

Minutes – John Cabot Academy Council Meeting

Version: Approved

Meeting Date: 4th March 2026

Location: John Cabot Academy

Time: 4:30-6:30pm

Present:	Linda Tanner Nigel Eaton King Egwu James Hackett Isabelle Cantel	Chair of Academy Council Sponsored Councillor Sponsored Councillor Sponsored Councillor Staff (Teaching) Councillor
In attendance:	Kate Willis Kate Searle Gemma Read Steve Church Jan Allen Jasmine Legrand	Associate Executive Principal Assistant Principal Head of Secondary Associate Assistant Principal Associate Assistant Principal Clerk
Apologies:	Oonagh Wisener-Walsh Angela Long Andrea Duignan Cameron Shaw	Staff (Support) Councillor Associate Councillor Parent Councillor Executive Principal

Minutes

		Action
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	JL introduced as new Clerk	
1.2	JH introduced as new AC	
1.3	Apologies AD, AL and OW, CS	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None	
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
3.1	Minutes approved	
4	Chairs Update	
4.1	Updated around new AC members	
5	Academy Council Report	
5.1	Year 11 Mock Results Data (JA) 3 weeks of mocks, no results yet.	

	Attendance has improved since terms 1 and 2, so it is moving in the right direction. Spanish mock attendance was impacted due to Matinee show, but any students that missed them will have mop up sessions. Mock 1 subjects of concern discussed support in place for staff and individual plans for each subject. There has been a more consistent art teacher since Christmas as the school have brought in a cover teacher with strong experience. Business as a subject changed the course from vocational to GCSE, there are currently 3 groups and has shown improvement over time. Work has been completed around exam technique. SLT stated absolute faith in Jan and the work she has been doing within business. There have been changes made to tutor groups to form intervention groups, for subjects that needed support. Also identified students of concern to implement action plans. For Year 11 there have been changes in the pastoral team over time, and we have been doing work with them on growth mindset. “On the bus” initiative has been initiated to support this, to encourage acts of kindness. Kids look forward to this and speak about it a lot. There has also been an exam stress assembly and workshop. What’s next: Analysis of mocks, tutor group interventions, study skills, address attendance around exams, finalise minibus rota, maths and science finalise. There will also be a strike system, so after 3 strikes the students would lose leavers assembly, 118 signed up for prom so this is really important to them.	
5.1.2	Clarity given for acronyms: VESPA = the revision programme running in year 11 tutor time. FNN Federation Network Night.	
5.2	KW and KS available to answer questions	
5.2.1	KW is now in the Associate Executive Principal Role. Discussed the consequential changes in SLT roles. KW to stay close to strategic development and AIP, Ofsted preparation, admissions and GR to take on Head of school. A handover is happening currently; it has created lots of opportunities for staff and personal development. Budget setting will happen in the coming weeks, looking at strengthening science department.	
5.2.2	What is this new role? 3 executive directors are now out doing sector work, so there are new roles associate executive principal roles. There needed to be sufficient capacity within the school, there is a risk to the academy through change but KW is there and visible to alleviate that risk. Planning for September, an awareness of losing money this year and the restructure can help managing with the budget.	
5.2.3	How many academies in the CLF? 35	
5.3	New Ofsted Framework training for councillors Raising standards remains a key priority. Instead of a single grade, the new approach will use a report-card model. The evaluation is built around three core principles and an Inspection Toolkit, with judgements made across the main evaluation areas:	

	safeguarding, inclusion, curriculum and teaching, achievement, attendance and behaviour, personal development and wellbeing, and leadership and governance. We will be deliberately cautious in our assessments beforehand to ensure we meet the criteria. Attendance continues to be a concern for JCA—below national averages but broadly in line with local figures. Leadership and governance expectations are increasing, and preparation is underway from leadership. Our next Ofsted inspection is expected around November 2028.	
5.4	Academy Council Report	
5.4.1	EAL – 40% in year 7 and 20% in year 11, within that, how many of them are completely new to English language? We should have an assessment, then rank in terms of need, this sits under inclusion and there should be more capacity made now to action this. For students with an identified need for support with English, which is identified through assessments at the start of school, they have intense support from external training. It's an area for improvement.	
5.4.2	Team around the child Where a child has repeated behaviour incidents or concerns, gather SLT pastoral and safeguarding to put things in place to support the student.	
5.4.3	How is the improvement in reading which is an area of focus going? There is a new section on CPOM's "caught reading" – if a student is "caught reading" they receive a positive behaviour point. Reading is magic is a theme. Librarian Laura has been working with students, reading in lower school is improving and they are enjoying spending time in the library.	
5.4.4	How to break down barriers, inclusion being a formal included, to improve barriers to learning? SEE is a breadth of evidence which will allow us to form as grounded a judgement as possible.	
5.4.5	Is finance missing on the academy council report? Yes, to update where we are financially, we are on track to make the budget position we said we would at the start of the year. Any money left will be invested in building projects which will bring income for the future, better facilities and bring in more income. We do still need to cut some money out of the budget.	
5.4.6	Could there be a table of contents page on the Academy Council Report? Governance team are creating a new template, contents page ACTION JL to ask governance team to add a table of contents	JL
5.4.7	How is staff turnover and sickness? About average across the trust, there will be a more detailed report for next meeting. Staff sickness is a focus for AIP; CLF have renewed the focus on HR process for sickness ACTION – next meeting report on staff wellbeing and absence	KW
5.4.8	How is attendance? 91.5% at start of term, compared to 92% national, 90.5% for us last year, 91.3% south glos, 89.9% in Bristol. PP attendance is a percentage up on last year and a percent up on recent national data. If compared to similar schools, compared to the LA 8th out of 16. Identified 3 area for us to work on: Year 8, girls, SEND	

