

Minutes – Monkton Wood Academy Council Meeting

Version: Final
Meeting Date: 24th March 2025
Location: Monkton Wood Academy
Time: 5:00 – 7:00pm

Chair: Cameron Shaw Executive Principal Sponsor
Attendees: Richard Bennett Sponsor Councillor
 Laura Lewis Parent Councillor
 Anne Guild Staff (Teaching) Councillor
 Clare Ousley Staff (Support) Councillor

In attendance: Ian Grant Vice Principal
 Jenny Onslow Assistant

Apologies: Richard Bonner Chair
 Hannah Jones Principal
 Alison Watson Parent

Minutes

		Action
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	CS welcomed everyone to the meeting. In the absence of a chair CS led the meeting. In the absence of HJ Ian answered questions.	
1.2	Apologies: Richard Bonner, Hannah Jones and Alison Watson.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	ACTION – to appoint link roles when RB is present.	RB
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	ACTION – TC to check Deputy Head of Governance sent HJ risk register.	TC
6.1	Quality of Education	
6.1.1	JO shared SEND presentations. This covered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What SEN looks like at MWA and how they address it. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing of SEN provision. • SEN in secondary education and what the statutory requirements are. • Two categories of children – SEN E (EHCP plan) and SEN K (students who do not meet the fresh hold of an EHCP but have an identified need). • How the school promotes an inclusive culture. • Improvements • Pupil voice • Funding • Common misconceptions • Monkton Wood approach 	
6.2	Q – With regards to SEND, there is a lot in place, can the school cope with it?	
6.2.1	Currently, the school’s capacity to address gaps remains uncertain due to county limitations.	
6.3	Q – Are some of the provisions statutory and need to be re-organised?	
6.3.1	Ian advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statutory provisions for SEND reside with the Director of Children’s Services, while local authorities may choose their own implementations. Consistency across secondary schools remains a considerable challenge. • HJ, as SASH chair, fosters collaboration and resource sharing for effective practice. 	
6.4	Q – What does funding disparity reveal regarding positions?	
6.4.1	Absent personnel in local authorities diminish channels for addressing these concerns effectively.	
6.4.2	CM advised they need to push back and remind the LA of their obligations.	
6.4.3	JO highlighted the importance of transparent communication.	
6.4.4	JO explained that this year, they have been slightly under with EHCPs, but new needs are surfacing, highlighting the importance of building relationships with families and identifying those needs effectively, which they now have the staff for.	
6.5	Q- rectifying last Ofsted – does this have the potential to have negative impact?	
6.5.1	JO advised that they are controlling the controllable and promoting what they are doing. JO left the meeting at 5:53	
7	Academy Council Report	
7.1	Behaviour and Attitudes	
7.1.1	Q – For those children accessing the refocus room, how do you ensure children are receiving work in line with the curriculum?	
7.1.2	IG advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All curriculum plans are systematically reviewed upon a student's arrival, ensuring appropriate access to work based on their year and topic. • Specific textbooks and online resources are utilised to enhance learning. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring students work as close as they can to the curriculum is a target for terms five and six. 	
7.1.3	Q- Several external suspensions dropped in term 3; do you have any records and has behaviour or suspension criteria changed	
7.1.4	<p>IG advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a focus on reviewing the specific reasons for suspensions. Aiming to implement more creative alternatives rather than resorting to suspension. Additional interventions are now in place. The SEN team is collaborating more effectively with the cohort team; class charts will transition to BROMCOM in Terms 5 and 6. Suspension is a blanket sanction. Increased logging has prompted alternative sanctions discussions. 	
7.1.5	Q - What is an anti-bullying plan, as created and shared by the pastoral and inclusion team?	
7.1.6	IG advised that an anti-bullying plan is set up when a student who has exhibited bullying behaviour returns from suspension. They must agree to follow specific behaviours, with further consequences if they do not.	
7.1.7	Q- Are tutors aware if they have someone in their group that has an anti-bullying plan?	
7.1.8	IG advises tutors are aware of anti-bullying plans which are mostly in KS3.	
7.1.9	Q- How is the academy acting to increase the feelings of safety for students?	
7.1.10	IG advised that they have set up support plans and built relationships with trusted adults, allowing children to name someone they can go to for help.	
7.1.11	Q – When was the last time you did a student voice?	
7.1.12	IG advised that the last student voice survey was conducted six months ago. Another parents' survey will accompany the next newsletter. More student voice opportunities would be beneficial.	
7.1.13	Q- Do you do the parent surveys because you have to?	
7.1.14	Ian clarified that they are valuable for identifying patterns and trends, not merely obligatory.	
7.1.15	Q- How are parents being involved into driving positive behaviour?	
7.1.16	<p>IG advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent forums are particularly effective in fostering engagement. Informal conversations are encouraged; after subject meetings, members of the SLT and pastoral team are available to address any parental queries. For parents of children involved in persistent bullying, we actively seek their support, ensuring they play a significant role in the process. The family intervention support worker role is no longer provided; we are exploring a hybrid role to support vulnerable parents effectively. 	
Quality of Education		
7.1.17	Q- From a parent's perspective, there is significant variation in terms of teachers teaching core subjects; what plans are in place for teachers?	

