

Minutes – The Brook Academy Council

Version: FINAL
Meeting Date: Thursday 5 December 2024
Location: The Brook Academy
Time: 15.30-17.30

Chair: Gus Grimshaw (Chair) Chair of Academy Council (via TEAMS)
Present: Kay Sarpong (KS) Principal
 Polly Pick (PP) Sponsored Councillor
 Vani Unny Sponsored Councillor
 Helen Bond Parent Councillor
 Danielle Harrison Staff Councillor
 Andrew Charsley Staff Councillor
 Kelis Cornock Staff Councillor

In attendance: Jackie Friday Interim Clerk
 Sally Apps Executive Principal
 Emma Wykes Observer

Apologies:

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions & Administration	
1.1	Introductions were made. Councillors were welcomed to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	The meeting discussed the parent election procedure. Concern was expressed about applications by parents who may be inappropriate to sit on a panel. The clerk advised that parents cannot be prevented from expressing an interest and/or being elected.	
3.2	<u>ACTION – Clerk to liaise with Head and Deputy Head of Governance regards concern raised about parent election.</u>	Clerk
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<u>ACTION – Principal to liaise with parents regards becoming and Academy Councillor. Principal to ask clerk to send further</u>	

	<u>information and application form to parent(s) when required.</u> Principal and Chair spoke to interested party. Details sent to clerk. Parent election procedure to be instigated subject to further information being obtained from the Governance Team regarding concerns about potential applicant(s). CLOSED	
5.2	<u>ACTION – Principle to liaise with HB regards assisting families to fill in forms.</u> Actioned by KS. CLOSED	
5.3	<u>ACTION – EW to amend staff figures for future reports to clearly show the number of staff in role in comparison with the total number of positions available.</u> COMPLETE	
5.4	<u>ACTION – Data to include comparatives with national averages and CLF schools in the next meeting’s update. Data to include dates between which the relevant data has been collected. Data to also include planned absences for contextual purposes.</u> COMPLETE	
5.5	<u>ACTION – EW report data at next meeting to show termly breakdown.</u> COMPLETE	
5.6	<u>ACTION – Chair to write to designated staff and thank them for their work at the school.</u> COMPLETE	
5.7	To be reviewed at a meeting to be arranged by the clerk via TEAMS. <u>ACTION – Clerk to arrange TEAMS meeting to sign off policies.</u> Clerk uploaded policies onto Gov Hub to be marked as signed by ACs instead of holding the TEAMS meeting.	
6	Academy Council Report	
6.1	The principal reported that there are a small minority of pupils whose conduct and behaviour is having a significant impact on the rest of the school community, pupils and staff, and none of the strategies the school has put or is putting in place seem to be having a significant impact on their behaviour.	
6.2	Are these pupils in a particular year or spread throughout the school?	
6.3	The pupils are in different years. Breakfast and lunch periods have been split, which has worked to an extent, but external influences are undoing the work that the school is doing internally with these pupils. Their behaviour is increasingly more physically aggressive and is becoming a significant concern for the safety and wellbeing of other pupils and staff. External professionals working with these pupils have been approached including the local authority SEND team, Education Support, Police, and any other agencies involved with the pupil and/or their family, but support is not always forthcoming.	
6.4	Is it one individual or a group of pupils that is the problem?	
6.5	One individual will become dysregulated, which causes a ripple effect amongst other students, and can result in some dysregulation throughout the whole school community.	
6.6	Some staff are less confident than others at managing the more challenging pupils, so it tends to fall on the same staff to manage the more challenging pupils and situations whenever they occur.	

