

Minutes – Redstart Primary School Academy Council Meeting

Version: Draft
Meeting Date: 26/06/2025
Location: Redstart
Time: 17:30-19:30

Chair: Sapphire Lynch (SL)
Attendees: Martin Richards (MR) Parent Councillor
 Jacqueline Hiscox (JiH) Sponsor Councillor
 Nikki Tilley (NT) Parent Councillor
 Jen Hill (JeH) Staff Councillor
 Carlie Stroulger (CS) Staff (Support) Councillor
 Joanne Thompson (JT) Sponsor Councillor

In attendance: Rebecca Collins Principal
 Tracy French Executive Principal
 Tessa Clark (TC) Clerk

Apologies: Jo Draper Sponsor Councillor

Minutes

		Action
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	The chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Academy Council.	
1.2	Apologies were accepted as above.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	Academy Council Membership	
3.1	The council has all positions filled.	
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.	
5	Matters Arising	
5.1	Item 13.4.1: TB confirmed that a revised induction pack for councillors is underway and will be ready at the start of next term.	
5.2	Item 13.5: Outstanding policies to be moved to "Approved" status.	

	Academy Council report	
6	Behaviour and Attitudes	
6.1	The report highlights 67 behaviour incidents involving 25 children since the last meeting. While the number of incidents has remained steady, fewer pupils were involved. Could this suggest the behaviour policy is beginning to have an impact?	
6.1.1	<p>Yes, the Principal shared that the behaviour policy appears to be effective for the vast majority of children. The use of simple categories and quick responses when children are not following expectations works well for most. However, there are some children whose needs fall outside of this approach.</p> <p>From September 2025 teachers will be completing training with PINS (Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools)—an organisation that helps improve understanding of neurodivergence in pupils. This included 37 hours of free training which will hopefully further support staff with managing behaviour effectively.</p>	
6.1.2	Can you clarify the makeup of the group of 25 pupils involved in incidents? It appears that a significant proportion may have SEND needs.	
6.1.3	<p>Yes, a significant number of those 25 children are identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN). The behaviours observed are not necessarily due to poor choices, but rather linked to additional needs. As a result, the school is working to make the behaviour policy more bespoke and responsive to these children.</p> <p>Some changes have already been implemented, such as ensuring consistency in the use of visual timetables and reinforcing consistent rules across settings.</p>	
6.2	Q – Has anyone in the school considered trauma-informed training?	
6.2.1	<p>Yes, one of our Teaching Assistants has attended trauma-informed training to enable them to provide direct support to individual pupils. This staff member has also worked extensively with both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children.</p> <p>From next year, groups of children will be supported through targeted work with her, drawing on her training and experience to better meet their emotional and behavioural needs</p>	
6.3	Q – Is there any ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) support happening in school?	
6.3.1	<p>Yes, we have two members of staff—who we are retaining—who will be delivering ELSA support. There is currently a long list of children who have requested or been identified for this support. In addition to the ELSA provision, we have other staff members who also support children with emotional needs.</p> <p>There is a growing focus on behaviour in schools nationally, and we recognise the challenges this presents. At our school, we maintain high expectations while also understanding that some children may need additional support to meet them. We provide firm boundaries, acknowledge the importance of movement for children, and adapt our approach as needed. While our current strategies are proving successful, we remain flexible and responsive to change</p>	
6.4	Q – If there is an incident, do you have enough staff available to respond?	

