

Wallscourt Farm Academy Council
Thursday 11 January 2024, 5.30pm
Wallscourt Farm Academy

AC Members		Attended	Apologies
Michael Small (MS)	Sponsor 1 (Chair)	✓	
Haidong Li (HL)	Sponsor 2	✓	
Linda Tanner (LT)	Sponsor 3	✓	
Kathryn Raftery (KR)	Sponsor 4	✓	
Colette Percival (CP)	Sponsor 5		✓
Charlotte Black (CB)	Principal	✓	
Susie Weaver (SW)	Executive Principal	✓	
Trevor Jones (TJ)	Local Authority Rep		✓
Helen Sommerville (HS)	Parent Councillor		✓
Jo Hewitt (JH)	Teaching Staff Councillor	✓	
Vacancy	Support Staff Vacancy		
Ellen Hardy (EH)	Student Advocate		✓
Invited attendees			
Hannah McDonnell	Vice Principal	✓	
Wendy Hellin (WH)	Clerk	✓	

Action No	Relates to	ACTION	OWNER
09.02.23 /2	7.3	ACTION: CB to commission an audit of the current communications going to parents on a weekly/termly basis and what, how and when it is sent. MS noted several actions are around communication and asked if a wider piece needs to be considered on this topic. This item was reopened on 29.06.23. UPDATE: CB confirmed another parent survey will be circulated next week; the academy is trying to stay in line with the surveys issued by the trust. The working group has not yet been set up; the communications champion is Helen. LT offered to assist with this working group. SW provided an update on trust-wide initiatives such as BromCom. Rachel Friday is leading this and would like to organise a small team of people to explore what communications BromCom can deliver. CB confirmed WFA would like to be involved in these trials. SW will confirm this with her. This item is ongoing and will be covered under Communications Plan later on the agenda. Closed.	CB
29.06.23 /2	7.5.1	SW will share the SEND review in the meeting folder, and it will be discussed at the next meeting. This will be carried forward and a wider update provided at the next meeting. Update 11.01.24: The SEND review report has been shared. 3 key strengths and 3 key recommendations have been identified as within the report. The recommendations are already being worked on. ACTION: At the next meeting the SENCo will be invited to the meeting to discuss how SEND is working in WFA and progress towards the recommendations in the SEND review. MS to invite the SENCo.	MS CB
09.11.23 /1	5.7.2	SW will follow up as to whether someone from the trust has contacted Rolls Royce to invite them into CLF primary academies to deliver some sessions on STEM. Update: 11.01.24: SW advised that it would be helpful to start with a two-school link (WFA and KOA). ACTION: HL will provide the details of relevant Rolls Royce colleagues to SW to take this forward. Ongoing.	HL
09.11.23 /2	5.7.3	CB to add a piece in the newsletter to explain what the Friends group does and how people can offer their services. It was suggested local residents in care homes and retirement homes might also like to be involved, as well as linking to the Parish Council. Update 11.01.24: A planning meeting has been arranged for next week between CB, HM, HS and current members of the Friends group to discuss how to build that team. CB noted that the Friends are also about to start publishing their own newsletter which will also reach out for potential new members. Ongoing	CB
09.11.23 /3	7.8.1	Feedback on the EDI work Saima Akhtar is leading will be reported at the next AC meeting. This is included as an EDI section below. Closed.	CB
09.11.23 /4	7.15.1	The outcomes comparison data will be reviewed at the next AC meeting. This is included within the AC Report. Closed.	CB

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions and Previous minutes	
1.1	MS welcomed everyone and introductions were made. Apologies are recorded above.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	No new declarations were made.	
3	Approval of Previous Minutes	
3.1	The minutes of the meeting of 9 November 2023 were approved.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	The action table has been updated.	

