

Minutes – Begbrook Primary Academy Council

Date	2 December 2025	
Location:	Teams - online	
Time:	5.00 pm	
Present:	Anne Harris (AH)	Sponsor Councillor (Acting Chair)
	Sian Adams (SA)	Teacher Academy Councillor
	Dr Shaun Mudd (SMU)	Parent Academy Councillor
	Dr Pawel Capik (PC)	Sponsor Councillor
	Nicole Owen (NO)	Support Staff Academy Councillor
Attendees:	Vicky Counsell (VC)	Principal
	Kate Richardson (KR)	CLF Director of Education
	Linda Corbidge (LC)	Academy Council Clerk
Apologies:	Sarah Page (SP)	Academy Councillor (Chair)

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions	
1.1	AH welcomed councillors and explained that she would be chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chair.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations of interest made for this meeting.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	The minutes of the meeting held 30 September 2025 were approved as a true copy.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	<p><i>VC will provide an update on PTA funding at next meeting, including the suggestion that some funds could be used for the Eco Committee.</i></p> <p>VC reported that the PTA would like to allocate funds for outdoor play equipment. The school agreed as the funds will provide quality lunchtime and breaktime equipment for the children.</p>	
5	Chair's Update	
5.1	<p>Membership changes were noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicole was welcomed to her first meeting as the Support Staff Academy Councillor. Simon Metson has stepped down as his term of office as Parent Academy Councillor had ended. An election is currently underway for a new Parent Academy Councillor who would hopefully be in place for the next meeting in Term 3. Checks are progressing well for two new sponsor councillors who will join the next meeting. VC briefed councillors on the background and skill set of the two new councillors. 	
6	Academy Council Report	
	<i>The Academy Council Report had been shared and was noted.</i>	
6.1	Pupil Outcomes /Teaching and Learning	

