



Bristol Metropolitan Academy Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday 28th April 2020, 6.00pm
Virtual meeting via TEAMS due to Covid-19 restrictions

Academy Council:

Clare Ryder (CR) CHAIR	Sponsor 1	Sally Apps (SA)	Executive Principal
Marie Mooney (MM) V. CHAIR	Sponsor 2	Cameron Shaw (CS)	Principal
Martin Neary (MN)	Sponsor 3	<i>Vacancy</i>	LA Rep
Charlotte Muzabazzi (CM)	Sponsor 4	Nigel Cooley (NC) *	Student Advocate
<i>Vacancy</i>	Sponsor 5		
Mark Swallow (MS) *	Teacher	In Attendance	
Helen Harman (HH) *	Support Staff		
<i>Vacancy</i>	Parent		
Helen Bruton (HB)	Parent	Sue Burns	Clerk
*	<- Indicates absent.		<- Indicates question asked

1, Welcome and Apologies:

CR welcomed everyone to their first virtual meeting and explained that staff were not required to attend in order to support their wellbeing.

No apologies were necessary.

The meeting was deemed to be quorate.

Alison Delyth resigned from the Academy Council with effect from 20th April 2020.

2, Declaration of Interests

The Councillors confirmed that they had no pecuniary interest pertinent to this meeting.

3, Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting (4th February 2020) were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4, Actions

All actions were carried forward to when the school re-opens following the Covid-19 restrictions.

The hub and Safeguarding

This is week six of the school closures (including the two weeks of the Easter 'break'). The school was closed by the DfE but is providing childcare for vulnerable children and those of key workers. We had anticipated a closure, but initially thought that it would only be for two weeks. When it became apparent that the closure was going to be for longer, we started to provide additional online learning and are now investigating ways for students to share their learning.

Originally, we were providing childcare for just BMA students, but this quickly also became Bristol Brunel students. Following the Easter break we collapsed down to the City Academy site as our catering teams were furloughing their workers. City Academy is hosting five schools including two primary schools and can provide a hot breakfast and lunch for the children on site. There are approximately 40 students across the City Academy site, therefore we have been able to offer some physical education every day.

How many BMA children are attending the hub?

On average 6-7 students, who are almost all key worker children. Today we had four of our CiC children on site.

Did you have fewer children attend when you moved to the City Academy site?

No, today has been the busiest day to date.

Is there any advance notice of which children are going to attend and when?

Some parents have given us advanced notice if they are working shift patterns. There is a minimum number of staff required to ensure the provision is safe, but we can have up to twenty with the current staff ratio.

We have 79 children on our most vulnerable list, what have we been able to do to encourage take up of places?

The government's definition of 'vulnerable' is children with a Social Worker, or children in care if it is not safe for them to stay at home. Uptake across the trust is in-line with national averages which is less than 1% of all children.

What monitoring is in place for our vulnerable students?

We have a system in place to contact the families of the students with two phone calls a week from our pastoral and safeguarding teams. This has dropped to one phone call a week if that has been requested. Three families have daily contact and we are signposting to external agencies.

Are you recording information on CPOMS?

Yes, we record who has been contacted and when, and whether we have any concerns.

This term we have started contacting all students through email via the tutors and asking them to reply and confirm that they are ok. If we do not get a reply then we follow-up with a phone call.

Some children were contacted by their tutors before this term?

Yes, some tutors made their own contact arrangements, but a formal decision to contact families was not made until this term.

Are we in regular contact with all our vulnerable children?

Yes, with all our identified vulnerable children, but we are conscious that as time goes on, additional children may be categorised as vulnerable because families may become in need as the situation goes on.

You mention the increase in pressure on families as time goes on, is there a plan to identify who those students are?

We categorise our children and move them up the categories following feedback from tutors and phone calls. We are liaising with the trust to determine what additional support we can provide for disadvantaged and vulnerable students.

Are you identifying any stress in any students that you are concerned about?

Most of the students seem to be doing reasonably well, which may in part be due to not understanding the gravitas of the situation.

Is the School Counsellor available to students?

Yes, we have introduced a new contract so that students are aware that the service is different because the parents are present. Some students have chosen therefore not to use the service. The Counsellor has a case load of 15 students a week as well as supporting with the pastoral phone calls.