5	Communication Update	
5.1	<p>CB provided the following update on the communications plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Friday Dates email is sent weekly to all families and staff and continues to be positively received. • A termly newsletter is shared containing upcoming events and information and photographs about what the children have been learning. • A termly email is sent with information such as around upcoming things in the curriculum, e.g. the date the 'being an athlete' begins. • Ad hoc communications are issues as requested by SLT/Teachers. • Survey data from the recent family questionnaire has been summarised and then shared back with parents to close the communication loop to allow parents to see what the general consensus is, in terms of responses to questions posed. • The Operations Manager is linking with Rachel Friday to discuss how this can all be pulled together within Bromcom. SW confirmed a few academies have requested this, which is likely to mean that piece of work progresses at a quicker pace. • The responses in the family questionnaire around communications is now positive, especially regarding the Friday Dates communication. • In terms of parental events, the coffee mornings are the least well attended, and the Family Learning Conference had the highest number of attendees. The coffee mornings are a new routine and have been a little ad hoc; they are now organised to the third Tuesday of the month to ensure they are regular and easy for parents to remember when they are held. MS suggested the noticeboard outside reception is better utilised to advertise such events. • Survey feedback showed that 89% of parents feel strongly informed about school events, and 90% felt strongly informed about their children's learning (up from 83% last year). HM confirmed the feedback summary has been shared in the Teams folder for information. • The 'even better if' feedback was around children being released promptly at the end of the school day. CB confirmed she had met with MS before this meeting to discuss putting in place a Walking to School policy. This has not previously been in place. There has been an informal agreement only, but there has been an increased number of requests for children to be permitted to walk home alone. The aim of the policy is to set out the school's position on this and eliminate any grey areas. 	
5.2	Questions from the Academy Council	
5.3	How close were you to having every family represented at the Family Learning Conference?	
5.3.1	It was very close indeed. If parents or carers could not attend, we arranged a different time for them to meet the teacher. If we could not find a suitable time, we ensured the teacher had a phone call with them. In that way we covered 100% of our families. When we hold these events we prioritise the parents and carers of disadvantaged children first. We invite them to book in first, and then open up the system to the remaining families. This has been very helpful.	
5.4	The survey response could be higher. How are you promoting that to ensure a higher completion rate next time? Could you have a poster up in reception, in the form of cars on a racetrack for example, to promote some inter-class competition for parents to be encouraged to complete the survey?	
5.4.1	We promote through the newsletter, posters and word of mouth. What we did not do last time, that we will do next time if we can, is direct parents and carers to the QR code during Family Learning Conferences and other events. We do also encourage children to talk to their parents about completing the survey. We can consider some class-to-class competitions too.	

5.5	Do you think the 62% figure for the question around being content with the resolution of concerns raised is linked to the safeguarding events that have happened?	
5.5.1	No, I don't believe so. There may be some linked to some behaviour incidents, where there has been some child-on-child negative behaviours, but not to safeguarding.	
5.6	Can you clarify the reason behind introducing the Walking to School policy, and what the school's position is on this?	
5.6.1	Up to now, parents could request for their child to be permitted to walk home alone, and in some cases to also collect a sibling in a lower year group too. The number of requests has increased and the requests can be for younger children than has typically been the case in the past. We have felt increasingly uncomfortable about not having a policy in place for this. There is no government guidance on this matter so we have looked locally at a variety of policies. Without a policy for the school, the leadership team (and particularly the teachers who are releasing these children to walk home alone) feel concern for the children and vulnerable and anxious should something happen to one of them. Some requests are for children to walk a considerable distance and to cross very busy roads, or pass through building areas, or wooded areas that may be unsafe. There is also the consideration that some of these children may stop at a park on the way home, so may well then be walking home in the dark. The school has been swift with setting the policy and it has now been sent out to families. The stance is now that only Year 6 children will be allowed to walk home alone. There has been some resistance from a very small number of families, from Year 5 in particular.	
5.7	The Academy Council discussed the provision of a grace period, in order to allow families to put in place arrangements for a suitable adult to collect children, where they cannot collect them themselves. The Academy Council felt that a term was an appropriate grace period. SW also suggested CB to discuss this with Steve Bane, the trust's DSL.	
6	EDI Update	
6.1	CB advised that the academy is looking through the EDI lens for several areas of work including attendance, professional development and personal development. This involves working closely with Saima Akhtar (SA), the trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead. SA recently supported conversations around attendance for families that wish to visit families abroad. SA provided advice around what constitutes religious observances and pilgrimages so that the school can authorise or not authorise as appropriate.	
6.2	Pupil voice has been collected as part of a piece of work around belonging, particularly for black children. A range of CPD is being considered in response to this. A wide variety of events, and work, took place last year to celebrate other cultures. SA is working to produce a trust-wide calendar detailing all key dates to be considered across the year. Training was provided in October around how to ensure an EDI lens is considered when planning the enquiry question.	
7	Academy Council Report	
7.1	Data	
7.1.1	Data shared in the AC Report includes Term 1 DOYA data for age related expectations and for those working at greater depth for reading, writing and maths, as well as the combined data. Data is split to show a comparison of PP children to non-PP children.	
7.1.2	CB reported that, following the data drop, a list of questions was compiled to examine what made the biggest difference in terms of progress, what data relates to each child, why there might be dips etc. In some places the data is impacted by in-year joiners.	
7.1.3	The report includes two sets of data. The first is data from the Year 6 mock assessments (and are the test scores, not percentages) and the other is the teacher assessment. The test scores may improve significantly for a child, but that alone does not mean the child is at age related expectations. Evidence for that is gathered from a range of places.	

