Minutes – Priorswood Primary School Academy Council Meeting

Version:	Approved (Public Version)
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, 18th November 2025
Location:	Priorswood Primary School
Time:	14:00-16:00

Chair:	Sapphire Lynch	Sponsor Councillor
Attendees:	Lucy Davis	Staff (Teaching) Councillor
	Cherry Hingston	Parent Councillor
	Daniel Sumner	Staff (Support) Councillor
In attendance:	Tracy French	Executive Principal
	Tessa Clark	Clerk
	Zuzanna Hebenstreit	Observer
Apologies:	Robin Clempson	Sponsor Councillor
	Carly Ellis	Principal

Minutes

		Action
1	**Introduction, Administration and Apologies**	
1.1	Zuzanna Hebenstreit attended as an observer pending completion of appointment checks.	
1.3	Everyone introduced themselves so Zuzanna knew who everyone was.	
1.4	The meeting was led by the Staff Councillor in the absence of the Principal.	
1.5	Apologies as above.	
2	**Declarations of Interest**	
2.1	No declarations of interest.	
2.2	SL checked that everyone has signed the Code of Conduct. **ACTION:**. Ensure all councillors have signed the Code of Conduct.	**LD & RC**
3	**Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**	
3.1	Previous minutes agreed.	
3.2	The council reviewed progress against actions from the previous meeting. • Recruitment:	

	The council noted ongoing work to recruit additional academy councillors and discussed the need to continue promoting vacancies within the local community. • Councillor Profiles: Progress is being made to ensure councillor profiles are published on the school website. • Health and Safety: The council received an update on health and safety and sought assurance that appropriate risk assessments are in place. It was confirmed that recent reviews have identified appropriate controls and there are no significant concerns. **ACTION:** Ensure Health and Safety information is included in future reports. • Parent Councillor Election: The council noted that the parent councillor election process has been completed. • Councillor Attendance: The council discussed arrangements to support councillor attendance at meetings and ensure full participation. • Link Roles: The council discussed progress with link councillor visits and challenged the need for these to be carried out consistently to support effective monitoring. • SEND Monitoring: The council sought clarification on arrangements for SEND compliance and monitoring, and emphasised the importance of councillor involvement in future review activity. **ACTION:** Confirm dates for upcoming SEND review activity. • Attendance: The council discussed the availability of attendance information and challenged how trends are being analysed to support improvement. It was agreed that more detailed analysis will be presented at a future meeting. **ACTION:** Review attendance data and trends at a future meeting.	**CE** **LD** **CE**
4	Chair's Update	
4.1	The Chair provided an update on Trust-level governance activity.	
4.2	Code of Conduct: A new Code of Conduct has been issued. All members are required to sign it; most have already done so.	
4.3	The council noted that all required training has been completed, with minor administrative checks ongoing. **ACTION:** Confirm training records are accurately reflected.	**TC**

4.4	The council noted that guidance and supporting materials are available to help councillors understand and fulfil their roles effectively.	
4.5	Recruitment: The council is still seeking Academy councillors. Members are asked to share any potential contacts. **ACTION:** Continue to promote academy councillor vacancies within the community.	**ALL**
4.6	The council noted updates relating to Trust reporting and performance expectations.	
5	Academy Council Report:	
5.1	**Student Outcomes**	
5.1.1	The council reviewed pupil outcomes and progress across the school, including contextual information for each year group.	
5.1.2	The council welcomed the inclusion of contextual data, including the proportions of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and those with English as an additional language, and recognised the value of this information in understanding performance.	
5.1.3	The council sought clarification on how targets are set and were informed that these are ambitious aspirational targets, informed by previous outcomes and the needs of current cohorts.	
5.1.4	The council discussed the impact of pupil mobility and cohort context on outcomes, noting that changes within year groups can significantly influence attainment data. Leaders provided examples to demonstrate how factors such as new arrivals, SEND, and language needs can affect progress.	
5.1.5	The council acknowledged the importance of understanding the context behind data, recognising that this supports both accurate evaluation and effective planning.	
5.1.6	The council challenged outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in the Early Years, and asked what the key barriers were to achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD). Leaders explained that barriers included speech and language development and aspects of physical development, which can affect whether pupils meet all required Early Years goals.	
5.1.7	The council noted that progress measures beyond Early Years can present a different picture, with some pupils demonstrating strong attainment in core subjects as they move into Key Stage 1.	
5.1.8	The council reviewed phonics attainment across Reception and Year 1 and sought clarification on variations in 'on track' measures between year groups.	
5.1.9	Leaders explained that expectations increase in Year 1 and that some pupils who are secure in phonics knowledge may still be developing fluency in key words. Targeted support and interventions are in place to address this.	
5.1.10	The council challenged whether staff have a consistent understanding of expectations, and leaders confirmed that training and support are in place to ensure consistency.	
5.1.11	The council explored the impact of the current phonics programme, including comparisons with previous approaches. Leaders noted that this is the first cohort to have experienced the current programme consistently and that forthcoming outcomes will provide a clearer indication of its impact.	

