

Minutes – Frome Vale Academy Council

Date	25 February 2025	
Location:	Frome Vale Academy	
Time:	5.15 pm	
Present:	Christian Simons (CS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Chair)
	Paul Stephens (PS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Jim Mulcrone (JM)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Ricki Petchley (RP)	Support Staff Academy Councillor
	Shanta Amdurer (SA)	Parent Academy Councillor
	Lori Streich (LS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Maggie Mironova (MM)	Parent Academy Councillor
Apologies:	Kate Richardson (KR)	CLF Director of Education
	Tracy Pakrooh (TP)	Teacher Academy Councillor
Attendees:	Jan Saunders (JS)	Senior Principal
	Linda Corbidge (LC)	Academy Council Clerk
	Maria Cerepanova (MC)	Vice Principal
Absent:	Phoebe Tutu (PT)	Sponsor Academy Councillor

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	CS welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations of interest.	
3	Governance	
3.1	Membership	
3.1.1	<p>CS outlined changes to membership since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miglena has now been confirmed as Parent Academy Councillor. • It was noted that Tracy is leaving the school for a new role at the end of term, therefore a teacher councillor election would need to take place. • Vice Chair role – Jim or Paul have volunteered to stand in at meetings if CS is unavailable, but neither will take on the Vice Chair role due to other commitments. New members were encouraged to consider the role once settled in. <p>Action: The Clerk will share information with the school for a Teacher Councillor election in Term 4.</p>	LC
3.2	Link Councillor Roles	
3.2.1	Discussion took place on link roles. It was agreed that current links were CS – STEM, RHSE; LS – Safeguarding; PS and SA – Jt SEND; JM – Disadvantage; RP – Health & Safety.	

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	<p>MM expressed interest in looking at practices around bullying at the school. LS suggested that the Safeguarding Link role could be shared with a view to MM taking on the role when LS's second term finishes in 2027. Following discussion, it was agreed that MM would begin to share some responsibilities for the Safeguarding link role. MM would also become link councillor for EDI.</p> <p><u>Action: MM/LS would meet with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to discuss the role.</u></p> <p><u>Action: Councillors would meet with their links in school before the next meeting and complete a Visit Report (pro forma on Governor Hub).</u></p>	<p>MM/LS</p> <p>Link ACs</p>
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held 26 November 2024 were agreed as a true record.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<p><i>CS/JS to meet to take forward Environmental Sustainability Plan.</i></p> <p>It was noted that there is an ongoing strategy forming around Eco Warriors as part of an Environmental Sustainability Plan.</p>	
5.2	<i>KR will discuss the best escalation route with Susie Weaver, whether for SEND and safeguarding or just SEND. See Item 10.</i>	
5.3	<i>KR will revisit plans with the local authority regarding other buildings and pursue support for a resource base. CS will discuss with JS the development of a Business Plan for utilising the Children's Centre site as a resource base for the school. See Item 10.</i>	
6	Pupil Voice	
6.1	<p>JS and MC provided updates on the groups that met last term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Group, led by MC, had focused on engaging with The Vassall Centre and involving pupils in community activities, such as a lunch club for elderly members, which will now be a weekly event. The group plans to continue these engagements and invite the lunch club members back into the school to share experiences together. The EDI group engaged with Bristol Charities and a visit is planned on March 18 to explore potential projects, including repurposing a phone box. JS has requested a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise the partnership between the school and Bristol Charities. The Ambassadors and Learning Champions remain actively involved, participating in weekly assemblies. The Wellbeing Group recently met with Aspens, the caterers, to discuss plans for creating a Frome Vale recipe booklet. 	
6.2	<p>Where does the engagement with The Vassall Centre and Bristol Charities sit within the Academy Improvement Plan?</p> <p>It is part of our aim to widen into the community.</p>	
6.3	<p>Are cooking skills taught as part of the curriculum at Frome Vale?</p> <p>Cooking skills are included through Forest School and during Healthy Eating and Sports Week. There is a desire to expand cooking activities, but challenges include curriculum constraints, space, and resources. The idea of a cooking club has been suggested, and JS has ambitions for community cooking. Bristol Charities agreed to partially fund a kitchenette in the dining hall, but the project was halted due to health and safety concerns and higher costs. RP mentioned that it might still be possible with more planning and funding.</p>	
6.4	Could the PTA fund the kitchenette?	

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	The project is too high cost for the PTA. The PTA is focusing on smaller projects with visible impact, such as outdoor eating areas and a reading shed.	
6.5	Could the children visit a secondary school for cooking? This could be arranged on an occasional basis but not regularly.	
7	Staff Wellbeing/Staff Voice	
7.1	JS reported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that a wellbeing audit had been conducted with one TA who is the Mental Health Lead. Feedback was that TAs are feeling positive about the Senior Leadership Team's (SLT) understanding of their personal needs and what impacts on their mental health. Further information will be available from the next CLF survey and there will shortly be a re-launch of the school's own termly wellbeing survey. Overall, the staff team is in good spirits. 	
7.2	How are the new teachers? We are really happy with the recruitment process and those recruited.	
8	Academy Council Report	
8.1	Attendance	
8.1.1	JS highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the main reasons for non-attendance last term were seasonal illnesses. The school's attendance ranking within the Local Authority (LA) and Trust was good. Pupil Premium (PP) students had higher non-attendance rates, with individual cases explained. 	
8.1.2	Do you report when pupils are fined? We meet with an LA representative to agree on the process when fines are issued.	
8.1.3	Do fines make a difference to attendance? Fines don't significantly impact attendance. Most not authorised absences are due to family travel for illness or extended periods.	
8.1.4	Do parents understand the culture that children should be in school? Yes, our families do understand the importance of school attendance and the school's ongoing efforts have resulted in very good attendance overall.	
8.1.5	It was noted that there had been one exclusion in Term 1 which was low.	
8.2	Quality of Teaching	
8.2.1	JS/MC highlighted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the Year 6 mock results are broadly in line with the performance of the last two years. The data in the report reflects the current assessment, and JS/MC will teach a small, targeted group daily to focus on bridging the gaps. The curriculum at Frome Vale includes a strong focus on reading. De-codable books for phonics have been ordered. 	
8.2.2	Will the book order increase the stock? Following a phonics audit, £3000 in funding has been secured to refresh the de-codable phonics books, with some requiring replacement. This process has been useful, and the school has a strong phonics team.	

