

Minutes – Bristol Brunel Academy Council

Version: Approved
Date: 3rd March 2025
Location: Bristol Brunel Academy
Time: 5.30 pm

Academy Councillors in attendance:

Nicky McAllister (Chair) - Sponsor Councillor
 Heather Milburn – Student Advocate
 Sharon Porter – LA Representative
 Georgina Hopkins – Parent Councillor
 Saima Ahktar – Sponsor Councillor
 Vic Boynton – Sponsor Councillor

Invitees:

Jen Cusack – Head of School
 Kelly Jefferies – Vice Principal
 Cameron Shaw – Executive Principal
 Charlotte Seavill – Clerk
 Izzy Grimes – Teacher
 Marius Dan - SENDCO

	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	NM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were received from TS and RH.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations. Councillors were reminded to complete the 24/25 written declaration of interest form on Governor Hub as soon as possible.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	<p>The Academy Council thanked Nicola Pearce for all of her support and dedication during her many years as an academy councillor at BBA. Nicola's resignation was received earlier in the term and has now stepped down.</p> <p>The Academy Council has the following vacancies: 1 Teaching Councillor</p> <p>The Sponsored and Parent vacancies have now been filled and applications sent to the interested candidates.</p> <p>Councillors agreed link roles for the year:</p> <p>Safeguarding – SA Careers – vacant SEND – vacant Disadvantage – GH T&L – VB Policy committee – SA and RH - 1 councillors needed</p>	

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	In addition to these link roles, it was also agreed that the Academy Council would like to retain its focus on EDI and so SP would continue in this link role.	
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting of 2 nd December 2024 were agreed as accurate and approved.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	<u>ACTION: JC to bring the minutes late and actions to the next meeting.</u> 13/05/2024 - Data will be available at the next meeting – carry forward 01/07/2024 – carry forward 7/10/24 – gave an update on the number of students who are late to the academy and will review again in T3 agenda – CARRY FORWARD 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	JC
5.2	<u>ACTION: JC to consider with SLT how critical thinking skills/future citizens teaching/development can be developed.</u> 7/10/24 – CARRY FORWARD 2/12/2024 – CARRY FORWARD 3/3/25 – COMPLETE	JC
5.3	<u>ACTION: JC to ask HR for the Trust policy on inclusive recruitment</u> 7/10/24 – Councillors discussed the Academies subscription to Socially to ensure adverts are reaching as wide a group of potential candidates as possible. <u>ACTION – JC to email Mike Reynolds to understand what is included in the subscription.</u> <u>ACTION: NM to raise inclusive recruitment at COAC</u> <u>ACTION: JC to ensure this is included in the ARSA</u> 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	JC
5.4	<u>ACTION: JC to invite the mental health lead to the next meeting.</u> 7/10/24 – Clerk to diarise in T3 agenda. 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	JC
5.6	A: We could start to use iPads again during parents' evening (<u>ACTION: JC.</u>) 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	JC
5.7	<u>ACTION: JC to organise an AC learning walk (see point 8.16)</u> 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 – Councillors should arrange a meeting with their SLT link during the AC meeting time in June.	JC
5.8	Councillors discussed the Anti-Racist School Award (ARSA) and the need for a link Councillor for the award. <u>ACTION: CS to diarise discussion with new Councillors once appointed.</u> 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 – carry forward	
5.9	<u>ACTION: Councillors requested that the Eco-Coordinator join the next meeting to provide an update – Clerk to diarise.</u> 2/12/2024 – carry forward 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	CS
5.10	The Eco Schools Award item was postponed until the next meeting. <u>ACTION: Clerk to diarise</u> 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	CS
5.11	It would be really helpful to organise termly link visits to support these priorities so that you can triangulate information shared with you in meetings. Staff links and SLT can provide a framework of questions to guide as necessary. <u>ACTION: All link Councillors</u> 3/3/25 - COMPLETE	All

