

# Minutes – Bristol Brunel Academy Council

**Version:** Approved  
**Date** 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023  
**Location:** Bristol Brunel Academy  
**Time:** 5.30 pm

## Attendees:

Nicky McAllister (Chair) - Sponsor Councillor  
 Nicola Pearce – Sponsor Councillor  
 Helen Pascoe – Sponsor Councillor  
 Saima Akhtar– Sponsor Councillor  
 Jon Jones – Principal  
 Naomi Soper – Teaching staff councillor  
 Nicky Goodall – Parent Councillor  
 Sydney Wesley-Weeks – Support Staff Councillor  
 Emma Thorn – Sponsor Councillor (online)

## Invitees:

Jen Cusack – Vice Principal  
 Jonny Mercer – LA Representative – Observer  
 Sue Maizonnier – Observer  
 Craig Jordan – Observer  
 Mark Saunders - Observer

## Apologies:

Dan Nicholls – Executive Principal

Item	Description	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	
1.1	NM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies are recorded above.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.2	No new declarations.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Academy Council Membership</b>	
3.1	The Academy Council sent their condolences to Rahana’s family at this sad time and thanked Rahana for her support, contribution and passion for children in the community, especially the difference her work made for black children.  The Academy Council has the following vacancies: Student Advocate Councillor Parent Councillor	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting of 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 were agreed as accurate.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	

Item	Description	Action
5.1	All councillors to consider joining the policies committee and email HP with their interest. <b>This action is ongoing.</b>	
5.2	NM noted that it was in the recommendations from the ARV that the barriers to SEND students should be explored further – <b>ACTION JJ</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup> May - COMPLETE</b>	
5.3	ACTION: JJ will include a breakdown of groups for attendance data in the next AC report <b>15<sup>th</sup> May – COMPLETE</b>	
5.4	This is a good challenge. At present if something is mentioned it gets a purple thread, but it does not necessarily mean something has been improved for disadvantaged students. It could be more tangible such as where the attendance team phone home for disadvantaged students first; but that might be a bit reductive. <b><u>ACTION: After discussion, it was agreed that anything that pertains to disadvantage pupils is purple, but actions are put in bold text.</u></b> <b>15<sup>th</sup> May - COMPLETE</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>CEIAG</b>	
6.1	CJ gave a presentation on the CEIAG work at the academy including the Envision programme, the Into University programme and the Insight programme. Other initiatives include the Eco Summit Day, Raising Aspirations, work experience opportunities, mock interview days with external providers, National Careers Week, the Bristol Old Vic project, groups with Airbus and UWE, City of Bristol College and opportunities assemblies, workshops and pop ups for refugees and asylum seekers. The biggest barriers for these projects have been ensuring that the family are involved so there have been targeted appointments at parents evening and options evening, attendance at PEP and EHCP reviews as well as invitations for families to join careers meetings and newsletter items. These have led to a reduction in the number of NEET students. There was a discussion about the Gatsby Benchmarks which have been increased and maintained over the last few years. Work experience has returned following the COVID break and restrictions. The CEIAG provision at the academy is topping the table against other CLF and Bristol schools and as Trust leader, we will be working in collaboration to improve the provision across the Trust. Student feedback of the CEIAG programme is very positive and Academy Councillors praised the work highly.	
<b>6.2</b>	<b>What happens if a student refuses to engage with P16 options.</b>	
6.3	All students have 121 guidance meetings, and we work with Year Teams to understand any potential NEET students. We are working with Creative Youth Network who work with high-risk-of-NEET students as well as working with parents and families. The LA will be notified of any NEET students, and we call all Y11 leavers to confirm their destinations.	
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Are we working with UWE?</b>	
6.5	Yes, we are working with them as a university and as an employer. Travel prices restrict what we can offer but UWE have funded coaches for us.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Personal Development</b>	
7.1	MS gave a presentation on personal development. There was a strong foundation laid last year around personal development, which has been reviewed and developed this year including the work towards the Anti-Racist School Award, which will be submitted shortly for the silver award. The gold award required national collaboration which will be the next focus. Key strengths in personal development include the leadership and governance. Our curriculum and hidden curriculum are well ahead of other schools. The decolonisation of the curriculum was done a few years ago and students are keen to see	