Item	Description	Action
6.1.1	<p>VC provided an update on teaching and learning and the Term 1 data which had been shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular learning walks take place, with feedback shared in SLT meetings and specific area feedback to whole school or year groups. A 39-week annual planner outlines curriculum coverage for each year group. Strong practices have been identified around curriculum planning, the teaching and learning policy, adaptive teaching, and SEND passports. Term 1 data highlighted the need for continued focus on improving outcomes for some children. Some disparity has been identified between previous year-end teacher assessments and the expectations of teachers in the following year group. To address this, SLT is reviewing the data journey from Year 1 to Year 6, with a focus on key children who are not yet on track. Additionally, SLT is planning moderation activities to ensure consistency in teacher judgements across phases and the whole school for the remainder of this term and into the next. 	
6.2	Attendance	
6.2.1	VC reported that an Attendance and Family Support Officer had now been appointed and is expected to start in January. The school are pleased with the candidate who has the skills to manage administrative processes as well as provide family support. This will increase capacity to focus on family support and punctuality.	
6.2.2	<p>Does extreme lateness count as absence in attendance data? Yes, pupils arriving 9:31am receive a U code (unauthorised absence), meaning the morning session does not count towards attendance.</p> <p>Councillors suggested focus on pupils with U codes. VC noted that the school is working with families to tackle issues such as traffic delays and busy mornings. Support includes free breakfast club and advice on home organisation. The new Attendance and Family Support Officer will play a key role in supporting families. This is an ongoing priority.</p>	
6.2.3	<p>Councillors noted that despite lighter traffic Mondays and Fridays have the lowest attendance and Year 1 and Year 2 attendance is strong, while Year 5 is significantly lower. VC explained the context around the lower attendance in Year 5 noting that attendance is a complex issue. KR highlighted that the absence of a Family Support Officer has made it harder to address these patterns.</p> <p><u>Action: VC to ask the Attendance Support Officer to review Year 5 attendance compared to previous years and analyse KS2 attendance against KS1 data, focusing on Year 3 and Year 5.</u></p>	VC
6.3	Health and Safety Audit	
6.3.1	NO reported that the academy had achieved an <i>outstanding</i> rating in the recent health and safety audit. Six identified actions are already being addressed. NO highlighted the team effort and commitment to maintaining momentum. Councillors congratulated NO and the team on this achievement.	
6.3.2	<p>Was the unannounced fire drill mentioned in the report an accident? Although it was not originally scheduled (and not set off deliberately), it was treated as one of the planned unannounced drills.</p>	
6.4	Behaviour and Attitudes	
6.4.1	<p>VC highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour remains a focus, particularly around the integration of new children joining the school. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charity events such as the school disco are taking place and are well-received by the children. VC praised the PTFA and Emily Mowlem for their efforts and thoughtful planning in exploring ways to make the events accessible to all, reinforcing inclusion. The PTFA website was noted as excellent. The school is working closely on oracy with Voice 21 this year focussing on embedding high standards of oracy across the school. The Oracy Development Day highlighted children’s positive attitudes to learning and positive impact has been observed on quality of interactions and behaviour. 	
6.5	Staff Absence/illness	
6.5.1	VC reported that staff absence and illness have been significant this term, creating challenges for the team in managing cover. Due to the statutory requirements for supporting the most vulnerable and highest SEND pupils, and the reliance on TAs for this provision, sourcing external cover is difficult. As a result, timetables often need to be adjusted daily. The team continues to work closely with the Employee Relations HR Manager to ensure the sickness absence process is followed in a supportive way.	
6.5.2	<p>Is there any particular reason underlying the high rate of sickness absence?</p> <p>The majority of absences do not appear to be work-related stress - return-to-work meetings include clear guidance for conversations about support needs, and staff at Begbrook are confident in voicing concerns.</p>	
6.5.3	<p>Does a lack of resources make covering staff absence more difficult?</p> <p>The budgets are tight while pupil needs are increasing. Cover staff cannot deliver structured timetables or trained interventions.</p>	
6.5.4	<p>Attendance case studies in the report were noted. Discussion took place with suggestions including promoting examples of pupils with 100% attendance and introducing peer-led incentives. VC highlighted the importance of understanding which families achieve full attendance, especially those considered vulnerable or entitled to PP. The discussion explored whether attendance concerns are mainly adult-dependent rather than child-related and proposed gathering Pupil Voice from children who struggle to attend. Additional ideas included asking high-attending pupils what motivates them and using positive peer influence through buddy systems or incentives. VC stressed the need for sensitivity when supporting families already receiving help.</p> <p>Action: Attendance strategies, including PP data and potential incentives, will be reviewed in the next PP Attendance meeting and report to next meeting.</p>	VC
6.5.5	<p>Is it unusual for the school to have a suspension?</p> <p>Yes, suspensions are rare and only used as a last resort. The school works hard to avoid suspensions, using alternative actions internally or in agreement with another school whenever possible. The decision-making process includes SLT and KR, and suspensions are intended to provide time for reflection for both the child and the school team.</p>	
7	Safeguarding, including link role, Termly Report and Annual Safeguarding Report	
7.1	<p>The Term 2 Academy Safeguarding Report and Annual Safeguarding Report 24–25 were shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SA highlighted that Begbrook has a strong safeguarding culture, with all staff upskilled and an 81% audit score—the second highest in the Trust. The safeguarding team attends regular training and feels highly knowledgeable. SA noted Begbrook’s strong recording practice, which provides an accurate picture of child-on-child harm. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child-on-child incidents remain a focus due to increased challenges with self-regulation. Actions include a termly reviewed log with audit section, data-driven responses, staff support through PD systems, and pupil support via assemblies. Processes will be reviewed in the January audit and shared in Term 4/5 meetings. 	
7.2	<p>Could the school offer pupils more activities and alternatives at play? SA explained that break is 15 minutes and lunchtime provision introduced last year includes five activity choices which is the reason the focus remains on training staff for impactful restorative conversations.</p>	
7.3	<p>Could the child-on-child incidents relate to parental concerns about ADHD. We believe that wider factors such as increased screen time and societal changes are more likely to contribute to the incidents.</p>	
7.4	SM praised the thoroughness of the safeguarding report. A discussion followed regarding an incident involving a member of staff. SA explained the context, noting it involved a younger child, and outlined actions taken, including a reflective conversation. The staff member felt supported, and the incident has not recurred.	
7.5	SA outlined that safeguarding bitesize training has been provided for all staff. Additionally, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is developing a process to support provision for Young Carers.	
7.6	AH praised the high level of data capture, noting the thorough recording. SA stated that the recording also enables the school to demonstrate confidently, with evidence, that there are no patterns of bullying.	
7.7	SA shared positive pupil voice collected during Anti-Bullying Week. Average scores for Term 1 shows overall improvement, with scores of 4 or above out of 5 across all questions compared to the same period last year. Comments from pupils included "I feel safe at school" and "we have people who are expert at keeping us safe".	
7.8	<p>What do you think has contributed to the increase in scores? We are seeing the impact of our safeguarding curriculum put in place two years ago. The good systems have empowered our children to feel and know how to keep safe. VC noted the Term 2 safeguarding weekly themes and staff briefings covering a range of areas around safeguarding which were highlighted in the AC report.</p>	
8	Equality and Diversity	
8.1	VC reported that EDI work is continuing with a variety of events and themes taking place as detailed in the AC report.	
9	SEND	
9.1	<p>VC reported that the school has noticed an increase in families raising concerns about children presenting with potential SEND needs, often perceived by parents as ADHD tendencies. Staff are engaging with these families, ensuring concerns are acknowledged while following a clear and systematic process to assess needs accurately. The aim is to identify the most appropriate support route, which may include counselling or addressing past traumas rather than assuming ADHD.</p> <p>AH noted that these issues reflect conversations with the SENCo during her link visit, highlighting the challenges faced by the school. Sensitive discussions with families about early childhood experiences require careful handling to maintain trust and provide effective support.</p>	
9.2	Discussion followed on who holds conversations with families regarding SEND concerns raised by parents. VC explained that the class teacher is the initial point of contact, working with the family and child and completing a referral form if needed. The SENCo provides weekly staff clinics, and following referrals, the Assistant SENCo or SENCo meets	