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5.12	We have decided that we don't want to submit evidence as a box ticking exercise, we want it to be truly embedded and have meaning. It has to be genuine. We aren't worried about the timescales, we would rather ensure we get it right. <u>ACTION: SP to meet with Mark Saunders to understand the progress made so far.</u> <u>3/3/25 - COMPLETE</u>	SP
5.13	The survey was purposely anonymous, but staff who provided written feedback have been asked for a conversation, if they would like to, to talk about their feedback and look at what can be done to address it. Very few people have responded and it has been difficult to provide a response or look at next steps in all cases. <u>ACTION: VB and JC to discuss alternative survey approaches</u> <u>3/3/25 - COMPLETE</u>	JC/VB
5.14	We need to clarify the rationale for the group because we want it to be inclusive and we need to understand if the purpose of the group is to bring together staff who don't feel heard or want to collective voice as we need to address the root of the problem if there is one. <u>ACTION: SA to provide more information at the next meeting.</u> <u>3/3/25 – Clerk to add to the agenda in May</u>	SA
6	Eco Schools Award	
6.1	IG gave a presentation to Councillors about the schools Eco Schools Award, the students involved and the projects underway around the school such as recycling, Earth Day plans, energy saving ideas, special vegan food options for Earth Day, the eco conference and how students are promoting their work via posters and assemblies. Councillors thanks IG and the students for their work in this area and encouraged praise for the good behaviours practices in place.	
6.2	Q: Are vegan options always available?	
6.3	A: Yes, but some students choose not to take advantage of the options available. The plan for Earth Day is to make vegan food the main option rather than a side option.	
7	Mental Health and Wellbeing	
7.1	MD gave a presentation to Councillors about the ways that the academy supports the mental health and wellbeing for students, staff, volunteers and families, and the policy in place. Councillors discussed having a MH lead for the academy, talked about EAP, mental health education, PHSE curriculum, delivering key messages to students, taking feedback and information from students to inform the mental health curriculum, Wellbeing Wednesdays where staff finish earlier on Wednesday and can attend social events, the responses to the wellbeing survey carried out in Autumn 2024 including what has been done to empower staff, training around responding to mental health issues, training in conjunction with safeguarding, CPD sessions, the number of mental health first aiders has expanded in the staff team and implementing a referral system in a confidential way. From a student perspective, there are pastoral staff for each year group trained for mental health first response to recognise the early signs of anxiety and depression in students. There have been wellbeing surveys for students, drop in counsellor sessions in school, and access to 121 mentoring if required. Next steps include developing a peer support programme with older students coaching younger students around key times such as options or exams, continued work with local partners such as off the record and encouraging parents to attend workshops and gather their feedback. Staff are creating a supporting school environment by making best use of facilities such as The Hive, a lovely space for working and socialising. There will be a focus on mental health awareness week, supervision for counsellors, a CLF mental health group, menopause café and occupational health referrals as well as focussed assemblies and events for various celebrations.	

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	Feedback from staff has been heard and enacted upon and new initiatives such as the upcoming American style supper, secret friend scheme and social activities have been popular.	
7.2	Q: Is there still an EAP available and if so, how well is it used?	
7.3	A: Yes, there is an EAP in place but as it is confidential, we don't know how often it is used or the reasons. As a Trust, there may be trust-wide data available.	
7.4	<u>ACTION: JC to investigate if there is EAP usage data available.</u>	JC
7.5	Q: Is there enough resource to meet demand?	
7.6	A: Staff support each other well but there is a need for more mental health first aiders and the peer mentoring for students will help going forward. There are so many more young people needing support now which staff provide and then need support themselves as the role becomes more demanding.	
8	Principal's Report	
8.1	Councillors received and reviewed the Principal's report ahead of the meeting and submitted questions via Governor Hub.	
8.2	Q: What is the current recruitment status since publication of the report? What impact is this having?	
8.3	A: Since the report, 1 out of the 2 LSA roles has been filled. There will be an attendance lead on SLT to drive attendance throughout the school from September and an Attendance Link Worker who will focus on engaging with families. There is also an advert for a RS and History teacher and potentially a part time role in Maths.	
8.4	Q: Is it difficult to recruit at the moment?	
8.5	It has been really difficult to recruit a primary specialist and maternity covers continue to be difficult to recruit to.	
8.6	Q: What is the nature of poor behaviour? Are there key patterns (e.g. truancy or violence) and is it a core of the same learners or more widespread?	
8.7	A: There are a cohort of students who are consistently internally truanting, they are difficult to engage and there is a lot of defiance. There is a lack of engagement and sense of belonging in that group. We have allocated a lot of money to alternative provisions to see if we can engage them in a different way.	
8.8	Q: What was the profile of parents/carers at the coffee evening? Are they catching the most vulnerable cohorts? How does this compare to parents' evening attendance patterns? How many attended the Term 2 coffee evening and how do you deliver the message to those who are not there?	
8.9	A: There were very few attendees but that won't stop us hosting these events. We ran it in the evening this time rather than the morning and staff delivered to the group. We will continue to advertise it to parents but we are yet to reach the parents we most want to engage. The theme was behaviour for learning and homework and the information was shared afterwards on the website.	
8.10	<u>ACTION: JC to arrange for the 33 non attendees at the coffee evening to be followed up to understand the barriers to attending.</u>	JC
8.11	Q: What was the uptake for February half term sessions? Did targeted learners attend?	
8.12	A: There were around 30/100 invitees with an additional 10 students who arrive who weren't originally invited. A session was cancelled due to illness. SLT have reviewed how effective they are and sessions have been adapted to try and increase attendance (eg. Later start times, running in the morning only etc).	
8.13	Q: Mentoring – Can you tell us more about the issues, is this BBA specific? Does the issue relate to a core group of students? Is the issue related to a requirement for further staff training?	
8.14	A: It is unusual to have a surplus in funding for us. It has been generated by not being able to recruit in places. We have exhausted our inhouse resources and gone beyond our remit with	

