

Minutes – Kingsmead Academy Council Meeting

Version: Final (Public Version)
Meeting Date: Tuesday, 10 March 2026
Location: Kingsmead Academy
Time: 6-8pm

Chair:	Colin Mister (CM)	Sponsor Councillor
Attendees:	Stuart Smith (SS)	Staff Councillor
	Nick Lapthorn (NL)	Sponsor Councillor
	Laura Jordan (LJ)	Sponsor Councillor
	Stefanie Back (SB)	Sponsor Councillor
	Jake Bale (JB)	Support Staff Councillor
	Chris Walder (CW)	Parent Councillor

In attendance:	John Eddy (JE)	Principal
	Cameron Shaw (CE)	Executive Principal
	Jenny Webb (JW)	Vice Principal
	Charlie Pierce (CP)	Vice Principal
	Laura Chesterfield (LC)	Observer

Apologies:	Eva Helm (EH)	Sponsor Councillor
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Minutes

Item	Description	Action
	Published Minutes These minutes have been approved by the Academy Council and prepared for public release. Certain content has been redacted where it relates to confidential business, personal data, staffing matters, safeguarding matters or information that could identify individual pupils or members of staff.	
1	Introduction, Administration and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed councillors to the meeting and introductions were made. Apologies were noted as recorded above.	
1.2	The Chair acknowledged that this was Nick Lapthorn's final meeting as a councillor and thanked him for his significant contribution, including the time he had served as Chair. Nick was thanked for his commitment and informed that he would be welcome to return in the future.	
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 approved as an accurate record.	
3.2	It was noted that data referenced in the previous minutes had not yet been shared. This will be uploaded to Governor Hub.	
4	Chairs Update	
4.1	The Chair provided an update from COAC, confirming that where councillors sit on panels (e.g. exclusions), parents have the right to request an Independent Review Panel (IRP). CLF has confirmed that support is in place to ensure academies and panel members are fully represented and supported through this process.	
4.2	The Chair advised that admissions panels take place every Friday morning and invited councillors to attend if available. It was noted that CM and EH continue to contribute significantly to Trust-wide work.	
4.3	Councillors were reminded that all governance communication and documentation should be accessed and shared via the Hub.	
4.4	The Chair noted that the CEO has been awarded a knighthood, and congratulations were recorded.	
4.5	Attendance continues to be a challenge across schools, and councillors were invited to share any ideas or strategies to support improvement. It was noted that Trust teams are currently working with a group of schools in relation to Ofsted preparedness. The Executive Principal provided a Trust-wide inspection update, advising that there are currently 412 Section 5 inspections nationally. While no CLF schools have yet been inspected under the new framework, 11 inspections are anticipated before the summer. The Trust has hosted seven pilot inspections and has had one recent Section 8 inspection.	
4.6	Councillors were reminded that a wide range of governance training is available on Governor Hub. It was noted that many modules are recorded and can be revisited as required.	
5	Academy Council Report:	
	The Academy Council report had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting and was noted by councillors.	
5.1	Student Outcomes	
5.1.1	English Data The Principal presented the English assessment data. Year 10 sat the same Trust-wide assessment, enabling direct comparison across academies. The average mark was 39.6, compared with a Trust average of 33.9. The Principal highlighted that Year 10 have a KS2 average starting score of 104.4, compared with the Trust average of 102, and noted that no school in the Trust had a higher starting point. This led to discussion around why Kingsmead is not consistently at the top of all outcome measures given the strength of student prior attainment. The Principal reported that:	

