Wednesday 24th September at 5:15pm at Bracken Lane Academy

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

In Attendance	Initials	Position	Absence
Mrs H Cawkill	HC	Principal - Bracken Lane	
Mrs S Kahler	SK	Principal - Thrumpton	
Mrs L Spacey	LS	Executive Principal	
Mr G Letton	GL	Executive Principal	A
Mrs N Benson	NB	Governance Professional (GP)	

Quorum	5	Governor's present	5

Outstanding Actions Log

C = Complete CF = Carried forward I = Incomplete (carried forward more than once)

Agenda item	Meeting Ref	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline	Update	Status
AC/65/2425	2425 - 6	carried forward from AC/51/2425 All Govs to upload pen portraits	All Govs	23/07/2025	SW, JG, CW, AMI to complete	I
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	carried forward from AC/62/2425 Complete Declaration of Interests	MW	30/09/2025		C
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Respond to NB with availability for separate meeting	All Govs	30/09/2025		C
AC/02/2526	2526 - 1	Complete mandatory training modules on National College	All Govs	30/09/2025		CF
AC/05/2526	2526 - 1	Share anonymised outcomes report with governors - Bracken Lane	NB / HC	08/10/2025	uploaded to governor portal and shared 06/10/25	C

AC/05/2526	2526 - 1	Share anonymised outcomes report with governors - Thrumpton	NB / SK	08/10/2025	uploaded to governor portal and shared 06/10/25	C
AC/09/2526	2526 - 1	Complete report to trustees	NB	30/09/2025		C