	Consideration is now being given to next steps in respect of these pupils including the possibility of sanctions.	
6.7	Except for the minority of pupils already discussed, the principal reported that behaviour has improved in most of the cohort. Class groups are collaborating more; pupils are rewarded as appropriate.	
6.8	Is there an option to take the more challenging/dysregulated pupils out of class?	
6.9	Individual staff work with these pupils first thing in the morning but as soon as they go into class the pupils' behaviour deteriorates.	
6.10	Risk limits what the school can do outside the learning classroom. The school must always assess risk against outcome.	
6.11	The meeting discussed the fact that as the school continues to grow, strategy successes and limitations will become clearer, and it will become easier for SLT to identify/agree when a review of strategy outcomes and/or a decision regarding the use of sanctions against one or more pupils becomes appropriate.	
6.12	Do the pupils and their families realise the gravity of the situation and the fact they are potentially at risk of losing their place at the academy?	
6.13	Yes. Numerous conversations and meetings have been held with the pupil and the parent/carer. Staff have listened closely to the pupil and parent voice. The school has implemented a number of different strategies and agreed the next steps, but inevitably the plan is not followed, so a different strategy must be implemented.	
6.14	Is TBA the right place for these children? How much more negative impact should staff and pupils tolerate before a line is drawn?	
6.15	The principal explained that, in general, the school wants and is able to hold its line of high expectation and that inappropriate behaviour is challenged with empathy, not punitive measures. The behaviour of a pupil is a form of communication; staff want to work with the pupil to understand what they are trying to communicate and offer appropriate support.	
6.16	Comments were made that if a young person's needs are such that they cannot be met in an academy environment, then perhaps the pupil should attend a different provision where their needs can be met.	
6.17	The principal reiterated that TBA wants to be able to work effectively with other professionals so its pupils do not reach a stage where their needs are not being met or cannot be met.	
6.18	Visits are now being made to feeder schools by the new Safeguarding Manager. The admission arrangements have been revised and are clearer and more transparent about which pupils TBA is able to welcome into its academy without putting the existing community at risk.	
6.19	The local authority needs to be made aware that additional funding is required to meet the needs of all the pupils it has contracted with TBA to take. It has taken the principal a year to obtain additional funding for therapy for just one pupil. The lack of	

	funding and limited resources is impacting on the school significantly and increasing risk to the school community.	
6.20	EHCP's received before pupils start at TBA are not always accurate, which also results in staff having to manage unexpected behaviour or need.	
6.21	What is restricting you from using suspension/exclusion sanctions against pupils?	
6.22	The academy uses a graduated response, evidence of which justifies moving to the next stage or tier of the response. With regards to certain pupils, the school is now reaching the climax of its graduated/tiered response, and the next step may have to be the introduction of sanctions.	
6.23	The meeting acknowledged the efforts of everyone at TBA in managing a difficult situation and reiterated their support for the principal and staff.	
6.24	The meeting also noted that what is happening at TBA is not an isolated situation. Local authority processes are failing pupils. TBA has a contract with the LA in respect of its pupils and the academy is working to improve its working relationship with the local authority and by association its ability to provide the appropriate support for the needs of its pupils.	
6.25	Staff at TBA are becoming increasingly frustrated and demoralised with the lack of support from external professionals and the local authority.	
6.26	Are you feeling restrained by anything? Can the academy council help the school with anything?	
6.27	The EP acknowledged that there needs to be a discussion at a higher level than local academy level regarding LA funding/support for TBA.	
6.28	The clerk briefly explained the governance procedure in respect of sanctions and the potential need for ACs to sit on a panel to review due process, should sanctions begin to be imposed.	
6.29	<u>ACTION–A line management discussion to be held outside of the meeting to discuss individual pupils, support that CLF can provide and appropriate next steps.</u>	Principal/EP/Chair
7	Personal Development	
7.1	CPD is having a positive impact. An ARV took place on 19/11/24, SA and TF were in attendance and there was a significant amount of learning during and after this visit.	
7.2	Y10s and Y11s attended an Apprentice show in Bristol. Over 200 students attended the show at Ashton Gate Stadium; it was a most successful visit.	
7.3	P16 transfer work is ongoing; students have been successfully attending events at their prospective colleges. A careers event is being held at TBA on 31 January 2025, which ACs are welcome to attend.	
7.4	A careers professional is scheduled to attend TBA in January 2025 to offer 1:1 support and guidance to pupils looking to continue their education.	

