

Minutes – Frome Vale Academy Council

Date	12 December 2023	
Location:	Frome Vale Academy	
Time:	5.15 pm	
Present:	Laura Walder (LW)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Chair)
	Kate Richardson (KR)	Director of Education
	Jan Saunders (JS)	Senior Principal
	Nikki Dawson (ND)	Senior Vice Principal
	Paul Stephens (PS)	Parent Academy Councillor
	Christian Simmons (CS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Tom Hartshorn (TH)	Parent Academy Councillor
	Ricki Petchley (RP)	Support Staff Academy Councillor
	Tracy Pakrooh (TP)	Teacher Academy Councillor
	James Mulcrone (JM)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Apologies:	Sophia Feinbaum (SF)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Lori Streich (LS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Attendees:	Linda Corbidge (LC)	Academy Council Clerk

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	Welcome and introductions were made by LW. Welcome to Jim and Tom who were attending their first meeting as Sponsor Councillors.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations of interest made for this meeting. LW reminded councillors to complete Declarations of Interest if they had not done so.	
3	Governance	
3.1	Membership	
3.1.2	Vacancies were confirmed as LA Representative, Student Advocate. <u>ACTION: JS/ND will seek interest for a Student Advocate again in January.</u> <u>ACTION: ND will follow up again with prospective LA Representative Councillor as no response.</u>	JS/ND ND
3.2	Link Roles	
3.2.1	LW confirmed current link roles as follows advising that Link Councillors will meet links in school each term and report to the next meeting. Pupil Premium – JM; SEND – PS, RHSE and STEM – CS; LAC/CiC – LW; Safeguarding – LS; Health & Safety – RP.	
	Training	
3.3	LW reminded councillors to complete all outstanding training.	
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	

Item	Description	Action
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held 17 October 2023 were agreed as a true record.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<i>ND will follow up prospective contact for an LA Councillor. See item 3.1.2.</i>	
5.2	<i>LW asked for notes on the ARV Pupil Voice. Completed.</i>	
5.3	<i>LS to report on Pupil Premium gaps/focus at the next meeting.</i> LS had not met due to ill health. <u>ACTION: Taken forward for JM to report on PP (new PP link councillor)</u>	JM
5.4	<i>JS will look into how Evergreen organised minibus licences for parents.</i> Evergreen's parents have their own contacts regarding mini bus licences. Funding is the issue regarding provision of mini buses. Teachers have been asked to forward plan so parents have longer to pay for trips.	
5.4.1	Do you have enough help from parents for trips? Yes, Academy Councillors and PTA are very supportive.	
5.4.2	Do you have a value in mind to enable you to give the educational experience you would like? It would be helpful to share with parents. Around £4,000 is needed. Bristol Charities partnership is a good route for funding, and the Collegiate School route is currently being explored for funding.	
5.5	Do you need books? The academy needs banded books. LS is supporting with finding organisations to donate books.	
6	Staffing/Wellbeing/Staff Voice	
6.1	How is staff wellbeing? Staff absence is very low which is a good indicator of staff wellbeing.	
6.2	Are you having conversations to support staff? Is the requirement growing? Some conversations are taking place at informal stages. We are confident that it is not an indicator of a wider issue.	
6.3	How are the new members of staff doing? Both new teachers have settled in well – the 1:1 induction sessions introduced this year have worked well.	
6.4	How are the support staff? RP responded that in his experience as a new member of staff the support he has received is second to none at the academy.	
7	Academy Council Report	
	<i>AC Report, AIP, Term 1 data, Link Visit Forms LAC, Pupil Premium, SEND had been shared</i>	
7.1	Academy Improvement Plan	
7.1.1	LW reported that on her visit to the school she had observed the oracy strategy in Year 4 – seeing children telling jokes. JS advised that every class has a distinct oracy lesson this year and this can already be seen through in the performance. PS commented on the amazing performance of the children and seeing children helping each other. JS advised that Sky News are coming on 19 th January for the children's element of Sky News. The school are already seeing positives from the oracy focus.	

