

Minutes – City Academy Council

Version: Approved (Public Version)
Date: 3 December 2025
Location: City Academy (CLF Institute)
Time: 5.00 pm

Present:

Ruth Pickersgill (RP)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Chair)
Claire Rodgers (CR)	Teacher Academy Councillor
Jason Clarkson (JC)	Student Advocate
Sejal Patel (SP)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Co Vice Chair)
Leigh McKenna (LM)	Sponsor Academy Councillor

Attendees:

Ben Tucker (BT)	Principal
Catherine Hickey (CH)	Assistant Principal
Tony Searle (TS)	Executive Principal
Joannie Nakakawa (JN)	Observer (support staff)
Tammy Lancaster (TL)	SENDCO
Tessa Clark (TC)	Clerk

Apologies:

Mahalah Katz (MK)	Sponsor Academy Councillor
Donna Taylor (DT)	Parent Academy Councillor
Leah Dowty (LD)	Sponsor Academy Councillor (Co Vice Chair)
Kate Yedigaroff (KY)	Parent Support Staff Academy Councillor

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	RP welcomed councillors to the meeting, and introductions were made.	
1.2	RP also welcomed a new Support Staff Councillor who attended as an observer.	
1.3	The council expressed their thanks and said goodbye to Linda, the previous Clerk.	
1.4	RP noted reduced attendance.	
1.5	RP confirmed that the SEND presentation would be taken first as BT was delayed.	
1.6	BT and TS joined the meeting after the start.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.2	There were no verbal declarations of interest made for this meeting.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held 1 October, 2025 were approved as a true and accurate copy.	
3.2	Actions from Previous Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TS to feedback on discussion around training provision Action removed – context unclear and no update available. • BT to get councillor information on the website BT confirmed this is in progress and awaiting details for one councillor. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JC to follow up on anti-bullying work JC has rescheduled the meeting and remains in contact with relevant staff. • DT to set up a link meeting on RSHE Action outstanding – follow-up required regarding RSHE link visit. <u>ACTION: Follow up regarding RSHE Link visit.</u> • All councillors to complete annual declarations Reminder issued: declarations must be completed. • Curriculum offer to be discussed at breakfast meeting Discussion took place; notes are available. Update considered useful. • JC to share update on student voice Scheduled for this meeting. 	
4	Chairs Update	
4.1	No update to report at this meeting.	
5	Election of vice chair	
5.1	It was noted that a Vice Chair appointment was required.	
5.2	SP was nominated and unanimously elected as Vice Chair. All members present agreed to the appointment.	
6	Update on breakfast meeting (curriculum offer)	
6.1	Notes from the meeting are available. No further discussion was required.	
7	Student voice and student survey update	
	JC provided an update on Student Voice, covering two areas: Student Council and the Student Survey.	
7.1	Student Voice – Student Council Update	
7.1.1	Elections - JC reported that Student Council elections will take place next week. Every student has been given a nomination slip during tutor time, linked to last week's theme of belonging and the importance of being heard. Students can nominate themselves for the Student Council, and each year group will vote for two delegates.	
7.1.2	Delegates will meet regularly with staff and represent their year groups, as well as connect with representatives from other year groups.	
7.1.3	Re-election - A re-election is planned for Easter to maintain engagement, as some students remain committed throughout the year while others do not.	
7.1.4	JC is exploring a revised model for next year to improve representation and diversity, including broader representation from student groups alongside elected members.	
7.1.5	<u>ACTION: A meeting with the student council to be arranged.</u> <i>Update: Meeting scheduled.</i>	
7.2	Student Survey Update	
7.2.1	JC shared recent student survey results, developed with senior leaders.	
7.2.2	JC noted that many students tend to select middle options, so some questions were designed without a neutral choice—for example, "There is an adult at school I can talk to" required students to lean either positively or negatively.	
7.2.3	JC highlighted that responses included key student groups, such as those with SEND, those eligible for free school meals, and Pupil Premium students.	

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7.2.4	It was noted that free school meal eligibility is used as an indicator of disadvantage, although this measure has limitations.	
7.2.5	Follow-up actions have been taken to identify and support students with lower survey responses, ensuring appropriate pastoral support and engagement.	
7.2.6	Will the survey be repeated? The survey will be repeated later in the year to measure progress.	
7.2.7	<u>ACTION: Survey results to be shared with councillors.</u>	
8	Presentation on SEND	
8.1	<p>The Academy Council received a presentation from the SENDCo on current provision and priorities.</p> <p>It was noted that the number of students requiring SEND support continues to rise, reflecting national trends, and that the academy is supporting a high level of need within a mainstream setting.</p> <p>Key priorities include strengthening the quality of provision, improving early identification of need, and ensuring inclusive teaching approaches across the curriculum. The importance of regular review of student needs and strong engagement with parents was highlighted.</p> <p>The use of alternative provision and adapted curriculum pathways for some students was discussed, alongside the longer-term aim of developing more in-school support.</p> <p>Councillors discussed the importance of ensuring the curriculum is inclusive and meets the needs of all learners, while maintaining strong academic outcomes.</p> <p>National developments in SEND and curriculum reform were noted, including ongoing uncertainty around future policy changes.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Monitor national SEND developments and update the Academy Council as appropriate.</u> • <u>Consider opportunities to contribute to wider inclusion initiatives.</u> 	
9	Parent Strategy Feedback	
9.1	<p>An update was provided on the parent strategy. It was noted that the strategy is under review to ensure it reflects current priorities.</p> <p>A parent survey will be undertaken to gather feedback and inform the development of the revised approach. Councillor input will be included in shaping the updated strategy.</p>	
10	Academy Council Report	
10.1	<p>An updated approach to the Academy Council report was discussed. It was noted that the format is being reviewed to ensure it supports effective scrutiny while including all required information. Further discussion will take place to agree a preferred format.</p> <p><u>Action: Review and agree the format of the Academy Council report at a future meeting.</u></p>	
10.2	Attendance	
10.2.1	An update was provided on attendance. It was noted that attendance is slightly below last year, in line with national trends, but remains on track to improve overall, with	

