

Minutes – Digitech Studio School Academy Council

Version: Approved
Issue Date:
Meeting Date: Thursday 2nd December 2021
Location: Virtual online via Microsoft Teams
Time: 5.00pm

AC Members		Attended	Apologies
Rob Gillman	Sponsor 1 (Chair)	✓	
Russ Gallon	Sponsor 2	✓	
Antony Merritt	Sponsor 3		Accepted
Lindsay Curry	Sponsor 4		Accepted
Vacancy	Sponsor 5		
Megan Ferguson	Student Advocate	✓	
Lis Jolley	Principal	✓	
Rebecca Kemp	Parent Councillor		Accepted
Debbie Boucher	Parent Councillor		Accepted
Sally Apps	Executive Principal	✓	
Isabel Tobias	Local Authority Rep	✓	
Katie Page	Clerk	✓	
Invited attendees			
Chris Ballard	Vice Principal	✓	
Luke Fazakerley	Boomsatsuma	✓	

Minutes

Item	Description	Action										
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies											
1.1	RGi opened the meeting and welcomed all, including the new Clerk, Katie Page. This meeting took place on Teams.											
2	Declaration of Interest											
2.1	No verbal declarations were made.											
3	Academy Council Membership											
3.1	There is currently one sponsored vacancy.											
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting											
4.1	The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a true record.											
4.1.1	Actions are listed at the end of the minutes.											
5	Matters Arising – see previous minutes											
5.1	<p>Covid 19 – Omicron Variant.</p> <p>LJo makes reference to this in the Academy Council Report, key points –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mask wearing has been reintroduced in communal areas• Twice weekly Lateral Flow Testing encouraged. Text reminders sent to parents/guardians• CLF letter sent to all parents/guardians with vaccine information• All students will be covid tested once before the start of next term. <p>CBa shared with the Council year to date, data regarding absences due to Covid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 students have tested positive• <table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">No. of students who have been absent, self-isolating with Covid type symptoms</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Year 10</td><td>20</td></tr><tr><td>Year 11</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>Year 12</td><td>39</td></tr><tr><td>Year 13</td><td>44</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>LJo stated that the Central CLF Health and Safety Team have comprehensive Covid risk assessments and are very dynamic and responsive.</p>	No. of students who have been absent, self-isolating with Covid type symptoms		Year 10	20	Year 11	9	Year 12	39	Year 13	44	
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Academy Council Questions												
	<p>Are students following the rules in regards to mask wearing?</p> <p>Students are wearing their masks in the morning, but by lunchtime this is not necessarily the case, however when asked to put one on they will. A lot of students are exempt from wearing one and it is not compulsory as it was last time when these restrictions were bought in.</p>											
	<p>Does the school have a reporting system like the NHS do for Covid Lateral Flow test results, (negative and positive) in order to get a sense of how many students are actually doing the twice weekly testing</p> <p>No, students only report to us when they have a positive result</p>											

5.2	Ofsted Reflections	
	<p>LJo - The Ofsted inspection took place a couple of weeks ago, we were expecting them and were well prepared. The official report and verdict will not be released for another few weeks. Once it is ready LJo will circulate it to the Council.</p> <p>Four inspectors attended which is a hefty tariff for a school with only 180 students. On the first day of the inspection, inspectors focused on Quality of Education to include Curriculum and Planning, Sequencing, Teaching and Learning. Day two then focused on Behaviours and Attitudes, Leadership and Personal Development.</p> <p>They concentrated mainly on 4 subject areas, Science, Media, Arts and English. For members of staff in these departments it was more challenging due to them having the inspectors in three or four of their lessons followed by a feedback session at the end of the day. They also spent a whole day with Carolyne Goh going through SEND data and they were very reassured with her approach and her methodology.</p> <p>Inspectors however seem to get an understanding of our school, which was our biggest risk and seemed positive about our PP, on rolling, belonging and graduated response process. There will obviously be areas to work on but that will play into the next stage and evolution of the school. As a school we did ourselves proud and the students were excited to be part of it too. They responded extremely well to having them in our school and we have some really high needs in there as well.</p> <p>The input from the Parent Voice was sensational and highlighted the support we give to students and families.</p> <p>The formal Governance meeting lasted 30 minutes, thank you to RGi for his input into this.</p> <p>LJo gave her thanks to the Leadership and Management team as well as the Council. Praise was also given to LJo for her key role in the inspection, in striking up the right relationship with the inspectors and directing the narrative.</p> <p>Recognition will be given to all staff once the final grading is released.</p>	
	Academy Council Questions	
	<p>How did the staff fare during and after the inspection?</p> <p>It was very much you were in it or you were not necessarily in it, due to the scrutiny and deep dive into the four specific subject areas. The staff were a little bit 'wobbly' the following week. We were expecting them to feel euphoric that Ofsted had actually finally been, but they actually felt quite flat.</p>	
	<p>Was it helpful that the inspection was delayed?</p> <p>Yes, they got to see an even more mature school and last year was so disruptive due to covid, it was better they came now when we have been less disruptive, a new cohort and staff in place.</p>	
	<p>What happens next?</p> <p>LJo will be sent the report for a fact checking exercise. She will then send it back and it will be put through Quality Assurance before being formally released (approx. 3 weeks)</p>	