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	<p>this go further. The pedagogy and racial literacy group are strong and will introduce a termly project for all curriculum areas. The hidden curriculum such as the welcome signs in different languages, the house names, the flags on display all put the school in a good position for the ARSA.</p> <p>Next steps include partnerships with the wider community and building a sense of belonging for them which we would hope would develop our students' engagement. We would look to extend the Race Equality Tool to cover other protected characteristics. We will develop our work towards the Diana Award, a national accreditation around anti-bullying and well as a focus on online safety, respect and wellbeing.</p> <p>Students who exceed expectations are rewarded for good attendance and behaviour with BBA badges, house celebrations as well as cinema awards and trips such as Thorpe Park.</p> <p>There will be a process to streamline the Brunel Way so that it is easier for students to follow which will be done in collaboration with staff and students.</p> <p>There will be a review of the student leadership programme to streamline and refocus the groups to ensure greater impact.</p>	
<b>7.2</b>	<b>How can the Academy Council check in on things like anti-bullying, student leaders and school council to ensure we are getting the right balance across those groups?</b>	
7.3	Anti-bullying leaders were chosen by Year Teams and Learning Support Staff who targeted students from various groups. We do consider the make up of leadership groups to ensure they are representative.	
<b>7.4</b>	<b>It's interesting that you're looking at the school council and including the committees and groups. How are we sure that the decision and actions of these groups are developing citizenship and responsibility?</b>	
7.5	We are working on how we formalise inclusive groups opinions and take them forward via student council. We want to streamline the process to bring all groups to the table to have their opinions and actions formalised, coached by a member of staff to ensure meetings are strategic, with an aim to be fully student led, with agendas etc in time.	
<b>7.6</b>	<b><u>ACTION: JC to run a Student Advocate recruitment process.</u></b>	<b><u>JC</u></b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Academy Council Report</b>	
8.1	The Academy Council Report was shared via Teams prior to the meeting.	
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Councillors were pleased to see the continued involvement of students in Environmental Action. Can we be confident that we are making the changes we need to make within the academy with regards to energy saving and recycling etc.</b>	
8.3	<p>Students requested a meeting with Skanska to discuss their recycling policy as they didn't believe that the rubbish was being sorted. They asked to visit the depot but this wasn't deemed appropriate so they showed a video of the rubbish being sorted into recycling and non-recycling waste by hand.</p> <p>Students challenge Skanska that by not having recycling bins in school where good habits can be formed, we are not promoting or encouraging recycling outside of the academy either.</p>	
<b>8.4</b>	<b><u>ACTION: JC to provide Skanska waste video in next AC pack and an update on energy consumption.</u></b>	<b>JC</b>
<b>8.5</b>	<b><u>ACTION: Academy to consider travel plans for healthier environment especially students travelling to and from school.</u></b>	<b>JC</b>
<b>8.6</b>	<b>The reading survey was interesting – what prompted the survey and what are the resulting actions?</b>	
8.7	We do the survey annually to see how students feel about the tutor reading programme and feedback includes students wanting to choose their own books and to read at their own pace.	
<b>8.8</b>	<b>How are we getting parents more involved in school life?</b>	

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8.9	We started with coffee mornings, which were attended by very small numbers of parents so we will introduce a coffee session after school also. The Year Teams are good at engaging parents and make lots of calls, arrange parents' evening appointments etc.	
<b>8.10</b>	<b>How confident are we that would interventions for SEND student attendance will lead to successful outcomes?</b>	
8.11	There is now one member of staff taking leadership of attendance. They are providing an individualised approach and vulnerable groups are prioritised first. We have dedicated time for the pastoral team to make calls. We can't yet measure the impact as it's too soon, but we will provide feedback at a later date.	
<b>8.12</b>	<b>In previous years, Y11 attendance drops at this time of year. What have we done to prevent this?</b>	
8.13	There are some students with severe anxiety around attendance. They have reduced timetables to ensure they are able to attend and attend the right lessons. For the remaining students, we ensure there are measures in place to ensure disruption is reduced, such as different start times, offering breakfast clubs, team revision, SLT interventions, a SEND exams team, calls home and student collection.	
<b>8.14</b>	<b>Are there strategies nationally that are working elsewhere that we can share?</b>	
8.15	No, we are reflective of the national picture and the CLF picture. CLF are the most proactive with their attendance team and strategies.	
<b>8.16</b>	<b>In terms of mental health and wellbeing, what's happening and how are we coping with the systems and interventions available to us?</b>	
8.17	It's a national problem, with lots of anxiety, school refusal and EBSR. GPs will refer back to us and CAMHS thresholds have been raised. Schools are taking on so much more. We have 2 counsellors which is good. We can deal with some things generically but offer a bespoke approach where we can. We are coping as best we can with the interventions and support available to us. We are in a good position compared to others.	
<b>8.18</b>	<b>With regards to the homework pilot, what has driven the intervention and what will the impact and next steps be?</b>	
8.19	We have seen it working well in another academy. Some departments have really successful programmes but others don't so the idea was to introduce knowledge organisers, initially trialling them with the incoming Y7 cohort. We can then find the gaps and issues and improve it ready for the following Y7 cohort. DCLs will lead the project and will provide feedback at a later date. <b>ACTION: Clerk to diarise.</b>	<b>Clerk</b>
<b>8.20</b>	<b><u>ACTION: JC to liaise with other schools who use the same homework system to share best practice.</u></b>	<b>JC</b>
<b>8.21</b>	<b>What do the ARV tell you about T&amp;L and the quality of education?</b>	
8.22	We've never asked them to scrutinise AP work before, or T&L and RA so there was lots to focus on and we will take feedback to the next SLT and Exec SLT meetings. Reading programmes and staff and student voice was positive. An area raised for improvement is the food from the canteen so we will seek further student voice about this. There is a new Literacy Lead at the academy who will be linked to the East Central Literacy Leads network for some external collaboration.	
<b>8.23</b>	<b>What strategies are in place to support Y11 with exam preparation?</b>	
8.24	Before every exam, there are revision sessions, there has been a lot of work on exam timetables, assemblies on Fridays specifically about exams, targeted conversations with students to ensure they understand what they need to do and there has been increased attendance at P7.	
<b>8.25</b>	<b>If a student is absent from an exam, are they able to retake it at another time?</b>	