6.4.1	<p>It depends on the day. This highlights the importance of how we plan to organise nurture support next year. The aim is to ensure one-to-one support is available for children who need it, along with some unmetabled support that can be deployed flexibly.</p> <p>Our intention is to prioritise support for children with the highest needs. While those children currently receive appropriate support, as you move down to lower levels of need—such as help with reading—there is less support available. We are working to address this balance.</p>	
6.5	<p>Q - How do you balance support for children who need one-to-one assistance versus those who don't have a diagnosis but still need someone to watch them?</p>	
6.5.1	<p>Safety is always the top priority. While we don't always have a fixed one-to-one arrangement, we use strategies such as buddying up to ensure that children have someone available to support them when needed.</p> <p>For children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), their support is clearly outlined and provided accordingly. Kerri acts as an advocate, assessing what support each child needs and helping to coordinate it.</p> <p>From a legal standpoint, we do have enough adults in school. The challenge isn't necessarily a lack of staff, but rather how we deploy them—balancing teaching responsibilities with additional support needs. We invest heavily in CPD (Continuing Professional Development) focused on adaptive teaching to help manage this.</p> <p>We've also implemented practical strategies to reduce reliance on staff for individual interventions. For example, we use wobble cushions and other sensory tools to help children self-regulate without needing to leave the classroom. Even our choice of phonics scheme was influenced by staffing considerations—we selected one that allows us to adapt and ensure no child misses out due to limited adult availability.</p>	
7	Achievements and standards Student Outcomes	
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonics screening passed mark is set at 32 out of 40, with an impressive 86% of children achieving this. • The phonics journey has been a bit tricky; Year 1 spent a whole year on a different scheme, so they've had to catch up. • Two children in Year 1 didn't sit the check due to their lack of exposure to the programme. However, those who were taught consistently throughout the year achieved a remarkable 90% pass rate. • Year 4 multiplication results involved 25 questions, with 6 seconds allocated per question. The mean score was 21.36; ideally, we'd prefer it to be higher. There's a notable concentration of top scorers, while a few fell below 20 and will receive additional support. • Out of 61, 19 students achieved full marks. • In Year 6 writing, we are at 75% at the expected level, with three achieving greater depth. <p>ACTION: Principal to upload all results, including those for Pupil Premium pupils, to Gov hub. COMPLETE.</p>	
8	Safeguarding	

8.1	First full year using CPOMS – How do you feel about the CPOMS categories? Are people choosing the best ones?	
8.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is more admin involved due to how CPOMS operates. • Staff are still on a learning curve and not yet using the system to its full potential. • The Trust’s Safeguarding Lead confirmed that the system is being used correctly. • Additional training has been requested, as CPOMS has extensive functionality and even the basics can be challenging. 	
8.2	Do the categories always fit the incidents being recorded?	
8.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always. If a suitable category isn’t available, staff either leave it uncategorised or use a broad umbrella category. • Behaviour incidents are recorded on CPOMS. • The Trust’s Safeguarding Lead has made some adjustments to improve category relevance 	
8.3	Safeguarding review: The team is proud of the review outcome, which reflects strong systems and the dedicated work of the safeguarding lead. All trackers are now being used effectively. Next step to add hyperlinks.	
8.4	For EHCP and part-time timetable children, are contextual safety plans in place?	
8.4.1	Yes, contextual safety plans are in place for both EHCP children and those on part-time timetables.	
9	Finance, health and safety and estates	
9.1	Accident reports are in place, but last year’s data couldn’t be retrieved due to a change in systems.	
9.2	Is risky play being managed appropriately?	
9.2.1	Risky play is considered essential for children’s development and learning. While there are more minor bumps, there have been no serious accidents. The benefits of physical exploration outweigh the minor risks.	
9.3	Is the new play equipment safe?	
9.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new play equipment is safe when supervised. • The equipment supports gross and fine motor development, which is crucial for tasks like writing. • Children need varied movement experiences to develop these skills. • Consistent risk assessments are conducted. • Regarding the trim trail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A few minor accidents occurred. ○ Children were trained on safe usage. ○ Staff were guided on appropriate supervision levels. ○ Supervision is key to safe play. 	
9.4	Nursery tends to over-report injuries, creating some data discrepancies, though no serious incidents have occurred. Reception children are developmentally more prone to falls, and risk assessments are adjusted accordingly between Nursery and school settings. Most injuries happen at lunchtime, but reports often show afternoon times because the system records when the note is entered, not when the incident	