Has any student had difficulty reaching City Academy?

One parent advised that this was going to be an issue. We provided information about the cycle paths and bus services, but the student is not using the provision. We have kept in touch with the family and they are not on the vulnerable list.

What provision has been made for our FSM pupils?

Originally we provided take-away food for FSM students who were not on site. We then moved to a voucher system where we purchased vouchers and sent them to families. The government has introduced a national FSM scheme which originally was not going to cover the Easter Break. Therefore, the trust delivered 2000 boxes of food to families and utilised 200 staff and parent volunteers; one family who owns a wholesale business donated 50 Easter Eggs. The delivery of the boxes allowed us face to face contact with our vulnerable families. The government then advised at very short notice that they would fund FSM provision over Easter. The national FSM voucher website had some teething issues but is now up and running. We are now ordering FSM vouchers for two-weeks at a time to ensure efficiencies.

The Academy Council thanked all the staff for ensuring that food was made available to vulnerable families and recognised Tania Garside's contribution in securing FSM vouchers.

Distance Learning

Online learning resources have been made available. There was been some concern about keeping up with the work therefore we re-published the timetable this term with three core sessions a day. We have quality assured the work that has been made available by the intervention teachers and TAs who have a good understanding of the students.

Are you aware of which students don't have laptops or printers at home, or are in a mobile only household?

We provide the work for a week in advance, over time we are seeing a growing number of families requesting paper-based work due to pressures on IT at home. Admin teams are going into school two mornings a week and printing and posting packs. We are therefore now investigating commercial workbooks that can be purchased and sent to students.

We have undertaken surveys with parents to determine who does not have access to devices and the trust is investigating procuring devices with 4G capability. We have leant out laptops that we had available, and the government has now announced a national scheme for laptop provision, but it is

not clear yet how this will be delivered. The CLF are re-purposing IT from across the trust wherever possible and are investigating procurement routes as availability is scarce. We will prioritise our most vulnerable students, but it is possible that some children will still not have access to IT.

Are you able to determine which students are doing work?

We are looking into ways to determine this and we are revising schemes of learning, particularly for Y10 moving into Y11. Most programme leaders have tried to set skills-based work as opposed to content, to support students for their return to school. Even those students who are accessing learning every day will not be making the same progress that they would have done if in school in normal times

What proportion of students are requesting paper-based learning?

Approximately 12%.

Does that suggest that 12% of students don't have access to IT?

No. There are more students requesting paper-based resources than families who don't have access to the internet. Some students may prefer paper-based resources and they may be more convenient if space is at a premium. Many families don't have printers at home. Forty-six families do not have access to computers.

Finance

You are currently undertaking budget planning, will there be a need to budget for unexpected consequences of the lockdown, e.g. supporting students who have fallen behind?

The scheme of learning that we are using currently will be retained for the next two years. We have introduced Satchel One (show my learning) which is an online learning platform in case we have to do a phased-return and all students will not be on site. Budgeting has been challenging due to several unknown factors, but we have a balanced budget as the school is still growing which results in additional funding. This year's department budgets have been frozen and will be re-deployed into other resources. High quality teaching will be key when students return to school, to identify and close the gaps in learning.

It is likely that budgets will be cut following the government's spending on Covid-19 responses?

Yes. We have our funding for next year and have set our budget for that year but we are mindful that funding may change in the future.

The BMA site is continuing to be maintained by SKANSKSA as per their contract requirements.

Staff Wellbeing

Cameron, how are you and your staff coping?

I have online meetings with my SLT three times a week and I meet with the programme leaders once a week, and with CLF for two hours a week. I write to all staff once or twice a week and have provided update videos for them. We have a celebration assembly at 9.00am every Wednesday with an assembly video that students can tune-in for. We have a well-being cascade tree to ensure that all staff are contacted by telephone by Middle Leaders who can then report any concerns they have about staff wellbeing and signpost them to support services.

How are the IT staff, are they properly resourced and supported?

Yes, they are well resourced and are working remotely. I speak to them most days and our IT systems have been very resilient.

Achievement and Standards

How are you managing centre assessed grades?

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes with the Institute. The Middle Leaders have met and discussed the process for teacher assessment and for rank ordering students.

