

Minutes – Digitech Studio School Academy Council

Version: Draft
Issue Date:
Meeting Date: Tuesday 5th April 2022
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	✓	
Lindsay Curry	Sponsor 4		✓
Vacancy	Sponsor 5		
Megan Ferguson	Student Advocate		✓
Chris Ballard	Interim Principal	✓	
Rebecca Kemp	Parent Councillor		✓
Vacancy	Parent Councillor		
Sally Apps	Executive Principal	✓	
Isabel Tobias	Local Authority Rep	✓	
Charlotte Seavill	Clerk	✓	
Invited attendees			
Simon Jones	Interim Vice Principal	✓	
Gareth Williams	Leader of Maths	✓	

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Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	RGi opened the meeting and welcomed all. Introductions were made. This meeting was held at the academy.	
2	Declaration of Interest	
2.1	No verbal declarations were made. Councillors were asked to complete the mid-year declaration confirmation form found on email.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	DB has recently resigned and so councillors thanked DB for her support and contributions during her term. There are currently 4 vacancies: 1 parent councillor (which will be recruited in September) 1 Support Staff Councillor, 1 Student Advocate Councillor and 1 Sponsor Vacancy.	
3.2	<u>ACTION: CS to liaise with VB regarding recruiting staff councillors</u>	<u>CS & VB</u>
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a true record.	
4.2	ACTION: Clerk to share future meeting dates	Clerk
4.3	Councillors discussed how a refresh may be necessary as there has only been one new risk added since 2016. ACTION: RG & RGa to meet CB to discuss the risk register.	RG/RG & CB
4.4	ACTION: Update on behaviour at the next meeting IN AGENDA	Clerk
4.5	ACTION: CB to feedback to the central team to include track changes for policies. ACTION: Councillors to provide feedback on policies via email. COMPLETE	CB ALL
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	Councillors were satisfied the latest COVID guidance was being followed at the academy. The COVID risk assessment has been updated appropriately and councillors discussed the impact of the current rules at the academy.	
5.2	Has there been incidents of long recovery periods that isn't "long covid" at the academy?	
5.3	Some members of staff have had phased returns to work due to fatigue and staff and students are being supported as much as possible on an individual basis. There have been no long-term absence cases due to COVID. The greater impact has been on student's mental health and repercussions of having such broken periods in school.	
6.	Outcomes – lead by GW	
6.1	GW gave an overview of the outcomes data shared prior to the meeting. Councillors discussed some of the context behind the data, such as each PP student counts 5% towards data, and the strong position the academy is in in terms of resourcing in the lead up to exams. Councillors discussed obvious trails, asking questions and challenging and the support and actions in place to improve these outcomes. Councillors were satisfied that SLT are making the necessary support and resources available where appropriate, with the intention to impact outcomes this summer for Y11 students.	

	Councillors discussed the out of class and after school interventions for maths and English including the additional sessions for students during the exam period and afterwards when there is more capacity in the timetable.	
6.1.1	<u>ACTION: CB to request a redacted black box to share with councillors and circulate.</u>	<u>CB</u>
6.1.2	Do students take study leave?	
6.1.3	No, students remain in school until they finish their last exam. We are able to manipulate the timetable to take advantage of option portfolios finishing and extra flexibility in the timetable to direct staff and students to support. Particularly those who are threshold, to focus on English, Maths and Science when option subjects have finished. There are around 10 students who are having a significant impact on data who have individual study plans for the remainder of the year.	
6.1.4	How long have we been offering additional maths and English interventions?	
6.1.5	The English tutor has been working with the academy for 3 years consistently but there has been a break in the maths intervention due to long term absence so the tutor has sometimes been used for maths lesson cover.	
6.1.6	Do you find this kind of intensive intervention work is usually fruitful at this point in the year?	
6.1.7	The majority of students do rise to the challenge but for lots of students, especially this year, anxiety issues and exam pressure is proving too much. We are aware of the students in need of support for this and we are helping them as much as possible. We are seeing more panic in their behaviour lately and continue to use the graduated response to support them and provide the provision they need.	
6.1.8	Do other schools offer this level of individual support and bespoke provision?	
6.1.9	All schools would have a raising achievement plan so would offer bespoke provision as appropriate.	
6.1.10	There appears to be a fall in the English data. Is this a trail or a temporary blip?	
6.1.11	This is most likely down to over prediction during the last data collection. English specialists from the central team are supporting teachers to moderate and ensure predictions are as accurate as possible.	
6.1.12	<u>ACTION: Clerk to add Y10 data to the next agenda.</u>	<u>CS</u>
6.1.13	Have the current interventions in place for Year 10 made an impact on data yet?	
6.1.14	Not yet, but we need to allow sufficient time for impact.	
6.1.15	GW left the meeting at 5.43pm	
7.	Attendance	
7.1	Councillors discussed the most recent attendance data and the comparisons made across the Trust, although it was noted that these schools do not make a like for like comparison in terms of context. Councillors discussed how good attendance was being promoted and supported as well as the work done with the EWO.	
7.1.1	Does the EWO focus on PP students?	
7.1.2	The EWO focusses on all attendance, but PP students are a priority. There are some prolific school refusers as well as high PA at the academy so this heavily impacts the attendance data. The EWO works with these families to ensure attendance is supported and if necessary fines are issued. Where necessary, the academy work with external agencies to support students and families to better attendance, such as CAMHS, Hospital Education, EP services and some students are making real progress. We often find that students come to DSSB with unsettled experiences of secondary school and in	