7.1	Student Outcomes	
	Data was shown to the meeting by LJo regarding results for the Year 11 mock exams taken in November and explained.	
	Academy Council Questions	
	<p>In the Head Teachers Report, there is reference to coaching for teachers, does this correlate to Computer Sciences?</p> <p>Yes specific coaching is in place for this teacher, plus the other area that we know is weak is English Literature, however it is taught by the same teachers who teach English Language, so coaching is there too.</p>	
	<p>Has the coaching been in place since these results or was it already ongoing?</p> <p>We have known since our analysis based on the results from the summer, that those areas were weaker, so there is a rapid improvement plan in both Computer Sciences and English Literature.</p>	
	<p>Will there be an opportunity to reassess if the coaching is having an impact?</p> <p>Yes, there will be an opportunity in the future to reassess how the coaching is impacting, however the Computer Science one is more complex, there is quite a lot of support from a lot of different areas, so coaching is only one part of this.</p>	
	<p>How would you summarise these results?</p> <p>I am pleased and disappointed in different areas, where the curriculum is tight and well delivered, I think they are doing incredibly well and they are where I would expect them to be. I think there have been real gains in top set English, but I am a little bit disappointed around the middle set and some of the third set. I am also quite proud that the students are taking mocks; it was not easy for them as it has been a while since they have written and experienced exam conditions. I think now Ofsted has happened we can make a really big focus on raising attainment. I am looking forward to February when the core subject materials for revision will be released. I think it will be a real pivotal point. I think there is a real opportunity for us this year, so I am not displeased with the results.</p>	
7.2	Attendance	
	<p>Data was shared before the meeting via the Academy Council Report prior to the meeting re: persistent absences.</p> <p>CBa apologised to the council and explained that after looking at the data again it was slightly misleading and some of the narrative incorrect mainly as it relates to persistent absence. CBa has since looked at where the data was drawn from and shared the updated key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance sits at 90% (year to date). It is stable and aligns with national average, but does need to improve • The attendance gap for PP students has reduced from 2.2% to 1.9% • Persistent absences in term 1 sat at 37% and are the same for term 2. (A persistent absence is student with <90% attendance) • We currently have 56 students across years 10 and 11 with <90% attendance, 19 are PP. 30 students have <85% or below, many of which are working with external agencies such as CaMHs. In this instance a medical action plan is more an appropriate way forward instead of a fixed penalty 	

	<p>CBa stated that persistent absences are our main challenge in regards to attendance but we are working closely with the EWO to meet with students and their parents to understand what is causing these. A lot seems to revolve around mental health issues as well as contextual things that are happening at home, which impact their resilience to get into school. We need to remember that our cohort join us in year 10 and a significant number already have mental health issues and we have to take this into account when looking at attendance and we need to manage it effectively as we want these students to be successful. We have to tread carefully with these students and that's why the graduated response and linking it in with everything else we do is key to ensuring we are doing the right things for them and their families.</p> <p>RGi stated that from a governance and council point of view, if he had to summarise attendance in a sentence it would be 'The numbers are not quite where we want them to be but they are improving.' The key thing is we can be pretty comfortable based on the description that is going on we are following the processes and all that is necessary to improve attendance it further.</p>	
	Academy Council Questions	
	<p>How effective do you find the EWO?</p> <p>We pay for the EWO services and together we are making positive moves forward. The EWO currently meets with CBa weekly, where they discuss individual attendance and ways to support them. His work also links into our graduate response processes which help to give a more holistic overview from a pastoral point of view. He will clearly explain the realities to students/parents on what will happen if attendance does not improve, whilst offering them further support and advice. Together we work within DfE expectations whilst also having a holistic approach. It is very much a joined up process between us and an essential resource. Attendance is stabilising and improving.</p> <p>So far this academic year the EWO has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent 34 letters • Held 18 Student Attendance meetings • Held 5 review meetings • Issued 1 fixed penalty, with a further one likely • 1 attendance panel, which could likely end up in court. 	
	<p>How long has he worked in school?</p> <p>He has been working for our school for approx. 4 or 5 years. He also works with a few other primary and secondary schools, which is a positive as he already knows some of our families.</p>	
7.4	Behavior and Exclusions	
	<p>CBa has summarised behavior in the Academy Council Report but said generally it is calm and purposeful, particularly in lessons which is good. However behavior can become disregulated and some of the highly vulnerable students are being sent out of class. Trends seem to be developing in defiance, low level disruption and truancy. In regards to the number of students being sent out of lessons, out of 70, over 50% of them had SEN K, plus many of them are struggling with their mental health, so a lot of it is around their resilience and being able to cope with what is being asked of them. We</p>	

