

**Minutes of the joint Academy Committee Board Meeting
held on Wednesday 22nd January 2025 at 5.15pm at Bracken Lane Primary Academy**

Membership	Initials	Governor category	Absence
Mr A Murray	AM	Appointed governor	
Mrs C Wyles	CW	Appointed governor	
Dr 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	
Miss S Garnett – Chair of Governors	SG	Appointed Parent governor	A
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	

Quorum number	5	Governor's present	7
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Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
AC/23/2425	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Dr Farrar, Mrs Garnett and Mrs Willows and these were accepted by the committee.	
AC/24/2425	Chair of Governors Resignation The Governance professional informed the committee that Sarah Garnett had made the decision to resign from her role as governor for Bracken lane and Thrumpton with immediate effect which means that the committee no longer has a chair of governors. Sarah had sent her apologies for non-attendance due to childcare issues and had wanted to be present at the meeting to share her decision with everyone in person. The Governance professional explained that she had met with Mrs Simpson (vice chair) earlier and Mrs Simpson had agreed to chair the meeting this evening but had made it clear that she did not feel able to accept the role of chair of governors. The governance professional asked if there might be a volunteer prepared to take over the role of chair for the remainder of the academic year. Mr Wintle was asked by some committee members if he might be interested and he expressed that having spoken briefly with the governance professional earlier in the week, he feels that it would be too soon for him.	

	<p>Mrs Malcolm said that she would not wish to return to the role of chair having performed this role before. There were no volunteers within the meeting and all governors agreed to consider the matter further and contact the governance professional if they felt that they might be able to support with this [ACTION].</p> <p>Mrs Simpson agreed to continue to chair the academy committee meetings and will attend and input into agenda setting for the remainder of the academic year but said that she is unable to perform other responsibilities.</p> <p><i>The governors wanted to understand</i> when Ofsted might be expected to visit the schools. Mrs Cawkill said that they are due this academic year, that they are still behind but that they are catching up fast. Mrs Spacey added that both schools are not unprepared, there is a plan and pathway and schools will be ready for Ofsted. Mrs Malcolm added that she was chair of governors for both schools' previous Ofsted inspections, and it was OK.</p>	GOVS 24/02/25
AC/25/2425	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>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/26/2425	<p>Local Training</p> <p>Mrs Malcolm and Mrs Wyles confirmed that they had viewed the cyber security training link shared before the meeting. The governance professional will update the training records [ACTION].</p> <p>Curriculum Changes</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill shared a document that Mrs Hurley had prepared as part of her handover to Mrs Kahler and explained that it has been adapted for use by both academies and demonstrates the current status of the curriculum.</p> <p>Mrs Cawkill went on to say that lots of things are being duplicated across both academies. The reading pathway is something that is being reviewed at the moment. Early reading is being delivered really well. Ellie Kerr is the lead for English development across the group and is relaunching Launchpad For Literacy which comes before the Read Write Inc that has been so successful. Ellie will be looking to find good practice to bring that back into Bracken Lane and Thrumpton.</p> <p>The Bracken Lane library is being fitted mid-February. The library does not currently have a system for children to find age-appropriate reading and this system known as ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) is being brought in. Mrs Cawkill is working with Pat Evans and some of the secondaries in getting this delivered.</p>	NB 03/02/25

Mrs Kahler told the committee that Thrumpton is still trying to restore their stock of books following the floods. The Governors asked if insurance money covered these costs and Mrs Kahler explained that some of the funding has come from fundraising such as a chocolate raffle organised by the children. Mrs Cawkill suggested that science books can be purchased with the science grant that the academies have earned.

The governors wanted to know how the academies encourage children to read widely and often and how do the teachers develop a love of reading in the children. Governors then added to the question asking how school encourage parents to appreciate the value in a love of reading.

Mrs Cawkill said that is done through the nursery transition programmes with parents though the importance of sitting and reading with children. Governors acknowledged this with one parent sharing that their child has been given some helpful sheets that support parents with reading at home helping them to understand what questions they should be asking when reading with their children.

Mrs Kahler added that next week at Thrumpton Key Stage 2 parents have been invited into school for Share the Learning to show them how reading is taught in school so that they can utilise some of the skills when reading with their children at home.

Another governor added that they have a child in year 6 and not only do they enjoy reading themselves, they are also still read to by their teachers and they love to hear the stories this way as well.

Mrs Cawkill went on to tell governors that Launchpad has a range of sensory books that are also available in the early reading programme for children with SEND. Governors recognised that the impact of Read Write Inc has been significant and commended both Principals.

Governors wanted to know if children are encouraged to read to siblings at home. Mrs Cawkill said that at school they have buddy reading and cosy readers. In classes, children read to friends and younger children.

