



Minerva Academy Council Meeting Minutes 28th January 2020 at 6.00pm

Members:

Nicky McAllister (NM)	Sponsor 1	Jenny Harvey (JH) (Vice Principal)	Teacher
Hannah Ward (HW) *	Sponsor 2	Donna Goodhind (DG)	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	Thareem Naz (TN) *	Parent 1
Kate Richardson (KR)	Executive Principal	Shuyara Chowdhury (SC)	Parent 2
Pete Hallam (PH)	Principal	Sue Burns (SB)	Clerk
* Indicates absent from meeting			Indicates question asked

The Academy Council met before the meeting (without the Principal and Vice Principal), to review the papers, discuss lines of enquiry and identify trends.

1, Introduction, Administration, and Apologies

Welcome to Sarah Roden, the new Assistant Principal and SENCo.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm

Apologies were received and accepted for: TN

Absent without apologies: HW

The meeting was deemed to be quorate.

The Academy Councillors introduced themselves and advised Sarah Roden which link monitoring roles they hold.

Sarah, you have been in post for three weeks now, do you think that you have had an impact on the SLT's workload?

I have been focusing on creating a presence in the school by being available before and after school and at break times and lunchtimes. I have been doing some teaching in some of the classes and have introduced myself to parents, particularly those parents of children with SEND.

2, Declarations of interest

The Academy Council signed the attendance and pecuniary interest register.

3, Minutes of Previous Meeting (26th November 2019)

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

4, Actions and Matters Arising

1, BS to liaise with the Academy Councillors to undertake a learning walk on a Friday – **Completed. The learning walk has been arranged for Friday 31st January 2020.**

C/F T1, AK to recommend that Headteachers write to all clinics to challenge the process of issuing appointments within school hours – **Completed. AK has been liaising with Leslie O’Hagan at Bristol City Council to raise awareness.**

5, BS to request at COAC that a staff questionnaire is re-issued, and to ask for a strengthened Administration of Medicines Policy – **Carried forward as BS was unable to attend the recent COAC meeting.**

6, All Academy Councillors to use the sample questions in the Ofsted training slides when undertaking Link Visits – **Completed.**

5, Academy Council Report

Paper circulated in advance

Has behaviour in Y3 settled down since the beginning of the year? The safeguarding report indicates that positive handling has significantly reduced from 14 to 2 incidents?

There is one NQT in Y3 who has an excellent relationship with the pupils. There were some issues with the behaviour of specific pupils which is being addressed, and longer-term solutions are being investigated e.g. Alternative Learning Provision. There have also been some ongoing issues during unstructured play with boisterous boys, but strategies have been introduced which have had a positive impact. All staff have been open to the need for consistency across the classes and clear expectations.

Persistent absence has reduced, attendance is at the national average, are you confident that measures in place will be sustained and what examples of good practice are you sharing with other academies?

Attendance is at the national average and we are confident that this will be sustained as there is a whole school approach to attendance which has now embedded. Teachers are having the initial conversations about missed learning and peer relationships, before escalating to Jess. We are sharing good practice with Summerhill, Wallscourt Farm and Begbrook who have spoken to teachers and the office staff. There has been impact across the CLF, but not as much as at MPA due to the need to ensure that the graduated response is robust. MPA have targeted attendance support in different areas and there is now a culture of high expectations which other academies may not yet have.

You have been challenging absence in the first instance?

We send the first text when attendance drops below 97% which opens up a dialogue with parents, particularly when it comes to understanding that lateness is recorded as absence.

The Academy Council thanked Jess Crossley for her ongoing support of the attendance process.

What are the implications for the future predicted reduction in PP funding?

Many of our families do not meet the PP criteria but require the same level of support. We are continuing to encourage parents to see if they are eligible for PP funding. We aspire to meet the needs of individuals and seek top-up funding where eligible. We will need to try to source income from other areas in order to retain key posts in the school. This year we have had a bigger emphasis on quality first teaching because research indicates that this has the most impact. We also have to be mindful that due to high mobility we often receive pupils who have gaps in their learning. We hold weekly pupil progress meetings and ensure that we meet the needs of individuals to ensure that they continue to make progress. We also recognise higher-attaining PP pupils who are entitled to the funding and therefore we ensure that they are provided with stretch and challenge. JH is attending PP review training tomorrow and will bring back information to cascade with the staff.

You have mentioned that parental engagement has increased, do the parents who are engaging represent the diversity of the school?