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	training and the resources we have. We can't train any more and it would be good to have more staff but we can't sustain the salaries in future years. We continue to use Snowdon Village resources.	
8.15	Q: Home visits – what is the process for home visits? Are key students from a particular demographic? How will you ensure that the visiting team begin to build a sense belonging?	
8.16	A: We have data available for home visits. 55% are families in receipt of PP. Home visits are done by year teams according to a timetable for weekly visits. Logs are kept in CPOMS of home visits and if no one is home then we leave a calling card. Home visits don't necessarily get the students back into school but it does build a connection with the students and their family in their home.	
8.17	Q: DOOYA – “A significant step forwards has been the inclusion of questioning racial biases within this data and there are three questions dedicated to this. For example ‘Compare the DOOYA grade to the assessment % for students from different backgrounds and ethnicities. How does this compare to their counterparts. Is there evidence of bias in the allocation of DOOYA grades?’ Our work with the Anti-Racist School Award has positively influenced this area.” – In what way has the work with the ARSA influenced this area?	
8.18	A: This was discussed in the raising attainment meeting and is still in the very early stages. Staff have discussed how we grade, group students in terms of demographics and specific needs. We ensure that our classes have the right mix of students. We continue to talk to staff about unconscious bias and systems such as marking blank scripts etc.	
8.19	Q: What outcomes do you hope for and how will you monitor and evaluate the success of the £100k you are putting in for additional support?	
8.20	A: The proof will be in students being more willing to engage, better attendance and less defiance. There will be a mixture of onsite and offsite provision, both 121 and group work.	
8.21	Q: We can't be the only school facing these challenges at the moment. Are there any central resources we can access?	
8.22	A: Some issues may be more acute here but it's not unique to BBA. Nationally there are challenges. The Trust wide focus is on SEND and attendance.	
8.23	Impressive response from the Student Council Consultation. How can the AC support these identified priorities, are there financial implications and what are the short term wins and long term goals?	
8.24	Students are engaged in the decision-making process and meet with key stakeholders. There is a focus on developing a culture of rewarding everyday positive behaviour. Longer term we are developing an inclusive culture for all students, developing an action plan, trying to encourage a wider group of students to get involved, and overcoming the financial challenges around rewards and working with students to understand the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.	
8.25	<u>ACTION: HM to propose some dates for the Academy Council to meet with the Student Council.</u>	HM
8.26	Q: AJ Day-Cycling in. How can this be encouraged?	
8.27	A: There are many students who already walk, cycle or scoot to school so we need to discourage driving rather than encouraging the other. Parking can be especially tricky here.	
8.28	<u>ACTION: JC to organise a newsletter item to discourage driving to school.</u>	JC
8.29	Q: The number of Police Initiatives is unprecedented! Are they helpful and having an effect?	
8.30	They have been an amazing support to us and really informative.	
8.31	Q: The SEND ARV shows encouraging results. Can you give us a bit more detail re the study room improvements and use of LSA's?	

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8.32	<p>A: The study room has changed a lot. It's less like a youth club because that was really unhelpful for students with sensory needs. The furniture has changes and there is a much more academically orientated atmosphere. It is staffed continually throughout the day. There is also a mind space room for those who are dysregulated so that they have a space away from others wishing to study. The focus is around teaching students how to help themselves when they are dysregulated.</p> <p>Some ALPs are telling us they can't help our students so we are doing the best we can with the resources we have available to us. There is a lot of work going on around LSA attendance and planning for contracts for the year ahead.</p>	
8.33	Q: When will we receive reviews of PD actions re SEND T&L?	
8.34	A: We will be able to share data in the autumn term when the cycle is complete for this academic year.	
8.35	Q: Academy damage – how many incidents have there been?	
8.36	A: A letter will be sent to parents shortly about the damage. It has been unprecedented levels of damage over the last 18 months with over £7,000 of repairs needed recently. We have needed to stop using 2 sets of toilets and will be investing in more CCTV points. The shutters will allow us to close certain toilets at certain times of the day. Shutters will cost around £15,000. Students have been truanting in staff toilets so we are investing in new locks that staff can access using their pass. For students with a medical pass, there will always be toilets available and they will be allowed to use a toilet at any time. Toilets are currently being staffed at all times and there aren't enough staff to keep all toilets open at all times.	
8.37	Q: Is Voice 21 used across the school?	
8.38	It is in a pilot stage at the moment being trialled in certain areas.	
8.39	<u>ACTION: JC to provide an update on the Voice 21 pilot at a later meeting.</u>	JC
9	Other agenda items	
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was no further update on safeguarding. There will be a safeguarding audit later this term Councillors were reassured by JC that the budget is healthy this year The H&S audit was rated as outstanding – congratulations to the team The SCR audit was successful Staff wellbeing was discussed in the agenda Student voice was discussed in the agenda 	
9.2	<u>ACTION: Clerk to diarise EDI agenda item in May</u>	Clerk
10	Policies	
10.1	The admissions policy was ratified by the Academy Council.	
	Matters for COAC/Board	
10.1	None.	
	AOB	
11.1	Councillors are invited to the upcoming awards evening on 6 th May 2025.	

ACTIONS:

5.7	<p><u>ACTION: JC to organise an AC learning walk (see point 8.16)</u></p> <p>2/12/2024 – carry forward</p> <p><u>3/3/25 – Councillors should arrange a meeting with their SLT link during the AC meeting time in June.</u></p>	JC
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