



Minerva Academy Council Meeting Minutes
6th October 2020 at 6.00pm
Virtual meeting via TEAMS due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Members:

Nicky McAllister (NM)	Sponsor 1	VACANCY	Teacher
Danielle Cohen (DC)	Sponsor 2	VACANCY	Support Staff
Bridget Suitters (BS) - Chair	Sponsor 3	Lily Wright (LW)	Student Advocate
VACANCY	Sponsor 4	Anna Keen (AK) *	LA Rep
Pete Franklin (PF)	Sponsor 5	VACANCY	Parent 1
Kate Richardson (KR)	Executive Principal	Shuyara Chowdhury (SC)	Parent 2
Jenny Harvey (JH)	Principal	Sue Burns (SB)	Clerk
*	<i>Indicates absent from meeting</i>		<i>Indicates question asked</i>

1, Introduction, Administration, and Apologies

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm

Welcome to Danielle Cohen, a new Sponsor Councillor.

Apologies were received and accepted for: AK

Absent without apologies: PF

The meeting was deemed to be quorate.

BS reminded all the Academy Councillors about the need for confidentiality.

2, Declarations of interest

The Academy Councillors confirmed that they had no pecuniary interests pertinent to this meeting.

2a, Academy Council Membership

After a rigorous round of recruitment, Jenny Harvey has been appointed as the Principal of Minerva Primary Academy. Therefore, the Teacher Councillor position is vacant so a Teacher Councillor election will be arranged shortly.

The Academy Council congratulated Jenny Harvey on her appointment as MPA Principal.

Donna Goodhind's term of office has come to an end, therefore a Support Staff Councillor election will be arranged shortly.

The Academy Council thanked Donna Goodhind for supporting the Academy Council during her term of office.

A new Parent Councillor (Maria Pagonis) was elected with effect from 2nd October 2020 and will join the next Academy Councillor meeting.

The Academy Council noted that there had been three applicants for the Parent Councillor vacancy which is a positive indication of the parental engagement at MPA.

3, Minutes of Previous Meeting (14th July 2020)

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed electronically by the Chair.

4, Actions and Matters Arising

C/F T2, BS to request at COAC that a staff questionnaire is re-issued, and to ask for a strengthened Administration of Medicines Policy – **Carried forward.**

C/F T5, 8, JH to investigate the drafting of a Lettings Policy and whether the Trust could be charged for using space in the academy – **Completed. Currently lettings are on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, in the future it will be possible to draft a Lettings Policy.**

10, BS to write to all staff and thank them on behalf of the Academy Council – **Completed.**

5, Academy Council Report

Paper circulated in advance

As newly appointed Principal what are your priorities for Minerva and how will you achieve them?

Before the summer when I was the Interim Principal, I worked with the SLT to think about the year ahead and to draft the AIP. We have high aspirations and high expectations for children's outcomes and what they can achieve in school.

There are four key areas in the AIP, but raising expectations is the theme that runs across all of them, underpinned by quality teaching and learning. We will focus on our recovery curriculum initially, and then move on to states of being supported by a well sequenced curriculum to develop children skills and learning.

Some of our disadvantaged pupils were further disadvantaged by not having access to technology or by having unmet SEN needs. Therefore, we will be very proactive about identifying additional needs.

The quality of teaching and learning will be led by the SLT which has been increased to include the literacy and numeracy leads as well as the phase leads. We are supporting our Subject Leads to empower them to support others across the school.

We are going to develop a Minerva community with a culture of excellence that includes attendance and punctuality, appropriate uniform and being ready to learn. We will develop our parental engagement further and have introduced parent meetings.

At our inset days we introduced all our staff to all areas of the AIP, and professional development meetings are linked to the AIP. All the staff are working together on the same priorities.

How will you ensure that you can maintain a strategic view when operational matters are key during the Covid-19 pandemic?

It is very beneficial for all the Principals to meet once a fortnight as this helps us to focus on the bigger picture which is key in my role. Having two inset days allowed us to introduce our expectations, and the CLF Central Team and Operations Manager has been key in supporting the operational requirements of the academy. When a Vice Principal is appointed in January 2021 the post will strengthen the team further, allowing us to maintain a strategic oversight.

Can you give us an over view of the curriculum to date and how children have received this?

We introduced the states of being curriculum in January which was very well received, and we quickly saw the impact on reading, writing and engagement. During lockdown the CLF curriculum has been developed by colleagues across the trust and many more states of being are now in place. During our inset days the year groups mapped out the 39 weeks to identify which states of being will take place when, and key questions. We are planning on increasing parental engagement and

opportunities, albeit virtually. There is a clear sequence of progression so that knowledge builds on knowledge and then in T2 we will publish the states of being on the website.