Mrs Kahler told the committee that Oracy is a key focus at Thrumpton this year and Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) is around this and launching Voice 21 so that everyone is able to speak about and discuss their learning. Voice 21 training has begun with a workshop at Bracken Lane recently and will be starting at Thrumpton within RE. She added that a lot of this is already being done, in particular in maths which will be built upon but this will be rolled out as RE is also very story based and book based.

Mrs Cawkill said that Bracken Lane are rolling out Voice 21 with a big question assembly. The children are given a question and 4 outcomes and they discuss the question in small groups and then stand up individually to respond to the questions, enabling them to gather the views of others and share them. Examples of recent topics have been: Kindness changed the

world: Are rules important: If you put a coat on a snowman will it stop it melting? Mrs Cawkill went on to say that staff are engaging well with the strategy.

The governors questioned whether there is emphasis on listening skills as well as speaking and Mrs Cawkill confirmed that listening is crucial to the process as you have to be able to listen to contribute to the conversation and this is why children are sharing the views of peers in big question assemblies rather than their own views.

The governors were interested to know who discovered the concept within the schools or the trust and Mrs Cawkill said it has been around for a while but that the Wainwright Academy are the Trusts' beacon school for voice 21. Mrs Kahler said that she is looking forward to seeing the impact of the strategy on the children as she gets to know them.

There has been a key change this year to the maths curriculum ensuring the appropriate resources are used, it is focussed and broken down into small steps. Hayley Johnson, (maths lead) has been very proactive with this work. [Number Sense](#) is successful at Thrumpton and this has been rolled out elsewhere. The governors asked for an example of number sense and Mrs Kahler explained that there is a set of 36 facts for Key Stage 2 times tables which are taught and measured on regularly to see how many facts that they know. This learning is consolidated with a 2-minute test daily to ensure that the learning can be recalled by the children. Mrs Cawkill added that this approach is required to ensure the speed at which the children are able to recall this information. is key. She went on to explain that in Key Stage 1 strategies are taught in understanding the way numbers work. The governors wanted to know if a dyslexic child can be helped by this type of programme. Mrs Kahler said that the concept can still be taught to children with SEND to develop a deeper understanding of maths and learning quick tricks.

The governors commented that some parents put their own maths anxiety onto their children which might not help when children bring work home and they could also be helped by this. The governors then asked if this teaching method helps students to be able to demonstrate how they reach an answer. Mrs Kahler said this strategy will help with that. One governor shared that using and applying, communication, reasoning and problem solving is something that Ofsted are looking at now in relation to maths.

Mrs Cawkill told the committee that [Primary Knowledge](#) curriculum is being utilised for art, music and DT at Bracken Lane which has been introduced from the autumn term. This is a valuable tool for staff which contains lots of resources and support for teachers. The Governors asked who Susan Coles is. Mrs Cawkill said Susan Coles is based at Gomersal Primary near Bradford and she delivered some CPD about sketchbooks.

The governors asked if drama was within the curriculum. Mrs Kahler said that drama was delivered as part of the English curriculum. The governors

	<p><i>then asked</i> where RE fits into the curriculum and Mrs Cawkill explained that RE is delivered through Discovery RE.</p> <p>Mrs Kahler told the committee that buying in resources such as these provides useful CPD for staff.</p> <p><i>Governors wanted to know</i> at what age the children are given swimming lessons as this has to be part of their primary education. Mrs Cawkill said there is a requirement that by the time they leave primary school all children have had the opportunity to learn to swim 25 meters. Mrs Cawkill said she feels that currently year 5 and 6 is too late and both academies are hoping to move swimming to year 3.</p> <p><i>The governors further questioned</i> what is being done to ensure that teachers are embedding the curriculum well. Mrs Cawkill told governors that there is a clear plan in both schools for roll out of curriculum subject resources, staff have received CPD to support with delivery of PKC and the new maths and both schools have monitoring and QA in place to ensure high quality delivery of learning.</p> <p>Governors suggested from recent reading that 44% of primary school children will going into jobs not yet invented asked how skills get taught. Mrs Spacey said the skills are embedded within the curriculum and are tracked alongside it and that this includes such things as resilience and team working.</p>	
<p>AC/27/2425</p>	<p>Governance Report</p> <p>The governance professional (GP) discussed the content of the governance report reminding all governors to complete any outstanding administration tasks and mandatory training.</p> <p>The governance professional asked governors if they had any feedback from recent trust led training sessions and to share whether they felt there was still value in the sessions being delivered as recent attendance has been low across the trust.</p> <p>Governors explained that they do watch the recording of the meetings if they are unable to attend and agreed to share details of any meetings viewed with the governance professional so that she can update training and attendance records.</p> <p>Governors were reminded to review the governance action plan and to provide the governance professional with their bio / pen portrait for the website. [ACTION]</p> <p>The governance professional reminded all governors to schedule their link visits and signposted the support material available for preparing a visit and writing a visit report.</p>	<p>GOVS 24/02/25</p>