	<p>many cases, undiagnosed and unmet needs. These processes take time and so staff work hard to get these processes and support in place as quickly as possible.</p> <p>For students whose attendance is poor, but the family and student are really engaged with school and the support being offered to them, the LA is being encouraged to support rather than go down the route of prosecution.</p> <p>Councillors discussed the morality of the situation and how the data will often look poor but behind it are real people who are having their needs met and being supported to ensure they are happy and healthy before attainment or attendance data targets.</p> <p>Councillors noted that the LA is unable to provide a lot of the provisions that neighbouring authorities offer as well as a stretched social care system that is unable to meet all needs due to capacity.</p> <p>Councillors discussed how attendance interventions at DSSB are dealing with habits and outcomes of a whole school career and so change is often slow while relationships are built and progress is made. Often their attendance is better than it ever has been so that's a real positive. It just doesn't measure up to national statistics.</p>	
7.1.3	What's the long-term impact of having poor attendance?	
7.1.4	Students may not leave school with qualifications, or the qualifications they need to access their next steps.	
7.1.5	It seems unfair that with a cohort that is not typical of other KS4 cohorts, that the same national averages and targets are in place.	
7.1.6	We are a mainstream school and so we have the same aspirations for our students as other mainstream settings. We just have to adapt to our students needs differently to other settings.	
7.1.7	Lots of students arrive without knowing other students and experience huge change when moving school. How do we ensure induction is robust and students feel supported?	
7.1.8	Due to the pandemic, we've been restricted with the induction offer we've been able to make, however this September, there will be a full induction programme offered with team building, orientations and hopefully outdoor pursuits.	
7.1.9	Do we get transition information from previous schools to help identify those who might find the transition most difficult?	
7.1.10	We reach out to partner schools for information about students. We encourage visits with family and staff and use any information we have to put bespoke support in place. Going forward, the LA will deal with Y10 admissions so we will have less access to transition information. Needless to say, the academy will try to get as much information as possible.	
7.1.11	<u>ACTION: RG to request KS4 snapshot from trust schools for a comparator with DSSB data.</u>	RG
8	Behaviour and Exclusions	
8.1	<p>Data and narrative was shared in the report prior to the meeting. Councillors concluded that incidents are falling, especially for PP students with no behaviour incidents recorded in Term3.</p> <p>Councillors discussed their observations from recent visits to lessons including passiveness from students in terms of their attitude to learning and class sizes, the expectations in place and the work to be done to ensure they are being applied consistently.</p>	
8.1.1	What is corridor behaviour like at the moment and the momentum for getting to lessons on time etc?	