Q = Question from Governors

A = Answer from senior leaders

Agenda item	Key points / Summary	Action Required	Responsible Person	Timeline
AC/12/2526	Apologies for absence Apologies received and accepted for CW, MM, SW, KC NB will check in with AMi [ACTION]	Contact AMi to ensure he is able to access information and ensure he is aware of future meeting dates.	NB	26/11/25
AC/13/2526	Declaration of Interests No declarations made.			
AC/14/2526	Minutes of the last meeting and update actions log There were no concerns about the new format minutes and actions	Contact governors individually regarding outstanding mandatory training.	NB	26/11/25
AC/15/2526	SEND - Summary of information presented and discussion held: Local Offer <ul style="list-style-type: none">Available on the <i>Notts Help Yourself</i> website.This is the official route for parents to access SEND information for academies.Parents often find it less helpful, but it is required by the Local Authority (LA).Outside agencies usually liaise with schools or parents to gather information. Information Report (2025/26) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Statutory document updated annually.			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used by parents when selecting schools or reviewing SEND provision. Feeds into local SEND policy. <p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by Nottinghamshire regulations. Coordinated by the family SENDCO (Sally Truseler for ROA family). Schools apply for funding through the family SENDCO. Funding levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AFN (Additional Family Needs): High = £6k/year (in context a TA costs = £20k). HLN (High Level Need): Max = £10k. Exceptional needs funding: short-term (2 terms), then aim to secure HLN funding. If HLN runs out, schools risk deficit. <p><i>Q: Do the documents refer to springboard and can you expand on it's value as a very important forum for SENDCOS to moderate and collaborate?</i></p> <p>A: Springboard is a forum for schools and agencies to discuss individual children's needs. It is currently limited due to reduced LA funding and fewer external agencies. Schools increasingly employ or upskill staff and use external contracts.</p> <p><i>Q: What is the school approach when someone wishes to enrol a child with SEND given the lack of funding and support.</i></p> <p>A: If the school has space, they will never turn a child away. Adjustments are made to meet need and then work done to develop the right approach and if appropriate apply for exceptional funding to bridge the gap. It's a case of knowing the right people, knowing what is available to support the schools and making every effort to involve them at each stage.</p> <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of LA support means schools must strategize around thresholds and needs. New pupils with unidentified SEND present significant challenges. 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must evidence interventions before applying for funding. • Bridging funding exists but requires proof of prior efforts. <p><i>Q: how many things do you try that incur costs before you can demonstrate that you have done enough?</i></p> <p>A: That is why it's so important to have good relationships with external providers to help be able to demonstrate what has been tried. We also benefit as an organisation because we have special schools that share knowledge and experience and can provide additional support.</p> <p>Key Points Raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of staff training to support SEND. • Strong relationships with external providers help evidence interventions. • Special schools within the trust share expertise with mainstream schools. • Some parents may not recognise SEND needs; preschools are not obliged to inform them. <p>The principals and their staff were praised for their efforts in supporting children with SEND.</p>		
AC/16/2526	<p>Pupil Premium - Summary of information presented and discussion held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP is a funding pot for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Children from low-income families ◦ Children whose parents serve in the armed forces ◦ Looked-after children and post-looked-after children • Exclusions: Does not include special guardianship or kinship arrangements. <p><i>Q: What is special guardianship/kinship?</i></p> <p>A: Children living with relatives but not their own parents.</p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PP helps schools address external factors affecting learning and participation. Eligibility is means-tested (e.g., parents receiving certain benefits). Schools receive a funded amount per eligible pupil. <p>Funding Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding per child for 2025–26 can be viewed on gov.uk via this link. PP Plus is Additional funding for looked-after children; academies must bid for this. FSM (Free School Meals) accounts for most PP pupils. Low PP numbers can cause sensitive year-on-year fluctuations, making budgeting difficult. KS1 universal FSM complicates early identification; many are eligible from day one, but parents are often unaware until KS2. Building trust with parents is essential; avoid appearing intrusive. Stigma around FSM persists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents may refuse free lunches for trips. Kitchen staff use discreet lunch boxes to reduce stigma. Single parents with multiple children face additional pressures. Some disadvantaged children fall outside PP or SEND categories. <p>Key Questions and Answers</p> <p><i>Q: Once PP is received, does it stay until the end of primary school?</i></p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p><i>Q: Does PP include adopted children?</i></p> <p>A: Yes.</p> <p><i>Q: Can you request an NI number from parents so the school can check eligibility?</i></p> <p>A: You cannot make them provide it, but schools do ask.</p>			
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<p><i>Q: How do we know that PP funding is having an impact?</i></p> <p>A: Through scrutiny of data, pupil progress meetings, ERM reporting, attendance and outcomes tracking, and ensuring impact is visible and measurable.</p> <p><i>Q: If somebody were to ask now, is the gap shrinking?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, but it can be cohort-specific and PP pupils may not meet expected standards but they are making greater progress along their individual trajectory.</p> <p>Also, it is important to note that where numbers of PP are low and they also have additional needs, there can be significant skewing of data. Example: 43% of the PP pupils at BL also have additional needs and their progress matters more than the raw outcomes.</p> <p><i>Q: Do you make use of IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) information?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, but it's a crude measure based on postcode. Highest deprivation index for BL was housing IDACI provides context but limited new insights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors noted strong scrutiny on PP spending and its impact. • Schools must demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Academic progress (e.g., phonics screening: Y2 – 90% reached standard) ◦ Holistic benefits (e.g., trips, uniform support) • Spotlight remains on reducing disadvantage gaps. • Funding has increased, but resources remain insufficient for desired impact. • Creativity and evidence-based strategies are essential. • Reporting requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Plans must show intended spend, expected impact, and review outcomes. ◦ Fully formatted plans due by end of December and will be shared with governors 			
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	<p>Governors suggested principals consider producing case studies to capture both academic and “softer” impacts in preparation for Ofsted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example: Cooking lessons improved diet and attendance for previously home-educated children. <p><i>Q: Is this information shared within the family of schools, and are creative approaches shared?</i></p> <p>A: Yes. Example: Thrumpton identified oracy as an issue; another school with high EAL used Voice 21 successfully, leading to wider adoption.</p> <p><i>Q: The recent PP link visit identified the current reports on the school websites looks outdated (at the end of a 3-year plan). Can the format of the report be addressed to ensure it is clear that it is the latest version of the document?</i></p> <p>A: LS, HC, SK agreed to look at the format of the reporting and take this to the group training session. [ACTION]</p>			
AC/17/2526	<p>Sports Premium Summary of information presented and discussion held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of the funding is to ensure children have healthy, active lifestyles and that sport remains an important part of education. Schools with 17 or more pupils receive £16,000 plus £10 per pupil. <p>Key Areas of Spend:</p> <p>Swimming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory requirement: All children should have the opportunity to learn to swim. Goal: By the end of Year 6, children should be able to swim 25 meters. Sports Premium cannot be used for general swimming lessons but can be used for children who are not meeting the target. <p>Teacher CPD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding supports professional development for teachers. 	<p>Review the format of the PP documents shared on school website to ensure it is clear they are current versions.</p>	LS/HC/ SK	31/12/25