7.1.4	The team can see how many more marks each child achieved compared to the last paper. Staff are working very hard to ensure progress continues to be made for every child and provision mapping is in place for interventions.	
7.1.5	Questions from the Academy Council	
7.1.6	Are you confident that the Year 6 children are still getting the breadth in the curriculum and are feeling positive and happy?	
7.1.7	Yes, there are still a lot of fun and exciting things happening for the children. Last term they watched School of Rock and we did some exciting work around how to be a scientist or an athlete. There is still a balance in the curriculum between a sharp focus on progress, as well as ensuring enriching experiences are still happening.	
7.1.8	How are the children being helped to be resilient? There was a particularly challenging paper in last year's SATs.	
7.1.9	We are making sure we are walking through previous papers with children; they will be well prepared ahead of the assessments.	
7.1.10	Is the data in the hands of teachers? Are they using it to inform their practice?	
7.1.11	Yes, it is shared with each team and they engage with it through core team meetings. A weekly agenda has been introduced for the core team meetings, which involves a tightening of routines and it is working well.	
7.2	Behaviour and Attitudes	
7.2.1	CB reported that the leadership and staff are very proud of the curriculum and of the work done to support learner's engagement with taking responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes to progress and to outcomes. Last term, leading up to Christmas, a small number of learners were identified that needed something individualised for them, to promote success around behaviour. We met with the family and learner together and all but one is now making good improvements.	
7.2.2	The school has been celebrating protected characteristics through the use of Strictly Come Dancing. Anti-Bullying week has taken place to increase children's understanding of what bullying is, and to start to understand what 'banter' is and how it can be misinterpreted. This gave learners the tools to support them to deal with bullying, and staff have been able to refer to those tools during the term.	
7.2.3	Questions from the Academy Council	
7.2.4	The report mentions you have given some guidance to parents, carers and children around the use of WhatsApp. Is that a growing issue?	
7.2.5	Yes, we have seen it increase significantly. Families assume it is the same as sending a text, but it often goes to a wide group of students and if there is unkind behaviour towards a pupil, it can be humiliating for them and have a huge impact. WhatsApp also has some worrying hidden features; the recommended age to use it is 16.	
7.3	Attendance	
7.3.1	Questions from the Academy Council	
7.3.2	How is the Attendance Hub supporting improvements in attendance at WFA? Is it manageable for the attendance lead? Is she supported?	
7.3.3	It is going well and HR is well supported. We have established some routines. In addition to the Hub, we are also part of the South West Attendance Network, and the work being completed by HR, alongside the trust's Attendance Lead and Education Director, has been shared at both the Hub and SW Network meetings.	
7.4	Feedback on Academy Review Visit (ARV)	