8.1.2	We are seeing small successes across the academy. The system for ensuring students get to lessons on time has had significant impact. Staff voice suggests that teachers are much happier now that their classroom is full. Lunch time detentions have had a good impact and left a core group of students who are being supported using the graduated response. Rather than using suspensions, we are directing students to other academies for the day, which again is having a good impact.	
8.1.3	What is meant by truancy? And what is the Graduated Response?	
8.1.4	Truancy is when a student is in school but chooses not to go to a lesson. They commonly hide in toilets. It tends to be the same few students now and numbers are much smaller as the new system has made a positive impact. The graduated response looks at each student as an individual and puts support in place for them depending on their needs. Support and interventions are reviewed regularly to ensure there is a positive impact and progress being made. If necessary, referrals are made to external agencies to support. It ranges from toilet passes to time out cards, right through to supporting students at risk of PEX or significant safeguarding concerns. The names used in the system, including the graduated response, are linked to the SEND code of practice. SLT work with staff to ensure staff are empowered to deal with situations in a trauma informed way. Staff have been having training on ACES and trauma. In term 6 we will launch a system focussing on attitude for learning and provide real clarity around expectations.	
8.1.5	Is there scope to decrease class sizes?	
8.1.6	The academy will be officially full next year so class sizes won't be decreased. Class sizes are much smaller than other mainstream settings. Funding at DSSB is the same as other schools for KS4 students despite their often interrupted KS3 experiences and greater incidences of mental health issues. Available funding issues are compounded by higher power costs going forward. SLT are open to radical change, but it must come within the current budget. Councillors put forward the idea of halving the number of children in each class and halving the curriculum time each week so that students held their attention in the time that they are in that class.	
8.1.7	Following the update at the last meeting, have there been any more incidents of vandalism?	
8.1.8	There was an increase in the number of vandalism incidents and damage to property which were carried out in isolation by very few students. Students have been charged some of the value of the damage and sanctioned appropriately. In general, students are really proud of the site. Incidents have reduced recently and although the damage was not malicious, it was costly none the less.	
9.	Pupil Premium	
9.1	Councillors discussed threads for PP throughout the agenda including analysing data to understand lessons that PP student do well or not so well, priority seating and book marking, PD actions for staff and priority in line management meetings, the plans in place for each PP student and lessons with significant numbers of PP students in single classes, accuracy of predications and any gaps in attainment or progress for PP students.	
9.1.1	Are SLT able to do observations or coaching again yet?	
9.1.2	We have relaunched coaching and have been carrying out QA in lessons. We have collected student voice from PP students and we will focus on PP in the Term 6 observations, in particular, priority seating, interventions, live feedback and focus on key and command words.	

10.	Finance update	
10.1	A finance update was shared in the report and there were no questions or queries from councillors.	
11.	Safeguarding	
11.1	Councillors were satisfied that safeguarding remains strong and a priority at the academy. There has been a focus on ensuring quality safeguarding processes at external providers and staff continue to work in collaboration. Councillors discussed the recent Belonging Survey and the resulting trails and actions.	
11.2	<u>ACTION: CB to invite other providers to the next meeting</u>	CB
12.	SEND link report	
12.1	The SEND Link councillor gave an overview of their recent visit, including concerns around the increasing numbers of students with complex needs who don't meet the threshold for additional funding, coupled with the reduction in funding generally. Councillors discussed the concerns shared by other schools in the LA around the change of funding banding and how there is a national shortage of Teaching Assistants. Councillors were very pleased with the work done for students in terms of destinations and opportunities for their futures.	
12.1.2	<u>ACTION: CB to provide an update on staff recruitment at the next meeting</u>	CB
13.	AIP	
13.1	Councillors discussed progress around the AIP areas and recognized the significant amount of time SLT have spent on operational matters of late.	
14.	Council membership and link roles	
14.1	Councillors discussed vacancies and link roles.	
14.2	<u>ACTION: RG to confirm suggested link roles with councillors.</u>	RG
15.	Policies	
15.1	None.	
16.	AOB	
16.1	<u>Key dates:</u> CLF Governance Conference 10 th May 9.30-2pm, CLF Summer Conference 8 th July	
16.2	<u>ACTION: CS to update the glossary</u>	CS
16.3	Councillors discussed the opportunity to introduce GCSE Dance to the offer which would lead to positive L3 opportunities for students and link to partner organisations.	

Action Log

ACTION: CS to liaise with VB regarding recruiting staff /parentcouncillors	CS & VB
ACTION: CB to request a redacted black box to share with councillors and circulate.	CB
ACTION: Clerk to add Y10 data to the next agenda.	CS
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