Is there a risk that parents could challenge the grades that students have been given?

It is a national process released by Ofqual, elements of which are under consultation.

Will moderation take place?

Yes, there will be checks and balances in place and I have to sign-off every grade in every subject. The trust will also utilise moderation and data analysis to ensure that every student is awarded the grade they deserve. Final grades will be submitted at the end of May which Ofqual will then perform statistical testing to ensure that there is not a significant variation from predicted grades. There will not be a right to appeal as there is no paper to mark, therefore the appeal process will involve taking an exam in September.

How will the additional workload impact on teachers?

No further assessment is permitted, therefore none of the work which is currently being produced can be used. We have to use the assessments that have already taken place including mock exams, predicted grades and where appropriate, course work. This is normally a busy time of year for teachers providing additional revision sessions and preparing students for their exams, which are not taking place. Teachers are keen for students to have the grade they deserve and therefore are committed to the process.

Are parents aware that Y11 students do not need to keep working?

We have written to students and families and we are getting very little work returned from Y11 students, but where we are it is being marked and feedback is provided. Students who are going to move onto A-Level subjects have been provided with resources and links to Post-16 centres to support students with transition to next year.

Parent Feedback

Powerpoint presentation from two Parent Academy Councillors.

The Parent Academy Councillors have sourced feedback from a small group of parents (29 families). Communication since the school closure, home-learning and any proposed solutions have been sought.

There were lots of positives in the feedback, including gratitude for the amount of work that has taken place, improved communication, response to emails, the reduced timetable and Mr Blue Sky. The Share Point is easy for students to navigate.

Issues that have been identified include:

- Lack of clarity about what is expected from the work that has been set (all year groups)
- Initial confusion around the three-subject timetable.
- Confusion around the change in location for sourcing online work (since rectified).

- Lots of concerns around the PDF format being difficult to use as it cannot be easily converted to allow typed responses in the document. This means potentially printing off work or needing to produce separate replies. (this may be driving some of the requests for paper-based work).
- Inconsistent contact from tutors (since rectified).
- Lack of clarity around whether work needs to be submitted to teachers.
- Some communications are not reaching all parents.
- Broken hyper-links.
- Clearer communication about expectations for students and what they should be producing (since rectified).

Improvement suggestions included:

- Reduced text in letters (so it's easier to read on mobile phones).
- More personalised contact with tutors (following multiple requests).
- Year group Skype conferences (not currently possible due to safeguarding concerns).
- A year group section on the website.
- Consistent instructions about what to do with the work once it has been completed.
- Daily/weekly extra-curricular activities to keep children focused.
- Written student reports.

CS thanked the Parent Academy Councillors for their feedback and advised that he would follow-up on some of the issues and suggestions raised. He will also draft additional communication to parents to manage their expectations where necessary.

Student Wellbeing

When students eventually return to school, have you considered how we will support the emotional and psychological needs of the children after an extended period of isolation?

We are discussing this with the CLF leadership forum and Sally Apps is working with the Confederation of Schools Trusts. We are not experts in this field and do not yet know what a return to school will look like following this unprecedented situation. We contract APS to provide educational psychologist support who are starting to create wellbeing videos for our students.

Will the DfE offer support?

We are not aware of a DfE or government initiative around this currently, but the CST are feeding a number of concerns back to the government. Work is being undertaken around the mechanics and phased re-integration of students back to school. We are also considering creating a simple Nimble Course for adults on how to prepare supporting children back into school. We also need to consider staff who find it challenging to return.

Do we have any staff in vulnerable groups who may have to retain social distancing?

Yes, we have staff with underlying health conditions. A CST consultation has taken place to consider what re-opening may look like and to ensure that there is a clear communication to all schools.

Policies that require review

- Remote Learning
- Online Safety
- Safeguarding Covid-19 Addendum

The Academy Council noted the policies and identified some questions that CR will raise with the CLF Central Team.

A Covid-19 contextual risk assessment is being undertaken for every vulnerable child.

Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC

None.

AOB

None.

The Academy Council thanked the staff for responding quickly to an unprecedented situation and for their continued commitment and support of their students and families during very challenging circumstances.

11, Date of Next Meeting: TBC.

Meeting ended at: 8.00pm

Approved: _____ Date _____