

# Minutes – Digitech Studio School Bristol Academy Council Meeting

**Version:** Approved  
**Meeting Date:** 13 January 2026  
**Location:** On site at DSSB  
**Time:** 17.00

**Chair:** Rob Gillman  
**Councillors:** Lewis Wild  
 Ash Williams

**Apologies:** Stephanie Martin  
 Matt Pincott  
 Veronica Balasco

**In attendance:** Simon Jones (Principal)  
 Tom Sowden (Boom Satsuma)  
 Katherine Ogden (Senior Principal)  
 Jacqueline Friday (Interim Clerk)

## Minutes

|            |  | Action |
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| <b>1</b>   | <b>Introduction, Administration and Apologies</b>  |        |
| 1.1        | The Chair opened the meeting. Introductions were made. Apologies were accepted as above.   |        |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>  |        |
| 2.1        | There were no declarations of interest.  |        |
| <b>3</b>   | <b>Academy Council Membership</b>  |        |
| 3.1        | RK resigned from the academy council last term. There are currently 2 sponsored vacancies and 1 parent vacancy.  |        |
| 3.2        | Link roles have been reallocated to include the following: -<br>RG – Safeguarding<br>SM – Careers and H&S<br>Chair to discuss allocation of link role/s with LW outside the meeting. |        |
| <b>4</b>   | <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>   |        |
| 4.1        | The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.   |        |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>Boom Satsuma - Update and Development (TS)</b>  |        |
|            | Slides were presented for information during the meeting.  |        |
| <b>5.1</b> | <b>Student Numbers</b>   |        |
| 5.11       | There are no year 12 photography students this year due to challenges around recruitment. Students who applied/were accepted onto this   |        |

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|            | course have been allocated to the creative and digital media course with a key focus on photography. Aim is for Photography to be a stand-alone subject from September 2026 on RSL curriculum.  |           |
| <b>5.2</b> | <b>Results</b>  |           |
| 5.21       | The meeting noted the excellent results achieved in 2024-2025 academic year. Retake passes – Maths 32 % and English 70%. Average rate is 19-20%.  |           |
|            | <i>KO arrived at 17.17.</i>   |           |
| 5.22       | Predicted results in 2026 are similar to levels predicted in 2025. Additional support is being provided for one currently ungraded student.   |           |
| <b>5.3</b> | <b>Attendance</b>   |           |
| 5.31       | Attendance for 2025-2026 ranges from mid 80 percent to mid 90 percent. 15 students are currently on modified/reduced timetables. Progression to HE will still be possible for the majority of these students.   |           |
| <b>5.4</b> | <b>Developments</b>   |           |
| 5.41       | <i>Staffing:</i> The meeting noted that as well as TS being appointed Director of Education there are new teachers, new TA's, a new Head of College and a new Head of Department.<br><i>Curriculum:</i> From 2026-2027 the intention is to commence Art & Design course/s.  |           |
| <b>5.5</b> | <b>Programmes</b>   |           |
| 5.51       | <b>Did Boom work with Clear channel last year?</b><br>Yes, but there is a different brief this year which is self-care.   |           |
| 5.53       | <b>Do you have student destinations figures?</b><br>The figures were not to hand, but Boom has good links with industry and a high proportion of students continued into creative content. Boom supports and funds internships with Ventures studio and can offer students commercial work with clients such as The Bottle Yard studio.   |           |
| 5.54       | <b>ACTION</b> – Student destination figures to be provided to the Council.  | <b>TS</b> |
| 5.6        | <b>Safeguarding</b>   |           |
| 5.61       | <b>12% of last year's cohort had an EHCP. How many students have an EHCP now?</b><br>The number is higher than previously, but exact figures are not to hand. The level is manageable.  |           |
| 5.62       | <b>ACTION</b> – ECHP figures to be provided to the Council.   | <b>TS</b> |
| 5.63       | <b>Please could you elaborate on Boom's links in relation to safeguarding responsibilities?</b><br>Boom has increased its safeguarding link contacts and holds more discussions with DSSB around safeguarding and related issues.<br><b>How would the principal characterise the links with the Boom Satsuma contacts?</b><br>Contact meetings are under discussion but the links between DSSB and Boom safeguarding contacts are improving. The relationship between the academy and Boom is open and subject to positive challenge from both sides. |           |
| 5.64       | <b>Regarding the education infrastructure, is there anything that needs material development at Boom Satsuma?</b><br>Boom's provision is closer to industry therefore its offer is different to school-based provision. Managing Boom students who are DSSB students  |           |