	particularly see spikes in this towards the end of term. It is important that we have a full understating of the student in order to put interventions in place, in lessons. It is also worth noting that 75% (16 students) of the students sent out of class are on level 4 or 5 of the graduated response process and struggling to cope, strategies are being put in place.											
	There were 8 exclusions in term 1, 2 of which were PP, 1 had an EHCP, 6 were SEN K and 1 was a previous LAC. Key behaviours that led to the exclusions were a fight, physical assault, peer on peer incidents, verbal abuse at staff, not typical behaviours within school. (LFa joins the meeting)											
10	Academy Council Questions											
	Do you trace any link or behaviours to weaknesses in teaching? There is a huge trend and potential areas for development in teaching, in certain subjects due to the number of students coming out of those lessons, so there is a correlation there and we are aware of it. It is important that we support the students as much as the teachers so that they feel success. There is also a correlation between the numbers of students sent out of lessons and a teacher not being culturally aligned with what we are trying to achieve.											
	What is the Graduated Response process? It is the process we have in place, which allows us to have a full holistic overview of the student. In summary, each student is on a level of the graduated response process. There are five levels in all - <table border="1"><tr><td>Level 1 (lowest)</td><td>Slight concerns. Overseen by the tutor</td></tr><tr><td>Level 2</td><td>Overseen by Pastoral Team/DSL/SENCO</td></tr><tr><td>Level 3</td><td>Overseen by SLT</td></tr><tr><td>Level 4</td><td>External support in place such as drug workers, CaMHs etc.</td></tr><tr><td>Level 5 (highest)</td><td>High needs/vulnerable behaviours/mental health issues/safeguarding/ low attendance/ serious concerns and at risk of exclusion.</td></tr></table> Every week CBa meets with Pastoral team, where they review every single student and discuss what level they are on, what support and strategies need to be in place etc., what is working, what is not. It gives us an oversight, whilst being able to act swiftly and ensuring no student falls between the gaps .It is needs met rather than data driven.	Level 1 (lowest)	Slight concerns. Overseen by the tutor	Level 2	Overseen by Pastoral Team/DSL/SENCO	Level 3	Overseen by SLT	Level 4	External support in place such as drug workers, CaMHs etc.	Level 5 (highest)	High needs/vulnerable behaviours/mental health issues/safeguarding/ low attendance/ serious concerns and at risk of exclusion.	
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	Do parents/students know what level they are on? No, they know the concerns, but not what level they are on. The purpose of the levels is mainly for information sharing and a holistic overview for staff, to allow us to effectively meet the needs of the students, whether that is pastorally or academically. It aligns our behavior system for staff to build relationships with students as they have a fuller understanding of what is happening with them. they know their vulnerable points											

	and then know how to communicate with that student in order to build more supportive relationships.	
8.1	BOOMSATSUMA	
	<p>LFa reflected on the recent Ofsted visit and said it was a good opportunity for them and Digitech to showcase what they had been working on over the past year. In particular Ofsted were very impressed with the TV and film course. LFa and LJo have been a lot more informed of each other and have been meeting more regularly which has been very helpful. It is a good way to find out what is happening at Digitech and Boom and again from the Ofsted inspection it is clear that both their missions are on the same page, which is good to know.</p> <p>The courses are going really well, getting as practical as we can whilst we can. It's going well.</p> <p>LJo stated that attendance; destinations and grade profile are strong, with 62% achieving distinction.</p>	
	Academy Council Questions	
	<p>We sit here as the Council for Digitech but have an interest in the partnership, in fairness we are half a step away as it is not central to us as a governance committee, but I remember a year or so ago that you had some local governance initiatives, in terms of oversight of what is going on. Is this still the case?</p> <p>That was probably through Mark Curtis who did the initial governance strategy, we are still developing and with our venture into HE there is an opportunity for the people to sit across both, have an input on a larger scale or have more interest in a governance role over the FE and HE sector.</p>	
	<p>Are courses oversubscribed?</p> <p>Film and Television is always popular and is nearly full, however Sports Production is always under subscribed. It is something we have looked at. We do have a lot of people asking if it is a journalist course, but it is not, it is content production, live match reviews etc. Our biggest challenge is the recruitment at Ashton Gate.</p>	
	<p>How are student destinations tracked, recorded and reported?</p> <p>We do the results day, destination data and 50% of students go onto HE, 10% straight into the industry and the rest go into other FTE such as retail and hospitality. We then follow them up 12 months later by phone or email and they are very communicative and will respond. We also send them out job advertisements that are not currently suitable for our current students so we often get communication and data back that way. We also keep in touch with our ex-students via our alumni group, which now has over 100 members.</p> <p>Further information and breakdowns can be found on page 21/22 of the SEF</p>	
	LFa leaves the meeting	
7.3	Quality of Teaching and Learning - Update on Computer Science and English Improvement Plan	
	RGi stated we have covered most of this already in the Results and Attainment areas	
10.1	Safeguarding	
	The Term 1 Safeguarding Report was sent to all to review prior to this meeting.	
	Academy Council Questions	

