

Minutes – Monkton Wood Academy Council Meeting

Version: Approved (public version)
Meeting Date: Tuesday 3rd February 2026
Location: Monkton Wood Academy
Time: 17:00 – 19:00

Chair: Richard Bonner (RB) Sponsor Councillor
Attendees: Clare Ousley (CO) Staff (Support) Councillor
 Anne Guild (AG) Staff Councillor
 Debbie O’Sullivan (DO) Parent Councillor

In attendance: Hannah Jones (HJ) Principal
 Cameron Shaw (CS) Executive Principal
 Amy Carden-Smith (AC-S) Observer
 Tessa Clark (TC) Clerk

Apologies:

Minutes

	Pre-Meeting Discussion	Action
	<p>Councillors identified key themes from the Academy Council Report to explore with leaders during the meeting. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the strategic approach to improvement priorities, including outcomes for Year 11; how leadership presence and behaviour processes support a positive learning environment; the school’s approach to promoting strong attendance; and how operational pressures are being managed alongside longer-term development. <p>Parent Councillors then joined the meeting and introductions were made. The Executive Principal outlined his role in providing support and oversight.</p>	
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	The principal joined the meeting and welcomed councillors.	
1.2	Apologies: None were received; all councillors were present.	

1.3	Election of Vice Chair – deferred. No volunteers at this meeting. Action: Chair to bring back next meeting.	RB
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	No declarations were made.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
3.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.	
3.2	<p>Link Roles & Induction Councillors reviewed the remaining link roles requiring appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding Link: Currently held by the Support Staff Councillor until the end of March, after which it will transfer to the Parent Councillor DO (subject to final checks) • Disadvantage Link: In place - AG (lead staff member: Louise Husband). • SEND Link: Still to be appointed pending completion of checks for the Parent Councillor (AC-S), who confirmed she is willing to take on the role. • Careers Link: Confirmed as the Chair (RB). <p>It was noted that an e-safety link is no longer a required link role. Councillors agreed that required links are already covered, but an e-safety link could be added in future if a need arises.</p> <p>Link Visits and Induction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safeguarding Link meets with the DSL at least once per half term. • Other link councillors typically conduct two visits per year, though this may vary depending on school need. • Link visits can be in person or online, with both formats considered valuable for reviewing documents and meeting link staff. • Councillors were reminded to complete induction activities ahead of starting visits. <p>ACTION: link councillors to contact SLT directly to arrange visits.</p>	DO/ AG/RB
3.3	<p>Council membership & checks: Four sponsor councillor vacancies remain; DO onboarding complete; AC-S DBS in progress.</p> <p>Action: Governance team to progress sponsor recruitment.</p>	Governance Team
4	Chairs Update	
4.1	The Chair explained that he had been unable to attend the recent COAC meeting and intends to attend the next one.	
4.2	All councillors, except AC-S, had viewed the Academy Council Report prior to the meeting. The Principal explained the structure of the report and invited councillors to raise questions under each section.	
5	Academy Council Report:	
5.1	Safeguarding	

5.1.1	The Principal presented the Term 2 safeguarding summary, which provides an overview of key safeguarding activity during the term. ACTION: Principal to upload the safeguarding summary to GovernorHub.	HJ
5.1.2	The Principal reported that safeguarding processes and recording systems continue to be strengthened to support effective oversight and timely responses.	
5.1.3	Is there a set target to close safeguarding logs?	
5.1.4	The Principal provided an overview of the types of safeguarding needs currently being managed within the school, noting that a range of support pathways are in place and are used proportionately according to need. The school continues to work with external agencies where appropriate and provides pastoral support to pupils requiring additional help. Councillors received assurance that trends are being monitored and that the school continues to promote a safe culture through proactive education and early intervention.	
5.1.5	Q: Are certain pupil groups more represented within safeguarding needs?	
5.1.6	The Principal noted that, as seen nationally, pupils with additional vulnerabilities often require more support. Staff work closely with families and external partners to ensure these pupils receive appropriate guidance and intervention.	
5.1.7	The Principal confirmed that the required local authority safeguarding audit has been completed.	
5.1.8	Alternative provision was discussed. The Principal outlined the systems in place to ensure that any alternative placements used by the school are monitored and quality-assured. ACTION: DO to review AP processes as part of safeguarding link visit.”	DO
5.1.9	The Principal highlighted that she regularly engages with local school leaders to share good practice and discuss wider sector challenges.	
5.2	Inclusion	
5.2.1	Q: Is there an update on the SEND peer review?	
5.2.2	A peer review (external SENCO) is scheduled for next week. ACTION: Once AC-S’s checks are complete and her appointment is confirmed, the SEN peer-review outcomes will be shared with her as the prospective SEND Link Councillor. Until then, the Principal will share the outcomes directly with the Chair.	AC-S/ HJ
5.2.3	Q: Can we have an update on the Cedar Centre transition?	
5.2.4	The Principal provided an update on the Cedar Centre arrangements. Annual reviews for Year 11 pupils have been completed, and ongoing planning is in place for pupils remaining on roll. Inclusion provision is being further developed on the main school site.	
5.2.5	Q: What is enabling KS3 pupils to access more mainstream learning?	
5.2.6	The Principal explained that co-locating provision on the main site enables a more flexible and inclusive model, supporting gradual access to appropriate mainstream opportunities.	
5.2.7	Pupil Premium strategy statement - Noted	

