

Minutes – John Cabot Academy Council Meeting

Version: Approved

Meeting Date: 10th June 2026

Location: John Cabot Academy

Time: 4:30-6:30pm

Present:	Linda Tanner	Chair of Academy Council
	Nigel Eaton	Sponsored Councillor
	King Egwu - online	Sponsored Councillor
	James Hackett	Sponsored Councillor
	Isabelle Cantel	Staff (Teaching) Councillor
	Oonagh Wisener-Walsh	Staff (Support) Councillor
	Angela Long	Associate Councillor
In attendance:	Kate Willis	Associate Executive Principal
	Gemma Read	Head of School
	Alex Lynett	Associate Assistant Principal, SENCO
	Jasmine Legrand	Clerk
Apologies:	Matthew Fincher	Associate Councillor

Not in attendance: Andrea Duignan Parent Councillor

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

Minutes

		Action
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	Welcome back to AL – pleased to have in attendance again.	
1.2	Introductions of everyone and their roles.	
1.3	Apologies given by MF – working abroad	
1.4	Election for parent successful – will be onboarded subject to checks	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None	
3	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
3.1	Accept as a record	
3.2	ACTION: LT ask Andrea to arrange a link meeting re PP – carry over	LT
4	Chairs Update	
4.1	Outstanding training will be completed with JL having a meeting to support AL and JH	
5	Academy Council Report	

5.1	Formative assessment – Formative assessment, which is a form of PD for staff has also had a significant impact on meeting needs of students. A twofold benefit of engaging in PD, it also helps with teaching children in SEND leading to better outcomes for them.	
5.2	AIP: SEND & Formative Assessment ALY &KSE	
5.2.1	The school has a robust online SEN referral system that staff use confidently, with 96 referrals submitted since January. Referrals are now clear and detailed, improving identification of need. This has strengthened communication between staff, students, and the SEN team, and led to an increase in the SEND register, ensuring a more rigorous and consistent identification process. The school has had a focus on evaluating the impact of interventions, particularly by comparing students’ reading ages, intervention participation, and progress over time, alongside classroom performance. There is robust tracking in place, supported by an assess–plan–do–review cycle to monitor how effectively students apply strategies. All staff are aware of interventions, with clear communication through a one-page document, and parents are informed, give permission, and receive outcome updates. Interventions are having a positive impact, with students typically showing improvements in reading age over a six-month period. All students with a reading age below 10 are prioritised for support to ensure access to the KS4 curriculum. Staff routinely use updated reading age data to adapt teaching and meet individual needs in the classroom.	
5.2.2	Pupil profiles: These were previously word heavy, and it may not be applicable to different subjects, PE vs English for example. We have replaced this with a ready to teach document, which outlines routines to support all students. This is focused around EAL, physical, cognition and learning and routines, to create positive conversations. This allows the pupil profiles to be more bespoke; they now only have what is additional to the generic ready to teach classroom document. This could for example be: Cognition and learning: please ensure they have a green overlay and encourage to use This has already been launched with year 8, now introducing for years 7,9 and 10. All pupils that need a pupil profile, now have new pupil profiles, we have 181 pupil profiles in total. We have taken staff voice and consulted at every stage. So far, the response has been positive and in future for lesson observations, we will use the ready to teach document and the pupil profile. Student voice has been positive so far. Next steps; We will do further evaluation to check we are being consistent, looking at interventions and how some are more successful than others. We want to continue refining pupil profiles; it is still a working progress. This will include parental engagement. We have given reassurance and have been talking about the new pupil profile and explaining that though they are shorter profiles, it will mean the teachers will actually know the children much better.	