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|            | <p>is a challenge, ensuring links with industry can be enjoyed whilst statutory school requirements are maintained and complied with.</p> <p><b>Can you give examples?</b></p> <p>Website compliance. Safeguarding policies have to be line with DSSB policies.</p>  |          |
| 5.65       | The meeting acknowledged the possibility of an imminent OFSTED inspection and ensuring that relevant preparations are prioritised.   |          |
| 5.66       | <p><b>What would be the top three priorities if Boom had its own improvement plan?</b></p> <p>Improvements to the spaces in which programmes are delivered, improved links between FE and HE and improved safeguarding links and provision.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – Revisit these three named priority areas – provide update to the Council.</p>   | TS       |
| <b>5.7</b> | <b>Attendance</b>  |          |
| 5.71       | <p><b>What has made the difference in raising attendance in post 16 at Boom?</b></p> <p>The student support team are very closely engaged with students. We celebrate small improvements in attendance. We are updating our attendance policy and procedure. We have clear expectations and consequences - high inclusion, high expectation.</p>   |          |
| 5.72       | <p><b>When students start at Boom what do you know about their attendance patterns in previous settings?</b></p> <p>Boom attendance is higher than previously. The half-day sessions benefit students who can focus better for this period.</p>  |          |
| 5.73       | <p><b>What are the EHCP figures?</b></p> <p>Currently 16 out of 237 pupils have EHCPs which equates to 7-8%. This is lower than last year but still above the national average. 31 students with offers have EHCPs but they may not all be admitted.</p>   |          |
| 5.74       | <p><b>Do you fill all your programmes?</b></p> <p>An error was made last year; programmes were closed too early, based on previous applications. Boom is seen as a <i>safe</i> second choice; a similar pattern in applications is anticipated this year.</p>  |          |
| 5.75       | <p><b>ACTION</b> – Copies of the slides presented to the meeting to be provided for uploading onto Gov Hub.</p>  | TS/Clerk |
|            | 17.45 - TS left the meeting.   |          |
| <b>6</b>   | <b>Academy Report</b>  |          |
| 6.1        | A copy of the Academy Report was circulated prior to the meeting.  |          |
| 6.2        | <b>Year 11 Mock Results/Data.</b>  |          |
| 6.21       | <p><b>Is DSSB particularly focused on getting the 4 this year rather than the 5?</b></p> <p>The focus is on obtaining the best achievement for all children but achieving the 4 for 13 identified students is key to increasing results. Strategies and techniques being used with these pupils will also work for the remainder of the cohort.</p> <p><b>What strategies/techniques are you using?</b></p> <p>Strategic seating of students in class. Reading support. Attendance calls – priority calls. Breakfast provision. Inset day – forensic review to identify strategies for each individual student. Pastoral support – support for</p> |          |

