

Minutes – Digitech Studio School Academy Council

Version: FINAL
Issue Date:
Meeting Date: Tuesday 29th June 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	√	
Lindsay Curry	Sponsor 4	√	
Madison Fowler	Sponsor 5	√	
Megan Ferguson	Student Advocate		Accepted
Lis Jolley	Principal	√	
Rebecca Kemp	Parent Councillor	√	
Debbie Boucher	Parent Councillor		Accepted
Leila Henry-Thorne	Staff Councillor	√	
Sally Apps	Executive Principal	√	
Isabel Tobias	Local Authority Rep	√	
Invited attendees			
Emma Robertson	Vice Principal	√	

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	RGI opened the meeting and welcomed all. This meeting took place on Teams.	
2	Declaration of Interest	
2.1	No verbal declarations were made.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	This will be the last meeting Leila Henry-Thorne & Emma Robertson. We wish Leila well as she will shortly begin Maternity Leave. Good Luck to Emma as she leaves DSSB also.	
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	
	<i>N/A</i>	
	<i>Please note the meeting began at Section 9</i>	
6	Quality of Education including curriculum developments	
6.1	How have the Yr10 Mocks been?	
6.1.1	(LJ) Staff are acutely aware that the assessments may be used for TAGs if necessary. Students have struggled with writing for a full 90mins and some have reported exam hand! We should have solid evidence in every subject.	
	<i>The meeting moved to Section 8</i>	
7	Achievement & Standards	
	Attendance	
7.1	DSSB are showing the attendance average as being below National Average – Why is this?	
7.1.1	(LJ) We have referred a few of our students to Pathways and have our Education Welfare Officer involved with others	
7.2	How did you measure attendance during lockdown?	
7.2.1	(LJ) Student who were absent relating to Covid are marked using an X Code. We were tracking the students that were on site and the engagement of those that were home learning. Annie Camp has been absolutely amazing at calling students to explain individually the work set via Show My Homework and how to log on and engage effectively.	
	<i>Lindsay Curry joined the meeting – 17:19</i>	
7.3	How does DSSB attendance compare to other Academies?	
7.3.1	(LJ) Very good – We’ve had great online engagement which is inline with other Academies. We’ve known where all our students were/are during each lockdown and throughout the year. Some students have struggled with returning to school and are on a bespoke timetable.	
7.4	In the report, the attendance figures are low due to the students on a bespoke timetable	
7.4.1	(LC) We didn’t discuss this at the last Safeguarding meeting, but it is on the agenda for 19 th July.	
7.4.2	(LJ) We have also had 3 students who are on a longer Fixed Term Exclusions, and one students who was away from the school at Pathways due to a Permanent Exclusion that	

	was subsequently not upheld. These students are on bespoke timetables after their return. We also have students that are attending outside agencies.	
7.4.3	(ERo) The high-end no-attending students vary due to outside engagement with CAMHS & Psychiatry.	
7.5	If students are attending outside agencies, does it get logged against attendance?	
7.5.1	(LJ) It depends – 1 student on our roll will never attend DSSB, but we log 50% against the timetable.	
	Student Outcomes – TAGs (Teacher Assessed Grades)	
7.6	(LJ) The Average grade seems to remain the same as other years, and whilst the PP gap remains, it is fairly modest.	
7.6.1	(LJ) PP students are doing well at grades 9-4, but this drops off at 9-5. We have a robust process with data that backs it up. The P16 data is very positive. BoomSatsuma won't compromise a grade for any student, and instead shrink the qualification.	
7.7	Are the English Literature grades worse than English Language, and if so, have you considered abandoning English Literature?	
7.7.1	(LJ) We follow the CLF Curriculum and English is interweaved. Literature suffered during online learning and we feel we've already removed a lot of the curriculum at DSSB. We feel we need the cultural capital but could perhaps replace with RE. We are a boy heavy cohort with lower incoming grades than in Maths & Science.	
7.7.2	(LJ) Some subjects were difficult to teach during lockdown and English is hard to teach online. The current Yr11 have had a significant time out of school. We would have preferred the BTEC grades to have been higher and the Core English to be at 65+	
7.7.3	(LJ) It's been a strange year with TAGs, teachers are under immense pressure and have been cautious, I think the staff have done very well.	
7.7.4	(RGI) We do appreciate it's been very a labour intensive and & stressful process for teachers	
7.7.5	(LJ) Teachers feel the process was managed with integrity with a thoughtful and supportive process. We can already see how teaching and learning will change next year	
7.7.6	(LJ) We don't believe there will be any appeals regarding grades from P16 but it is possible that we may receive appeals from KS4 students who didn't return after lockdown – We did take this into consideration and are very happy with the process.	
7.7.7	(SA) At the Principals forum tomorrow evening there will be information on how to reduce the likelihood of appeals and how to manage the appeals process if this becomes unavoidable.	
	<i>The meeting moved to Section 6</i>	
	Pupil Premium	
7.8	(ERo) Annie Camp has been a real asset and huge support to our PP students. The PP student felt that being able to come on site during lockdown particularly helpful and we have a tutor on site for the Core Subjects. Our PP students are inline with their peers at grade 4 but drop off at grade 5.	
7.9	How do you evidence the PP spend?	
7.9.1	(ERo) It's data driven, The impact of the blended learning co-ordinator will be reviewed and reported and the same with tutoring for the PP students.	
7.9.2	(LJ) We have a slim plan that operates well, we removed strategies that weren't working for our PP students and used the funds for the EWO, Blended Learning co-ordinator.	