	Parental engagement, has traditionally been low, and as the pupils go through the school, engagement becomes less, we are looking at improving that parental engagement.	
5.2.3	GR – The formative assessment looks at how staff adapt and meet students at where they are and build on that. It looks at belonging, safety and security and supporting the students to feel confident to learn. There is research that points to how formative assessment does help to support learners to succeed, particularly where there are SEND needs. Their prior learning experience can have an impact on capacity to learn. Teachers have got to understand where a student is to get them to where they need to be. EEF is an organisation that evaluates whether things are impactful. They look to see whether the new technique has impact. They have said it is genuinely impactful on student outcomes. Ofsted feedback was that formative assessment wasn't used enough, so it has been a work in progress. For our PP and SEND students, we do have a gap in attainment. "Formative Assessment" program is designed as professional development. We are following a 2-year program, it is helpful to have a program and process to follow. We have had 8 workshops, some in inset days, some in meetings and we have 1 more year to go of the program. Impacts: It is to support teachers and can change certain habits and give them more tools to use in their teaching. Feedback from staff: we received 32 responses from staff. This was generally positive, with increases in staff confidence, the classrooms felt more inclusive. Teachers felt significant time with their pairs to talk about their strategies would be helpful. Next steps: formal student voice, assessment data, quality assurance, further embed process	
5.2.4	So, you received 32 responses out of how many staff? 32 out of 43 Some staff answered the responses in a group setting.	
5.2.5	In terms of a teacher perspective, it has helped to get you out of the same practices. To re-evaluate how I would do things. Mini whiteboards. Group learning. Different way of teaching, which can feel more exciting and student engagement has improved from that. There are some SEN students that would maybe not stick up their hand previously, but through these techniques they have achieved working in groups and holding up their whiteboards. For the "hands down questioning": autistic students may be nervous for how they would feel about this but have found it a positive experience and engaged with that. If we had students with pupil profile that would be deeply uncomfortable with that, they would have that noted on there.	
5.2.6	In science – we have used lots of mini whiteboards. Low prior attainers, they have found that breaking down longer questions into mini whiteboards helped them break it down efficiently. There were in smaller classes, it helped where changing things on the spot and gave them more confidence. Going round to ask as part of the "hands down" method, the students are more prepared and keeping track of the lessons.	

	Some students have been able to be encouraged to be called upon in lessons, despite never having their hands up in the future, they feel able to get things wrong and that be acceptable for them.	
5.2.7	NE joined the meeting 17:10pm	
5.2.8	These techniques are all child centred which is brilliant. 96 referrals of SEN needs – where have these come from, what needs are they picking up? They are picked up on handwriting for example, assessing the need for word processing etc. for exams. Teachers and actively making sure we have everything covered in preparation.	
5.2.9	Have you had the resource to achieve all 96 referrals? Yes, there is a budget for licensing, for dyslexia screener, handwriting screener, for that I have the budget. It is the time it takes which is more challenging, but we have a staff member who also supports with this. It is brilliant to have more referrals, as it shows we are picking up on more. The time to assess the students and reporting back to parents, staff and student does take time and this has been a challenge. There is collaborative work to plan for this between SLT. There were some referrals made which were picked up as not appropriate, but this has led to us being able to refine where the referrals are coming through and identify training needs for teachers. This happened following mock exams. Following this, we brought in the exam assessor, out of 20 referred, 9 of them did not need GCSE exam access. Then we had the conversation about a training need, so that we can do the best for the students alongside CPD with the teachers. 9 student referrals is a about a day's work.	
5.2.10	How often do you perform interventions and then follow up their outcomes? They are assessed, in year 7 and year 9 for their reading. We do this at the end of year 9 to give us accurate ages for students going into year 10. There is a new national reading test in year 10, there will be a new approach for that as we evolve. There are children arriving with a low reading age from Primary School and that is increasing, rather than decreasing.	
5.3	Academy Council Report	
5.3.1	SEF – This will continue being refined over the coming weeks. Actions arising from the SEF: • SEND attendance, we are assessing and intervening, doing our work around adaptive teaching, engaging with parents. • Changes from the Government: we will need to include an internal inclusion base, Alex and Andy will be leading on this and it is a significant feature for next year. • Improving behaviour and attendance. For attendance we are just below national, but above local attendance. We are featuring this in the AIP next year. • Bullying – we have identified some behaviours which were not being logged as bullying where they perhaps should have been. Our process isn't a concern, it's based on anti-bullying alliance, but it needs to be re-visited with more training. We identified pupils weren't moving from stage 1 and correlated that with all our leavers that have left to a local school have left due to bullying.	