Item	Description	Action
7.1.2	<p>Do all children have a role to earn Penguin Pounds? Is there feedback to parents?</p> <p>From Year 1 in Pupil Voice Group or they can apply for a job. Next step is to have a bank. Penguin Pounds is about earning/saving which are life skills – this will evolve.</p>	
8.2	Outcomes/Progress	
8.2.1	JS had shared end of Term 1 data.	
8.2.2	<p>Are you confident that last year's assessments are accurate?</p> <p>Y5 into Y6 is accurate. The least accurate is Y4 into Y5 – there is learning around that.</p>	
8.2.3	<p>How were the mock SATs?</p> <p>Data shows they were broadly in line with where we have been previously. The greatest gains are from the children at the lower end. We anticipate this following through to all children in Term 3 data.</p>	
8.2.4	<p>Is it better than expected?</p> <p>This is our weakest cohort for 5 years. ND/JS will be giving further support to Y6 earlier.</p>	
8.2.5	<p>Is that common for Principals/Assistant Principals to teach?</p> <p>It is not common, but it is good to demonstrate we are close to the learning.</p>	
8.2.6	JS commented that it is difficult to compare Pupil Premium data as there are different numbers of PP children/cohorts. Y3 and Y4 data has highest number of SEN children.	
8.2.7	<p>Is the difference in Y6 boys and girls SEND related?</p> <p>Yes, we have a number of SEND children in Y6 who are new to the school. There is a wider attainment gap for children who start mid-way through the school.</p>	
8.2.8	<p>Who makes the decision for children to be on the SEN Register?</p> <p>We make the decision, and for children to come off the register. ND explained the support/adaptations in place.</p>	
8.2.9	<p>Is there a long list for children on the SEN Register needing play therapy?</p> <p>Yes, we record and review the list regularly as more money is needed for this area.</p>	
8.2.10	<p>Is there a possibility that some children can't access the therapy they need?</p> <p>The impact of play therapy is huge – we have seen transformations of children's lives. We also have Mental Health Team who come in to support to provide CBT, so this reduces the list for play therapy.</p>	
8.2.11	<p>Can you use lump sums of cash donated?</p> <p>Organisations tend to be specific on what funding is spent on.</p>	
8.2.12	<p>Have levels remained the same since the Ofsted Report?</p> <p>We have maintained the Ofsted criteria on the AIP. There has been a change of staff since the inspection with newer members of staff receiving support and a change in profiling of the school as SEN need has grown. Next term PD is focussed only on SEND to ensure every teacher is confident as a teacher of SEND. We are part of the Trust evaluation on SEND so learn best practice from each other and ND meets with every teacher to talk about SEND provision. We will be revisiting SEN due to the changing profile and SEN becoming more complex.</p>	
8.2.13	<p>Do you have a succession plan for the SENCO role/is there someone else in the school who can be SENCO?</p>	