	occurred. Sometimes children report a bump later, even though it happened earlier.	
9.5	Is there a date for the electrical work?	
9.5.1	The fire door upgrades are part of a slow, rolling programme. Some doors can be upgraded, but many cannot, and the process is costly. While some doors are labelled as fire doors, they don't meet the necessary standards. The goal is to ensure doors can properly shut off areas. This will take years to complete.	
9.6	Have you done a lockdown drill?	
9.6.1	Yes, we do conduct lockdown drills, but not this term.	
9.6.2	Do you have a designated location?	
9.6.3	Yes, the location is always accessible, and the caretaker lives on site.	
9.7	One action from the health and safety audit was to complete the Business Continuity Plan. Has this been done?	
9.7.1	Yes, it's completed. We were tested recently when we thought we'd lose electricity. It highlighted that without power, we couldn't keep children in school due to gate and system failures. The continuity plan now addresses this.	
9.7.2	How would you communicate with parents in an emergency?	
9.7.3	We can access Bromcom to send out information. If our systems are down, we also have the option of using the Ops Manager at Castle to send out communications as she now has access to our Bromcom. We also have Tea Club phones as a backup. There are clear plans in place to ensure parents are informed.	
9.8	Finance - The school is currently projected to end the year without a deficit. While meeting all financial targets may be challenging, remaining in the black is considered a positive outcome. Financial decisions continue to be made with scalability and compliance in mind, adhering to the necessary regulations. The Chair, speaking on behalf of the Academy Council, thanked FORS for their fundraising work. A substantial amount of money was raised, and its impact is clearly visible across the school. Each year group received £250, which has been used to purchase a range of resources including Bee-Bots, benches, and other equipment that have significantly enhanced the learning environment.	
9.9	The policy regarding councillor expenses, which was due for review, could not be accessed due to an invalid PDF file. The only information currently available states that councillors may claim travel expenses when attending any panel at another CLF school. However, it was noted that the expenses claim form has recently been changed. ACTION: Clarify the councillor expenses policy and ensure the correct version is uploaded to the Hub. COMPLETE.	
10	Governance	
10.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair confirmed that all councillors have completed the necessary training, but reminded the group that training will need to be repeated in September. A strategic review meeting is scheduled for early next term. Bright spots and areas for development for 2024/25 have been uploaded to the Hub. Councillors are encouraged to reflect in advance on successes and improvement areas, to feed into this review. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This conversation links directly with the updated Academy Improvement Plan, which will be ready for the first meeting. <p>ACTION: Principal to upload the updated Academy Improvement Plan to Gov Hub before the next Academy Council meeting. COMPLETE.</p>	
11	Equality and Diversity	
11.1	The chair noted the use of two diverse texts during a year 2 reading sessions she attended and that these were encouraging examples of inclusivity in the classroom.	
11.1.1	<p>The Principal shared that at the recent Early Years Network meeting, the topic of gender stereotypes was raised. Staff were asked to consider how gender is represented in early education. As part of an activity, children were invited to draw a picture of a pilot. Out of 66 drawings, 61 depicted men, highlighting the persistence of gendered assumptions. The discussion emphasised the importance of using inclusive language—for example, avoiding terms like "postman"—and promoting diverse role models. The book <i>Astro Girl</i> was mentioned as a positive example used in Early Years to challenge stereotypes.</p> <p>Early Years staff are making a conscious effort to include diverse books in their provision. However, it was acknowledged that the CLF 2030 strategy, which aims to close the pay gap between global majority colleagues, feels more challenging to implement in non-urban settings. Currently, there are no staff members from the global majority, and approximately 70% of the children are white British. The focus, therefore, is on ensuring that children are exposed to a variety of ethnicities and cultures through curriculum content and enrichment activities.</p> <p>Plans are in place to invite speakers from different backgrounds to share their experiences with pupils. Teachers have also led assemblies that challenge traditional gender roles, such as highlighting women in professions typically associated with men.</p> <p>The Principal has attended all EDI meetings, which are often secondary-focused, and continues to advocate for inclusive practices across the school. This year's CLF theme is <i>Inclusive Excellence</i>.</p>	
12	Any Other Business	
12.1	<p>A parent councillor asked about expectations for children after they complete their classroom tasks. It was clarified that there is no formal policy on this matter; the approach varies by teacher and depends on the lesson. Children may be offered additional reading, extension tasks, or suggestions on how to improve their work.</p> <p>The parent councillor also raised concern that his child reported spending approximately 45 minutes watching television episodes each Thursday. The Principal responded that this level of screen time is not appropriate for children of that age and affirmed the council's role in holding the school to account. She committed to investigating the matter further.</p>	