	Who is the new member of the Safeguarding team? CBa is the new member, plus we now have a Mental Health Support Worker coming into school from the LA.	
	Why is there an increase in ART referrals? The majority of the ART referrals are put in, in order for students and families to get external agency support. A key trend in our cohort has been around substance misuse and in order for them to access further support a referral has to be put into social care, ART. This would account for the increase in the number of referrals put in. Our graduated response may also be a factor in the increase in referrals due to use identifying a need and actioning it quicker.	
	Does substance misuse happen on the school site? No it does not, it happens in the community but we hear about it in school and we then put in the ART referral. CBa left the meeting	
16	ARV	
	ARV was postponed due to Ofsted. To be rescheduled in term 3	
17	Equality and Diversity	
	Academy Council Questions	
	Would it be better to summarise key EDI issues in one section rather than on every topic? In summary we feel happy with the EDI summary and aggregating it into the place. Organising our discussions on it is the right thing to do and we should continue to monitor it, but we should not at the end of every topic at council say 'what about EDI?' The wrap up and specific focus as a topic is the better place to have it. We have to have an EDI statement which we work on and create with HR. It is about having a few key objectives that you are focusing on, specific to your school. We did think that they were the right things for our school but on reflection the EDI statement is missing a SEND objective and we have a large amount of our cohort with special educational needs. In a post Brexit world language is one of the things that does stand out in our school community and that shows up in our bullying, behavior and attitudes.	
	The approach to language and the analytical skills are they strong enough? The language teaching is very good and one of the Ofsted reflections was around the analysis of language and was really good, but they stated that there may be too much of a skills focus and they spoke about where is the wider stuff that you expect in English. The language question is more about our students' acceptance of learned language in a post Brexit world in a white British school and there is a lot of inherited language that they think is banter. In the Ofsted Student Voice one of the trails was that I do hear other students in the school using racist or homophobic language all under the guise of banter. So focusing on language and positive role models and not accepting these sorts of language is what we are trying to do. So it is not necessarily about teaching and learning it is about personal development, that's why we have the focus on oracy too, we can pick things quicker than we can do in writing; it is part of the personal development refresh.	
	When English Literature is well taught it gives you the opportunity to raise some of these observations and gives perspective, a poem about racism and prejudice can give	

	<p>students a reflection about other people and can develop their thinking. So if literature is being well taught, could this be another angle to come at it?</p> <p>We agree with you and it would be interesting to work with ITo on this. One of the challenges from Ofsted was 'What does English look like at Digitech?' It's not about quality of education, behaviours and attitudes. It is our next big piece of work and it would be good to get ITo prospective on it.</p>	
18	Policies /Strategies that require review	
	<p>RGi South Glos. Admissions Policy no comments passed apart from RGi who mentioned the catchment area map.</p> <p>The Exclusion policy has been updated to reflect Covid related procedures for exclusions. No questions raised</p>	
	Academy Council Questions	
	<p>The catchment area map on the back of the Admissions Policy seems a little 'odd' and stretches over to Landsdown in Bath, the area of prime responsibility, is this current? The residence threshold and tiebreaker seems historic and relates more to when the school was the Grange. For oversubscription is a residential tiebreaker the right one for our specialist school?</p>	
	<p>We presume it is when the local authorities plot the schools; they then work out the catchment and coverage for those schools. I also think the locality is not as relevant to a studio school</p>	
19	Any Other Business	
	<p>LJo has sent RGi the updated Year 11 data for Combined Sciences and he will now circulate it to all.</p>	
	<p>RGi thanked everyone for attending.</p>	
	Date of next meeting Thursday 10th February 2022 @ 5pm.	

Action Log

Action Log

18	To contact the LA to find out more about the catchment area and how they define and work it out for our school	LJo			
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