The Academy Council commended the breadth of the curriculum and that it will provide opportunities to children which are not available outside of school due to Covid-19.

Prior to lockdown, the Academy Council carried out a very informative learning walk and therefore there are plans to repeat this activity next term, in line with the MPA Covid risk assessment.

Are you confident that all teaching staff are delivering at least a good teaching and learning experience in the classroom? How can you evidence this?

I am confident in our judgements about teaching and learning in the classroom as Sarah (AP) and myself are in the learning every week. We are continuing to review planning to ensure that it is well sequenced and meetings the needs of children. We regularly speak to the children about their learning and classroom routines. Our ARV indicates that we have had a very positive start to the school year, the classes are calm, and the children are engaged.

Thank you for sharing your approach and expectations for blended learning. How will you monitor this for effectiveness?

This is an approach that we adopted from the leadership forum in the trust who are sharing best practice. There are Phase 1 signposts on our Word Press site, and Phase 2 is via TEAMS. Phase 1 parents can access blended learning with paper packs initially as not everyone is on TEAMS. Staff who are self-isolating are delivering lessons virtually. The most challenging phase is Phase 2 as teachers need to narrate over a power-point, or film live teaching. Therefore, I am supporting staff individually to better meet children's needs with delivering blended learning.

When children return to school after a period of absence, we collate feedback from their parents to determine how they managed access to virtual learning and we continue to raise the profile of virtual learning via the school newsletter.

Do all children have access to the technology when needed, to assist with remote learning?

No. However, we are aware of which children do not have access to technology and therefore we can lend IT hardware if they have access to wifi. We also have paper packs of learning available to support children for up to 14 days. If we have a local lockdown then children in Y3 – Y6 who meet certain criteria can access IT equipment via a government support scheme.

Minerva had a positive ARV. What key actions will you take from this?

A lot of the actions that arose from the ARV were individual feedback to teachers. All of these teachers have already put actions into place. The longer-term ARV observation was to revisit and reflect on our 39 week plan to ensure that both sequencing and progression across subjects is in place.

At this stage in the school year are there any year groups that you are concerned about? What is in place to support this?

Y4 is a cohort with a high percentage of SEN need, social emotional, mental health, and cognition and learning needs. Therefore, to support them and accelerate progress they will require additional support. At the end of the year the multiplication check is required, therefore fluency in number bonds and support with their Phonics development so that they become confident readers is planned. We have also introduced additional pastoral support.

The EYFS have some challenging children who require additional support from external agencies. The SENCo is working closely with the EYFS team, whilst ensuring that high expectations remain. Y6 have lost stamina and concentration and therefore the Y6 teachers are focusing on this in preparation for the Y6 SATs. By T2 we will be confident enough in our safety measures to reintroduce interventions in an appropriately socially distanced way.

Is there an expectation that SATs may be cancelled next year due to Covid-19?

At Minerva we want our children to achieve their best outcomes and be ready for their next steps. In Y6 we have already started talking about secondary school expectations to support their transition and ensure that they are ready. It is not known if there will be SATs, but we will continue to ensure that our teaching and learning is in place for children to reach their full potential.

How are you ensuring that every member of staff's mental wellbeing (and yours) is positive, and what is MPA and the CLF doing to support this?

Cath Archer is our children mental wellbeing advocate, and we have added a staff mental health lead and a member of staff who is experienced in trauma informed schools. This mini team has joined the CLF wide network and they meet regularly to identify ways to support staff. We are mindful of staff wellbeing and where possible we support them by making adjustments. Our Wednesday night professional development meetings take place from home, and a wellbeing lunch is planned. We have a suggestion box and our wellbeing leads signpost staff to external support agencies. Steve Taylor (CLF CEO) emails all the CLF staff once a week and provides a forum for staff to discuss any concerns.

How have you identified children who may need additional wellbeing support?

In T6 we issued a questionnaire to all families which helped us identify if children had had a difficult lockdown or lost a relative. This information has informed our understanding of children's' needs. The recovery curriculum uses a range of resources to support wellbeing and play-therapy referrals have been made where necessary. PSHE now includes emotional wellbeing as part of the curriculum, but at Minerva we have been doing this consistently for a long time now.

How can you encourage more families to meet with you and the family support worker, each week? Is the invitation school-wide or to specific families?

The invitations go out in the newsletter to specific year groups and is restricted to a maximum of ten families. We have surveyed our families to determine the best time of day for parents to meet with us and will offer a virtual session in the future.