5.3	Curriculum and teaching	
5.3.1	Council received an update on the academy's ongoing school improvement and inspection preparedness work.	
5.3.2	Leaders outlined the continued work taking place across curriculum quality assurance, middle leader development, and monitoring of impact. Council received assurance that priorities for continued improvement are clearly identified and are being addressed through existing plans.	
5.3.3	Council was updated on curriculum planning for September, including the introduction of Computer Science at KS3, an increase in PE time at KS4, and adjustments to ensure balance across core subjects.	
5.3.4	A staffing update was provided. There are currently no long-term teaching vacancies, and recruitment is underway for roles starting in September. PPA remains protected, with short-term absence being managed through internal cover. External QA and ECT feedback remain positive. Numbers on roll continue to move towards PAN.	
5.4	Achievement	
5.4.1	Q: What are the key factors currently shaping KS4 outcomes?	
5.4.2	Principal explained the range of contextual factors influencing this year's cohort and outlined the ongoing work to strengthen consistency, expectations and curriculum delivery across all subjects. Council received assurance that curriculum quality assurance continues to focus on embedding high expectations and monitoring the impact of teaching and learning.	
5.4.3	Q: How are pupils receiving targeted support being monitored and supported?	
5.4.4	Principal described the mentoring and intervention approaches in place to support pupils working towards key grades, ensuring the right support is matched to the right students. Data processes are reviewed regularly to ensure accuracy and alignment with intervention planning. KS5 outcomes remain strong.	
5.5	Personal development and wellbeing	
5.5.1	Q: Are current staff absence levels typical for this point in the year?	
5.5.2	Principal confirmed that short-term absence levels reflect seasonal patterns. A small number of long-term absences are being managed appropriately. Pastoral staffing structures are being kept under review to ensure ongoing stability and effective support for students.	
5.6	Attendance and behaviour	
5.6.1	Q: Does the attendance data reflect on-site or in-lesson attendance?	
5.6.2	Principal confirmed that the figures shared represent on-site attendance. In-lesson attendance is monitored separately, with systems in place to identify and address pupils who are on site but not in class.	

	Council received an update on the school's approach to addressing lesson refusal.	
5.6.2a	ACTION: Track internal truancy trends and report key themes at the next meeting.	HJ
5.6.3	Attendance patterns across year groups and pupil groups were discussed. Principal highlighted the ongoing work to support pupils with more complex circumstances, including those awaiting specialist provision.	
5.6.4	Q: Are processes for sending pupils home formally overseen and reviewed?	
5.6.5	Principal confirmed that procedures are being strengthened. A pastoral check-in step is being introduced to ensure consistency, and frequent attenders at first aid are being monitored to ensure appropriate support.	
5.6.6	Q: Is targeted work underway to address persistent absence and truancy?	
5.6.7	Principal confirmed that monitoring continues to focus on key behaviour routines, including addressing classroom disruption and ensuring pupils remain in lessons. Weekly reviews help identify patterns, and the school is exploring options for additional on-site support for pupils who need it. An update will be shared at the next meeting.	
5.7	Post-16 Provision	
5.7.1	KS5 outcomes remain strong, including for key groups. No questions were asked for this item.	
5.8	Leadership and Governance	
5.8.1	The Principal reported that, although council membership has changed over time, governance processes remain strong. Minutes and link visit reports continue to be important sources of evidence demonstrating effective oversight.	
5.8.2	Q: Can we include an Ofsted-readiness item at the next meeting?	
	Yes. ACTION: Principal to add Ofsted-readiness to the next agenda.	HJ
5.8.3	Q: Are there any link reports this term?	
5.8.4	It was confirmed that a safeguarding/site-walk link report is currently being finalised. ACTION: CO to submit the safeguarding/site-walk link-visit notes using the agreed template.	CO
6	Student voice.	
6.1	Q: Shall this item be rolled forward?	
6.1.1	Yes. A summary will be presented at the next meeting following the forthcoming house-captains (school council) meeting. ACTION: Principal to bring the updated Student Voice summary to the next meeting following the house-captains' discussions.	HJ
7	Policies	
7.1	Policies presented for ratification were approved/ noted.	
7.1.1	Q: Should mobile-phone expectations be set out in a local policy?	
7.1.2	The Principal will review whether a local policy is required and ensure the Behaviour Policy reflects current practice. ACTION: Principal to review Behaviour Policy mobile-phone section.	HJ

8	Link Reports	
8.1	No link reports were received this term (one safeguarding/site walk report is pending).	
8.2	ACTION: All link councillors to submit visit notes in advance of the next meeting.	CO/ RB/ DO/ AG
9	Any Other Buisness	
9.1	No further business was raised	
10	Date of Next Meeting	
10.1	Tuesday 17 th March 2026	

ACTIONS

1.3	Election of Vice Chair – deferred; Chair to bring back next meeting.	RB
3.2	Link councillors to contact SLT directly to arrange visits.	CO/DO/ AG/ RB
3.3	Governance team to progress sponsor recruitment.	Governance Team
5.1.1	Principal to upload the safeguarding summary to GovernorHub.	HJ
5.1.8	DO to review AP processes as part of safeguarding link visit.	DO
5.2.2	Once AC-S's checks are complete and her appointment is confirmed, the SEN peer-review outcomes will be shared with her as the prospective SEND Link Councillor. Until then, the Principal will share the outcomes directly with the Chair.	AC-S/HJ
5.6.2a	Track internal truancy trends and report key themes at the next meeting.	HJ
5.8.2	Principal to add Ofsted-readiness to the next agenda.	HJ
5.8.4	CO to submit the safeguarding/site-walk link-visit notes using the agreed template.	CO
6.1.1	Principal to bring the updated Student Voice summary to the next meeting following the house-captains' discussions.	HJ
7.1.2	Principal to review Behaviour Policy mobile-phone section.	HJ
8.2	All link councillors to submit visit notes in advance of the next meeting.	CO/RB/DO/AG