

Minutes – City Academy Council

Version: Approved (Public Version)
Date: 4 February 2026
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) |
| Mahalah Katz (MK) | Sponsor Academy Councillor |
| Donna Taylor (DT) | Parent Academy Councillor |
| Joannie Nakakawa (JN) | Support Staff Councillor |
| Kate Yedigaroff (KY) | Parent Support Staff Academy Councillor |

Attendees:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Ben Tucker (BT) | Principal |
| Catherine Hickey (CH) | Assistant Principal |
| Tony Searle (TS) | Executive Principal |
| Tessa Clark (TC) | Clerk |

Apologies:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Leah Dowty (LD) | Sponsor Academy Councillor (Co Vice Chair) |
| Leigh McKenna (LM) | Sponsor Academy Councillor |

| Item | Description | Action |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1 | Introductions | |
| 1.1 | The Chair opened the meeting and noted apologies as recorded. The Council noted the resignation of Leah Dowty | |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest | |
| 2.1 | No declarations were made. | |
| 2.2 | DT confirmed appropriate steps had been taken to manage potential conflicts of interest. | |
| 3 | Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising | |
| 3.1 | <p>Item 3.2 Work relating to RSHE engagement is ongoing. Action: Continue arranging RSHE link visit and report back.</p> <p>Item 7.1.5 The Academy Council received an update from the Student Council. Action: RP to circulate Student Council notes.</p> <p>Item 7.2.7 Survey graphs have been uploaded; item complete.</p> <p>Item 8.20 There are no significant updates regarding the SEND White Paper.</p> <p>Item 10.1.2 The format of the Academy Council report remains under review.</p> <p>Item 10.4.6 Mock data has been reviewed; item complete.</p> <p>Item 10.6.2 The new Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is in development and will be reviewed by the Council.</p> | |

| Item | Description | Action |
|------------|--|--------|
| | Item 12.1 The Council noted approval of the Positive Handling and Safety Policy. | |
| 4 | Chairs Update | |
| 4.1 | The Chair provided a brief update. | |
| 4.2 | Training compliance for Academy Councillors was reviewed and is on track | |
| 5 | Update on breakfast meeting (Community, estates and lettings) | |
| 5.1 | MK reported that leaders provided an overview of the school's assets, revenue streams and management arrangements. Discussion focussed on the balance between community benefit and financial sustainability, and the significant behind-the-scenes work required to maintain this balance, and the impact on school leadership capacity. | |
| 5.2 | The sports hall continues to operate on a model that ensures funds are set aside for safe and sustainable community use. | |
| 5.3 | The athletics track was highlighted as a key strategic asset. BT outlined ambitions for it to become a city hub, with increased daytime and evening usage, including for students, family memberships and community groups. The long-term lease sets community expectations, but safe supervision and cost coverage present challenges. The school is exploring a full clean, respray and resurface programme. Initial estimates suggest significant capital investment may be required, with potential external support being explored. A business plan and sinking fund model are being developed to ensure sustainability. | |
| 5.4 | The Council discussed pricing for club use, access arrangements and ensuring the facility benefits both the community and the school without imposing a disproportionate operational burden on leaders. Workforce capacity within estates was noted as an area for ongoing monitoring. | |
| 5.5 | RP highlighted that income yield differs significantly across assets. Given that this activity sits outside core educational provision, the Council agreed to maintain close strategic oversight. | |
| 6 | SEF and AIP update | |
| 6.1 | BT confirmed SEF and AIP are being updated and will be brought to the immersion day for review. | |
| 7 | Staff wellbeing & Parent engagement | |
| 7.1 | It was reported that staff feel able to raise concerns and that issues are being handled appropriately. Staff report that queries are consistently passed on and actioned. | |
| 7.1.1 | Leaders intend to issue a pulse survey to gauge current staff sentiment. | |
| 7.1.2 | Staff absence this term has been relatively low, improving continuity and climate. | |
| 7.1.3 | Some variation in staffing costs was noted, linked to additional pupil support and internal staffing arrangements. | |
| 7.2 | A parent engagement session is scheduled for 10:30 the following day. The Council considered whether survey questions could be drafted within that session instead. Action: Draft parent survey questions. | |
| 8 | Academy Council Report | |
| 8.1 | Student Outcomes | |