7.1.18	IG advised that a full-time English teacher will commence after Easter. The key objective is to stabilise the staffing structure, as more staff are remaining than leaving. Subject specialists are being prioritised, with science now fully staffed with specialist teachers.	
8	Leadership and Management	
8.1	Q- How is the Academy creating a culture of continuous improvement?	
8.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IG advised the importance of maintaining a clear improvement plan, with regular reviews at every Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting. A significant amount of insights has been derived from staff voice, black box data, and reflections with the SLT. He highlighted the crucial role of restorative practice in the focus room, particularly as conversations shift towards Term 6. The alignment of team improvement plans with Personal Development Plans (PDPs) was emphasised, alongside a responsive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) cycle that identifies key activities, such as parent meetings, each term. Ian stressed the need to target specific issues, such as mobile phones, based on data while being mindful of staff workload to avoid unnecessary pressure. SLT members will reflect on their own practices and consider the implications of data trails. 	
8.2	Q - Are our expectations of the standard of work from students experiencing disadvantage high enough?	
8.2.1	IG advised that further work is required, yet expectations are rising; certain students are excelling in specific subjects.	
8.3	Q – Are you anticipating negative impacts on PP children with the disruption from LA?	
8.3.1	IG emphasised controlling what they can and are implementing strategies.	
8.4	Q – Anything CLF can do to support the school to broker the conversations with LA?	
8.4.1	CS confirmed support for the principal and noted that the trust supports schools in challenging the services responsible.	
8.5	Q- The risk is it bounces between organisations, is there a process?	
8.5.1	IG highlighted the aim to help parents understand the system, ensuring every child gets the support they need.	
8.5.2	CS advised that schools must assist parents in understanding available support and clarify the extent of their authority.	
9	Attendance	
9.1	Q – In the report, we continue to see parents opting for EHE; why is this the case?	
9.1.1	IG advised of a strong home-education movement currently. Some students face challenges attending school; however, several children previously in Elective Home Education are now returning.	
9.1.2	CS advised that EHE has doubled nationally since covid.	
9.2	Q – Do we have statistics of types of children choosing EHE?	

9.2.1	IG advised that there is an inclusion tracker used to monitor those opting for EHE, along with meetings to discuss the reasons for their decisions.	
9.3	Q – Is there more disadvantaged families choosing EHE?	
9.3.1	ACTION – Data to show what proportions of EHE applications are from disadvantaged students.	HJ
9.4	Q – Attendance increase – Is that a couple of students you have engaged with?	
9.4.1	IG advised uncertainty regarding the reasons behind the attendance increase; however, he believes it may stem from the work on sense of belonging. Initiatives such as trips, positive praise, and phone calls to parents have positively influenced student attendance. Engagement efforts for persistent non-attendees have shown varied success.	
9.4.2	CO advised that the phone calls to parents have made a positive difference.	
10	Finance, Health and Safety and Estates	
10.1	Budget ok for current academic year, more challenging landscape for next year.	
10.1.1	HJ is collaborating with CS on the initial budget setting next week.	
10.2	Q – In terms of new school places, any update from County about offers?	
10.2.1	270 was proposed, yet the council aimed to extend more. ACTION: Obtain update on accepting offers.	HJ
10.3	Q – Questions have arisen regarding the new shared gender toilets, particularly concerning parental concerns about safety and student wellbeing.	
10.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HJ will be updating parents regarding site works. CS advised that unisex toilets have improved behaviour in other schools. IG advised that he has responded to parents with those concerns and each parent will get the correct information. CS offered some positive PR to help parents understand. 	
11	Any Other Business	
11.1	There was no other business	
12	Close of Meeting	
12.1	The meeting closed at 19:00	
13	Date of Next Meeting	
13.1	12 th May 2025	

ACTIONS

3.1	ACTION – to appoint link roles when RB is present.	RB
5.1	ACTION – TC to check Deputy Head of Governance sent HJ risk register.	TC
9.3.1	ACTION – Data to show what proportions of EHE applications are from disadvantaged students.	HJ
10.2.1	ACTION: Obtain update on accepting offers.	HJ