7.9.3	(LJ) PP remains a key CLF strategy and key measure for every staff member. The Blackbox data will include the PP students only and RAG rate the delivery for these students	
7.9.4	(SA) We will be unpicking some of the practices that stops leaders being able to make an impact, less about accounting for every penny. PP funding can be spent across the board as long as it helps PP students. We have a 3yr strategy as a trust. We are showing a film at our CLF Conference made by BoomSatsuma with PP students and staff who were disadvantaged as students, it's a powerful piece and discusses how did school work for you, or not? We will focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oracy – Develop high quality • Belonging – Understand the sense of belonging • ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) – More than 4 out of 10 have a likelihood of poor health etc. We are working on the cultural experience and providing a supportive environment. We have good foundations in place a DSSB. If a student is behind at Primary school and not supported at KS3 it is an incredibly hard job for LJ and the Team to implement at KS4. There is real strength in the trust but also lots to improve on and the data needs to be good.	
7.9.5	(LJ) The AIP is a key document for the Academy Council, the disadvantaged plan is in there for next year. We are really pleased that the Belonging project is showing strong	
7.9.6	(LJ) Steve Taylor (CLF CEO) suggested Andrew Best & Tanya Best speak with DSSB (ERo) regarding a paper, 'What children experience in KS3'. The majority of students were great in KS2 but something happens in KS3 where they don't perform to their best ability, a sense of belonging is key to these children, when they feel they belong, they perform better. We didn't realise just how many students had attended several KS3 provisions or were home-schooled to avoid attending a PRU (Pupil Referral Unit). We have a focus on risky behaviour if the student has ACE ie, Gangs and risky sexual behaviours.	
	<i>The meeting moved to section 10</i>	
8	Safeguarding (including Link Role & Termly Report check)	
8.1	LC met with Tom for the T5 Safeguarding report and are meeting again on 19/07/21 to discuss T6. There has been a decrease with CIN (Child in Need) however drug use has increased, but the school has these students on plans and are working with outside agencies.	
8.1.1	(LC) The increase in incidents is due to students returning to the school site after lockdown. Assemblies have been held covering bullying, neurodiversity, language, resilience, cannabis and climate change.	
8.2	(LJ) The Belonging data is very positive. 121 conversations have been held with students, and whilst bullying incidents are reported racist incidents have decreased.	
8.2.1	(ERo) At times several members of staff can report the same incident, there have been no bullying incidents in T5.	
8.3	It is a comprehensive report that is almost a Term out of date, are the actions complete?	
8.3.1	(LJ) Yes, we have regular meetings with BoomSatsuma. With Yr11 leaving there is ample time for ERo to upskill Tom. We have also conducted 30 1hr meetings with our PP students.	
8.4	Will Tom remain as Safeguarding Lead next academic year?	

8.4.1	(LJ) Yes	
8.5	Is Peer on peer abuse a problem at DSSB?	
8.5.1	(ERo) We hosted an assembly for peer on peer abuse and met with all tutor groups. We have spoken about sending nudes, and educated our students about the implications, there was great interaction from the students and a lot of input from LHT.	
8.5.2	(LJ) Further peer on peer abuse sessions are planned for September. ERo has taken a step back from safeguarding to continue upskilling Tom. Tom will continue as DSLO but will no longer mentor students.	
8.5.3	(LJ) We are recruiting for a Deputy Principal who will fill the mentoring role. Carolyn Goh, Tom and ERo have worked extremely well as a triage team and EROs replacement will have further staff taking responsibility.	
8.5.4	(ERo) We have recently done a deep dive on Safeguarding practices and identified some great strengths. I've been able to upskill Tom, he is great at what he does and will continue to do so, Tom has also been working closely with Steve Bane (CLF DSLO)	
8.6	Will Tom take on the Safeguarding for BoomSatsuma?	
8.6.1	(LJ) No, David Thorp is the Safeguarding lead at BoomSatsuma – We share CPOMs and we share some actions from the Academy Review Visit (ARV). Tom does not deal operationally at BoomSatsuma but is more of a Critical Friend.	
8.6.2	(LC) Tom was meeting with David Thorp oncer per week, will this continue into September?	
8.6.3	(LJ) Yes – The meetings are double booked each fortnight to ensure the meeting can take place.	
8.6.4	(LC) The DSLO has done a great job of keeping touch with Yr11 who remain on role until 30 June 2021. DSSB is using the co-ordinator very well to keep engagement high.	
8.6.5	(LJ) We are unable to keep this role unless we receive extra funding, but the co-ordinator has been successful in securing a TA role with us.	
	<i>The Meeting moved back to Section 6</i>	
9	Finance, Health, Safety & Estates	
9.1	(LJ) Our Covid Risk Assessments remain the same with students not wearing masks on site. We have a one-way system around the school and students receiving feedback from teachers in class is not in close proximity.	
9.1.1	There have been no Covid cases at school however we do have some staff absence due to their own children having to isolate, therefore we are unable to host any transition days. Our Bubbles within school are of approximately 75-80 students and we send text messages twice per week to remind for Lateral Flow testing.	
9.2	Are students reporting the Lateral Flow test results to DSSB?	
9.2.1	(LJ) No, they are reporting to the NHS App.	
9.3	What is happening to the old Grange Building after the Fire?	
9.3.1	New 24hr Security has been installed; they are very vigilant. A new Primary School will be built on the site, with a provisional opening date of September 2023.	
	<i>The meeting continued at Section 7</i>	

