

Minutes of Minerva Primary Academy Council Meeting

Meeting Date: 17 March 2026
Location: On site – In person
Time: 18.00-19.30

Present:

Bridget Suitters (BS)	Chair
Patricia Fry (PF)	Sponsor Councillor
Alison Levinge (AL)	Sponsor Councillor
Zoe Skuse (ZS)	Parent Councillor
Claire Westbury (CW)	Support Staff Councillor
Katherine Whidden (KW)	Sponsor Councillor

In attendance:

Jennifer Harvey (JH)	Principal
Jen Shaw (JS)	Vice Principal
Craig Jones (CJ)	Executive Principal
Jacqueline Friday (JF)	Governance Administrator/Clerk

Apologies:

Sophie Pring (SP)	Teaching Staff Councillor
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Minutes taken by Cover Clerk

		Action
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	KW has been signed off as an Academy Councillor.	
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	BS and PF attended the immersion day. Slides were shared with the meeting. Thanks were given to the staff for hosting. ACTION – Future Immersion Days to be agreed and diarised, one per term.	JH/BS
6	Academy Council Report	
	<i>A copy of the academy report was circulated prior to the meeting.</i>	

6.1	How is staff morale and how is this being measured. Staff morale is generally positive. The professional development inset day on 6 March was a well thought out, purposeful day. Sessions were held about success stories – academic, SEMH etc. Staff engaged well and shared back things that have made a difference, things we need to do more of and things we could do better. The DSL is leaving employment with the school. Plans are in place to manage the workload until a new DSL is appointed.	
6.2	How is the school ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all students? Safety is one of the school's values; it is discussed in class and in assemblies. Staff model what safety looks and sounds like. Assemblies have been held in respect of safe spaces in support of children's mental health week. School is an inclusive environment – our vision statement stresses the value of being an inclusive school. The way we talk about our pupils, the way we welcome children and families demonstrates inclusivity and meeting need. Inclusivity is a focus within assemblies and the curriculum. Staff work with and support children to understand inclusivity and differences and external providers also come into school to support lessons both in pre-school and primary stages.	
6.3	How are students performing academically this year compared to last year? Are there any concerns at this time with year 6 SATS preparations? Pupil progress meetings are held; staff identify pupils making progress and those pupils we need to focus on. The foci on CLF black box data this term is identifying pupils who were at expected stage, but who are no longer not at that stage, exploring and identifying reasons the reasons why and implementing appropriate support and interventions. Strong moderation data on children is held by the school and the trust which enables secure judgements to be made. The final set of mocks have been held – most of the access arrangements were put into place and pupils responded brilliantly. We are expecting an improvement from the last mock exams. Some children will not achieve combined, but staff are continuing to teach and support all children to achieve their best outcome. Are they doing any Easter clubs this year? There are no plans to hold Easter clubs this year. Are there outside programmes that children can link into? The school signposts pupils and their families to appropriate external material/resources. Y6 staff provide boosters for pupils but we don't want to overload our pupils. Staff continue to encourage Y6 pupils with their learning up to and after SATS to ensure they start secondary provision as well prepared as possible.	
6.4	Are year 1 on track with phonics? How are those not on track being supported? Mock phonic assessments are held termly so pupils become familiar with the supporting adult and the environment, and teachers get to know and understand the children. Additional phonics sessions are out into place for all children as well as targeted individuals. A strong outcome is expected.	
6.5	How are high achieving students being challenged? Curriculum provides breadth and depth. Y6 showcased their writing for parents which provided children with an additional challenge. Additional boosters are run for pupils in specific areas e.g. greater depth writing. Y6 writing moderation training is also provided for staff.	
6.6	T3 ARV appears to have been positive. What learning did you take from the visit to make any improvements?	

