

Minutes – Minerva Primary Academy Council

Date: 30 June 2026
Location: Minerva Primary Academy
Time: 18:00

AC Members: Bridget Suitters (BS) Sponsor Councillor – Chair
 Katherine Whidden (KW) Sponsor Councillor
 Sophie Pring (SP) Teacher Councillor
 Vacancy Sponsor Councillor
 Zoe Skuse (ZS) Parent Councillor
 Patricia Fry (PF) Sponsor Councillor

In Attendance: Jennifer Harvey (JH) Principal
 Sue Burns (SB) Clerk
 Jen Shaw (JSha) Vice Principal
 Kate Richardson (KR) Executive Principal.
 Craig Jones (CJ) Executive Principal
 Maeve Brittle (MB) Sponsor Councillor (Observing)

Apologies: Clare Westbury (CW) Support Staff Councillor
 Alison Levinge (AL) Sponsor Councillor

1	Introductions and Welcome	
1.2	BS welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.3	Apologies were received from Claire Westbury and Alison Levinge.	
1.4	The quorum is 3 – only one of whom can be a Staff Councillor. If there is less than 3 in the meeting then the meeting cannot make any decisions or approve any policies, or minutes of the last meeting. The meeting was quorate.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	The Academy Councillors confirmed that they had no change to their declarations.	
3	Academy Council	
3.1	There is one Sponsor Councillor vacancy.	
3.2	Bridget Suitters will not renew her appointment when her term of office ends, therefore she is offering anyone who would like to consider becoming the Chair to shadow her in the interim period.	
4	Minutes of the Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed electronically by the Chair.	

5	Academy Council Report	
5.1	Sophie, how are the staff and how did they cope with the heat wave? It was hot and challenging for everyone and there wasn't much time to communicate to parents that they should collect their children on Friday at lunchtime when we only opened for the morning.	
5.2	Did all the CLF schools close on Wednesday and Thursday? No, because everyone has a different type of building, and different children and staff react to the heat differently.	
5.3	It's due to get hotter again in the coming weeks? There are no amber heat alerts and definitely no red ones. We will monitor the forecast and then act on the data and any government recommendations. We held a staff meeting via Teams and discussed the risk assessment which was well received. We also checked in on vulnerable staff on the closure days.	
5.4	[REDACTED]	
5.5	[REDACTED]	
5.6	Attendance continues to be a focus and it is recognised how much time is given to ensure children are in school learning. Have you any new strategies to try next school year? Yesterday, Jen went to London to share strategies at the DfE conference about attendance. We know from the data which children need support with attendance, but if we target those on the cusp and can improve their attendance to 93% or 94% then it can have a real impact on the statistics, but also on how well they do in school. Having a joy-filled calendar really encourages the children to want to come to school. We also need to focus on pupil voice for those children whose attendance has dropped.	
5.7	How did you get invited to go to London? Kate Richardson was speaking there about what the Trust does to support schools with attendance. We have a great attendance tracker produced by the data team and after we shared it we were approached by a lot of people asking about it. The data informs how we can have meaningful conversations with families about patterns in attendance and if there are specific days of the week that their child is absent.	
5.8	Is there a reason for the higher number of leavers (10) in year 3 since September? We do track our leavers. They have all moved geographically, no-one has moved to a neighbouring school. [REDACTED]	
5.9	What year groups will be mixed from September. How will this work and what will class sizes be? We will have one mixed Reception/Y1 class and also a mixed Y3/Y4. Class sizes will remain very similar to this year which is about 23-30. We will ensure that	

	the children receive the curriculum designed for their year group. Our teachers are skilled at meeting need and adapting planning and to support that we've given them some extra planning time to map it out. There are some children who are not secure in their Phonics so they will move fluidly to have additional access to Reception Phonics. We've seen this model work really well in other schools. The Maths scheme we use is NCETM and we've got mixed year group planning which will ensure the children receive what they need. We've been able to share best practice with Chester Park which has been helpful, and the teachers already know the children well.	
5.10	Was there a specific reason you chose to do this because of just the cohort of children? Or is it because the numbers of children coming in are lower? The number of children joining Reception is lower due to the drop in birth rate which is a national picture. At the moment there are 81 children in four classes so next year there will be three classes which means the class sizes only increase from 20 to 25 or 26.	
5.11	Do you have a prediction for the number of Reception children from September? Yes, we have 40 or 41 children joining us.	
5.12	What did pupils do at Bristol Beacon earth story event? It's an opportunity for our children to learn to play an instrument and they get to perform with other children from across the city as well as professional musicians. They spend the afternoon rehearsing and then parents and carers can watch the performance at the end. It was a really lovely experience and the children enjoyed going there on the bus.	
5.13	Does the school get any extra funding for Forest School. Is there a limit on number of children who can access the provision? We don't get any additional funding for our nature area but we do ask for donations of pallets and tyres, that sort of thing. Some of the children have a nature lesson there once or twice a week, then at lunchtime anyone can access it and there's always a member of staff in there. We also provide wellies and spare coats and gloves. We have an after-school garden club too.	
5.24	Why do you think there is limited impact with parent or child led interventions with Education MH practitioner? We have a new Education Mental Health Practitioner who works differently to the other one and they work more with the parents which should have a good impact on children in the long run. The Local Authority funds the provision so we don't recruit them as part of our team.	
5.15	How is diversity, equality, inclusion and belonging reflected in teaching and learning? We weave stories throughout our planning and assemblies and arrange pupil voice groups which are representative of the PP, SEND or EAL groups in our school.	
5.16	What strategies are being used to attract a diverse work force? The Trust also supports us when advertising for staff to ensure we use appropriate language. We also have Nimble training about unconscious bias and we make sure that our interview process allows for reasonable adjustments.	
5.17		