10	Staffing and Wellbeing	
10.1	Could you explore a full-time floor walker to help reduce pressure on staff?	
10.1.1	(LJ) We don't have the finances for this and not sure it would be the correct thing either. We need to be careful that behaviour does not become just 1 person's problem. Removing students from class does not help with the sense of belonging. This is not the culture of DSSB.	
10.1.2	(LJ) Staff do feel that the onus is being put back on them and some are uncomfortable with this, We could use more capacity at DSSB as 52% of our students are SEND, and more with additional needs, we sometimes feel like an alternative provision.	
10.1.3	(LJ) Staff have been trained in small groups for Trauma informed behaviour practices. The training is complex and has caused some unrest with small numbers of staff.	
10.1.4	(LHT) The survey is a fair reflection of how staff feel. The Pivotal approach would work better if we were years 7-11 although I feel we should try it.	
10.1.5	(LJ) It is a big job to convince teachers as a small but very vocal group are against Pivotal.	
11	Policies that require review	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Handling • Literacy All noted/approved	
12	Student Voice/Advocate	
13	Governance	
13.1	The Board paper was shared with the Council, is there anything that would be implemented soon?	
13.1.1	(LJ) It's not an Agenda item but the Council will be kept up to date.	
13.2	(SA) The Board paper was a positioning paper to monitor the sustainability of DSSB. Studio schools struggle with sustainability and a difficulty to recruit students, and a difficulty to adhere to some practices ie, no need to be Progress8 compliant although OFSTED have previously judged DSSB against this. DSSB is having success due to the P16 provision – We have a good model. This is how we develop ambition and have been successful with students on the spectrum. We have looked into the possibility of a Resource Base working with South Glos Council. We have also discussed our Marketing strategy and the name of Digitech.	
13.2	Is the recommendation that you carry on as you are? What is a Resource Base?	
13.2.1	(SA) The Resource Base would work with students with higher additional needs.	
13.3	What basis would the Council make a decision to create a Resource Base?	
13.3.1	(SA) The DfE would need to agree, more students with EHCP and students with more need than they currently educate.	
13.4	How long does the process take?	
13.4.1	(SA) If no building works are required it can be done in 4-6mths, but currently in Bristol it is taking years and South Glos is notoriously underfunded and overspent.	
13.4.2	(IT) It is good to see the rationale of why you carry on as you are. Some staff are concerned with the perception of a school that may not be able to provide well.	
13.4.3	(LHT) Staff are open to the idea but concerned what support and funding would be in place.	
13.4.4	(LJ) We are getting a reputation as a school that is good for children with additional or extra needs.	

	There is a risk to DSSB for SEND that we may not be able to serve the students we already have, and we have 4 students joining next year that we already cannot meet their needs but we have been named as school that can.	
13.5	We are hopeful of appointing a Deputy Principal this week.	
14	Equality & Diversity	
	N/A	
15	Matter for the attention of the Board/COAC	
	N/A	
16	Any Other Business	
16.1	Thank you to all Councillors for commitment this year.	
16.1.1	Good Luck and thank you to ERO & LHT and our thanks to the rest of the staff.	
	Meeting closed at 19:19	
	Next meeting – Wednesday 22 September 2021 – 5pm	

Action Log

Date	Item No	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
06.10.20	7.9.2	LJ to invite RGi to the ARM/ARV meetings	LJ		Close
02.03.21	7.9.7	The Link Councillor roles are really important and you are encouraged to contact your Link counterpart prior to the next meeting.	ALL		Open
02.03.21	8.1.2	Invite Tom to the next AC meeting re: Safeguarding	LP		Closed
02.03.21	16.1	Update the Councillor section on the website Update 29.04.21 – Ongoing liaison with V.	LP		Open
	7.10.2	LJ to check with the SEND cluster if a 1 day per term SEND review should take place.	LJ		Closed