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|      | working at home for some students where appropriate. Catch up for others on site.   |    |
| 6.22 | <p><b>Is the greatest concern improving English or Maths or both?</b></p> <p>Fractionally more on Maths than English. But we only achieved 28% grades 9-4 for English Language; target is 60%. We are focusing on current results rather than predictions – the urgency is highlighting where students are currently at and determining what strategies can be implemented and what can be improved to support each individual child.</p>   |    |
| 6.23 | <p><b>How is DSSB managing the difference between English Literature and English Language predictions/outcomes?</b></p> <p>This is an early assessment – the knowledge is new and there has not been a huge amount of curriculum time to study/learn poetry. Poetry historically is the lowest achieving area. Studying new Literature texts has been a focus at the expense of mock performance in Language.</p>   |    |
| 6.24 | <p><b>What is the plan to improve English Language results moving forward?</b></p> <p>There will be additional curriculum time allocated for walking through the English Language curriculum.</p>   |    |
| 6.25 | <p><b>How many of the PP/disadvantaged students identified are boys?</b></p> <p>5/13 disadvantaged students are boys but the students achieving the lower grades are predominantly boys. There is a lot of need and vulnerability amongst our disadvantaged students.</p>   |    |
| 6.26 | <p><b>Is the issue with boys' achievements typical across the trust?</b></p> <p>Typicality local to area is linked to underperformance of boys. There is a thematic element nationally also. Gender is not a line of enquiry typically followed by CLF, which prioritises disadvantaged/SEND over gender. Nationally, there is a trend for boys in white working-class areas to underperform. This year's cohort is two thirds' boys.</p>   |    |
| 6.27 | <p><b>How did science exams turn out?</b></p> <p>Meeting reviewed the national and DSSB figures for gender for science results. DSSB results – boys 7.9% 9-5 and 16% girls. Lower than national average.</p>  |    |
| 6.28 | <p><b>Are mocks completed in other subjects?</b></p> <p>No – just English (Literature and Language) Maths and Science.</p>  |    |
| 6.29 | Students who are struggling with English and Maths are receiving additional academic support and are also taking an ASDAN course to provide them with a vocational qualification.   |    |
| 6.3  | <b>Attendance</b>   |    |
| 6.31 | The meeting noted attendance is 5.3% down on this time last year. 83% of year 10 students have a higher attendance than in year 9 at their previous provision. Bristol School of Acting/Robins Foundation attendance has improved. The aggregate data produced in collaboration with the CLF data team relating to attendance in previous settings is a powerful indicator of the success of Digitech's strategy of enabling students to make a fresh start and promotion of inclusion and belonging. |    |
| 6.32 | <p><b>Why did attendance increase in T1 week 6-7 after a decrease in T1?</b></p> <p>Year 11 mocks were held that week.</p>  |    |
| 6.33 | <b>ACTION</b> – Attendance spreadsheet and anonymised case studies to be shared with the Council.   | SJ |
| 6.34 | <b>Please explain the changes that have been implemented in respect of attendance and behaviour leads?</b>  |    |

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|      | The previous attendance lead also led on behaviour. Attendance and behaviour are now two distinct areas with two separate leads with improved working capacity.  |  |
| 6.35 | The meeting will ensure there is equal challenge made to both KS4 and P16 data moving forwards.  |  |
| 6.36 | <b>How will the DfE attendance expectations apply to DSSB?</b><br>The benchmark/minimum expectation in addition to national target sits at approx. 84% against similar schools' comparison. DSSB are 7/20 on the DfE schools' comparison portal. Need to consider attendance in the spotlight of the OFSTED narrative – focus on what is being done to improve attendance rather than just focus on figures.                             |  |
| 6.4  | <b>Behaviour and Exclusions</b>  |  |
| 6.41 | Phone discipline data has eroded since introduction a year ago. Working on truanting lessons/late to lessons. Suspensions increased in T2 compared to T1 but have decreased on this time last year.  |  |
| 6.42 | <b>The disadvantaged data is higher for suspension but doesn't tend to lead to exclusion?</b><br>None led to PEX last year or this year to date.   |  |
| 6.43 | <b>What are the biggest behavioural challenges and what is being done?</b><br>The number of boys and the 'culture' this has created. Positive sessions have been held discussing role of boys in society and social media interaction. Mid-level behaviour at social times deteriorates from behaviour in class but there are no high-level behaviours. No students are currently at risk of PEX.  |  |
| 6.44 | <b>Do you have any data as to how many OSD's there are?</b><br>There are 3 OSD's, 2 out and 1 in. OSD is always a last resort.<br><b>Could this data be included in reports moving forward as a trail?</b><br><b>ACTION</b> – Data on OSD's to be included in the Behaviour Report.  |  |
| 6.45 | <b>Are passive students a behavioural or T&amp;L challenge and does this run across all subjects or specific subjects e.g. maths? Does the increase in class sizes affect this?</b><br>It is a balance between attendance in class and passive learning. Sending students out of class in some respects is counterintuitive but can be disruptive in respect of T&L. There is less passivity in option subjects than mandatory subjects. |  |
| 6.5  | <b>Teaching and Learning</b>   |  |
| 6.51 | <b>How do you quantify ARV/ARM?</b><br>The development and embedding of universal provisions. Review of case studies on most vulnerable learners. EHCP tracking. Teachers' knowledge of individuals and meeting their need. Link SEND work with T&L agenda and framework. CPD focus on embedding UPs to work together to identify individual strategies. The ARV quantified improvements that could be made to universal provisions.     |  |
| 6.52 | <b>Are the weaknesses identified in the previous report part of the universal provisions?</b><br>Yes, but they need to be reviewed in more detail.   |  |
| 6.53 | <b>Are the circulating teachers part of the same strategy?</b><br>They are part of a coaching model – 15 min observations, refine and reflect Middle and senior leaders work together. Tracking students provides useful data in respect of most vulnerable students.  |  |