	A key reflection was around the monitoring of Learning Passports; feedback to/from the SENDco and SLT, coaching and developmental drop ins and feedback to teachers. Learning passports are most effective if targets are reviewed fortnightly as designed. Playworkers are being provided with more support and professional development to improve their interactions with pupils, to empower them to support pupils better with conflict resolution and to be better able to engage pupils during break times. Sentence stems and posters are being designed and published for playworkers' information and use. Staff are also working with children to help them instigate speak and talk tactics during break times. Within the T&L framework, staff now have one mentor as this provides continuity in conversations.	
6.7	Some of the actions from the term 3 health and safety walk haven't been completed for various reasons. Can you give us an idea of the types of actions concerned and any still outstanding? The school holds a spreadsheet of H&S actions. Example of actions not yet completed include work to the basketball hoop to make it perpendicular and repairs to the sand pit matting, both of which need to be completed by an external contractor. Other barriers to completion actions include cost and time issues. There are three H&S walks held with colleagues from the Central team each year as well as termly walks by internal staff. The aim is for the school environment to be fit for purpose. Safety is always prioritised. H&S audit items are up to date.	
6.8	Has there been any impact to SLT with the business manager having been absent and yourself being out of school due to your senior Principal position? There has been an impact on capacity, but prioritising work is key as well as looking after staff wellbeing. Staff are working together to manage the absence. The principal is generally out of school one day a week. SLT meetings are held every Friday to plan for the week ahead and ensure staff are briefed and prepared. Training days are planned and diarised in advance. The principal tries to do as much of their external work in the evenings where possible. What are the business manager's responsibilities? They lead on operational management e.g. setting up reports, census returns, liaising with external caterers, H&S as well as line managing the admin team. They are the only person who undertakes that role.	
6.9	Has there been a drop in attendance due to Ramadan? No; attendance has not yet been affected by Ramadan, but Eid is currently predicted to be on Friday 20 March which is likely to impact attendance. Staff have worked closely with families, encouraging parents/carers to speak to them about managing attendance during Ramadan and explaining what can be offered by the school to support families during Ramadan. Advice has been sought from a local Imam to ensure pupils can join in during Ramadan with PE, music etc. All-year round prayer space is provided. A whole school celebration for Eid is planned for 27 March.	
6.10	What would you say are the biggest risks to Minerva over the next 12-24 months and how are you mitigating them? Falling numbers is a key risk as funding is linked to numbers on role. Birth rates nationally are falling. Pupil numbers are falling in other local schools. By way of mitigation, we will need to use the money we have in the best possible way. To this end weekly meetings are being held with Finance and the EP, discussing costs, possible scenarios and potential savings. Safeguarding is always a priority. The absence of a DSL has the potential for risk, but three strong deputy DSLs will pick up the workload in the interim period.	

	In respect of H&S risks, maintenance plans for the school environment are being pulled together. No large risks were identified in recent audits. Individual PD plans have been drawn up with and for all staff. The school works hard to keep its staff by providing ongoing access to PD and flexible working to support career aspirations where possible. There is a good balance of youth and experience in the current staffing team.	
6.11	Are there any financial challenges that may affect learning resources? Staffing is the biggest resource; an appropriate structure is in place to support pupils. Equipment has already been budgeted for. SLT will have capacity to run/manage the school. Comms is a particular strength of the school, encouraging strong parental support and engagement and donations.	
6.12	How is Pupil Premium or other funding being used to support disadvantaged pupils? The pupil premium funding strategy was included in the January report. PP funding is used to support all children; it is not a pot of money allocated to an individual child. PP funding has been used to support teachers to become good coaches and provide enrichment opportunities for families. The Lift-Up strategy also links into pupil premium funding.	
6.13	Parents seem to be engaged more with the school. How is Minerva improving communication with parents? Text messages are sent to individuals to celebrate positive learning which has opened more conversations with parents/carers about their child's learning. Attendance at parents evening is tracked; absent families are identified and staff follow up with them to identify barriers to attendance and provide resolution, e.g. booking families into designated/reserved timeslots. Teachers work together to support siblings across the school. Parents are monitored in respect of their engagement with their child's learning passport. Can the school access translator services? Translators can be employed at a cost; the school prefers to manage communications internally through its skilled and knowledgeable staff. How many parent evenings does the school hold a year? There are two parent evenings where parents book individual appointments and a drop-in summer event where parents can collect their child's report and speak to the staff member who will be teaching their child in the next academic year.	
6.14	When looking through the Improvement Plan, Meeting Need priority it was noticeable that there was not a specific data point target or progress for SEND pupils but that the actions taken noted steps taken to monitor the consistency of learner passports for tracking the progress of children with SEND, how many pupils with SEND are working beneath their current year group curriculum and is this tracked with learner passports? Over last few years, significant PD has been undertaken by staff to enable the setting of good/appropriate targets for SEND pupils. The primary need for SEND pupils is communication (e.g. S&L) then SEMH, then cognition and learning. The school is working hard on raising expectations and increasing aspirations for SEND pupils whilst ensuring appropriate targets are set. The SENDCo holds and monitors the target set for each SEND pupils; if the target is not achieved, the SENDCO works to identify and resolve the barriers to achievement. As a cohort with SEND, what does progress look like for that group? Group target data is located within attainment data which is published in T1 T2 T4 and T6 and one of the groups by which the data is broken down is SEND. SEND data is split into two categories – EHCPs and year group. In terms of a cohort data is broken down into attainment per year group, then S&L, SEMH interventions. Group targets	

