

Minutes – Lime Hills Academy

Meeting Date: 25 November 2024

Location: Teams

Time: 3.30pm

Present:

Brigid Allen (BA)	Sponsor Councillor & Chair
Alex Davies (AD)	Sponsor Councillor
Luz Martinez (LM)	Sponsor Councillor
Claire Pannell (CP)	Sponsor Councillor
Lis Jolley (LJ)	Senior Principal
Sally Apps (SA)	Executive Principal
Natalie Sweet (NS)	Teacher
Phoebe Chan (PC)	Clerk

In attendance:

Joe Thomas (ES)	Curriculum Lead
Zoe Jenkins (ZJ)	Deputy Principal

Apologies:

Kate Gillam (KG)	Parent Councillor
Nicolle Deighton (ND)	Sponsor Councillor

Item	Description	Action
1	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
1.1	BA welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	The Academy Councillors are noted that they need to declare/ confirm their pecuniary interests on Governor Hub.	
3	AC membership & Link roles	
3.1	NS is now an official Staff Councillor in LHA AC.	
3.2	A new parent councillor has been elected. PC would prepare the necessary paperwork to facilitate this.	PC
4	Minutes of the last meeting	
4.1	The minutes of the last meeting (30 September 2024) were agreed to be a true and accurate record and were approved.	
5	Actions and Matters Arising	
5.1	The action table has been updated.	
6	Academy Council Report	
	SEND	
6.1	LJ shared SEND success stories and positive outcomes in attendance for students previously identified as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) cases.	
6.2	LJ emphasised the importance of Year 11 annual reviews to secure student destinations. LJ also noted collaboration with Weston College for transition plans.	
6.3	LJ discussed recent diagnoses of Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and plans to work with Weston College on specific educational pathways.	
6.4	LJ reported the utilisation of North Somerset resources to support EBSA students and families, including home visits by TAs.	
6.5	Q: Is it possible for academy councillors to see examples so they can understand the narrative and provide feedback? A: Yes, we could share those after the meeting. We have case studies on attendance and SEND that can be shared for feedback.	LJ

	Personal Development	
6.6	LJ identified personal development is a potential strength for the academy. There are many personal development conversations occur throughout the day.	
6.7	LHA focuses on supporting students to make right choices and social/emotional regulation, the strategies adopted include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning journals (particularly strong in primary) - Curriculum for life skills, employability, and learning outside the classroom - Weekly rotation of topics: E-safety, Employability, British values, RE and safety, WINK weeks linked to CPOMS themes - Use of Jigsaw PSHE programme 	
6.8	JT has written a life skills programme for Key Stage 4. An action plan specifically for personal development is in place.	
6.9	ZJ reshuffled student groupings to better meet needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blagdon class (Year 6) focuses on ADHD-friendly approaches - Cheddar class uses more play-based, Key Stage 1-style learning 	
6.10	The approach of personal development is following the Lime Hills curriculum, with the current focus on e-safety. LHA is arranging for local PCSO to discuss crime and consequences, as well as the staff training on religion and beliefs led by Josh Oakes.	
	Quality of Education & Curriculum	
6.11	There is a strong performance in Key Stage 2 and 3, particularly in English and Maths. The curriculum includes adaptive pedagogies to support reluctant learners.	
6.12	The academy is adopting the Birmingham Toolkit for assessing English and Maths. Other curriculum areas like food and personal development have improved significantly.	
6.13	Key Stage 4 students have shown progress through entry-level certificates to functional skills qualifications, preparing them for GCSEs.	
6.14	There are separate CPD sessions for teachers and TAs to address specific needs and improve classroom language use.	
6.15	AD shared experiences from Snowdon Village about managing exam conditions, favouring larger group settings over individual rooms due to staffing challenges.	
6.16	BA highlighted the importance of learning formalities associated with exams as part of maturity and emphasised understanding individual student needs for accommodations.	
6.17	LHA implemented a shift in Key Stage 4 culture, transforming the former referral room into a more positive learning space. He also introduced off-site learning opportunities for struggling students, which proved highly successful.	
6.18	The academy incorporated unit awards into the curriculum, allowing for personalised learning based on student interests. A range of unit awards covering diverse topics such as fishing, photography, and animal care is developed.	
6.19	The academy created a curriculum structure that includes both whole-class unit awards and individual interest-based sessions, as well as mapped some unit awards to traditional subjects like biology, English literature, and RE, allowing for potential GCSE entry.	
6.20	Adjusted timetables (50%) are also implemented for some students to prevent suspensions and engage them more effectively.	
6.21	Q: Are you running mocks for year 11 in the same way as the rest does? A: No, we use walking, talking mocks over a longer period to prepare students incrementally.	
6.22	Q: What practice are they going to get with actually sitting an examination? A: We plan to do more mock papers closer to the GCSEs but need to balance this with students' anxiety towards exams.	
6.23	Q: Do you have a picture of five rooms with a person each student trusts during exams? A: Exams are currently one-to-one with a TA in separate rooms to reduce stress.	
6.24	Q: Could you give a couple of examples of the sort of unit awards you're talking about?	