	<p>ACTION: Principal to investigate the concern about high level of screen time in class – COMPLETE.</p> <p><i>The Principal later confirmed via Gov Hub that she had spoken with the team. The viewing takes place during lunch on Thursdays, linked to the logistics around Year 4 swimming sessions. Because pupils leave for swimming during their lunch hour, they finish morning lessons early to allow time to eat and rest. During lunch, teachers may play something on the screen while pupils are eating.</i></p>	
12.2	<p>This year marked the school’s first participation in the CLF biennial staff wellbeing survey. Overall, the headline results were positive, with many areas scoring above the CLF average. For example, satisfaction with communication between staff and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) scored 78%, compared to the CLF average of 68%. Behaviour was the highest-rated area, with pupil behaviour receiving a positive rating of 94%, well above the CLF average of 62%. Areas with lower scores included perceptions of the trust and the relevance of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Only 34% of staff rated CPD from the trust as positive, with an average response across CLF of 30%. Staff felt that the CPD provided does not consistently align with their professional needs. The Principal has shared this feedback with the central trust team.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that survey results could be linked to future Bright Spots work. A particularly low scoring area could be explored in more depth and used to guide a focused improvement trail.</p> <p>When asked about the best things in school, staff highlighted many "really lovely things," though they also identified two areas where work base could improve. In particular, mental wellbeing support generated 12 separate comments around communication. In response, the leadership team invited staff to clarify their concerns, acknowledging their ongoing efforts to improve communication, including changing policy so that all messages are now routed through the school office.</p> <p>Two examples shared included frustration around not being formally informed about sudden staffing changes, such as sickness cover or team movement. These changes are not always communicated in a structured meeting, leading to gaps in understanding. Staff were asked to identify what isn’t working so this can be addressed.</p> <p>A staff Councillor expressed interest in receiving class-specific messaging. While teachers have the option to join a distribution list for whole-class communications, no one has opted in yet.</p>	
12.3	<p>The Principal attended a SCITT (School-Based Initial Teacher Training) meeting in support of two teachers currently undergoing their teacher training</p>	
12.4	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>The Chair and Principal offered their thanks to all attendees for their contributions. The Principal shared a positive update following JiH’s visit to the sewing group; JiH, a sponsor councillor, noted the enthusiasm and initiative shown by the children, with some working ahead and others engaging at a foundational level.</p>	

	<p>The Principal extended a warm invitation to all Academy Council members to volunteer or visit the school at any time.</p> <p>It was noted that Ofsted had made positive observations regarding the Academy Council's involvement. The principal reaffirmed the value of open dialogue, reminding attendees that the council is a safe space for constructive challenge and shared improvement.</p>	
13	Date of Next Meeting	
13.1	Strategic meeting – Wednesday 24 th September 5:00 – 6:30pm AC1 - Thursday 2 nd October 5:30-7:30pm	

ACTIONS

7.1	ACTION: Principal to upload all results, including those for Pupil Premium pupils, to Gov hub. COMPLETE.	RC
9.9	ACTION: Clarify the councillor expenses policy and ensure the correct version is uploaded to the Hub. COMPLETE.	TC
10.1	ACTION: Principal to upload the updated Academy Improvement Plan to Gov Hub before the next Academy Council meeting. COMPLETE.	RC
12.1	ACTION: Principal to investigate the concern about high level of screen time in class – COMPLETE.	RC