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8.26	If they are absent, we will offer to go and collect them, if they are unwell or have extenuating circumstances, we can request special consideration through the exam board but if they don't attend, it will result in a X grade.	
<b>8.27</b>	<b>In BBA publications, we say that we make exceptional things happen every day. How do we know this happens?</b>	
8.28	It runs through our core aims, culture, ethos, systems and processes. The inclusivity of the school is exceptional and we see exceptional things every day, from our reading programmes, behaviour, pastoral support, CPD and RA to name a few. Our values are instilled in our community and really shine through.	
<b>8.29</b>	<b>The ARV feedback regarding maths is encouraging. How will you ensure momentum continues into next academic year?</b>	
8.30	We've learned a lot this year about line management and our QA processes. SLT will be more rigorous with QA and will drive momentum. The improvement work in Maths has been adopted in other departments also and incorporated into improvement plans for next year. We will also be offering coaching for individual members of staff.	
<b>8.31</b>	<b>How successful has the A Level target groups work been?</b>	
8.32	It's been a lovely project. A CLF colleague has been working with our HAP Girls group to show that it's not a male dominated domain. We have female maths and engineering staff who also provide positive role models for all students.	
<b>8.33</b>	<b>The work around poverty proofing BBA is commendable. What changes are planned?</b>	
8.34	We have looked at financial disadvantage with our pupil premium strategy to see how we can reduce the barriers to students, such as providing equipment, uniform etc.	
<b>8.35</b>	<b>Given the cost-of-living crisis, why does working the equality gap into our strategy need to take so long?</b>	
8.36	We are committed to a contact with a uniform provider that requires a significant notice to make changes to uniform so that they can phase out stock. Remaining stock needs to be purchased by the academy. We have a preloved uniform shop and Y11 students often hand back uniform when they leave. We provide support for the prom including preloved suits and dresses and subsidised tickets.	
<b>8.37</b>	<b>Are we reaching the students who need it?</b>	
8.38	Year teams coordinate support as they understand students' needs most. We usually have 5-10 students attending prom who wouldn't have otherwise taken part.	
<b>8.39</b>	<b><u>ACTION: JC to look into a prom salon where colleagues/ex students/ current students can come together to do hair and nails etc for prom</u></b>	JC
<b>8.40</b>	<b>Could you provide more detail to better understand the bullying data?</b>	
8.41	There has been a victim of verbal harassment and we have taken the decision to record it as sexual harassment to send a clear message about the severity of such actions in the future. It's a very proactive response to an incident.	
<b>8.42</b>	<b>What is the impact of continued strike action on the school?</b>	
8.43	We have tried various approaches to minimise impact on learning but it has been tricky. We support staff to make independent decisions and understand the massive financial impact it has for staff. We have prioritised Y11 and they have had a good deal so far. Communication with families has been challenging to balance as we aren't able to plan for strike days beforehand, we know who is striking or not on the day itself. Communications has been improving and parents are happier with our communications more recently.	
<b>8.44</b>	<b><u>ACTION: JC to bring enrichment attendance data to the next meeting including breakdowns for key groups.</u></b>	JC
<b>8.45</b>	<b>How does the options process work for children with SEND or/and in receipt of Pupil Premium?</b>	

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8.46	Students who need more support or guidance to make options decisions, have meetings with year teams and the Quality of Education Team to ensure they are making good choices for them. In extenuating circumstances, if a student doesn't like their option, we allow swaps to find a course that better suits the student. There is a deep sense of belonging and sense of safety in the SEND team and students are well understood by staff.	
<b>9</b>	<b>Safeguarding</b>	
9.1	Included in report.	
<b>10</b>	<b>Finance, Health and Safety and Estates</b>	
10.1	No update.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Staffing and Wellbeing</b>	
11.1	Recruitment remains difficult nationally but continues.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Policies that require review</b>	
12.1	No update.	
<b>13</b>	<b>Student Voice / Student Advocate</b>	
13.1	Student voice has been threaded through the presentations and report.	
<b>14</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
14.1	There will be a recruitment process for a Student Advocate in term 1. An update on training and networking dates was included in the agenda.	
<b>15</b>	<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	
15.1	EDI has been threaded through the presentations and report.	
<b>16</b>	<b>Matters for the attention of the Board / COAC</b>	
16.1	None.	
<b>17</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
17.1	The academy council extended a huge thank you to all staff for their work this year and during the exam period.  Academy councillors approved the intention to introduce tailored shorts to the uniform policy as a result of student feedback.  Resignations were received from JM and SWW.	

**ACTIONS:**

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