| Item | Description | Action |
|------------|---|--------|
| 8.1.1 | Student numbers: BT reported an anomaly in Year 7 linked to local demography. The Local Authority asked whether the academy would consider additional Year 7 offers; BT confirmed the school indicated willingness to take up to 230 this year. The target roll is 195 per year group. | |
| 8.1.2 | The Council asked about in-year admissions and how pupil information is shared. Leaders confirmed processes are compliant and that pupils are assessed and supported on entry. | |
| 8.1.3 | The Council discussed the implications of cohort size and the importance of maintaining pupil numbers in the context of local demographics. | |
| 8.1.4 | It was confirmed that reading ages are assessed early in the academic year and that baseline profiles are improving. | |
| 8.1.5 | November mock outcomes are broadly in line with the same point last year. Mathematics is trending ahead; in English a sizeable group at Grade 3 is targeted for conversion through set adjustments and targeted intervention. Improving English and mathematics outcomes remains a key school priority. | |
| 8.1.6 | Feedback from pupils highlights some inconsistency in homework and feedback. Leaders acknowledged this and confirmed that a review is underway. | |
| 8.1.7 | Q: Do you use online platforms? Online platforms are used where appropriate. Leaders noted that access can vary and that alternative approaches are used to support learning. | |
| 8.1.8 | Q: How is homework set and is it centrally logged? Approaches to homework vary across subjects. Leaders acknowledged the need for greater consistency and confirmed that a review is planned. | |
| 8.2 | Quality of Education | |
| 8.2.1 | No additional items were raised under this heading. | |
| 8.3 | Attendance | |
| 8.3.1 | Attendance remains a key priority for the school. Whole-school attendance stands at 89.1%, above the ABI (Attendance Baseline/Improvement expectation) of 88%, but below where it needs to be. | |
| 8.3.2 | The Council discussed attendance expectations and the use of national benchmarking measures. Leaders confirmed that the focus remains on improving overall attendance. | |
| 8.3.3 | Challenges were noted, particularly for a small proportion of pupils requiring intensive, individual support. | |
| 8.3.4 | The use of penalty notices was discussed. Leaders confirmed that these are administered by the local authority, and the school is reviewing the balance between support and enforcement. | |
| 8.3.5 | Variation between pupil groups was noted, including disadvantaged pupils. The school is working with external partners and other schools to identify effective practice. | |
| 8.4 | Quality of teaching and learning | |
| 8.4.1 | A new Careers Lead is in post and will undertake a Level 6 careers apprenticeship. Evidence collation against Gatsby benchmarks is being strengthened to support inspection readiness. | |
| 8.4.2 | Leaders use a range of monitoring and professional development approaches to drive consistency and high expectations across teaching. | |
| 8.4.3 | Staff have opportunities to observe and work alongside colleagues, with coaching approaches continuing to be developed. | |
| 8.4.4 | Leaders confirmed that high expectations are clearly communicated, with a strong focus on pupil outcomes, progress, and meeting the needs of different groups of learners. | |

| Item | Description | Action |
|------------|--|--------|
| 8.5 | Behaviour and Exclusion | |
| 8.5.1 | The Council reviewed behaviour data. There were 157 suspension events in Term 1 following the introduction of revised expectations; by mid Term 3 there were approximately 30 events, indicating a downward trend. Corridors are calm, lessons are purposeful and the behaviour policy is well understood. | |
| 8.5.2 | The Council discussed suspension trends and noted that numbers are decreasing. It was confirmed that figures relate to incidents rather than days lost. A small number of pupils require additional support, including bespoke or alternative provision where appropriate. | |
| 8.5.3 | Leaders and councillors discussed the balance between the academy's inclusive ethos and high expectations. The Council discussed the balance between inclusion and maintaining high expectations. Leaders confirmed their commitment to ensuring appropriate and timely responses to behaviour. | |
| 8.6 | Pupil Premium and LAC | |
| 8.6.1 | The risk register has been updated to acknowledge wider sector considerations. Leaders remain confident in local mitigations and practice. | |
| 8.6.2 | The Council considered equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) oversight. Leaders confirmed that there is trust-level oversight alongside local implementation, and highlighted the importance of professional support and networking for staff leading this work. | |
| 9 | Safeguarding | |
| 9.1 | The Council received an update on safeguarding. Systems and processes continue to be strengthened, and leaders confirmed that appropriate arrangements are in place. | |
| 9.2 | Updates relating to training, documentation and safeguarding practice were noted. | |
| 9.3 | The Council reviewed the Prevent Risk Assessment and confirmed it met requirements. | |
| 9.4 | Leaders continue to promote an inclusive environment that supports pupils' wellbeing. | |
| 10 | Student Voice | |
| 10.1 | Student Voice activity was noted, including a recent meeting with pupils. | |
| 11 | Link Reports | |
| 11.1 | The Safeguarding Link Councillor report had been received prior to the meeting. No further safeguarding link actions were required at this point. | |
| 11.2 | The Council noted that the SEND link visit has been completed, and the written report will be submitted. | |
| 11.3 | Link reflections relevant to Pupil Premium Councillors noted that the EAL team, a significant area of provision and spend, was not clearly identified within the current 'barriers' section in the Pupil Premium Strategy. Councillors suggested that this be considered during the forthcoming PP Strategy review. | |
| 12 | Policies | |
| 12.1 | The Council confirmed that required policies had been reviewed. | |
| 12.2 | The Council agreed arrangements for reviewing the Pupil Premium Strategy. Action: Review of the Pupil Premium Strategy to be undertaken. | |
| 13 | Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC | |
| 13.1 | There were no matters identified for escalation to the Board or COAC. | |
| 14 | Any Other Business | |

| Item | Description | Action |
|------|---|--------|
| 14.1 | The Council noted the upcoming school production. | |
| 15 | Date of next meeting | |
| 15.1 | Wednesday 25 th March 2026 | |

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 |