Item	Description	Action
	ND works closely with JS who is also now SENCO qualified.	
8.2.14	Is there any other member of staff/role you have identified that needs succession planning? How we induct/train has improved every year. Discussion followed around recognition of Frome Vale investing in support for teachers.	
8.2.15	Do you have a staff buddy system? It naturally happens in a small school.	
8.3	Attendance	
8.3.1	Chicken Pox is a reason for some sickness absence – do children have vaccines in school? Only the flu vaccination is given in school. We encourage families whose children don't want the vaccine in school to have it outside of school.	
8.3.2	Following introduction of the attendance pyramid, are you seeing children coming in more with a sniffle/cold? Yes, and being able to administer Calpol has made a difference.	
8.3.3	Will you be communicating further with parents to encourage children into school? Yes, and we also have targeted conversations with individuals. Attendance has improved since this time last year.	
8.3.4	How much of attendance is safeguarding related? Two children – we triage weekly for children on Child Protection Plans. JS explained the response and monitoring process for the two children. Sharma is doing brilliant work – as part of Bristol Strategies wider strategy work in the community.	
8.4	Pupil Premium/Looked After Children	
8.4.1	JS outlined how Pupil Premium funding is spent at the academy; the main grant is spent on the DSL, play therapy, professional development, and The Nest.	
8.4.2	ND explained the funding grant for LAC/CiC. It was noted there are no LAC/CiC children at the academy.	
8.4.3	If PP funding reduces will this affect play therapy or staff training? Staff training potentially although PP numbers increased for September, so funding has not been reduced.	
8.4.4	What is the current number of children receiving Pupil Premium funding? If the number drops, is there a plan to cover the funding? 199. We would have to look at budgets elsewhere.	
8.4.5	Where would this be? We are starting to look at the PTA and Bristol Charities and there are grants to mitigate some of the funding issues. We would try hard to protect play therapy as it has a big impact on the children.	
8.5	SEND	
8.5.1	Have you made progress with the EHCP applications? Three have reached Panel 1 of Needs Assessment which is a good indicator - if successful this will take EHCPs to the highest we have ever had. The threshold for EHCPs is very high which is an indication of the national picture.	
8.5.2	Why is the need rising for EHCPs? There is less checking of 2-year-olds as they do have to attend nursery; ND works with Little Hayes Nursery. There are not a lot of professional services available to	

Item	Description	Action
	children and young families and access is difficult. We also received incorrect information for one child who needed an EHCP.	
8.6.3	Is there enough staff capacity in the school to cope with the rising demand? We are having to train teachers to support the extra SEN demand which is a challenge. The other issue is that the LA offer around specialist provision is small which puts mainstream schools in a difficult situation. There is a lot of push back from the LA.	
8.6.4	At what point do you meet that saturation level? ND explained the consultation process with the LA around discussion on how to say 'can't meet need' which is a long process of consultation. Occasionally parents follow the route of individual consult and bypass Bristol City Council.	
8.6.5	Is that a GDPR issue regarding incorrect historic information given to the school? That is another part of the argument we will put forward. The child has now been accepted in school as the original EHCP is out of date.	
8.6.6	Are you having to put aside other work due to the huge amount of time/capacity? Is the personal cost being considered? SENCO is my role, sometimes it is easier than others. There is some flexibility to not attend a meeting or work from home if there is a lot of paperwork.	
8.6.7	Can you quantify the time? It is the nature of education; we are learning and navigating our way through and taking every opportunity to feedback to the LA/Regulator and Susie Weaver – CLF Executive Director for SEND.	
9	Safeguarding	
	<i>Safeguarding Link Visit Report and Term 1 Safeguarding Report had been shared</i>	
9.1	Councillors noted the link report and Safeguarding Term 1 Report.	
10	Health & Safety	
10.1	RP reported that health and safety is at a good place with compliance and health and safety checks taking place together with a walk the school each week. After Christmas a new entrance will be opening to the school which will relieve some of the congestion and avoid some slip hazards in bad weather.	
11	Policies	
11.1	Councillors approved local adaptations to the CLF Template Policies : Treasury Management; RHSE; First Aid; Exclusions & Suspensions; Online Safety; Remote Learning.	
11.2	Is there an annual review of policies? Yes, JS reviews all policies annually each year.	
12	Link Councillor updates	
12.1	There were no further updates.	
13	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
13.1	None noted.	
14	AOB	
15.1	None	

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

Next meetings:

FVA Meeting Minutes 12122023

FVA		
AC1	27/09/2023	5-8pm (CLF Board & Academy Council Results Review)
AC2	17/10/2023	5-7pm
AC3	12/12/2023	5-7pm
AC4	27/02/2024	5-7pm
AC5	23/04/2024	5-7pm
AC6	02/07/2024	5-7pm