7.5	Students are continuing to work in the academy canteen. This is proving so popular that a rota is having to be drawn up to ensure as many pupils can participate as possible.	
7.6	Swimming sessions for TBA pupils have recently recommenced at Tewkesbury Academy.	
7.7	What is transport training?	
7.8	An organisation attends TBA to provide advice and support to Y11 pupils, who are currently transported to school by taxi but who may have to take buses or other transport to their prospective further education provisions.	
8	Teaching and Learning	
8.1	The key message this meeting is that there has been a significant shift in safeguarding culture at TBA.	
8.2	A S175 audit has been completed.	
8.3	Staff are working with the CLF safeguarding team to identify things that can be improved to support pupils whilst also holding them to account and keeping the school community safe. Lots of child protection meetings are being held and the school is constantly chasing external agencies for support. The new safeguarding manager is having a real impact and working to ensure that safeguarding at TBA is as strong as it can possibly be.	
8.4	Next steps: implement the s175 audit recommendations before the next audit takes place in February 2025.	
8.5	What does the safeguarding role encompass?	
8.6	The new staff member will act as the DSL and in a pastoral capacity. They have a teaching background, they know local primary schools, they already know some of our parents/families and they have started to visit our feeder schools to hold contextual conversations and clarify our offer.	
8.7	SLT are meeting with representatives of the local authority on 6 December 2024 to discuss funding and admissions.	
8.8	Consults clinic – members of SLT including the principal, safeguarding lead and new SENDCo will collaborate and put together a strong provision map, supported by CLF colleagues.	
8.9	Have we moved anywhere towards in-house mentoring?	
8.10	Our future intention is to move towards in house mentoring; subject to appropriate training/funding. Our existing pastoral team are not trained mentors but support with mentoring requirements and TBA would be willing to support staff who expressed an interest in travelling down a mentoring training route	
8.11	The school currently works with Yes Mentoring and other external providers e.g. the Aston Project. The local authority SEND team have put some therapy provision and other strategies in place but non-engagement by the pupil results in the withdrawal of the service.	
9	Quality of Education and Curriculum	
9.1	The EP and assistant principal are currently working together to develop and adapt a primary curriculum for use at TBA	

9.2	The staff presentation evidences how far the school has travelled to date in developing its quality of education. The curriculum is bespoke and complicated, playing to staff strengths and expertise.	
9.3	JCQ visited TBA on the date of this meeting. It is anticipated that TBA will shortly be signed off as an approved exam centre. The Chair congratulated the principal and the staff on their efforts to date.	
9.4	SNN took place today which was successful. There was a staff focus on expertise. The curriculum will continue to be developed.	
9.5	A new SENDCo will start in January 2025. The meeting thanked an existing staff member for providing cover for an interim period. Cover is currently being provided by other internal staff supported by the CLF SENDCo Lead.	
10	Health and Safety	
10.1	FRA audit was held on 4 December 2024. The risk assessment requires further updating but the academy has come a long way since the previous audit.	
10.2	A food safety risk assessment for TBA is being completed.	
10.3	There will be a full school H&S audit on 20 January 2025 which will look at the calendar of events for the year, drills, high risk audits etc.	
10.4	Focus of this audit was Food Tech. Other audits will include DT etc. Audits ascertain the current baseline and offer advice and support to the academy moving forward.	
10.5	The H&S committee meeting held last week was successful.	
11	Hire and Lettings	
11.1	A community meeting between TBA and Brook Rugby Club is being held to discuss the rugby club's hire of TBA facilities. There are currently 6-8 bookings which have been made on the booking system. The principal has met with the CLF lettings team and discussions are underway regarding the potential recruitment of a casual staff member to meet current demand, which will be reviewed after March 2025.	
12	Staffing	
12.1	One member of staff is currently on adoption leave; 2 members of staff (including one of the Councillors) will be leaving at the end of term.	
12.2	The recruitment process is ongoing – the school received a number of applications but not necessarily of the quality required. A candidate from Affinity (supply agency) met with the principal this week and expressed an interest in being employed by TBA; discussions are ongoing. Vacancies are being advertised; the school wants to ensure it recruits the right candidate for the right position.	
12.3	Are the vacancies suitable for internal staff to be able to step up?	
12.4	Unfortunately, not yet. We have staff who aspire to step up but they are not yet at the appropriate level – this would be our medium to long-term plan.	
12.5	Pupil numbers are increasing as the school increases its cohort, so staff numbers also need to increase proportionally.	