	<p>Mr Wintle had recently visited Bracken Lane as Reading and Phonics Link Governor and shared that he had a very strong visit. He went on to tell the committee that it was pleasing to see the children engaging in their lessons and he identified a consistent approach between each session. Mr Wintle said that he couldn't tell who the teacher was and who the Teaching Assistant was, the relationships were strong between teachers, leaders and children. He felt that there were wide opportunities for children to read based on the strategies that leaders have developed.</p> <p>Mrs Gawthorpe then shared her feedback from her SEND link visit earlier that day. Mrs Gawthorpe had been looking at provision maps and fed back that they were wonderfully written with smart targets. She then went into the classroom to see how the provision maps translate to the classroom and she could see how the children were adapting what they were learning. Mrs Gawthorpe said that she was able to match the provision map and what was happening in school.</p> <p>The governance professional shared some policy amendments with the committee for information.</p>	
AC/28/2425	<p>Governance Strategy</p> <p>The governance professional confirmed that the changes to the strategy had been shared with all governors prior to the meeting and previously as part of the latest governance newsletter. There were no comments or questions from governors.</p>	
AC/29/2425	<p>Minutes of the last Academy committee meeting on 20th November 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the vice chair.</p>	
AC/30/2425	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.</p>	
AC/31/2425	<p>Bracken Lane Principals Report</p> <p>Mrs Spacey shared the salient points from the ERM report. Mrs Spacey confirmed that work continues looking towards the next Ofsted to ensure the 'goods' are strong and embedded and to try and move beyond good into outstanding.</p> <p>Attendance remains a priority for the Trust and is high at Bracken Lane. Early Years tends to be a year group where positive attendance isn't great due to illness and time spent at home, but the staff have worked hard to ensure parents understand the gaps that children will have if they miss too many days.</p> <p>The Governors asked about the comment in the ERM referring to the move to immediate fines for particular children under the watch of the local authority and questioned if there is evidence that the fines make a difference. Mrs Cawkill said that to be under the watch of the Local Authority means that the school has already done a significant amount of</p>	

	<p>work with the family to try and improve attendance and the Local Authority have now stepped in.</p> <p><u>Governors then asked</u> about poor attendance in early years for those children of non-compulsory age and wanted to know if parents that are giving their children a wider experience are approached differently about non-attendance to those doing nothing. Mrs Spacey said that the curriculum is explained to parents to help them to understand that their children miss a specific area of the curriculum, and these conversations have altered the way parents think. Governors recognised that poor early years attendance can be tracked right through to A Level grades. Mrs Spacey and Mrs Cawkill explained that they know the children and families very well in this case. <u>The governors wondered</u> if there could be more flexibility for children in early years and Mrs Spacey explained that it doesn't work well for curriculum planning and staffing to provide flexible options for early years.</p> <p>Mrs Spacey moved onto the targets for Bracken Lane and explained that the second set of targets are for greater depth adding that they are very ambitious. Governors acknowledged that the trend from last year has moved forward and staff are displaying great teaching and learning.</p> <p>Thrumpton Principals Report Mrs Spacey shared feedback from the AIR (Academy Improvement Review) which was held at Thrumpton in November. Mrs Spacey said that the AIR had been carried out in a very collaborative way and showed real progress from the previous AIR, adding that Thrumpton, in particular, has been on a quicker journey in terms of curriculum development because this was led by Mrs Hurley.</p> <p>The impact of the work completed on the curriculum will be evident over time particularly with the adaptations being made for children with SEND as this work is refined.</p> <p>The targets for children with SEND need to be consistently smart and give clarity in the next steps for each child.</p> <p>Mrs Spacey went on to tell the committee that attendance at Thrumpton is still a focus and there has been a dip over the recent year. <u>The governors wanted to know</u> if there was a clear reason for the attendance dip. Mrs Kahler shared that there was an awful lot of holidays taken in the first term and there will be a whole piece of work on attendance at the next staff inset day.</p> <p>Governors discussed the issue of parents taking children on holiday during term time, some feel that the government are targeting parents and school when they should be challenging the travel companies.</p>	
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	<p>Flood Update</p> <p>Mrs Kahler told the committee that there was a flood warning in the first week back after the Christmas holiday and the flood defences were put up. The defences were left partially up during the day as it takes 4 hours to get them up. As a result, the flood plan has been updated, and everyone has been made aware. Fortunately, there was no flood.</p>	
AC/32/2425	<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"> - Curriculum, in particular focus on reading, voice 21 and maths, methods of teaching - SEND support within curriculum - Attendance, in particular within early years 	
AC/33/2425	<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/34/2425	<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/35/2425	<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:</p> <p>Academy Committee meeting Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 5.15pm at Thrumpton.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:50</p>	

Signed by Chair: Date:

Fiona Simpson, Vice Chair of Governors