

Minutes – Frome Vale Academy Council

Date	26 November 2024	
Location:	Frome Vale Academy	
Time:	5.15 pm	
Present:	Laura Walder (LW)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Chair)
	Paul Stephens (PS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Christian Simons (CS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Vice Chair)
	Jim Mulcrone (JM)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Ricki Petchley (RP)	Support Staff Academy Councillor
	Phoebe Tutu (PT)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
	Shanta Amdurer (SA)	Parent Academy Councillor
	Lori Streich (LS)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Apologies:	Tracy Pakrooh (TP)	Teacher Academy Councillor
Attendees:	Kate Richardson (KR)	CLF Director of Education
	Jan Saunders (JS)	Senior Principal
	Linda Corbidge (LC)	Academy Council Clerk
	Miglena Mironova (MM)	Observer (new Parent Academy Councillor)
	Maria Cerepanova (MC)	Vice Principal (<i>from item 8.1.5</i>)

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	LW welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Miglena, the new Parent Academy Councillor. Introductions were made by all present.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations of interest.	
3	Governance	
3.1	Membership	
3.1.1	<p>LW outlined changes to membership since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian will take on the Chair’s role from 27 November following Laura stepping down from her Chair and Sponsor role. • Phoebe is appointed as a Sponsor Councillor from 26 November. • Shanta has now been confirmed as Parent Academy Councillor. • Miglena has been elected as the second Parent Academy Councillor and is awaiting completion of checks. • Vice Chair role now vacant. <p><u>ACTION: Academy councillors to talk to Christian if interested in Vice Chair role.</u></p>	All
3.2	Link Councillor Roles	
3.2.1	<p>LW noted that everyone was now settled into their link roles.</p> <p><u>ACTION: SA/PS to liaise regarding joint SEND role.</u></p>	SA/PS

Item	Description	Action
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held 8 October 2024 were agreed as a true record.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<i>Organise a session on interpreting data for Academy Councillors to include new councillors.</i> JS explained the more detailed data and process behind the data shared with councillors.	
5.2	<i>JM will liaise with MC to discuss use of data going forward re Pupil Premium.</i> JM is meeting with MC this Friday and will report to next meeting. <u>ACTION: JM to report to next meeting on use of Pupil Premium data.</u>	JM
5.3	<i>Update on Environmental Sustainability Plan suggested at last meeting</i> CS has sent a draft plan to JS <u>ACTION: CS/JS to meet to take forward Environmental Sustainability Plan.</u>	CS/JS
8	Academy Council Report	
	<i>AC Report for Term 2 and PINS Sensory and Physical Environmental Audit had been shared.</i>	
8.1	Data	
8.1.1	Referring to data in the report, JS indicated that an uplift in Writing data is expected, particularly in Years 1 and 2 following further embedding of the strategy later this year.	
8.1.2	Are you concerned about any of the trails? There are no concerns. For the first time “Developing” is now a target for the Combined Score on the Strategic Plan from the Trust.	
8.1.3	Is that changing the approach? The approach is changing, and this has been discussed with the Trust.	
8.1.4	Is there any cross checking within CLF? We have requested anonymous writing during moderation within the Trust. Discussion followed about the difficulties of consistency when using different test papers from various schools within the Trust. Councillors commented that this is becoming more important as the Trust grows.	
8.1.5	Seven children in Year 2 are participating in catch-up Phonics sessions – when did the catch-up sessions start and how have they progressed? These sessions started in Year 2 for children who were either new to the school or did not pass Phonics in Year 1. The short, sharp checks are progressing well. Three children in Year 5 should be back on track when their teacher returns. We are closely monitoring these students to determine the necessary provisions as historically; these students have been on track.	
9	Disadvantage: Pupil Premium, Looked After Children, Carers etc.	
9.1	The number of children receiving Pupil Premium (PP) has reduced – what is the implication of that? The number of PP children has reduced to 38%. This reduction is balanced out by an overall increase in student numbers.	
9.2	Are there any children in Early Years who should be receiving it?	