There were 100 attendees at the last CLiC (Children Learning in Class) meeting which was very popular; the children have been inviting their parents to attend which has been impactful. Friends of Minerva also have a diverse range of parents.

ACTION: PH to confirm the diversity of the parents who are engaging with the school.

Do you hold coffee mornings with parents?

No. There was a loyal attendance, but they tended to be the same parents each time. I ensure that I am on the school gate every morning, greeting parents and children when they arrive. The office staff are very welcoming, but also firm with our parents when needed.

What evidence do you have that reading across the school is strengthening? Are children taking books home to read?

We have several reading strategies across the school which are being used consistently. 'Reading above pay grade' is where the teacher reads a book a year above the children's reading age, followed by group work; answering questions about the text to check for understanding. We have introduced VIPERS: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summary. We have moved away from guided reading and introduced whole class reading, based on research. There are a lot of EAL children in the school and their comprehension has improved. We have been supporting pupils with strategies about understanding a word through examining the context, which is a life skill and will encourage pupils to be lifelong learners. We have been encouraging parents to complete their child's reading records but in cases where this is not happening, we provide opportunities to pupils to read to an adult in school.

Y6 have sat three mock exams, what has been the increase in pupils achieving the expected standard each time?

All the staff have sat a Y6 SATs paper to understand what the questions may look like and we have discussed with the staff what question styles may be used, in order to better prepare the children. Reading has improved from 50% to 60%, another mock in March and the SATs in May when over 70% of pupils are predicted to achieve ARE for the Reading SATs paper.

Maths has improved from 48% in the first mock to 60% in the most recent mock.

Combined (Reading and Maths) has improved from 38% in the first mock to 51% in the latest mock. We are confident that we will meet our SATs targets this year.

How are we ensuring the pupils will be well supported for the SATs in May?

We are planning to arrange the SATs in two or three shifts to reduce the stress on the day. We will personalise the SATs where possible, e.g. providing the opportunity to read aloud if necessary, offering one to one support, keeping the children in their own classrooms, and maximising access arrangements. There are five criteria that can be met in order to qualify for 'Special Considerations' for pupils who have extenuating circumstances; in these circumstances three scale points are added to the scale scores.

A new Y2 teacher started in January - how can you be sure that the children will receive the support they need to achieve good outcomes in their KS1 assessments?

The SLT have already been in the learning and reviewed the planning and children's books. We have high expectations and have identified barriers to learning and how they can be overcome. Although the new teacher has only been in post for a few weeks she has been very proactive in supporting the Y2 children which can be seen within the classroom with motivated and engaged pupils making progress.

Is this fed back to the new teacher?

Yes, and we regularly check-in with her wellbeing in formal and informal ways to support her settling in.

The Begbrook model has now been rolled out across the school. What has been the initial successes and challenges to date, what are your next steps for implementation?

There is a 'buzz' in the school and feedback from the pupils has been very positive as they are very excited about their learning. Some of the challenges have been around changing the curriculum plan and managing staff workload as a result. We are ensuring that there are high-quality texts available in the school which fit the curriculum. Y6 have some high-quality texts which have generated deepening writing, therefore we need to ensure we don't disrupt processes that are working. Having the whole Trust working on the curriculum has been excellent for sharing best practice. We need to ensure that by the end of Y4 all the Y4 KPIs have been covered by the new curriculum implementation.

When do you anticipate being able to confidently say that all children are receiving a good quality, broad and balanced curriculum in every wider curriculum subject?

We can confidently say that now.

Is the Begbrook model being used across all the CLF primaries?

No. MPA have immersed themselves in the opportunity to ensure the best possible implementation.

Are we covering the Arts and Drama?

We have started with being Scientists, Historians and Geographers, but the Art version has been trialled in Y1 and Y5 this term and will be rolled out to the rest of the school next term when children will 'Be an Artist', 'Be a Designer' etc. Performers and Coders is coming later in the year. The travelling kitchen has just visited Reception and Y1 who have been designing, making and evaluating as part of their state of being.

Have all the staff embraced the change in the curriculum?

Yes, we started with a pilot when some of our teachers visited Begbrook, now all our staff have embraced the change because they are all seeing the benefits.

(Sarah Roden left the meeting at 7.10pm)

Are all teachers now delivering good quality teaching? If not, what strategies are being put in place to ensure outstanding practice?

We have identified areas where we feel there could be an improvement and have put support plans in place. Re-setting the expectations for good teaching and learning and the CLF framework go hand in hand. The CLF teaching framework "I do" "You do" "We do" has been impactful. Our SEF indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good which should be validated by external measures.