	- The average KS2 score of just under 105 places the academy as the highest-attaining school on entry within the Trust, although not above national averages. - Year 7 and Year 9 APS are above national levels, and Year 8 APS is the highest within the Trust.	
5.1.2	SEND E outcomes were noted as requiring further exploration, as these were below the CLF average. Relevant pupil group data was reviewed by councillors.	
5.1.3	The Principal reminded councillors that Trust conditional-formatting uses colour coding for ranking, and green does not always indicate 'good' but rather relative position within the Trust.	
5.1.4	Q: A councillor asked which schools demonstrate the strongest value-added progression from KS2 starting points in English.	
5.1.5	The Executive Principal explained that progression data is available for Year 10, but not yet for Year 11. Each academy receives a full "black box" data set. Schools regularly share progress information in collaborative sessions, identifying bright spots and learning from one another. Data is viewed as the starting point of all improvement conversations.	
5.1.6	The Principal noted that transparent, comparative Trust data is helpful when talking to staff, particularly where staff have historically felt certain targets were not achievable. The data now provides clear evidence to inform professional dialogue.	
5.1.7	Maths outcomes show that 108 students sat the higher paper. The average points score for Maths is below the Trust average. The Principal reported that Maths outcomes are not as strong as English and require further investigation.	
5.1.8	Q: A councillor queried whether the PP outcomes in Maths were concerning.	
5.1.9	The Principal acknowledged the gap. Councillors discussed the impact of cohort composition on the data.	
5.1.10	Q: A councillor queried whether lower-attaining students are being entered for the correct tier, suggesting this as an area for exploration.	
5.1.11	The Principal explained that setting approaches had been trialled in Year 7, with mixed-ability and traditional sets on different sides of the year group. Results varied across the two groups. Black box data allows class-level analysis and will support decision-making around tiering and setting.	
5.1.12	Q: A councillor asked how this data is being shared with and used by subject leaders.	
5.1.13	The Principal confirmed that he has met with the Head of English to review the data in depth, including moderation outcomes. Extended writing has been identified as an area for development in KS3, with actions taken through line-management structures.	
5.1.14	Q: A councillor asked whether this correlated with observations and black box data.	
5.1.15	The Principal confirmed correlation work has taken place, particularly in English. Black box data is available to every teacher and includes class-level outcomes.	
5.1.16	Q: A councillor asked about leadership continuity in English.	

5.1.17	Councillors received assurance regarding leadership capacity and succession planning within the English department.	
5.2	Quality of Education including curriculum developments	
5.2.1	Quality of Education including curriculum developments was covered within the Principal's report and through discussion in other areas of the meeting.	
5.2.2	Councillors discussed the continuation of the motor vehicle curriculum provision. It was noted that the qualification is no longer included within performance tables; however, it continues to serve a clear curriculum purpose. The provision is funded through ring-fenced capital funding, separate from revenue budgets. Councillors were assured that the provision will continue to be used and that retaining the facility avoids the higher costs associated with decommissioning.	
5.2.3	School Day Structure (for information) The Principal provided an update on proposals being considered regarding the structure of the school day. It was reported that changes to registration and lesson timings are being explored, including a reduction in the length of the final lesson and a slight extension of registration time. The aim is to support staff professional development within directed time while minimising impact on pupils. Early feedback from staff has been positive. Proposed changes would take effect from September, subject to consultation with parents and consideration of transport arrangements. Councillors noted the update.	
5.3	Attendance	
5.3.1	The Principal reported that attendance remains below the national average and continues to be a persistent challenge. Persistent absence has reduced, and severe absence has decreased slightly since the start of the year; however, a small number of pupils continue to present significant attendance challenges and are being supported through individual attendance plans	
5.3.2	Q: Councillors asked whether the Trust had recommended appointing a designated attendance lead and whether this could be considered in the future.	
5.3.3	The Principal explained that, while the Trust supports the idea of a designated attendance lead, such roles are typically appointed at Associate Assistant Headteacher level and are not currently affordable within the school's budget. To support attendance within existing resources, funding has instead been allocated for two pastoral support workers with a focus on attendance. The Principal highlighted the challenge of balancing budget reduction with the need to strengthen attendance support.	
5.4	Quality of teaching and learning	
5.4.1	The Principal reported on a range of preventative and safeguarding-focused activity, including additional drop-down days addressing violence and ongoing safer internet education. It was noted that some younger pupils had been joining large WhatsApp groups, and the school has written to parents encouraging them to monitor their child's phone use. Parents' evenings have also been used to raise awareness and promote discussion.	
5.4.2	A Parent Councillor commented positively on the school's approach, noting that it had prompted meaningful conversations at home and consideration of approaches used by other schools, such as phone bans.	

