

Saxon Hill Academy

Minutes of the Academy Council Meeting held in the school on Thursday 1 February 2018 at 7pm

Present: Mr Richard Metcalfe (Chair), Mrs Melsa Buxton (Principal), Mr Steve Baker, Mrs Vivienne Handley, Mrs Nicki Humphreys, Mr Ron Monk and Mr Ian Weetman
Mr Jon Thickett (Sleepover Representative and oversight of Councillor Training and Mentoring)

Associate Members: Wes Morris

Observers: Maggie Candlish and Melanie Newbury (Saxon Hill)
Helen Turner (Shaw Education Trust)

In Attendance: Mrs Emma English (Clerk to Councillors)

417 Apologies and Attendance

Resolved: none

The Chair reported that two Councillors have resigned:

- Heather Butler due to family reasons
- Terry Finn because of medical issues

He thanked them for their contributions to the Academy Council and Thank you cards were distributed for signing.

He also welcomed 2 new people to the Council and confirmed the appointments for a term of office of 4 years:

- Viv Handley as a Co-opted Councillor
- Jon Thickett as Sleepover representative and with an overview of Councillor training and Co-opted Councillor(subject to police checks)

418 Minutes of meetings

a) Interim Academy Council Meeting 28 November 2017

Resolved: minutes of the Interim Academy Council meeting held on 28 November 2017 were agreed

b) Committee Meetings 17 January 2018

The minutes to the Raising Attainment & Pupil Committee and Finance & Personnel Committee were distributed and noted. They will be signed off at the Committee meetings.

419 Matters Arising/ Actions

a) Interim Academy Council Meeting 28 November 2017

- 1) Councillors have been invited to 2 Safeguarding sessions in school. Sessions are also available on Flick Learning (online training)
- 2) All Councillors have access to Flick Learning
- 3) Advert for non-teacher Staff Councillor has gone out. The Parent Councillor advert is under development. The Council is seeking a candidate from the inspiring governance website to fill the final Co-opted Councillor vacancy.

4) A summary of the “Our Future Direction” was distributed. All Councillors were encouraged to send comments to the Chair. This document is the basis for the Council’s work this year.

5) The school is still awaiting dates for Safer Recruitment training from Insight. Loxley Hall is providing Safer Recruitment training on 21 March 2018 – any interested Councillors to contact school.

Councillors queried how long Safer Recruitment training was valid.

Resolved: Clerk to check renewal date for Safer Recruitment training

ADVICE FROM GOVERNOR SERVICES: It was advised, and best practice, but never mandatory, to refresh Safer Recruitment training every 5 years.

The Chair confirmed that Jon Thickett will have an oversight of training with a mentoring and support role for newer Councillors.

The school has subscribed to The Key as a source of advice and guidance for Councillors.

6) Councillors working with Middle Leaders: to be discussed later in the meeting

7) PODD training – MC reported that booking in progress

8) My Concern has been rolled out to all staff – catch up sessions available

9) Policy Schedule: this has been updated. However input from a recent Principals’ meeting now needs to be included.

Resolved: review Policy Schedule at Interim Academy Council meeting in March
Councillors discussed how they assess policies for approval. Much of the content is determined by legislation and all schools will use their staff expertise to develop them for their individual school. It was suggested that it would be useful for SET to keep all policies from schools within the MAT: these can then be referred to by fellow Trust schools.

b) Committee Meetings 17 January 2018: actions noted

420 Principal’s Report to include Safeguarding Update

The Principal reported on the Autumn Term and **Contextual Data:**

- **Current roll** of 96 with 4 children on assessment
- **Pupil attendance** fell during the Autumn Term, generally due to illness. The threshold for persistent absenteeism changed during the Summer Term which resulted in an increase up to 42% in the Autumn Term 2017 compared to 13% in the previous year. Having reviewed each pupil’s attendance the school believes there are just 2 pupils where more could be done by the family to increase attendance.
- **Staff attendance** was lower during the Autumn Term with 3 staff members on long term absence. Attendance rates in the sleepover and bathroom staff teams are the lowest within the different staff groups. The poor systems provided by Stoke payroll have made absence monitoring very difficult. Going forward the school will use a new system provided by SET which should improve staff attendance data.