7.4.1	MS explained the ARM/ARV cycle. An ARV had taken place today focused on the bespoke PD offer. Christ Baker, the CPD Lead for the trust visited to talk about active listening in the classroom, whole class feedback and lesson design. The feedback from Chris Baker, following the visit, had been very positive. As part of the day, both staff and student voice was collected and CB also dipped into some of the learning in classrooms.	
7.5	Safeguarding	
7.5.1	HM has written safeguarding report as shared in the Teams folder. Key points have been summarised in the AC report.	
7.5.2	Questions from the Academy Council	
7.5.3	How are you able to quantify safeguarding as outstanding, or good, when there is a high number of incidents recorded?	
7.5.4	The report details 185 incidents, however, this figure includes all recorded incidents, such as behaviour incidents, or where contact might be made to a family support worker. Actual safeguarding incidents are much lower. Additionally, there is a trend that where specific CPD is given to staff around a certain topic, you naturally see a greater number of those types of incident recorded, as awareness has increased. During an inspection, safeguarding is now either effective or not, the words outstanding or good would not be used in that context.	
7.5.5	End of Questions	
7.5.6	The next safeguarding audit, led by the trust's DSL Steve Bane, is due again in Term 4	
7.6	Teaching	
7.6.1	Teaching is currently good. There is information in the report detailing some of the developments that took place last term.	
7.6.2	Questions from the Academy Council	
7.6.3	What does the school need to do next to enable teaching to become outstanding?	
7.6.4	Some teaching is already outstanding. To move it all to outstanding is about the planning of how we enact the curriculum, and how learners are able to articulate what they have learnt and the journey they have been on. Learners need to be able to link their learning across subjects and back to previous learning from the week, term or year before. This will be a big focus in the AIP for the next academic year. We want to ensure subject leads are clear around planning and progression and that we hear that from the learner's voice.	
7.6.5	Is this something the Academy Council can get involved with, by joining a learning walk and talking to the children.	
7.6.6	Yes, we can arrange a learning walk focused on pupil voice. We are working with the children to enable them to talk about their learning without the prompt of their books. ACTION: MS and CB to schedule a learning walk for members of the Academy Council.	MS CB
7.6.7	Do subject leads have a clear understanding of the key requirements of the Ofsted framework and can they articulate that?	
7.6.8	Yes, we have recommendations from Ofsted around the learner's ability to articulate progression in a subject and link it backwards and forwards around the concepts of the curriculum. Subject leaders have a good grasp of the framework and have opportunities to practice articulating the intent, implementation and impact of their curriculum areas.	
8	Staffing and wellbeing	
8.1	CB advised that there were some members of staff on, or about to go on, maternity leave. An existing teacher has been appointed to the role of Phase Leader for upper KS2. Hard to recruit roles are the out of hours teams, including breakfast club and after school club. There has been some recent success in recruiting to the after-school places, but since then there has been some further sickness in the team. A couple of the lunch time roles have been filled and these are very experienced people.	

8.2	Questions from the Academy Council	
8.3	The safeguarding report mentioned some challenges during unstructured times. How is that now?	
8.3.1	It has definitely improved. The safeguarding team have reviewed all of the incidents for terms 1 and 2. They know the detail of which pupils were involved and what type of incident it was. The peaks previously seen have now settled. ACTION: A high level summary of behaviour incidents in unstructured times will be brought to the next AC meeting.	CB
8.3.2	Staff wellbeing was tested during the Academy Review Visit and those carrying out the visit were happy with what they heard from staff.	
9	Policies	
9.1	The AC approved the following policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct for families and visitors. 	
10	Governance	
10.1	MS confirmed he and CB were attending the CLF Academy Scrutiny meeting next week. ACTION: Feedback on the Academy Scrutiny Meeting will be provided at the next meeting. It was noted that there were no nominations following the recent parent election process. A further parent election will be arranged for the start of Term 4.	CB MS
10.2	ACTION: CB/WH to arrange a parent election process for the start of Term 4.	CB WH
10.3	ACTION: Clerk to check if LT is able to serve another term of office.	WH
11	AOB	
11.1	No further business was reported. The meeting closed at 7.25pm. Future meeting dates (all at 5.30pm at the academy): Thursday 29 February 2024 Thursday 18 April 2024 Thursday 27 June 2024	

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11.01.24 /3	11.1	Feedback on the Academy Scrutiny Meeting will be provided at the next meeting.	CB MS
11.01.24 /4	11.2	CB/WH to arrange a parent election process for the start of Term 4.	CB WH
11.01.24 /5	11.3	Clerk to check if LT is able to serve another term of office.	WH