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|           | <b>How often do refine and reflects happen?</b><br>Fortnightly once a term. All teachers are included.   |          |
| 6.54      | <b>ACTION</b> – T&L framework to be uploaded onto Gov Hub for councillors' information.  | SJ/Clerk |
| 6.55      | <b>Have you ever received any feedback from Scrutiny Panel?</b><br>No feedback has been received by staff.   |          |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Safeguarding</b>  |          |
| 7.1       | A copy of the safeguarding report was circulated prior to the meeting. Main areas for discussion included substance abuse numbers and management strategies, mental health and wellbeing, Boom links/connections and misogyny  |          |
| 7.2       | <b>Have you been surprised by any safeguarding issues or are there any you would like to highlight?</b><br>The next safeguarding review has been confirmed for March. DSSB is working positively with all its partners and managing all its students in respect of safeguarding – on site and off site.                  |          |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Admissions</b>  |          |
| 8.1       | The meeting discussed the new admissions committee meetings and references to PAN.   |          |
| 8.2       | <b>How do you manage admissions applications? At what point is the curriculum or facilities compromised?</b><br>Year 10 determined PAN is 90 but an admissions number of 100 has been agreed with the LA. The admissions process was discussed. The academy is planning for an intake of approx. 90 students in 2026-27. |          |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Policies</b>  |          |
| 9.1       | There were no policies for determination at the meeting.   |          |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Matters for the Board</b>   |          |
| 10.1      | There were no matters for the Board.   |          |
| <b>11</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b>  |          |
| 11.1      | The meeting discussed the times of the AC meetings for the current year and the lack of time in which to discuss the proposed meeting times.   |          |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Close of Meeting</b>  |          |
| 12.1      | The meeting closed at 19.04.   |          |
| 12.2      | Next meeting is on Tuesday 24 March 2026 from 18.00-20.00 via TEAMS.   |          |

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| <b>ACTIONS – Boom Satsuma</b> |  |                 |
| 13.1.26<br>001                | <b>ACTION</b> – Student destination figures to be provided to the next meeting.  | <b>TS</b>       |
| 13.1.26<br>002                | <b>ACTION</b> – ECHP figures to be provided to the Council.  | <b>TS</b>       |
| 13.1.26<br>003                | <b>ACTION</b> – Revisit and update on three priority areas - Improvements to the spaces in which programmes are delivered, improved links between FE and HE and improved safeguarding links and provision. | <b>TS</b>       |
| 13.1.26<br>004                | <b>ACTION</b> – Copies of the slides presented to the meeting to be provided for uploading onto Gov Hub.   | <b>TS/Clerk</b> |
| <b>ACTIONS - DSSB</b>         |  |                 |
| 13.1.26005                    | <b>ACTION</b> – Attendance spreadsheet and anonymised case studies to be shared with the Council.  | <b>SJ</b>       |

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| 13.1.26006 | <b>ACTION</b> – Data on OSD’s to be included in the Behaviour Report.                   | <b>SJ</b>       |
| 13.1.26007 | <b>ACTION</b> – T&L framework to be uploaded onto Gov Hub for councillors’ information. | <b>SJ/Clerk</b> |