5.1.12	The council noted that additional support is in place for pupils who join mid-year, including targeted catch-up provision.	
5.1.13	The council emphasised the importance of tracking pupil progress across key milestones, including Early Years, phonics, and multiplication, to ensure pupils are well prepared for later outcomes.	
5.1.14	The council noted examples of strengthening practice, including improvements in arithmetic fluency and the development of pupils' use of subject-specific vocabulary.	
5.1.15	The council reviewed Year 6 outcomes and challenged the variance between predicted and actual results.	
5.1.16	The council sought assurance that assessments are being appropriately analysed, including through question-level analysis, to identify any patterns or areas for improvement.	
5.1.17	Leaders confirmed that there was no single consistent trend, but noted the importance of refining assessment processes and ensuring pupils are familiar with test conditions.	
5.1.18	The council reviewed progress in writing and asked how improvements are being secured.	
5.1.19	Leaders outlined strategies which have contributed to improved outcomes, including: • A structured approach to the teaching of writing • Reduced cognitive load through sequenced learning • Increased focus on the quality of writing rather than quantity • Opportunities for pupils to draft, edit and apply grammar effectively	
5.1.20	The council noted the positive impact of these approaches on improving attainment in writing.	
5.2	**Quality of Education**	
5.2.1	The council reviewed developments in the curriculum and sought assurance that sequencing supports effective learning and progression.	
5.2.2	The council noted the continued focus on oracy and the development of pupils' subject vocabulary.	
5.2.3	The council reviewed the phonics approach and were informed that it is now consistently embedded across the school.	
5.3	**Attendance**	
5.3.1	The council reviewed attendance and discussed factors affecting trends, including pupil mobility.	
5.3.2	The council challenged how attendance is compared with similar schools and were informed that benchmarking tools are being used.	
5.3.3	The council agreed to receive a detailed attendance report at a future meeting to support further scrutiny.	
5.4	**Quality of teaching and learning**	
5.4.1	The council reviewed the quality of teaching and learning and sought assurance that effective approaches are in place to support pupil progress.	
5.4.2	The council discussed approaches to home learning and challenged how pupils can be further supported to practise key skills outside of school, particularly in writing.	
5.4.3	The council agreed that opportunities for optional home learning tasks will be developed to support pupils' engagement.	

	ACTION: Develop optional home learning opportunities to support writing.	**LD**
5.5	**Behaviour and Exclusion**	
5.5.1	The council reviewed behaviour and noted improvements in pupil behaviour, including the impact of targeted support approaches.	
5.5.2	The council discussed provision during unstructured times and challenged how pupils are supported to develop positive behaviour and social skills, particularly during lunchtime.	
5.5.3	The council sought assurance that strategies are promoting long-term improvements, including supporting pupils to engage successfully with wider school activities. **ACTION:** Review the impact of lunchtime provision and strategies to support pupil behaviour.	**CE**
5.5.4	The council discussed staff support and training and challenged how consistency in behaviour expectations is maintained across all staff. **ACTION:** Provide appropriate training and support for staff supervising pupils at lunchtime.	**CE**
5.5.5	The council also considered opportunities to enhance lunchtime provision, including additional activities and quieter spaces for pupils. **ACTION:** Explore opportunities to develop lunchtime provision, including additional activities and quieter spaces.	**CE**
5.5.6	The council agreed to monitor behaviour trends over time to ensure continued improvement. **ACTION:** Provide behaviour information to support ongoing monitoring.	**CE**
5.6	**Pupil Premium and LAC**	
5.6.1	The council reviewed provision for disadvantaged pupils and sought assurance that high expectations are maintained and progress is closely monitored.	
5.6.2	The council asked about the number of looked after children and were informed that this is monitored and recorded appropriately.	
6	Safeguarding	
6.1	The Safeguarding Link Councillor reported that regular meetings take place with safeguarding leaders to review practice and ensure compliance.	
6.1.1	The council sought assurance that appropriate support is in place for safeguarding staff, recognising the demands of the role. **ACTION:** Explore options for independent safeguarding supervision.	**LD**
6.1.2	The council challenged how safeguarding responsibilities and communication with families are managed, ensuring these are shared appropriately across leaders. **ACTION:** Review arrangements for managing parental contact.	**SLT**
6.1.3	The council noted outcomes from external review activity and discussed strengthening relationships with pupils and families.	
6.1.4	The council sought assurance that safeguarding arrangements for all pupils remain robust, including for those joining the school.	
7	Areas of focus identifies in agenda planning	
7.1	Given the SENCO transition, the next AC focus area will be SEND.	