	are measured from entry assessment to exit assessment. Learning passports are for 12 weeks; interventions are typically 10 weeks (1 week entry 1 week exit). Why is it necessary to have group targets for children with individual needs? SEND covers children with such a broad range of needs that some children on the SEND register will meet age related expectations whilst other children will not reach these. Sector challenge is to monitor/log SEND progress. Cannot exclude SEND pupils from the data. Children with highest need have interventions which are measured differently but some children with identified needs will be age-related. SEND pupils may have a different journey but can still achieve with appropriate support and interventions. ACTION – breakdown of SEND data to be provided to councillors during the next immersion day.	JH
	<i>CJ left the meeting at 19.11</i>	
6.15	How will you ensure that safeguarding processes remain effective across the school when there is a period without DSL and whilst a new person is getting to grips with role in a new environment? CPOMs makes it easy to review previous data recorded against individual children which the new DSL will be able to access. Staff will support with communication with the LA as appropriate. The principal will hold regular meetings held with the DSL. The principal will empower the new DSL to do their role and have difficult conversations. Statutory training will have to be completed as a priority. There is a high level of team support – paired meetings are held if in the interests of the child/parent. Staff receive strong support from CLF network and CLF leads. Information is shared with colleagues; fortnightly inclusion meetings are held, at which staff review the list of vulnerable pupils and SLT reviews the list termly. Do you have a tracker to hold this information? Yes; the CLF has a central list of all vulnerable pupils. Fortnightly meetings are held at MPA at which the list is reviewed.	
6.16	Will the planned CPD upskill for all staff still happen and who will attend the DSL network? CA has already attended CPD and will attend DSL meetings for the time being. Other members of SLT will attend CPD as required.	
6.17	Has the reduction of child-on-child incidents reduced due to categorising ‘rough play?’ AL commented she had attended the academy last week and spent time in the playground, which was very enjoyable. Some reduction has been due to recategorisation of rough play and with the provision of additional and different activities. Younger children have different play skills to older pupils. A greater mix of boys and girls play together amongst the younger cohorts.	
6.18	Observing break time at the immersion day, all children were engaged and playing. There was the noise you would expect from children having fun. Are the incidents of child on child happening at lunch time. If so, why is this? Do play workers need more training? More incidences occur during lunchtime as it is a longer break period. Reasons for incidents include lack of verbal skills to manage conflict. SEMH pupil behaviour can differ – one solution has been permitting the wearing of ear defenders. KA has been providing 1 hour PD sessions for playworkers and longer training sessions to upskill playworker staff.	

	Are the playworkers part-time staff who come in to support the children during break times? Some come in just for breaks; some are regular support staff. A known adult always goes on the playground to support child/ren with additional needs. Phase leaders use duty time on lunch to follow up on any regular or persistent lunch time incidents or behaviours. The transition from lunch into adult led time can be difficult transition. Can pupils access a quiet area during lunchtime? Pupils are not permitted to access classrooms; some go to an enclosed nature area; some children spend time in a designated indoor space where they can build up play skills to be used outdoors. Some pupils are only be permitted to play in certain zones. Children are taught self-agency by staff modelling desired language and behaviours.	
7	Policies	
7.1	The EYFS policy was reviewed and approved by a quorum of academy councillors.	
8	Matters For The Attention Of The Board	
8.1	None	
9	Any Other Business	
9.1	<i>Updated delegation of Link Roles:</i> SEND – KW Disadvantaged/PP – PF Safeguarding (including LAC/Prev LAC) – BS Wellbeing – AL Curriculum - ZS No H&S link role but the principal and Chair meet regularly and include H&S in their discussions. ACTION – Interim clerk to update Governor Hub with link roles as required.	JF
9.2	On Page 5 of the academy report it states that younger children found it difficult to articulate and provide examples when talking about growing. What has been done to improve this? Additional work by staff has been undertaken to define personal development and growth and what it looks like at MPA, to ensure younger pupils understand and can articulate responses if they are asked what growing means to them.	
10	Close of Meeting	
10.1	The meeting closed at 19.14	

ACTIONS from the meeting held on 17 March 2026

5.1	ACTION – Future Immersion Days to be agreed and diarised, one per term.	JH/BS
6.14	ACTION – breakdown of SEND data to be provided to councillors during the next immersion day.	JH
9.1	ACTION – Interim clerk to update Governor Hub with link roles as required.	JF