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	<p>attendance expected to remain close to 90%, representing an improvement on last year.</p> <p>Councillors discussed the importance of maintaining strong attendance and addressing persistent absence. Measures in place include targeted support for families, analysis of attendance patterns, and initiatives to improve punctuality. Some improvements have already been seen in specific absence categories.</p> <p>It was noted that attendance remains a key priority for the academy, and continued focus is required to sustain improvement.</p>	
10.3	Culture and Ethos – Suspensions	
10.3.1	An update was provided on suspensions. It was noted that reducing suspension rates remains a key priority for the academy. While there was an increase earlier in the year, more recent data shows a reduction compared to the same point last year.	
10.3.2	The academy continues to maintain high expectations for behaviour while implementing targeted support for students who require additional intervention. This includes working closely with families and ensuring appropriate support is in place to help improve outcomes.	
10.3.3	Councillors discussed the importance of balancing high standards with inclusive practice and ensuring that interventions are effective in supporting students and reducing repeat incidents.	
10.4	Teaching and Learning	
10.4.1	An update was provided on teaching and learning, including recent mock examination outcomes. It was noted that performance is currently ahead of the same point last year, with projections indicating continued improvement.	
10.4.2	A range of strategies are being implemented to further raise attainment, particularly in English and Maths, including targeted support for identified groups of students and adjustments to teaching approaches.	
10.4.3	Councillors discussed the actions being taken to accelerate progress and were assured that appropriate interventions are in place to support students to achieve their potential.	
10.4.4	The importance of attendance in securing strong outcomes was highlighted, with continued focus on engaging families and reinforcing the link between attendance and attainment.	
10.4.5	Action: Review progress across a wider range of subjects at the next meeting.	
10.5	Inclusion	
10.5.1	An update was provided on inclusion. It was noted that the number of students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) is expected to increase, reflecting wider local and national trends.	
10.5.2	The discussion highlighted the challenges associated with meeting a growing level of need, including the restricted nature of EHCP funding and the complexity of some provision. The academy continues to work closely with the local authority to secure appropriate support and resources.	
10.5.3	Councillors noted the importance of forward planning to ensure that staffing and provision remain sustainable and continue to meet the needs of all students.	
10.6	School Evaluation Framework (SEF)	

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10.6.1	The School Evaluation Framework (SEF) was discussed in the context of updated Ofsted expectations. It was noted that the SEF is being reviewed and updated to align with the current framework.	
10.6.2	The need to ensure clear links between the SEF and the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) was highlighted, alongside the importance of ensuring that judgements are well-supported by evidence.	
10.6.3	Councillors agreed that ongoing review and monitoring arrangements for both the SEF and AIP are important to ensure accuracy and impact. Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Complete the updated SEF in line with current requirements.</u> • <u>Strengthen alignment and monitoring of the SEF and AIP.</u> • <u>Schedule a review of the AIP to agree next steps.</u> 	
11	Link reports	
11.1	Safeguarding	
11.2	An update was provided on safeguarding, including recent monitoring activity. It was noted that safeguarding processes remain effective, with a reduction in recorded incidents compared to previous periods.	
11.3	An increase in mental health and well-being concerns was identified, and this continues to be a key area of focus for the academy. Councillors discussed the importance of ensuring appropriate support and intervention is in place, including reviewing the effectiveness of current provision and maintaining awareness of external support services.	
11.2	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Link Visit	
11.2.1	An update was provided on EDI. Positive progress was noted in embedding inclusive practice across the academy, with a continued focus on key priority areas.	
11.2.2	Councillors discussed ongoing work to strengthen student voice and develop leadership opportunities linked to EDI, as well as planned training and wider engagement to support an inclusive school culture.	
11.2.3	It was recognised that the academy continues to promote a supportive and inclusive environment for all students, with ongoing work to build on this further.	
12	Policies	
12.1	The following policies were discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Policy: to be reviewed at the next meeting. • Positive Handling Policy: circulated for review prior to ratification. • Safeguarding Policy: circulated for review. <p>Action: Councillors to confirm they have reviewed the Positive Handling and Safeguarding policies prior to the next meeting.</p>	
13	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
13.1	No matter for the attention of the Board/COAC	
14	Any Other Business	
14.1	Councillors asked about the trust's approach to external speakers and visits. It was confirmed that visits from external speakers, including public representatives, are considered in line with safeguarding requirements and the academy's	

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	<p>responsibilities to promote British values. Any such visits are carefully planned to ensure the safety and well-being of students.</p> <p>It was noted that, on a recent occasion, a visit was not able to proceed due to logistical and safeguarding considerations. Councillors discussed the importance of clear communication in relation to external engagements.</p>	

The meeting closed at 19:10

Meetings for 2025-26

CAB	5-7pm
Term 1	Wednesday 1st October
Term 2	Wednesday 3rd December
Term 3	Wednesday 4th February
Term 4	Wednesday 25th March
Term 6	Wednesday 1st July