	We will re-launch and re-process: Each bullying stage needs a parent meeting, but there can sometimes be a delay with having parents in for a meeting, then within that delay, there have been further instances which has meant the bullying has quickly escalated. There have been open conversations with staff about improvements. We have decided that a phone call and communication, without having a formal meeting and choosing to not wait to tell parents it is a bullying incident that has occurred would be better going forward. Students are open that processes are strong.	
5.3.2	Have there been any schools where they have really improved their attendance that we can learn from? Yes, these schools are the RISE Attendance and Behaviour Schools. All schools are welcome to visit; KW has visited 2 (Somervale and Cranbrook Enterprise Campus). KW is leading on secondary attendance across the trust, so there will be work on this coming in the future.	
5.3.3	Ofsted framework: we need to improve our approach to spelling, punctuation and grammar and we also want to bring in more handwriting support. Cradle to Career project: building JCA into the community to make us the centre of the community. Listening. Map which maps the cohort of where we are coming from, looking at areas we are not going through. We go to Easton area, along the bus routes, it gives us a good idea of where students come from. Building relationships within communities. Speaking with our feeder primary schools to build relationships. Committed to Reach foundation. Kings Oak Academy is 3 years into their Cradle to Career journey. Focus next year is relational, we will gain parent voice, and we are wanting to build on engagement. The current feedback is that we are transactional and quick to contact about when things have gone wrong. Parents have stated they want to know more about the school's enrichment programs and Duke of Edinburgh. We are looking at building and making events more positive. This week: holding a uniform sale, discounted price ahead of September, attendance was low but an improvement on last year. Exciting work, but needs to link with systems we already do and be balanced with capacity.	
5.3.4	Is there a Kingswood Voice? Could we share this on there to improve engagement? Yes, it can go in our newsletter and on social media. Dean Blake (CLF) puts news stories out for the Academies across the news outlets. We will get some promotional things in the Voices in the summer.	
5.3.5	Do you go into Kingswood and receive students from schools there? Yes there are some of our feeder schools there. Previously we were known for being along the bus routes, but we want to build on the history and make sure people know we are here for students to come to us.	
5.3.6	For handwriting approaches and other learning, all schools have a different approach so that can bring a challenge for consistency, where do you take pupils from? We have 25 or 26 feeder schools; 7 or 8 we take big numbers from. Review of the map of where students feed into us, colour coded according to attendance, red is really low Comparison with other secondaries and spread of it: A420 bus route	

	Also looked at primaries and where we feed from – we have taken from some schools that are on our bus route. We have organised meetings with headteachers, to find out about all the schools. Air balloon is reducing its PAN, there are other schools reducing their PAN. The only school which is retaining its PAN is Beacon Rise. We need to consider reducing our PAN, we are not filling our current year 7. PAN has not been filled; the demographic is falling. We are perhaps better off reducing our PAN and planning for that, which will result in fewer staff. This will need to be taken to the board. There could be a significant risk to the school financially and we want to be planning rather than reacting	
5.3.7	Government guidance: Mobile phones ban and inclusion hub will be coming in the new year.	
5.3.8	Will the inclusion hub be the same as what we had a few years ago? It will be similar, but we need to change our approach from what we had. We tried to set up a hub where students could go to (where they were not meeting criteria for alternative provision). We didn't have enough staff etc to fund it. We need to learn from it. We want to get to a position where all the children are in the school, and we have a comprehensive provision of support, providing safety and ambition for their learning. September 2027/2028 launching and we will take learning from other provisions set ups.	
5.4	Outstanding Training: Training is planned for governor hub ACTION: JL to do training on declarations and training logs	JL
5.5	Overview of Risks: - We should have a balanced budget, but we have a falling role, part of that solution may be to plan to be a 150 school. - SEN indicators are high. - Attendance is below average. - Trade Union action, there is strike action at HWA and TA and the volume of NEU strike action is exponentially rising. The NEU are going for a national ballot in September, with this comes a risk to reputation, this is less so if national issue. - If our internet went down = result in a loss of access to bromcom. We have a plan to mitigate the risk of a member of staff going to other building and providing the information We will be investing money into the school, to make improvements to fencing, science stools. We are unlikely to have this money in the future so worth spending on long term features now. We came out as outstanding in health and safety audit performed recently.	
5.5.1	What proportion of staff are NEU? We can't ask/know that, but a guess would be predominant.	
5.5.2	Does the fence border with Magpie Bottom? Not sure, but KW will do a walk with the site manager to explore. Could you fix the gaps to the fence? Yes. Monetising the Magpie bottom? Natural habitat extension. We own a chunk of it, could have a look at it, but the CLF lettings team have not been successful in the past.	