5.4.3	The Principal advised that a further safeguarding audit is taking place this year, building on the one completed on joining the Trust. The refined audit includes a more detailed, quality-focused, sliding-scale assessment. A desktop phase was due to take place shortly, followed by a full on-site audit day in early April.	
5.4.4	The Principal updated councillors on proposals to install shutters on first- and second-floor toilets to support supervision and ensure that facilities are used appropriately. One toilet would remain open to ensure access while improving oversight. The estimated cost is £14k, requiring multiple quotes. Senior leaders consider this a necessary investment despite the financial impact.	
5.4.5	Q: Councillors asked whether similar issues were experienced in other schools and whether there was evidence of impact, such as reduced damage or staff demand.	
5.4.6	The Executive Principal confirmed that a number of other academies have installed shutters for similar reasons. Councillors highlighted the importance of ensuring that such measures also consider underlying causes, including pupil movement out of lessons and congregating behaviour.	
5.4.7	The Principal reported that an ARV had taken place that day, with generally positive and thoughtful feedback from staff and pupils. Areas for further consideration included the impact of setting and ensuring pupils are consistently challenged. More detailed feedback will be shared next term. ACTION: Principal to share detailed ARV feedback with councillors next term.	JE
5.5	Behaviour and Exclusions	
5.5.1	The Principal shared behaviour data provided by CLF, which was reviewed by the Academy Council. This included positive and negative behaviour points and comparative suspension data across the Trust and against national averages. A spike in suspensions during Term 2 was highlighted and attributed to revisions made to the behaviour system, particularly around disruption in lessons. As anticipated, this initially led to an increase in recorded incidents; however, data for Term 3 shows a reduction as pupils adjusted to the revised system.	
5.5.2	The Principal confirmed that five-day suspensions had been issued for serious incidents, including fights. It was also noted that a permanent exclusion had been issued during the reporting period. The Principal emphasised that no suspension is issued lightly and that all decisions take account of a range of factors, including proportionality and consideration of any SEN.	
5.5.3	The Principal referred to recent review meetings involving pupils who are not currently meeting the academy's behavioural expectations. It was noted that, despite ongoing challenges, these pupils have demonstrated a willingness to learn and engage positively with their education.	
5.5.4	Q: Councillors queried whether the increased number of suspension days in Term 2 reflected wider concerns.	
5.5.5	The Principal explained that the increase was expected following changes to the behaviour system and confirmed that behaviour has improved as pupils became accustomed to the revised approach.	
5.5.6	Q: Councillors asked whether the revised behaviour system had delivered the intended impact.	
5.5.7	The Principal confirmed that, overall, the system has had the positive effect anticipated.	

5.5.8	Councillors reviewed suspension categories recorded in line with DfE guidance, including comparisons with CLF schools and national data. It was noted that incidents recorded as racist abuse were proportionately higher than both Trust and national averages and councillors sought assurance regarding the actions being taken to address this.	
5.5.9	Q: Councillors asked whether there was an understanding of why this category was elevated.	
5.5.10	The Principal explained that incidents were linked to a small number of younger pupils, including some repeat instances from the same individuals. These incidents are addressed robustly through sanctions, restorative conversations and reintegration meetings with parents. It was emphasised that such behaviour is treated explicitly as hate-related, with work undertaken to address underlying influences, including online exposure.	
5.5.11	Councillors also sought clarification on figures recorded for drugs and alcohol. The Principal explained that these figures are often linked to vaping incidents and are recorded using DfE-prescribed categories, over which schools have limited discretion.	
5.6	Pupil Premium and LAC	
5.6.1	Pupil Premium and Looked After Children were covered within the Principal's report, and no further questions were raised.	
6	Safeguarding	
6.1	The Academy Council reviewed safeguarding arrangements and received assurance that statutory safeguarding responsibilities are being met. Safeguarding continues to be a key priority for the academy.	
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7.1	The Principal provided an update on staffing matters, including workforce planning and leadership structure arrangements.	
7.2	Councillors discussed the importance of maintaining oversight of staff well-being. ACTION: CM and SS to meet in their capacity as Well-being Link Councillors to discuss staff well-being priorities and feedback, and to report back to the Academy Council.	CM/SS
8	Finance and Budget	
8.1	The Principal provided an update on budget planning, confirming that work is ongoing with the Finance Link and in line with Trust guidance. The first funding statement has been received; however, a number of elements remain uncertain at this stage, including pay awards and some central Trust contributions. Councillors were advised that staffing costs remain the largest area of uncertainty.	
8.2	The Principal reported that a refreshed budget submission has been made. Based on current assumptions, a projected deficit of approximately £170k has been identified. This figure includes proposed pastoral roles and support staff alignment and therefore does not yet represent a balanced budget. It was noted that further work is ongoing to refine budget assumptions and consider a range of options to achieve a balanced budget position.	
8.3	Assumptions within the budget include anticipated SEND income changes, acknowledgement that some Year 11 pupils with EHCPs will leave at the end of the academic year, and the potential for additional funding linked to pupils	