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	with teachers. Additionally, fortnightly SEND meetings with SLT review current cases, referrals, actions, and next steps for support.	
10	Link Reports	
10.1	SEND	
10.1.1	AH reported a successful SEND link visit. Key points discussed included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the CLF audit, which was mostly green. AH was pleased with how the school is adapting to challenges, noting that nothing raised in the audit was unexpected or unaddressed. Discussion on changes to the TA role, with some associated challenges. Less positive areas were external factors, such as insufficient Educational Psychologist time and limited external resources or support. Time required to respond to parents' self-identification of issues. Need for further exploration where some families are unwilling to recognise additional needs. 	
10.1.2	VC reported significant progress in successful ECHP applications and receipt of funding over the past 18 months, with the waiting list reduced and moving more quickly. AH commented that the school felt calm and safe during her visits, complimented the SENCo on her efforts, and congratulated the school on a very positive compliance review. AH recognised the positive changes within the school despite the limited resources.	
10.2	Disadvantage	
10.2.1	Action: Taken forward for SP to provide an update at next meeting.	SP
10	Policy Reviews	
10.1	None.	
11	Any Other Business	
11.1	VC and SA were thanked for their comprehensive reports.	

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

	4.30pm pre meeting	5-7pm AC meeting
Term 1	Tuesday 30th September	At Begbrook (in person)
Term 2	Tuesday 2nd December	Online
Term 3	Tuesday 3rd February	Online
Term 4	Tuesday 24th March	Online
Term 6	Tuesday 30th June	At Begbrook (in person)