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes bringing in external PE specialists (e.g., PE teachers from ROA) to broaden sports opportunities. <p>Physical Activity & Inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in projects like Project Play (e.g., Thrumpton) to provide active play opportunities. After-school clubs and competitive sports (e.g., School Games). Activities for children with additional needs/disabilities (e.g., BOCCIA). Sports Premium can cover School Games membership and transport costs. Equal access for girls is a key focus. Ensuring activities are fully inclusive across abilities and genders. <p>Planning & Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools must plan spending, account for impact, and evaluate outcomes. Impact measurement is challenging; strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil voice (feedback on enjoyment and fitness benefits). Linking with oracy projects to help children articulate experiences. <p><i>Q: Does it filter down into early years?</i></p> <p>A: Yes, although funding is for Years 1–6, early years are included in all activities.</p>		
AC/18/2526	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Local Authority safeguarding audit</p> <p>HC gave governors an overview of the BL status for safeguarding.</p> <p>SK gave governors an overview of the Thrumpton status for safeguarding</p> <p>Additional staff have been trained in DSL at both academies to ensure there is capacity throughout the week.</p>		

<p>LS told the committee that a safeguarding incident had occurred at Bracken Lane which has been fully investigated and addressed and was classed as a near miss safeguarding incident. The incident occurred when children were being dismissed from an after-school club and it has been addressed with Patrick Knight (Strategic Development Leader for Safeguarding) and a review has been carried out. Nobody was hurt or injured but they could have been.</p> <p>There was a misidentification of a parent who was standing far back from the door in the rain with their umbrella up and two children were dismissed to the wrong adult. The adult sent them back. Parents were very concerned LS discussed the incident at Executive Level and is informing governors to let them know that all processes and procedures have been reviewed and extra systems have been put in place to ensure a proper hand over.</p> <p>The chair of governors thanked LS for informing the committee and acknowledged that mistakes happen adding that it is crucially important that it has been identified, staff will learn from it and it will feed into the safeguarding review processes.</p> <p>All acknowledged the situation could have been far worse and agreed that it triggers further consideration to be given to such things as school discos and dismissing children in different circumstances than the 'normal' end to the school day.</p> <p>LS told the committee that this will be fed back to all Principals to review procedures and learn from.</p> <p><i>Q: Have all staff reviewed prevent?</i></p> <p>A: This is done as statutory training for all staff and drip fed throughout the year in further training sessions / events. There are regular spot checks and quizzes on key areas.</p>			
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	<p><i>Q: Is this for all staff, not just teaching?</i> A: Yes.</p> <p><i>Q: Would children know how to respond to whether they feel safe and supported in school?</i> A: Yes this is done as part of the AIR and is checked and measured regularly.</p> <p>HC told the committee that CW (Safeguarding LINK governor) comes into both schools and talks to the children regularly.</p> <p><i>Q: Is there an opportunity for governors to receive stakeholder voice for children, parents and the community?</i> A: There are various points throughout the year where we gather stakeholder voice formally and this information will be shared with governors as part of the usual reporting cycle.</p> <p><i>Q: would it be feasible for governors to potentially be invited to attend parents evenings to give them the opportunity to chat informally with staff, parents and children to gather voice through the 'softer' approach.</i> A: this has worked well in the past and could be trialled.</p> <p>NB will contact HC and SK for dates and work with governors to put together a schedule. [ACTION]</p>			
AC/19/2526	<p>Link governor visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EF conducted PP visits and reports have been shared with all. AMu conducted H&S visits, NB will share reports completed by academies. <p>SK told the committee that the flood warning and evacuation plan works very well. The process was tested last Friday when a weather warning was issued, everything was elevated off the floor and parents were reassured that all precautions were in place.</p>	Put together a parents evening schedule for governor representation.	NB	19/12/25

AC/20/2526	<p>Complete report to Trustees</p> <p>Governors completed the report to trustees and commented that it had been a great session.</p> <p>Governors added the need to build into agenda planning invitations to staff to attend to talk about their specific areas.</p> <p>NB will discuss this further with the chair and principals in preparation for agenda setting. [ACTION]</p> <p>Feedback from Trustees following September meeting:</p> <p>Trustees acknowledge the SATs achievements and appreciate the reflections on meeting structure. Trustees note the increase in KS2 pupil numbers and the plan for ongoing monitoring.</p>	Develop schedule of staff attendees to LACs.	NB	19/12/25
AC/21/2526	<p>Determine Confidentiality</p> <p>Governors considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any confidential items discussed have been recorded separately. - There had been no Equality Act implications. 			
AC/22/2526	<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 21st January at 5:15 pm at Bracken Lane Academy</p> <p>Meeting closed at 6:50pm</p>			

Signed by Chair: Alastair Murray

Date: 17/12/2025