# Minutes – Priorswood Primary School Academy Council Meeting

| | |
|---|---|
| **Version:** | Approved (Public Version) |
| **Meeting Date:** | Tuesday, 20th January 2026 |
| **Location:** | Priorswood Primary School |
| **Time:** | 2:00 – 4:00PM |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Chair:** | Sapphire Lynch | Sponsor Councillor |
| **Attendees:** | Cherry Hingston | Parent Councillor |
| | Lucy Davis | Staff Councillor |
| | Daniel Sumner | Staff (Support) Councillor |
| **In attendance:** | Steve Morton | Principal |
| | Tracy French | Executive Principal |
| | Zuzanna Hebenstreit | Observer |
| **Apologies:** | Robin Clempson | Sponsor Councillor |

## Minutes

| | | Action |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Introduction, Administration and Apologies** | |
| 1.1 | Apologies as noted above. | |
| 1.2 | The Chair welcomed attendees and introduced the Acting Principal, who shared his professional background and expressed enthusiasm for supporting the school. | |
| 1.3 | Councillors and attendees introduced themselves. | |
| **2** | **Declarations of Interest** | |
| 2.1 | No declarations of interest were made. | |
| **3** | **Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising** | |
| 3.1 | The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record. | |
| 3.2 | The council reviewed progress against actions from the previous meeting.<br>• **Code of Conduct:** The council noted the importance of all councillors completing the Code of Conduct and adhering to expectations, including appropriate use of social media.<br>**ACTION:** Ensure all councillors have signed the Code of Conduct. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • **Recruitment:**<br>The council discussed ongoing efforts to recruit academy councillors and agreed to continue promoting vacancies within the community.<br>• **Health and Safety:**<br>The council reviewed health and safety information and discussed trends in incidents, noting the importance of ongoing monitoring.<br>• **Link Visits:**<br>The council noted that link visits are being completed and reports shared with councillors.<br>• **SEND:**<br>The council discussed arrangements for SEND leadership and monitoring, noting ongoing recruitment activity.<br>**ACTION:** Confirm SEND review arrangements once staffing is in place.<br>• **Attendance:**<br>The council confirmed that a detailed attendance update will be provided at a future meeting.<br>**ACTION:** Receive an attendance update at the next meeting.<br>• **Teaching and Learning:**<br>The council noted developments in home learning approaches and the positive engagement from pupils.<br>• **Behaviour:**<br>The council reviewed updates on behaviour and lunchtime provision, noting positive progress and the importance of continued monitoring.<br>**ACTION:** Review the impact of lunchtime provision at a future meeting.<br>**ACTION:** Provide behaviour information to support monitoring.<br>• **Safeguarding:**<br>The council noted that arrangements to support safeguarding leadership are in place and continue to be developed.<br>• **Equality and Engagement:**<br>The council noted ongoing work to strengthen engagement with families.<br>**ACTION:** Include family engagement as a standing agenda item. | |
| **4** | **Chairs Update** | |
| 4.1 | The Chair informed the Council that the next Trust governance meeting is scheduled and that key updates will be shared with members as appropriate. | |
| 4.2 | Governors were also informed that additional training opportunities are being planned to support their ongoing development. | |
| **5** | Academy Council Report: | |
| 5.1 | **Student Outcomes** | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.1.1 | Governors reviewed the information presented on pupil outcomes and progress across the school. | |
| 5.1.2 | Q: Governors asked how the school supports pupils who require additional help to achieve expected standards. | |
| 5.1.3 | Leaders explained that targeted support is in place to ensure all pupils can access learning and make progress, with regular monitoring of pupil development. | |
| 5.1.4 | Governors discussed the school's approach to raising attainment and were assured that outcomes are expected to be strong, supported by staff's detailed understanding of pupils' needs. | |
| 5.1.5 | The Council noted plans to strengthen support across Key Stage 2, with a focus on early intervention to improve outcomes over time. | |
| 5.1.6 | Governors acknowledged the challenges associated with pupil mobility and recognised the importance of timely support for all pupils. | |
| 5.1.7 | A key priority for the school is to continue improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly in achieving higher levels of attainment. | |
| 5.1.8 | Leaders highlighted the importance of providing a wide range of learning experiences to support pupils' development, including opportunities to build vocabulary, resilience, and deeper understanding. | |
| 5.2 | **Quality of Education** | |
| 5.2.1 | Academy Councillors asked whether the school remains on track with its improvement priorities. | |
| 5.2.2 | Leaders confirmed that the school continues to work towards its existing improvement plan. They highlighted that, following recent leadership changes, there has been a review of priorities to ensure they remain appropriate and effective. The focus remains on maintaining stability whilst identifying areas for further development in later terms. | |