One parent commented that she had not seen an impact on teaching or care during these times.

The Principal reported that staff attendance has generally increased this term. Councillors asked about supply cover and the school stated that they generally use staff within the school as staff members are best placed to understand the needs of the individual pupils. They also understood that supply cover insurance would cover much of the cost of supply teachers.

Mel Newbury reported on **Progress Data**

- She took Councillors through the data drop which she provides to SET. This includes numbers, as well as percentages, as the number in each group is small. All data shows expected or better with a % of 70% and above.

- A pre-Ofsted assessment from a member of SET indicates “outstanding” data. However this data must be triangulated with target setting and moderation to increase the overall judgment to outstanding.
- A Councillor asked if the EYFS made less progress as they were newer to the school. This has not emerged as a feature during the Autumn Term as the school has been recruiting to all age groups.
- The data does raise some questions eg KS1 cognition and KS3 science: analysis of the groups shows some long term absences.
- Although the percentages of “expected or better” are high the majority of this is “expected” – the school is looking to increase the percentage of “better”. The team are however aware that some special schools have been accused of inflating progress statistics and are exercising caution.
- MN reported how school leaders ask teachers to provide high quality data at termly meetings where attainment and next steps for each pupil are reviewed. These meetings are attended by 2 or 3 teachers and minutes are taken. This will go some way to meeting the school’s aim of moving the overall grading of the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding. Councillors questioned the school on baselines and target setting. It was noted that the new processes may mean there are some fluctuating statistics as teachers’ expectations become more critical. The school has good tracking systems. Councillors asked about national data to benchmark school data- no meaningful data is available.

Maggie Candlish reported on **CPD**

- Flick learning is used for online training
- Blue Wave Swift is used to monitor staff training – 37 staff members have now accessed it. Just 5% have rated it less than adequate due to difficulties getting online rather than the quality of the training/ system.
- Of 38 hours available for training 23 hours are mandatory.
- Next steps include adding Councillors to the Blue Wave Swift system, ensuring all staff evaluate the training within 2 weeks of receiving it and discuss possible extra training days with SET.

Melsa Buxton took Councillors through **Principal’s Comments on the Autumn Term**

- There were lots of Christmas activities and combined with rescheduled events due to the snow, parents receiving many invites into school – for some virtually every day in one week. The school will think carefully about invites to Christmas events this year.
- The additional Parents’ Evening was successful.
- The Foodbank is going well and the café is now open 5 days a week. The school is reviewing extending the café’s customer base beyond staff.
- DfE Engagement Profile: pilot introduced following the removal of all benchmarking data –it is providing good CPD
- Sleepover – low attendance in 2 quarters has meant the removal of 1 bed per night. Absence rate has now fallen from 36.2% to 3.8% but despite this improvement the school was unable to persuade the LA to reinstate the bed at today’s meeting.
A Councillor asked why attendance rates were low. The Principal replied that factors included illness, last minute decisions not to attend and alternative offers of respite at other organisations eg Acorns. The school is working to manage known absences such as operations/ hospital stays and offer 2nd night places to pupils especially to those where the school believes the family will be able to take up the place.

- It was noted that following the sudden departure of the LA's lead on SEN Paul Senior many of the workstreams have now collapsed. His replacement is on a very short term contract.
- The school has worked hard to access EN funding. The LA has agreed sums and to backdate these to September 2017. The monies, have as yet, not appeared on the budget lines.
- It is likely that funding for enteral feeding will be delegated to the school from September 2018.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment (MB)

- Reviewed strengths and areas for development
- JT noted that he has been working with another Trust on looking at other ways of plotting effectiveness

Personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils (MN)

- Increasing roll allowed for the creation of a new class
- Behaviour: 2 students were subject to the majority of last term's RPIs. These students have now been placed in different groups - one as a result of the reorganising of pupils when the new class was created and the other promoted up – these changes are working well and there has been good feedback from parents.
- Attendance: EAL identified as a group with lower than average attendance. This group comprises 5 children one of which has significant health issues and the other started recently at the end of November 2017.
- Careers information: discussed transition evening and post 19 places

Quality of Leadership and Management (MB)

- Middle Leaders roles and work noted
- Finance: Helen Turner reported that the school was showing as slightly over budget as of the end of December 2017.