	A: Examples include fishing, photography, wildlife, and animal care. He specifically mentioned creating a unit award for fishing that incorporates maths and English, and another for looking after chickens and livestock.	
6.25	Q: How do you think these strategies that you're implementing with this specific Year 11 are going to tell the rest of the students, the 46% who are not coming to school, to come to actually see that something good is happening there and to tell them that they should come into school? A: The work with Year 10s and 11s in Key Stage 4 is specific to getting unit awards and qualifications, which differs from Key Stage 3. He emphasized the importance of a bespoke curriculum suited to students' interests, allowing for individual pursuits within the timetable.	
7	Safeguarding	
7.1	Out of 54 students, 15 are on child protection or child in need plans, indicating a high percentage of vulnerable students.	
7.2	ZJ is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the whole Academy, with CW and ES as deputy DSLs for secondary and SEN-related issues.	
7.3	All staff have completed safeguarding training, but some Academy Council members are pending. PC will chase the AC members to complete it.	PC
7.4	Issues include child-on-child verbal and physical abuse, especially among younger children, with incidents often arising during football games.	
7.5	The academy has increased focus on online safety; plans for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) training.	
8	Attendance, Behaviour & Exclusions	
8.1	LJ discussed the challenges and improvements in behaviour, exclusions, and attendance at the new Weston site. She also highlighted issues with school infrastructure impacting student behaviour, such as inadequate doors and fencing.	
8.2	LJ addressed suspension statistics, mentioning 40 suspensions mainly related to vaping and absconding.	
8.3	ZJ reported positive attendance in primary school, with significant reductions in major incidents due to improved relationships and interventions.	
8.4	ZJ mentioned improvements in school facilities, including new play equipment and plans for trampolines to aid regulation.	
8.5	JT discussed the vaping issue among students, particularly in Key Stage 4, supported by parental behaviour, and described efforts to engage students in conversations about vaping during car journeys and through PSHE content.	
8.6	JT mentioned the importance of building strong relationships with students to address behavioural issues effectively.	
8.7	Q: What does the academy do about the vaping? A: LJ explained that students caught vaping are suspended for the rest of the day. Workshops on substance abuse have been conducted with some students under specific programmes for support.	
8.8	Q: Are you delivering content in PSHE that can be pointed towards? About the effects of vaping. A: LJ confirmed that they are delivering relevant content through PSHE.	
8.9	Q: Have you considered any of these vaping detectors? A: LJ stated they are not using vaping detectors but are exploring other supportive measures with SAS for students struggling with vaping addiction.	
8.10	Q: Is there any mileage in an education for the parents? A: JT mentioned that a letter was sent home explaining the importance of supporting school policies on vaping without alienating parents who may also vape.	
8.11	Q: Is there any national average for SEMH exclusions and attendance that you can compare it with? A: LJ noted that while there is national SEND data, SEMH schools tend to have lower attendance rates. They compare their attendance with other SEMH provisions rather than national averages.	