	ACTION: Next meeting focus—SEND (with recruitment update and interim arrangements).	**CE**
8	Equality and Diversity	
8.1	The council discussed how the school promotes inclusion and a sense of belonging, particularly given the diverse school community.	
8.2	The council recognised the importance of strengthening communication with families and ensuring that all feel welcomed, safe and included.	
8.3	The council challenged how engagement with families can be improved, including increasing opportunities for involvement in school life.	
8.4	The council agreed that strengthening relationships with families will be a key priority, supported by clear and accessible communication. **ACTION:** Develop and implement strategies to strengthen communication and engagement with families.	**CE**
8.5	The council also discussed approaches to gather feedback from families to inform future developments. **ACTION:** Gather feedback from families to support development of inclusive practice.	**CE**
9	Policies	
9.1	Members confirmed that the Medical Care Policy, Accessibility Plan, and Attendance Policy have been reviewed and can be signed off. A new Behaviour Policy is being finalised with SLT and will come to council next.	
10	Link Reports	
10.1	The Safeguarding Link report was noted.	
10.2	The SEND Link report was noted. The council re-emphasised the need for the forward key-dates calendar to target SEND link visits around audits/learning walks.	
11	Matters for the attention of the Board/COAC	
11.1	The council noted positive feedback from recent scrutiny activity, including strengths in leadership and the council's understanding of the school.	
12	Any Other Buisness	
12.1	The council reviewed arrangements for quality assurance of external speakers and sought assurance that appropriate checks are in place to ensure content is suitable and aligned with the school's values.	
12.2	The council discussed staffing and resource deployment and challenged how support staff are used effectively to meet pupils' needs, particularly in the context of financial pressures.	
12.3	Leaders confirmed that a targeted approach is used to ensure support is deployed where it will have the greatest impact.	
13	Date of Next Meeting	
12.1	Tuesday, 20th January 2025	

ACTIONS

2.2	Ensure all councillors have signed the Code of Conduct.	**LD & RC**

3.2	Ensure Health and Safety information is included in future reports.	**CE**
3.2	Confirm dates for upcoming SEND review activity.	**LD**
3.2	Review attendance data and trends at future meeting.	**CE**
4.3	Confirm training records are accurately reflected.	**TC**
4.5	Continue to promote academy councillor vacancies within the community.	**ALL**
5.4.2	Develop optional home learning opportunities to support writing.	**LD**
5.5.3	Review the impact of lunchtime provision and strategies to support pupil behaviour.	**CE**
5.5.4	Provide appropriate training and support for staff supervising pupils at lunchtime.	**CE**
5.5.5	Explore opportunities to develop lunchtime provision, including additional activities and quieter spaces.	**CE**
5.5.6	Provide behaviour information to support ongoing monitoring.	**CE**
6.1.1	Explore options for independent safeguarding supervision.	**LD**
6.1.3	Review arrangements for managing parental contact.	**SLT**
7.1	Next meeting focus—SEND (with recruitment update and interim arrangements).	**CE**
8.4	Develop and implement strategies to strengthen communication and engagement with families.	**CE**
8.5	Gather feedback from families to support development of inclusive practice.	**CE**