Support Staff Update and Premises Overview (WM)

- New payroll provider
- Principal questioned the amount of time being taken to show potential bidders round the school site. WM assured the Council this was necessary to ensure that the right contractors are invited to tendering meetings. The school is no longer restricted to LA approved contractors and the current work is being tendered for by two companies not previously known to the school.
- Significant amount of roof work will be completed over the half term

The Principal also reported on the successful Ofsted Inspection of the Sleepover Club which was held on Monday 8 January. The report has not yet been published.

The Chair thanked staff for the excellent Principal's Report.

421 Chair's actions

- Attended the National Conference of Academy Governors in December
- Completed a level 2 Safeguarding course, met with Kim Thomas re Safeguarding and Maggie Candlish regarding LAC.
- Reviewed policies with WM

422 Parent Support Group update

Key group members are identifying activities and roles and looking to pass these on to other parents, ideally to those with younger children in the school. Monthly coffee mornings continue to take place and FB remains active.

423 Councillors’ update to include Future Direction, Membership, Roles, Training, Review and Monitoring

The meeting noted it had reviewed Future Direction, Membership, Roles and Training. **Review and Monitoring:** the Council considered the lead teacher department monitoring schedule. During this term monitoring will take place in two of the four school’s phases. The relevant teacher will contact their Link Councillor to arrange the most appropriate time to come into school during that week:

- Nicky Humphries (Investigators) week beginning 5 March
- Ron Monk (Towards Independence) week beginning 12 March

Councillors asked if SET have advice on Link Councillor visits to school. Mrs Humphries noted that she had seen some good guidance on The Key.

424 Governor Information Pack

The Chair directed Councillors to the most appropriate sections.

425 AOB

a) INSET Dates 2018-19

The meeting reviewed the term dates set by SET. Three INSET dates have already been set Monday 3 September, Friday 29 March 2019 and Monday 22 July 2019. The Principal reported that, given the number of hours demanded by mandatory training, she has asked SET for additional INSET days.

She sought the opinions of Councillors as to when INSET days should take place. Parent Councillors said they had found the recent Christmas break to be very long extending much further into the New Year than other siblings in the family.

Suggestions included not being tagged on to long holidays but rather at the end or beginning of a week, at the end of shorter holidays or at the same time as siblings in other local schools.

The Chair asked if SET would always decide 3 of the school’s training days. Whilst new schools are embedded into the MAT there is no plan to stop this. The joint training days were discussed at the Principals’ meeting and MB reported that the group was positive about them. The April INSET day will see a gathering of 700-800 staff across the MAT. There will be a number of staff well-being activities as well as a staff awards ceremony. The Chair confirmed they he will continue to ask if the joint INSET days are in the best interests of Saxon Hill.

426 Confidentiality

Information shared about the inspection at the Sleepover Club is confidential until it is published.

427 Next Meetings

Meeting Type	Day	Date	Time
Committee meetings	Thursday	8 March	
Interim Academy Council	Thursday	15 March	7pm
Full Academy Council	Thursday	17 May	7pm
Committee meetings and Interim Academy Council	Thursday	5 July	

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chair

Date

ACTIONS FROM SAXON HILL ACADEMY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2018

- Non- teacher Staff Councillor vacancy
- Parent Councillor vacancy
- Co-opted Councillor vacancy: seek candidate from Inspiring Governance website
- Loxley Hall Safer Recruitment training 21 March 2018 – interested Councillors to contact school

- Clerk to check renewal date for Safer Recruitment training: *it was advised, and best practice, but never mandatory, to refresh Safer Recruitment training every 5 years.*
- RMe and WM Review Policy Schedule at Interim Academy Council meeting in March
- MC add Councillors to the Blue Wave Swift system (monitor training)
- MB reviewing extending the café's customer base beyond staff
- Link Governors visit during Lead Teacher Departmental Monitoring:
 - Nicki Humphries (Investigators) week beginning 5 March
 - Ron Monk (Towards Independence) week beginning 12 March