Are there any barriers to communication?

We issue the invitations via the newsletter and then with text. However, the families do need to book-in so that we can use track and trace if necessary.

Has there been any additional children that the school is worried about re safeguarding since returning from lock down? Have children settled into the new normal school life?

There are some additional children that we are worried about following lockdown. Some of our families have been impacted by bereavements, domestic violence, or evictions during lockdown. Where necessary we have referred to Early Help, Families in Focus, or food banks. It has been lovely to see the majority of our children return to school enthusiastically and engage in and enjoy their learning.

What is attendance to date? Are you concerned that some families could take advantage of the Covid situation by not sending children to school?

Attendance is currently 95.3% and continues to improve. We have had two weeks of attendance with over 97%. There have been some challenges for our families to get Covid tests and they have had to travel to Cardiff or Swindon. Most of our families have returned to school after a few days of absence. There have been some language barriers with understanding self-isolation timelines and one pupil and one member of staff have had test results go missing in the testing system. The office is very supportive of our families with robust procedures and we do not believe that there are any non-genuine Covid absences to date.

We will be reintroducing our tiered response for families who are not absent for Covid reasons.

In your report you mentioned testing is a problem, is this a problem across CLF and are there any suggestions to support disadvantaged families who will struggle to get to testing centres?

There is a national issue with test results going missing and other schools in the CLF have experienced this. The CLF has an attendance network who are supporting schools with when it is appropriate to challenge families and when it is not.

How can we as Academy Council support with ensuring that the diversity of applicants for positions across the school reflects the diversity of Minerva. Currently most of the teachers are female and white?

70% of our community are BAME, but the statistics for the local community is 70% White British, therefore our families who attend our school do not live in the nearby community. In terms of encouraging more diverse staff, we shortlist against clear criteria and then employ the candidates with the best qualifications rather than based on their ethnicity. The CLF have an Equality and Diversity Policy and a desire for the staff to reflect the community, however, people from minority ethnic groups may not have had the same life opportunities. Therefore, the CLF is ensuring that our SKITT trainees and students are from diverse backgrounds wherever possible.

Is the CLF actively reviewing their recruitment processes with regard to equalities?

Yes, there is a Racial Steering Group and a clear line of accountability for equality, diversity and inclusion is part of the CLF five-year plan and is reviewed every year. Unconscious bias training will be provided for all staff this year. Minerva has invested significantly in high-quality books and resources that reflect our diverse pupil cohorts and that can be used as a talking tool for pupils.

What are you as Principal doing to support and develop your middle leaders?

The development of middle leaders is very important for succession planning and for driving improvements within our academy. This week we have undertaken professional development planning linked to the AIP. We have introduced termly middle leaders' meetings; writing effective action plans and measuring impact has been provided in-house.

The CLF provide leadership opportunities for emerging middle leaders and senior leaders and all staff are sign-posted to training. National professional qualifications are also available, two members of staff have started senior leader training and we are supporting them in developing leadership skills.

In your report you mention the financial situation and a £55k surplus, why is this?

In March all the Principals were advised that additional Covid costs would be covered by the CLF, but any surplus would be returned to the Central Team to offset the significant additional costs that the trust has had to support. At the end of July, we ensured that sufficient PPE is in place. MPA has made a financial contribution to the trust and has carried over a £17k surplus. I liaise with the Finance Manager weekly to monitor the budget.

How often is the Risk Register updated?

It is updated regularly in-house by the SLT and I meet with the Executive Principal to review it. Today the Academy Council Chair and I have reviewed and updated the risk register which will be circulated for the next Academy Council meeting.

ACTION: JH to circulate the Risk Register for the T2 AC meeting.

6, Safeguarding

The Annual Safeguarding Report is available on TEAMS. BS has reviewed the report with the DSL at the end of last year. The SCR has been reviewed by BS.

7, Policies

The CLF Safeguarding Policy will be based on BCC Safeguarding Board model template and will be updated with the KCSIE 2020 changes and the Covid-19 addendum.

8, Student Voice

A Student voice video is available to view on TEAMS.

9, Academy Council Membership

The Clerk reminded all the Academy Councillors to complete their Nimble training.

10, Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC

None.

11, AOB

None.

12, Date of Next Meeting: 24th November 2020, 6.00pm

Meeting ended at 7.55pm

ITEM	ACTION	INITIALS
C/F T2	BS to request at COAC that a staff questionnaire is re-issued, and to ask for a strengthened Administration of Medicines Policy	BS
5	JH to circulate the Risk Register for the T2 AC meeting.	JH

Signed by Chair: _____ Date: _____