Staff attendance appears to have improved, what is being done to maintain this?

We have raised the profile of staff wellbeing and have been systematic in the application of robust absence procedures with staff and support staff wherever possible. We have introduced internal cover arrangements to maintain consistency in teaching where possible, and staff now understand the impact that their absence has on their colleagues.

Are teachers taken off PPA to cover colleagues?

Only when absolutely necessary, but it is then re-organised later in the week to ensure they receive their quota of PPA.

The Academy Council thanked the SLT for raising the profile of staff wellbeing in the Academy.

You refer to age-appropriate books being read on a termly basis in the Academy SEF, who decides these books are "appropriate"?

We made a conscious decision to read books to children that they could not read for themselves. Initially we thought we could use books from the year above, but some of these did not have age-appropriate content e.g. the boy in the striped pyjamas. Therefore, we have selected books that would introduce a wider vocabulary to our pupils and have used research and recommendations to determine these, as well as conversations with staff across the Trust. We had a book that referred to looked after and adopted children and spoke privately to our CiC pupils before the book was read to the class.

Are parents involved in the decision of which books selected?

We advise parents through the termly curriculum overview, but do not seek their opinion.

Do you list recommended texts for parents to read to their children available on the website?

No, but we do have lists of texts in the school so we could arrange to share these with the parents.

ACTION: PH above to publish a list of recommended texts for parents to read to their children on the website.

The new RSE curriculum will become mandatory from September 2020, what steps are being taken to implement this in a way that will not upset any faiths/ communities of the school?

Have any discussions been had with parents as to what is to be taught in the school?

In T6 every year we teach the 'Change in Me' curriculum which is about how children's bodies change and how a new person is made. We always make arrangements for parents to visit the school to hear about what will be taught and how. This year the conversation will be slightly different as the RSE curriculum is mandatory. In our experience there is often a lot of misunderstanding about what is taught and when this is outlined for parents, they are usually comfortable with it.

There is a lot of collaborative work taking place across Bristol with Faith Leaders about the teaching of RSE?

Yes, communication with parents is key.

The Chair and Principal have recently reviewed the risk register this term. How often do SLT discuss items that should be added to the risk register?

We have a termly meeting to identify any items for the risk register.

MPA has been called to scrutiny twice this Academic Year. How helpful has the process been, what changes were put in place as a result, how far and with what success to date have these changes been implemented?

Education is too important not to have regular scrutiny of practice and to ensure that the SLT are held to account for safeguarding, attendance, outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning. The Academy Council offers regular scrutiny. Scrutiny meetings involve highly focused questioning around areas that require improvement which sharpens our focus and the rationale behind initiatives.

Do you feel that this Academy Council holds the SLT to account?

There have been some changes recently which has improved the level of accountability.

Friends of Minerva (FOM) organised 'Wacky Wardrobe' and it was lovely to see most pupils and staff taking part. Do FOM discuss with SLT what the academy priorities are re extra funding? Should someone from the Academy Council meet with FOM?

The Friends of Minerva have raised some money that they would like to use to enhance the playground. They would welcome a visit from an Academy Councillor and meet on Wednesday afternoons.

6, Governance

The Clerk reminded the Academy Councillors to ensure that they log into Nimble and complete the four core CLF training requirements.

TEAMS

Some Academy Councillors are still experiencing issues with accessing TEAMS and expressed their frustration at not being able to access important papers in order for them to be able to fulfil their roles robustly.

7, School Council Update

The School Council have met and written some questions for interview candidates (examples were provided for the Councillors). They have also created an Anti-bullying leaflet.

8, Health and Safety

PF toured the site last week and noted the amount of work that the Site Manager undertakes. There are some concerns about pooling water in the playground, and the sand being regularly washed away.

Is the work under guarantee?

Heidi Clements is pursuing the builders who should have provided drainage for the area.

Does MPA have a Letting Policy?

Not currently.

PF noted that the CLF are regularly using MPA without charge which is a lost income for the academy.

ACTION: PH to investigate the drafting of a Lettings Policy and whether the Trust could be charged for using space in the academy.

Is the old MUGA area going to be revamped?

Yes, the work is planned from next week.

9, Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC

None.

10, AOB

None.

11, Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 31st March 2020, 6.00pm

Meeting ended at: 8.00pm

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	PH to confirm the diversity of the parents who are engaging with the school.	PH
8	PH to investigate the drafting of a Lettings Policy and whether the Trust could be charged for using space in the academy.	PH

Signed by Chair: _____ Date: _____