12.6	Negotiations are being held with local special schools who would like to use the facilities at TBA – a staff trade-off as a possible return is being discussed.	
12.7	A buddy system has been implemented for staff.	
12.8	Forthcoming trips for pupils include an ice-skating trip, a trip to the cinema, and a festive lunch.	
12.9	<u>ACTION – EP and Councillors invited to attend TBA for Christmas lunch on 11 December 2024. Further details to be posted by clerk on Governor Hub after the meeting.</u>	Clerk
12.10	The principal thanked staff for their hard work and dedication which was seconded by the Chair on behalf of the academy council.	
13	Staff and student survey	
13.1	A copy of the staff and student surveys was circulated prior to the meeting.	
13.2	What is the issue identified in respect of Science?	
13.3	Pupils have been identified as missing a significant amount of knowledge in respect of science, so action is being taken to rectify this. The KS2 curriculum is being followed as this closely follows the entry level certificate curriculum. Y10 will study the double award; Y11 the single award. Topics have been chosen which are as close as possible to those on the ELC curriculum.	
13.4	The science curriculum includes lots of hands on and practical science to engage the pupils and produce quick results to fill the missing gaps in knowledge and experience - awe and wonder. Really good comments have been fed back by pupils.	
13.5	<u>ACTION – AC presentation to be carried over to the next meeting.</u>	VU
14	Policies	
14.1	<u>ACTION – Ops Man to advise the clerk when policies are ready to be ratified. The clerk will then upload the policies onto Governor Hub for marking as signed by ACs. Once signed by 5 ACs, the policies will be deemed to be ratified.</u>	Ops Manager
15	Any Other Business	
15.1	The Chair invited attendees to make comments which included the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA has made huge progress. The school identity continues to develop, and staff confidence is increasing. • Improvements at school closing time were noted – the process is a lot calmer than previously. • Communication is key –it is important for staff and pupils to have a voice and for academy council meetings to acknowledge these voices. Honest communication is vital. • The challenges faced by the academy are great, but the school is on an ongoing journey. Staff are making a real difference; staff ac’s acknowledged it was good to hear how the school is progressing from a different point of view. 	

15.2	The Chair thanked the principal and all the staff for their efforts and work to date, which was seconded by the meeting.	
15.3	The EP thanked all members of the academy council for their time and commitment.	
16	Close of meeting	
16.1	The meeting closed at 17.34.	
17	Date of Next Meeting	
17.1	3 rd February 2025 at 15.30.	

Actions summary:

3.2	<u>ACTION – Clerk to liaise with Head and Deputy Head of Governance regards concern raised about parent election.</u>	Clerk
6.29	<u>ACTION–A line management discussion to be held outside of the meeting to discuss individual pupils, support that CLF can provide and appropriate next steps.</u>	Principal/EP/Chair
12.9	<u>ACTION – EP and Councillors invited to attend TBA for Christmas lunch on 11 December 2024. Further details to be posted by clerk on Governor Hub after the meeting. COMPLETE</u>	Clerk