5.5.3	What data do we have around outcomes this year? They will be weaker outcomes this year but will look more positive next year. Attendance may be lower for some, but we have still managed to get children in to sit exams, who have not been through the school door during the academic year.	
5.6	Safeguarding	
5.6.1	We have two pupils who have had an increase in safeguarding concerns, staff have been exceptional with trying to get them into to their exams, unfortunately we haven't been able to, we are working with external agencies. Other than those two, we have had 100% attendance.	
5.6.2	AL – will be in touch with the safeguarding team to do some link reports Pleased to have Angela back. Quality assuring the learning provisions: Deputy DSL/Acting DSL has been rigorous and has been speedy at getting outcomes. 26 students with alternative provisions.	
5.6.3	Is DSL back in school? Signed off since November, phased return, but she is off again. She will be back as soon as she can. Great team and processes have held up in absence.	
5.6.4	How has the school performed for the CLF safeguarding audits? We are confident in our setting, for this, the number of referrals and outside agencies has increased on last year. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility with every staff member being clear on what aspect they are responsible for. Adele Rice performed the audits, and she said she can feel the culture shift here. We have improved by over 15%, and we are most proud of the culture. A lot of this is credited to the dedication from DSL.	
5.6.5	Mental health specialist has left; we will get two replacements. One for group interventions and one for one-to-ones. Early Help will always be our largest column on the data. The data shows our systems are doing what they should be doing when referrals are higher. CP plan students, we have 2 students. That work has been key with the year teams. There are several different services and external agencies we are working with, we can be judicious about who we work with. When we look at data on impact of the interventions, we can then switch in other agencies which provide different interventions where needed. Terms 4 and 5 – Roth Tactical Group. They tackle risk outside the home, where there isn't concern about the home, they are concerned about the risk from external sources. We trained in the process in term 2/3 and now our referrals are being picked up and building the picture for them. Mental health support will be critical for our cohort. Child on child: our reflection as SLT, this feels an incomplete data set, anything which requires to be logged in two systems can be a risk. This isn't sufficiently robust yet, the need to log in different places is something we are aware of. We also want to work on the potential under reporting of online bullying. Mental health: students are aware about us not having mental health staff, so students have not been coming to see us as much, but communications have gone out about that to know there is still support there. We have arranged staff one to ones, to pick up some of the students that have stopped talking as much. Year 10 low mood is concern.	

5.6.6	Is there largely the same children coming in to talk about their concerns, or is it an increase in volume of students? Low mood and anxiety fluctuate a lot, whereas self-injury, suicidal thoughts, eating tends to be the same students over time. Range of support provided. Waiting lists can be challenging. CAMH's has improved their process and now respond to schools to give advice on things school and parents can do, which is helpful information.	
5.6.7	Do the self injury incidents happen on school premises or at home? Yes some of them do happen in school, we risk assess the students where we know that is happening on the school premises. There are "safety blades" and we can risk assess and support them safely. Staff have a call-in duty to speak to pastoral team and support the pupils where it is picked up.	
5.6.8	There are several students who I see them drawing on themselves, do we consider this a risk and should it be reported? Occasionally they are doodling, for passing time, etc, sp only if you felt concerned by what they were doing. If it is a lot of drawing, yes, it is worth reporting. Staff who notice marks, will report to pastoral team. Staff are impacted by students' low mood. No harm in reporting, where its concerning, it should be reported just in case.	
5.7	Equality and Diversity KWI Presentations – defer to SWG in July	
5.8	Staff and Wellbeing KWI	
5.8.1	What does Ofsted say the responsibilities lie for Academy Council and staff: Academy Council: to address leaders wellbeing Schools: to consider staff wellbeing, systems in place to protect against bullying etc, CLF cover this and are robust in their processes. We want staff feeling valued and supported. Each term we have different supports around staff wellbeing over the year. Supporting workload and wellbeing. For our yearly calendar we have spent time to keep it consistent with minimal changes to support staff wellbeing. We also have provision and initiatives within the school, including the staffroom and resource provided by CLF, eg the thrive app, CLF benefits. We also try where possible to accommodate staff requests for personal family school visits. Survey at this time of year: Staff are communicating positive changes and shows the positive changes vs 2023. Effective is behaviour: Recommending the school, workplace positives. 2 areas less positive: leaders understanding professional challenge and how do the PD meet your needs. Met with CTL's: professional services, we looked at individual colleague PD forms and came up with learning points and actions. Inset day was planned with professional services colleagues in mind too, training for leaders to hold PD development meetings better in the future and gave time for conversations. The impact of this is likely to start showing from next year. Monitoring staff sickness: When we had significant absence from staff, we started receiving information about a year ago, we were given training from Central HR. We started with informal sickness meetings, SLT were trained then training was given to middle leadership. Staff sickness is beginning to look impactful. There is a big drop off in absence, that investment in leaders, in having proper conversations and talking with staff has been impactful when comparing it across time. ACTION: Policy out with the minutes KW/JL	KW/JL

5.8.2	How many staff in JCA? Around 100	
5.9	Student Voice GRE We can't report on this as haven't had the information back from South Glos – will be shared for the next academic year	
6	Policies for Review	
	None	
7	Any Other Business	
	Matters for Board or COAC to be shared with LT if needed. SWG: LT, J H and AL attending	
8	Close of Meeting	
	Close of meeting 18:31pm	

ACTIONS

3.2	ACTION: LT ask Andrea to arrange a link meeting re PP – carry over	LT
5.4	ACTION: JL to do training on declarations and training logs for outstanding AC's	JL
5.8.1	ACTION: Policy out with the minutes KW/JL	KW/JL