Item	Description	Action
9	Disadvantage: Pupil Premium, Looked After Children, Carers	
9.1	JM reported that he had really appreciated the further information provided in the report following his request at a previous meeting. Going forward JM requested the ability to track data through the years. JS advised that she was pleased that the central data team now have this in progress and it should be in place for Term 4 following the next data drop. It was noted that this information would provide a genuine understanding of the Pupil premium profile. JS highlighted that 66% of Pupil Premium children who are not on track are SEND.	
10	Safeguarding	
	<i>Safeguarding Term2 Report had been shared</i>	
10.1	JS/LS reported that improvements have been made around Safeguarding support concerns from the LA and the Police are now much quicker at reporting domestic abuse incidents to the school.	
10.2	JS recently met with a representative from LA who is looking at SEND needs in Bristol. They reviewed the historical plans from 2022 and explored the potential use of available space at the NEST building, which the LA will investigate further.	
10.3	Following discussion, it was noted that the response to the academy's expression of interest to the LA regarding the growing SEND need in Bristol would likely take some time. JS agreed to follow up and inform the academy council as needed.	
11	SEND, including Link Update	
11.1	<p>PS highlighted the overlap between SEND, safeguarding, and pupils with Pupil Premium (PP), expressing interest in identifying how many cases overlap.</p> <p>JS noted that while PP/SEND data is easily accessible, safeguarding might need separate analysis. MC observed that many PP children with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs often have related safeguarding concerns. LS questioned whether these overlaps should be considered a cause for concern or a safeguarding issue. The group agreed on the importance of understanding the desired outcomes, with JS agreeing to analyse the data profiles, noting that smaller numbers would make it easier to identify patterns.</p> <p>Action: JS to review the data profiles for SEND, safeguarding and Pupil Premium</p>	JS
11.2	<p>Discussion took place about the ongoing shortage of SEND resources in the LA, which remains unchanged. JS highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Lou Coles, the Trust SEND Lead, had met with the LA twice since September, however, there does not appear to have been any follow up. JS had followed up on behalf of Frome Vale which had led to some progress. KR had spoken to Lou Coles about the impact on specific cases at FVA. The total SEND numbers in school are the highest for years and the school's criteria for identifying SEND is more accurate than before. The profile of SEND has changed with more communication, interaction, and cognition needs, including children in nappies and with profound learning needs. The school is still having consults through for children with high learning needs, where the school cannot meet need. 	
11.3	<p>What is the quality of EHCPs?</p> <p>They are not accurate; managing EHCPs and SEND need in school is increasingly difficult.</p>	
12	Finance, Health & Safety and Estates	
12.1	Health & Safety	
12.1.1	<p>RP gave an update, highlighting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lockdown practice last term went well, change of locks on doors made easier. 	

Item	Description	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moved the scooter compound to outside the gates. Given funding to have outside dinner hall in the KS1 playground which is going to be tarmacked. The Health & Safety Audit last term was judged outstanding. 	
12.2	Finance	
12.2.1	JS reported that the school is on track to meet its targets, with a small surplus generated from savings following Tracy leaving and her replacement being appointed at a lower cost. Additionally, a small saving was achieved by replacing an SMSA.	
12.2.2	Is anything earmarked for that surplus? Essential repairs, e.g. lift.	
13	Policies	
13.1	Councillors reviewed the policies listed.	
13.1.1	Councillors approved the FVA Admissions Policy 2026/27.	
13.1.2	Councillors noted the local adaptations which had been made to the CLF Complaints Policy.	
13.1.3	Councillors noted the following CLF policies: Exclusions and Suspensions; Positive Handling and Physical Intervention; Sponsorship and Ethical Fundraising; Trustee and Councillor Expenses Policy.	
14	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
14.1	<u>Action to COAC: SEND lack of capacity within the LA and budget considerations next term will be a challenge for SEND support as there is no longer top up funding.</u>	CS
14.2	How many children are there with EHCPs? Four at present, with one to submit. We will have 6 with EHCPs.	
15	AOB	
15.1	None.	

The meeting closed at 7.00pm

Next meetings:

FVA			
AC1	Wed	25-Sep-2024	5-8pm (online/in person)
AC2	Tues	8-Oct-2024	5-7pm
AC3	Tues	26-Nov-2024	5-7pm
AC4	Tues	25-Feb-2025	5-7pm
AC5	Tues	22-Apr-2025	5-7pm
AC6	Tues	1-Jul-2025	5-7pm