| 5.2.3 | **Leaders reported that staff are being supported through professional development and opportunities to share best practice, including collaboration with other schools.** | |
| 5.2.4 | The development of subject leadership remains a priority, with plans to ensure subject leaders are supported to drive improvements in their areas. | |
| 5.2.5 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked about staff development and leadership opportunities.** | |
| 5.2.6 | Leaders explained that staff are encouraged to contribute to curriculum development and leadership activity as part of a collaborative approach, while ensuring roles and responsibilities are appropriate to experience levels. | |
| 5.2.7 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked for an update on the Teaching and Learning Handbook.** | |
| 5.2.8 | Leaders confirmed that the handbook is in development and will support consistency in teaching practice across the school. It will inform staff training and future monitoring of teaching and learning.<br><br>**ACTION:** Provide an update on the completion of the Teaching and Learning Handbook at the next meeting. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5.2.9 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked whether the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) is being updated.** | |
| 5.2.10 | Leaders confirmed that work is underway to review and refine key self-evaluation documentation, with a view to producing a clear and cohesive overview of school performance.<br>Action: Share an updated SEF format at the next meeting. | |
| 5.3 | **Attendance** | |
| 5.3.1 | No questions were raised regarding attendance, as all relevant information was included within the AC Report. It was noted that attendance will be a key focus for the next meeting, and the Attendance Lead will be joining to provide a detailed update and respond to any questions. | |
| 5.4 | **Quality of teaching and learning** | |
| 5.4.1 | Leaders provided an update on staffing and class organisation for the next academic year. Planning is currently underway, informed by the school's budget and pupil needs. | |
| 5.4.2 | Leaders confirmed that the priority is to ensure high-quality teaching across the school by placing staff where they can have the greatest impact on pupils' learning. | |
| 5.4.3 | Academy Councillors were advised that there may be some changes to staffing, and that the final structure will be shared with the Academy Council once confirmed. | |
| 5.4.4 | Staffing updates are reported regularly to the Academy Council as part of routine monitoring. | |
| 5.5 | **Behaviour and Exclusion** | |
| 5.5.1 | All relevant information was covered within the AC Report and discussed under other agenda items. No further questions were raised. | |
| 5.6 | **Pupil Premium and LAC** | |
| 5.6.1 | The updated Pupil Premium (PP) Statement was shared, with figures amended to reflect additional funding. The document has already been reviewed by SL, Principal, and the Disadvantaged Lead. Key priorities were highlighted, and it was noted that PP continues to be central to the school's work. The statement is clear overall, though specific interventions are not explicitly detailed. | |
| 6 | Safeguarding | |
| 6.1 | The safeguarding section of the AC Report was reviewed. Academy Councillors noted that the report was clear and detailed. No questions were raised. | |
| 7 | Building Strong-Home Relationships | |
| 7.1 | This item followed a request from Academy Councillors to review how the school is strengthening trust and engagement with families. | |
| 7.1.1 | Leaders reported that their approach focuses on being visible, welcoming and transparent, with increased opportunities for parents to engage with school life and their children's learning. | |
| 7.1.2 | A range of initiatives have been introduced to encourage engagement, including opportunities for parents to visit classrooms, attend events, and take part in activities linked to pupils' learning. | |
| 7.1.3 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked about attendance at recent events.** | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7.1.4 | Leaders confirmed that recent events have been positively received, providing accessible and informal ways for families to connect with the school. | |
| 7.1.5 | It was noted that introducing informal opportunities for engagement helps build confidence, with the intention of increasing participation in more structured activities over time. | |
| 7.1.6 | Academy Councillors discussed the value of curriculum-linked events in encouraging parental involvement. | |
| 7.1.7 | Leaders highlighted the success of extracurricular activities, including opportunities for parents to attend showcases of pupils' work and achievements. | |
| 7.1.8 | Academy Councillors reflected on the need to continue rebuilding levels of parental engagement following the pandemic. | |
| **7.1.9** | **Q: Academy Councillors asked about opportunities for parents to attend assemblies.** | |
| 7.1.10 | Leaders confirmed that parents are invited to attend assemblies and that these provide valuable opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievements. | |
| 7.1.11 | Academy Councillors suggested increasing the frequency of these opportunities to further strengthen engagement. | |
| 7.1.12 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked whether a parent survey should be undertaken.** | |
| 7.1.13 | Leaders advised that, as new initiatives are still being embedded, feedback is currently being gathered informally and will inform future developments. | |