8.12	Q: Why do you think year seven attendance is impressive? A: LJ attributed this to strong parental support, effective transition processes, and excellent teaching staff. NS echoed these sentiments, emphasising supportive parents and a focus on relationship-building during transitions.	
9	Pupil Premium	
9.1	67% of the cohorts are children experiencing disadvantage. Specific data includes: - All girls at LHA and 3 out of 5 girls in years 7 and 8 have adjusted or reduced timetables. - Year 5 has the lowest Pupil Premium (PP) cohort at 50%, while Year 6 has the highest at 80%.	
9.2	Attendance rates for PP cohorts are around 72-73%, with non-PP attendance nearly reaching 90%.	
9.3	The PP funding strategy has changed from specific itemised spending to a broader strategy document. In addition, the funding is lagged, meaning it is based on the previous year's student numbers. The academy receives £21,581 for the current academic year but spends £52,000 on their PP strategy.	
9.4	The PP challenges include attendance, progress towards EHCP targets, speech and language difficulties, self-esteem, and positive transitions, while the strategies involve using PP money to ensure safety, nutrition, learning, and emotional well-being.	
9.5	There are specific programmes include educational psychology coaching, speech and language support, and wider strategies like pastoral care and off-site provision costs.	
9.6	The intended outcomes focus on improving educational experiences for disadvantaged students through various targeted strategies. Success criteria are set for different challenges, including teaching improvements and targeted academic support.	
9.7	Q: Do you sort of balance because it's a two-year strategy? Will you balance the books then because you'll get the extra, you'll get an increase in money next year, won't you? A: Potentially. LHA has taken strategies with the most impact for disadvantaged children to ensure they are part of our suite of things.	
9.8	Q: So the money you get definitely gets diverted into those, rather than ending up being spent on something else? A: Yes, we spend a lot on feeding children, uniforms, and activities like riding.	
9.9	Q: Do they discount more for school children full of children who experience disadvantage because that would be good for their publicity? A: We work with groups like the Bristol Cycling Centre that offer open sessions for students with disabilities.	
10	Finance, Health & Safety and Estates	
10.1	Health and safety audits of LHA are rated as good. In terms of finance LHA is meeting business rules.	
11	Staffing and wellbeing	
11.1	Current Staffing Challenges: LJ discussed the difficulty in recruiting specialist staff, leading to the temporary closure of one class per day for two weeks. This decision was communicated to parents with minimal pushback.	
11.2	Recruitment Issues: LJ highlighted the competitive job market and challenges in finding suitable candidates. Mentioned a recent successful recruitment of Laura Begley, who is positively impacting student engagement.	
11.3	Risk register: LJ reflected that staffing is identified as a major risk, with ongoing efforts to recruit and maintain a sustainable provision. Discussed the high number of red risks even after mitigations.	
11.4	Q: Is it OK on the Nailsea site? A: Yes, it is. We do have an agency member of staff out today. But there is not any long-term sickness or any major red flags at this point in time.	
14	Matters for the attention of the Board	
14.1	None.	
15	AOB	

15.1	CP noticed negative comments on Facebook about the new site (Churchill). Some community members expressed opposition to new building, while others defended the need for the facility for students.	
15.2	ZJ acknowledged the issue and emphasised the importance of being aware of community sentiments.	
15.3	BA reminded all councillors that while BA reviews each policy, particularly those that are LHA specific, councillors should read the policies on governor hub, and pass any comments to Brigid. If there are concerns about a policy, it will be raised at the next AC meeting	All
16	Close of Meeting	
16.1	The meeting closed at 5.18pm. Future Dates: Thursday 6 March 2025 - Meeting 4 Monday 28 April 2025 - Meeting 5 Monday 23 June 2025 - Meeting 6	

Actions to take forward to next meeting:

Action No.	Item	Owner	Status
27.11.23 01	BA to ask Charlotte Seavill to let KG know the Safeguarding Network meeting dates. WH to ask Jackie to let KG know the dates.	WH	Completed
26.02.24 02	It was agreed that at one of the summer AC meetings, Academy Councillors will visit the new Churchill site for LHA on Pudding Pie Lane. Consideration will also be given as to whether Academy Councillors should visit WHA.	BA	Completed
01.07.24 01	ND will email a date through to LJ for a deep dive.	ND	Completed
01.07.24 02	LJ and BA will discuss the best way to give councillors the opportunity to visit both of the existing sites, or the sites as they will be next year, and put on hold any kind of visit to the proposed building site.	BA & LJ	Completed
30.09.24 01	Suspensions are being used to set boundaries, but will be reviewed at half-term.	LJ	Ongoing
30.09.24 02	The academy plans to look at the curriculum in the upcoming meetings, with deep dives into specific areas: English and maths will be discussed in meeting three; reading and social communication will be discussed in meeting four.	LJ	Ongoing
25.11.24 01	A new parent councillor has been elected. PC would prepare the necessary paperwork to facilitate this.	PC	Ongoing
25.11.24 02	All staff have completed safeguarding training, but some Academy Council members are pending. PC will chase the AC members to complete it.	PC	Ongoing
25.11.24 03	Q: Is it possible for academy councillors to see examples on attendance and SEND so they can understand the narrative and provide feedback? A: Yes, we could share those after the meeting. We have case studies on attendance and SEND that can be shared for feedback.	LJ	Ongoing