Item	Description	Action
	All eligible siblings have been collected. It is important that we encourage families to apply for PP when their circumstances change.	
10	Safeguarding	
	<i>Safeguarding Term 1 Report and Link Councillor Visit Note had been shared.</i>	
10.1	<p>LS (Safeguarding Link) raised a concern regarding communication issues between the Police, Local Authority (LA), and the school. LS emphasised that there are no safeguarding concerns about the school itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LS raised a concern on communication between the Police, Local Authority (LA), and the school around safeguarding issues. It was noted that the link between these entities often breaks down due to a lack of resources within the LA. When the school reports incidents but does not receive responses, it leads to a breakdown in communication. LS raised an incident from Term 1 as unacceptable and had discussed it with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Steve Bane, the Trust Safeguarding Lead. Whilst management-level communication within CLF is satisfactory, individual schools face challenges. • PS (SEND Link) raised overlapping concerns regarding responses for SEND. There are significant delays in Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Bristol, affecting children at FVA who require substantial support. These delays are a significant problem, with some children at FVA not receiving the necessary support. CLF has engaged with Bristol City Council (BCC) to address the needs of two specific children. The LA's new staff and rescheduling of meetings, combined with rising needs and reducing resources, are causing delays and impacting various groups. The SEND and safeguarding students are being failed in different areas, which has a significant impact on children as they transition. • LW reported that she had raised concerns about safeguarding communication between Bristol LA and FVA at the COAC meeting. High-level concerns at FVA were considered, with discussions around Bristol's high threshold for action. These issues have been escalated through COAC, and Susie Weaver will respond to CS going forward. • KR commented that 50% of LAs are inadequate for safeguarding and that CLF are aware of the lack of LA resources for SEND support. Following CLF previously writing to the LA there is a defined escalation route and the Trust would always support parents to complain. Due to the increasing volume of parental complaints, PS recommended escalating issues with lawyers. There was also a discussion on involving local MPs. • LS emphasised the duty to flag LA failures, particularly concerning Year 6 students who have not received necessary support. KR supported escalating issues, including consideration being given to contacting lawyers to raise concerns. There are concerns about the relationship between the Bristol Safeguarding Team and the school, and the need to chase even for high-level issues. It was noted that it is harder for children to fall through the gaps at FVA due to the processes in place. • JM suggested using the press to generate public opinion against a failing authority. Discussion followed on potential impact. • JS expressed concerns about how SEND delays affect relationships with parents at FVA. PS noted that a lot of resources from FVA are being used to support SEND issues. There was a discussion on what more can be done with the site. KR mentioned possible new government support for nursery provision. PS questioned whether a new resource base would have the support of the Trust. 	

Item	Description	Action
	<p>KR confirmed that it would receive support and that logistics would not be a barrier due to central team support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KR said that it was reassuring to hear the concerns from academy councillors and added that the Trust is working to bridge the gap caused by LA resource shortages - four out of five LA's have a Written Statement of Action around SEND. <p>Actions were agreed as follows:</p> <p><u>ACTION: KR will discuss the best escalation route with Susie Weaver, whether for SEND and safeguarding or just SEND and draft a letter for CS.</u></p> <p><u>ACTION: KR will revisit plans with the local authority regarding other buildings and pursue support for a resource base.</u></p>	<p>KR/CS</p> <p>KR</p>
10.2	<p>KR expressed her thanks to Laura who had been a fantastic Chair. <i>(KR left the meeting)</i></p>	
11	SEND, including Link Update	
	<i>SEND Link Councillor Visit Note had been shared</i>	
11.1	See item 10.	
12	Health & Safety	
12.1	RP reported that CLF was providing good support to the academy. A new stair carpet is being fitted next week and Health & Safety is going well.	
13	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	
13.1	<p>It was agreed that consideration would be given after Christmas regarding the appointment of a councillor to take on an EDI link role.</p> <p><u>ACTION: Consideration of the EDI link role appointment</u></p>	CS
14	Policies	
14.1	Councillors noted the reviewed CLF Template Academy Policies: Asbestos Policy; Fire Procedures, Fire Guidance.	
14.2	Councillors approved the Academy Policies: Behaviour and Bullying; EYFS; SEN; Accessibility Plan.	
14.3	SA raised the question of whether the name "Behaviour Policy" should be changed. This led to a discussion around the culture associated with the policy.	
15	Link Councillor updates	
15.1	There were no further updates.	
16	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
16.1	None.	
17	AOB	
17.1	<u>ACTION: 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.</u>	CS/JS
17.2	JS expressed gratitude to LW for her calm and measured approach as Chair. JS highlighted that LW's support had been instrumental in the school's cultural changes and thanked her for being part of the school's journey. JS also echoed the sentiments expressed by KR.	
17.3	JS reported that it had been identified during a recent SEND evaluation that there should be a focus on transitions within Trust schools.	

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

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