	requiring revised EHCPs. The position regarding incoming Year 6 EHCP pupils remains uncertain, and the Principal confirmed that best-estimate assumptions have been applied.	
8.4	The Executive Principal outlined the rationale for in-year savings and turnover assumptions, explaining that these are intended to reduce the need for early staffing reductions where savings are likely to materialise later in the year. Councillors were reminded of the requirement to demonstrate a minimum 1% surplus within the three-year budget plan. Assurance was provided that, even in a worst-case scenario, the academy would retain a positive financial position due to Trust oversight and contingency arrangements.	
8.5	Councillors discussed the risks associated with a three-year budget plan and noted the increasing financial pressures across the sector. The Principal confirmed that, while difficult decisions may be required, they feel appropriately supported by the Trust. The Executive Principal highlighted the advantages of operating within a multi-academy trust, particularly in managing risk and responding to unforeseen pressures.	
9	Policies that require review	
9.1	The following policies were reviewed and approved by the Academy Council: • Behaviour Policy • SEND Policy	
9.2	Student-Friendly Policies It was noted that the student-friendly safeguarding and child-on-child policies are available on Governor Hub.	
9.3	Lockdown and Emergency Evacuation Arrangements Councillors received an update on emergency procedures. A fire drill was held earlier the same day and was reported to have gone well. A further fire drill is planned, during which Year 11 pupils will practise evacuation conditions as if leaving an examination. A lockdown drill is scheduled for the following Tuesday, and pupils have been prepared in advance.	
9.4	Risk Management and Health & Safety Councillors noted that responsibility for the risk register and health and safety sits with the senior leadership team. A recent health and safety audit has been completed, with no high-level concerns identified. Work is ongoing at Trust level to develop a centralised risk assessment approach. A safeguarding audit is expected to take place imminently.	
10	Link reports	
10.1	Safeguarding Link Report The Safeguarding Link Councillor (CM) reported that they had met with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and undertaken site walks and learning walks with a focus on safeguarding. Councillors were assured that safeguarding practice remains up to date and embedded across the academy.	
10.2	Careers Link Report The Careers Link Councillor (LJ) reported on a meeting held with the Careers Lead approximately one month ago. Positive developments were highlighted, including recent university visits and external organisations engaging with pupils through assemblies and events. It was noted that the Gatsby framework now places increased emphasis on careers education being delivered across all year groups, a change that has been	

	in effect since September. Discussion took place around how this can be effectively embedded within classroom teaching and whether additional resources may be required. Councillors were advised that requests for support or funding could be made to the PTA where appropriate. The importance of pupil voice was discussed, including plans to gather feedback from Year 7 pupils about future aspirations. Staff voice was also highlighted, particularly in understanding how careers education is integrated into everyday teaching and preparation for external review. A councillor commented on recent work relating to artificial intelligence and its impact on future careers, noting this as a potentially useful area to develop further. Maintaining links with external organisations following assemblies was also identified as an opportunity to support future work-related learning. Clarification was requested regarding a careers-related leadership review survey. It was confirmed that this is a Somerset-wide exercise. ACTION: Principal to clarify survey requirements with a member of the senior leadership team and update councillors.	JE
10.3	It was noted that all Link Councillor reports are available on the Hub. One report remains pending final sign-off.	
11	Matter for the attention of the Board/COAC	
11.1	No matters for the attention of the Board/COAC were raised.	
12	Any other business	
12.1	Councillors were informed of a number of upcoming school and community events: • A talent show held on 26 March, which has already raised over £1,000 • A PTA comedy night scheduled for 28 March • A forthcoming drama performance of To Kill a Mockingbird • A Civic Society event titled Life Behind the School Gates Councillors were warmly invited to attend any of the above events where possible.	
12.2	The Chair reported that the final accounts had been signed off and submitted to Companies House. It was confirmed that there are no liabilities and that director changes have been completed.	
12.3	Meeting close 8:21pm	
13	Date of Next Meeting	
13.1	Tuesday 16 th June 2026	