	Male attendance has fallen by a percent from last year and attendance for students with EHCP's is low, adjusted provision and alternative provision has an impact on these numbers. Higher proportions than average of illness 3 things to do: Continue to work with SenCo to ensure EHCP has as close a timetable to fulltime as we can, it has improved Review roles and responsibilities of the attendance team, rigorous about chasing up Adjusted timetables new piece of work	
5.4.9	The minibus collection service, is that for everyone or just exams? Just exams	
5.4.10	What is the reaction to these buses? They are usually receptive to get up and come in, with support from staff and it has been a great support for mock attendance	
5.4.11	ACTION – LT to ask Angela to arrange a link meeting re PP	LT
6	Safeguarding	
6.1	Including link Report	
6.2	GR available to answer questions	
6.2.1	GR has been leading on safeguarding and now KS will be covering in absence of DSL and they are all doing a fabulous job. The current main concerns are around mental health and wellbeing; we have various students presenting with different concerns. Our counsellor had seen a drop in referrals, so we wanted to make sure the referral system was clear for the pastoral team. We will have a period without lower level support, but the counsellor is available to give guidance to year leads for this period of time. We will be doing the South Glos wellbeing questionnaire for students, which will hopefully give us more insight into a broader curriculum.	
6.2.2	How quickly will we have the results from the questionnaire? We should receive in June, following that there will be more for strategic planning for future for students and embedding in the community. Confident the students know where to go to access support and their trusted adults.	
6.2.3	The team are doing a great job, there may be smaller things being missed with logs on CPOM's due to capacity. However, DSL can do strategic work from home which eases some of the capacity. CLF audit at the end of the month, it is a robust audit we scored 76% last year and it should be 80's this year. There has been a spike of child-on-child reports, typical of this time of year, however the number of physical restraints (staff involved) is down and low. Staff are using techniques which are working, eg whistles and non-restraint. Exclusions are significantly lower this term compared with last term and school feels calm. The rain has had an impact as students can't be outside as easily which can cause more tensions, but the outside areas are being used and the librarian is there 4 days a week. Alternative learning provision and adjusted timetables take significant time and aren't always the best option for students. We currently have many pupils on reduced timetables, and we want to change that where possible.	

	Our aim is to move toward online learning delivered on-site, supported by external mentoring organisations. This approach keeps students in the building, maintains their connection to school, and provides more consistent support. Ultimately, we want to keep children as part of the school community while offering flexible, targeted help.	
6.2.4	Noted that it is an encouraging report on safeguarding	
7	Area of focus identified in Agenda Planning	
7.1	AIP: Parent engagement focus (GR) Attendance at parents evening last year was 65%, SEND child it was 42%, PP attendance was 48% We have an engagement gap, as year 7 is well attended, but then we don't see them until the end of the year and 10% more won't attend. Changes we have made this year: Training this year for GR Finding parent voice, to know what they want from it, particularly the parents which have made complaints etc. Wanting to hear about the good stuff as well as the bad, the move to MCAS has helped support that communication, there is good engagement with that app. There are still some that don't have smartphone/are EAL so that is a working point. There has been a change in the structure of parents evening, having more presence available for parents to speak to. Online safety is a key area identified from the parents; we then ran a session for this. Moving away from transactional conversations, where possible. IFTAR's big uptake and the performing arts team the same. Attendance has gone up by 10% this year following these improvements, SEND families has also increased. PP 8% increase. Bespoke feedback: Staff are biggest strength; the biggest weakness is the communication when things need improving. They also value face to face connection. Staff want more support in communicating with EAL families. Occasionally doing a positive phone call, has been received well, there is the time constraint with this. Streamlining communication with CPOM's, EAL family engagement, training for staff, increase parent sessions. The report system on CPOM's can be a positive	
7.1.1	What has happened with the champions groups? These were being run regularly, but they have changed due to various reasons staff, these will be brought back in soon. 18th March 8:40-12:20	
7.1.2	Can you tell us about this app MCAs? It shows parents lots of information relating to their children including grades, attendance, behaviour, achievement points, homework We are working with parents 1 to 1 to enable them to use the app	
7.2	AIP: Careers (Gatsby Benchmarks) Steve Church Careers is a key focus within the Academy Improvement Plan, and we are using the eight Gatsby Benchmarks to strengthen our provision in line with Ofsted's "golden thread" of improvement. Our careers programme is reasonably stable, with several strong areas—particularly personal guidance. Work is underway to better link curriculum learning to careers, ensuring students understand a broad range of pathways and the skills required. While tutors currently deliver bespoke careers	

	content, our aim is to embed this more consistently within subject curricula, so it is planned, revisited, and reinforced over time. We are also developing workplace experiences, though health and safety checks can create challenges and reluctance from providers. Despite this, progress is positive: 40 Year 10 students already have confirmed placements, with a target of reaching around 60% of the cohort. Employer engagement continues to grow, with 20 different workplaces visiting the school this year. To manage logistics, we plan to spread these encounters across the year, aiming for at least one meaningful experience each term.	
7.2.1	Is there a challenge in getting employers to take students on? There are ongoing challenges with securing workplace experiences, largely due to insurance requirements and the level of risk assessment needed. This creates barriers for both employers and families. To support this, we held sessions for parents on how to secure a work experience placement, with 20 families attending. Post-16 placements tend to be easier to arrange. Students receive support with writing CVs and preparing letters, with guidance led by Alex Williams.	
8	Any Other Business	
	None	
9	Close of Meeting	
	18:34	

ACTIONS

5.4.6	ACTION JL to ask governance team to add a table of contents	JL
5.4.7	ACTION – next meeting report on staff wellbeing and absence	KW
5.4.11	ACTION – LT ask Angela to arrange a link meeting re PP	LT