5.19	Are all staff able to meet the needs of a vulnerable and complex cohort? What is done to support staff who find this difficult? We have spent the last two years upskilling our staff to support the needs of the children we have across the school. We have supported staff to understand that behaviour is communication and therefore they are communicating that their needs are not being met. We also have support from lots of outside agencies who also come in and provide training to the staff. We also have a strong SENCO network who put interventions in place and then monitor their impact. We also have SEN surgeries so we can identify children early and put support into place. We explicitly teach the behaviours we want and we revisit them regularly so that they embed.	
5.20	When will you know the pass mark of phonics screen? This year the pass mark was reduced to 31, but that made no difference to us because all our children scored over 34. We had two children who didn't pass so our overall result was 93% which is the best in the CLF. And our children in receipt of PP had a pass rate of 89% which is the best we've had, but also a recognition that they are the children from our pre-school and therefore had a really strong start.	
5.21	Was there a reason that two children didn't pass? Yes, they've made progress term on term but just need a bit more time.	
5.22	With challenges in year 4 are you pleased with multiplication times table check? It's a statutory test that is best delivered by the children's regular teachers which wasn't possible. The average mark was 21.8 and for our PP children was 19.9 and both of those scores are higher than last year's national average. If children don't have a laptop at home, we give them more opportunity to practice in school.	
5.23	Have the Secondary School transitions started? Yes, we have had numerous visits from Secondary Schools. We also have additional transition for children with additional needs. Someone from our Trust takes them to their Secondary School and then continues to visit them in Term 1. Parents have attended transition evenings and tomorrow is the Big Step across the city when all Y6 children visit their new school for the day.	
5.24	Which schools do MPA children go to? Most of our children go to Bristol Brunel. But this year we have children going to six settings, most of them CLF schools.	
	SEND Walk Around – Kate Richardson	

5.25	I observed a range of effective inclusive practices, including explicit teaching of vocabulary, the use of communication boards, visual scaffolds, workstations and sensory circuits to support pupils' regulation and engagement in learning. I was pleased to hear about the positive impact of the nature area, which staff reported had contributed to a reduction in SEMH-related behaviours and suspensions. During playtime, I observed pupils engaging positively with their peers and accessing resources successfully.	
5.26	I visited the Den and found it to be a calm, nurturing environment where pupils of all ages were receiving highly effective support from knowledgeable staff. I also noted the increasing participation of pupils in clubs and gained a strong sense that leaders and staff know their pupils and families exceptionally well, including the factors that can affect attendance and engagement.	
5.27	Leaders explained that Communication and Language is currently the most prevalent area of need within the school, followed by Cognition and Learning and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. I heard how Learning Passports are reviewed fortnightly and are supporting staff to track small-step progress while ensuring accountability for pupil outcomes.	
5.28	We discussed how small-step assessment data contributes to the wider picture of pupil progress, recognising that progress for some pupils may not follow typical patterns. I also heard about the positive impact of staff training on classroom provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND. I was reassured by the school's monitoring arrangements for pupils on adjusted timetables, which are reviewed fortnightly in line with statutory requirements.	
5.29	Looking ahead, I suggested that it would be useful for governors to receive further information about how additional SEND funding, including the Mainstream Inclusion Fund, will be utilised. Leaders advised that a fully costed whole-school provision map is now in place and that further work is underway to identify expenditure across the four broad areas of need and, in future, at an individual pupil level.	
5.30	Leaders also outlined plans to further develop enhanced provision from September and to explore opportunities for staff training in speech and language support to strengthen in-school expertise. Finally, we discussed the school's processes for identifying and tracking pupils who may have SEND alongside other characteristics, such as EAL, and how reintegration into mainstream classrooms is supported where appropriate. Overall, I came away with a very positive impression of the school's inclusive provision and the commitment of leaders and staff to meeting the needs of individual pupils.	
Safeguarding - BS		
5.31		
5.32		

5.33		
6	Policies	
6.1	Policies to note: • Absconding procedures. • Uniform guidance. Policies to Approve: • Revised Teaching & Learning Policy • Revised Home Learning Policy • Revised Communication Policy <i>The Academy Councillors approved the above policies.</i>	
7	Matters for the attention of the Board	
7.1	None.	
8	AOB	
8.1	The Academy Council noted the number of EHCPs that have been applied for and commended the SENCO and team for their hard work.	
8.2	The Academy Councillors wished all the staff a restful summer break.	