| 7.1.14 | Academy Councillors discussed the importance of belonging, inclusion, and representation, and noted that these considerations are reflected in the school's ongoing development work. | |
| 7.1.15 | The Council discussed the school's values and the importance of ensuring these are clearly communicated and understood by families. | |
| 7.1.16 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked how values could be communicated more effectively.**<br>Through regular communication, including newsletters.<br><br>**ACTION:** The school will ensure that values are communicated more explicitly in newsletters. | |
| 7.1.17 | Leaders outlined plans to further embed the school's values across all aspects of school life and communication.<br><br>**ACTION:** Leaders to continue developing approaches to embed values across the school community. | |
| 7.1.18 | **ACTION:** Review progress on home–school engagement initiatives at a future meeting, with a fuller evaluation later in the academic year. | |
| 7.1.19 | **Q: Academy Councillors asked about opportunities for pupils to share achievements from home.** | |
| 7.1.20 | Leaders confirmed that opportunities exist and will be further developed to ensure wider participation. | |
| 8 | SEND | |
| 8.1 | Academy Councillors received an update following a request at the previous meeting regarding the recruitment of a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and interim arrangements. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8.1.1 | Leaders confirmed that recruitment for the SENCO role is underway. Applications have been received and the selection process is progressing. | |
| 8.1.2 | Leaders also highlighted the importance of developing internal capacity, with ongoing professional development planned to strengthen expertise within the school over time. | |
| 8.1.3 | Interim arrangements remain effective, with support in place to ensure continuity of provision and oversight. The school continues to prioritise high-quality support for pupils with SEND. | |
| 8.1.4 | Academy Councillors noted the importance of maintaining strong, positive relationships with families, ensuring that support for pupils is approached in a collaborative and inclusive way. | |
| 8.1.5 | The SEND Link Academy Councillor confirmed a visit is planned this term to review provision and gain further insight into current practice. | |
| 8.2 | A Parent Academy Councillor also expressed interest in visiting the school to better understand day-to-day provision.<br>**ACTION:** Leaders to arrange a suitable time for Academy Councillors to visit and review SEND provision. | |
| 9 | Policies | |
| 9.1 | The Accessibility Plan was reviewed and agreed. | |
| 10 | Link Reports | |
| 10.1 | The Safeguarding Link Academy Councillor confirmed that a recent safeguarding visit has taken place and the report has been shared with Academy Councillors. | |
| 10.1.1 | Leaders provided an update on safeguarding capacity within the school. They confirmed that appropriate arrangements are in place, including trained safeguarding leads and ongoing staff development to maintain capacity. | |
| 10.1.2 | Leaders assured Academy Councillors that there are clear procedures in place to ensure safeguarding support is always accessible, including access to additional guidance and support where required. | |
| 10.2 | The Disadvantaged Link Academy Councillor was not present. Academy Councillors agreed that an update from this link role would be provided at the next meeting. | |
| 11 | Any Other Buisness | |
| 11.1 | Leaders confirmed that a review of the school website is underway to ensure that content, including statutory information, is accurate and up to date. | |
| 11.2 | Academy Councillors discussed safeguarding oversight and the importance of reviewing key safeguarding records during link visits. Leaders confirmed that appropriate systems are in place to ensure all required safeguarding and recruitment checks are completed and monitored. | |
| 11.2.1 | The Safeguarding Link Academy Councillor agreed to review safeguarding records as part of a future visit. Ongoing oversight will continue to be maintained. | |
| 11.3 | Academy Councillors discussed the development of a school risk register. Leaders confirmed that this will be established to support effective identification and management of risks.<br><br>**ACTION** Leaders to develop a school risk register for review by Academy Councillors. | |
| 12 | Date of Next Meeting | |
| 12.1 | 10th March 2026 | |

**ACTIONS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3.2 | Ensure all councillors have signed the Code of Conduct. | ALL |
| 3.2 | Confirm SEND review arrangements once staffing is in place. | LD |
| 3.2 | Receive an attendance update at the next meeting. | LD |
| 3.2 | Review the impact of lunchtime provision at a future meeting. | SM |
| 3.2 | Provide behaviour information to support monitoring. | SM |
| 3.2 | Include family engagement as a standing agenda item. | SM |
| 5.2.8 | Provide an update on the completion of the Teaching and Learning Handbook at the next meeting. | SM |
| 7.1.16 | The school will ensure that values are communicated more explicitly in newsletters. | SM |
| 7.1.17 | Leaders to continue developing approaches to embed values across the school community. | SLT |
| 8.2 | Leaders to arrange a suitable time for Academy Councillors to visit and review SEND provision. | SM |
| 11.3 | Leaders to develop a school risk register for review by Academy Councillors. | SM |