

Uphill Village Academy Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday 12th November 2020, 6pm
Venue – Microsoft Teams

Academy Council:

Shane Hawkings (SH) – Chair of the Academy Council
Toby Blackburn (TB) – Parent Councillor
Stewart Castle (SC) – Sponsored Councillor
Becky Frise (BF) – Support Staff Councillor
Sarah Goode (SG) – Teaching Staff Councillor
Lizy Jones (LJ) – Parent Councillor
Anita Beal (AB)– Student Advocate
Sam Hodder (SH) – Principal
Georgie Tincker (GT) – Vice Principal

In attendance

Charlotte Seavill - Clerk

Introduction, Administration, and Apologies

The Chair introduced all councillors and welcomed everyone to the first UVA AC meeting. There were no apologies.

Declaration of Interests

None.

Approve minutes from the previous meeting

n/a

Actions and Matters Arising

n/a

Academy Council Report

The council reviewed the last teacher assessments (March 2020) at KS1 & KS2.

The council shared an overview of the context of the Y6 cohort, including PP, non-PP, gender and SEND, along with the target grades for Summer 2021. They also discussed national average and FFT data. Current predictions look to be in line with national average.

The current Y6 cohort undertook assessments and rose to the challenge well. It gave them a focus and sense of purpose. It was good to see them enjoying the challenge and how they work under time pressure. Staff have identified those in need of interventions in SATS areas, which are being managed well, albeit with some challenges with the current restrictions.

The council received an overview of the target setting process used by leadership and data managers.

The council discussed the EYFS cohort, their readiness to learn and be independent, how they have settled and well and are enjoying school. Where gaps have been identified in learning, interventions have been put in place.

The council discussed the recovery plan in September and building on that, discussed the 3 areas of rebuilding and recovery going forward.

1. Safety – there are procedures in place to stay safe onsite and all students have adapted to the new routines well. Communication is good between staff, students and families to understand expectations. Due to the school opening in June, most staff were familiar with the new procedures before returning in September. There is a dynamic risk assessment in place, which was approved by leadership and the Health and Safety team, who continues to support the academy. Routines are well established and student have been flexible and adaptable.

The council asked for details about clinically vulnerable staff and students. There is guidance in place across all CLF academies with regards to keeping vulnerable staff and students safe. There are currently no staff who fall into this category.

2. Wellbeing – The academy has been gathering information from staff, students and families about their wellbeing, relationships, interactions and feelings. Some of the COVID measures in place such as staff meeting students at the gate and eating lunch together in classrooms has built tolerance and compassion. Students are supported to recover their own relationships, friendships and social groups and build good relationships. Students enjoy coming together for assemblies via Teams and Pupil Voice is positive. Students understand the importance of remaining in bubbles and playing is happy. Students requested a friendship bench which was provided for them. Staggered break and lunchtimes have resulted in less friendship and behavioural issues. Hot Chocolate Friday remains popular as are recognition boards in classrooms. There are community games so that students feel they part of the whole school.

Staff have adapted really well and are coping well with the workload. There is a mental health lead onsite who promotes mental health support and awareness through training, briefings, memos and the CLF wellbeing blog. The council asked if staff voice had been collected. There has been no formal questionnaire yet but staff are voicing their opinions via the mental health lead.

The council asked if any of the changes due to COVID would be kept when restrictions lift.

There are some aspects of the new routine that could be kept going forward such as the staggered break and lunch times. Having lunch in classrooms relieves pressure in the hall and a staggered start in the morning has resulted in a calmer start to the day as well as positively impacting students' punctuality.

The councils agreed that from a parent perspective, feedback is positive about the new drop off and pick up routines in terms of traffic and parking.

The council asked if pupil voice was being recorded or evidence of the impact of the new routines on children. They also asked if there were any concerns raised by pupils.

Pupil voice is gathered and brought to forum. There isn't yet a procedure in place for pupils to meet in vertical age groups due to the bubble structure. The council agreed that pupil voice would be brought to the council via the Student Advocate councillor going forward including pupil voice, feedback from PSHE sessions and student feedback during Academy Review Visits (ARV) so that the AC minutes can become the formal record.

3. Learning

The council received an update on how the academy has approached returning to school, the group focus around "hope" and how gaps in learning and lost learning have been identified and interventions put in place. Areas identified include using cutlery, being able to manage play equipment, stamina for writing, letter formation, using scissors, balance, arithmetic and mental maths. The academy very much reflects the national picture and the areas that Ofsted have identified as needing improvement. Leadership are happy with the progress made so far. The Council asked how staff are coping with the increased workload.

Staff are coping well but it is a much more tiring day as there are less breaks and less adult interaction between colleagues. The benefits of playing with other classes can't be overlooked as although student staff relationships are good and they are forming lovely bonds, the relationship is intense.

When bubbles can change, work will ease for staff, especially around breaks, lunchtime and duty. Staff are being encouraged to go home a little earlier and where work or meetings can be done from home rather than the academy then staff are encouraged to do so. Where time can be given back to staff or meetings changed then leadership are mindful to do so. There is trust wide work around wellbeing and supporting colleagues. There are many processes and systems that have been streamlined and made more efficient during the pandemic and so these need to be taken forward.

The council agreed that this is national picture and not a local issue and thanked all staff for their hard work and efforts.

The council discussed how staff are engaged with learning and training around providing an online provision for students.

The council discussed how pupils are feeling and how concerns for their mental health have been identified in some cases. There has been friendship and relationship intervention and work around self esteem for students in need of some support. There has been work around anxiety too. The academy has signposted families to support outside of school where needed.

There was a telephone parents' evening at the beginning of term and feedback was gathered from parents. Parents generally valued the call and found the call informative. They left understanding how their child has settled back into school and would be happy for phone parents' evenings going forward.

Areas to improve remote parents' evenings going forward would giving examples of work before the meeting and having a longer period of time. The council discussed ways to share work examples and agreed that having meetings of longer than 10 minutes each was difficult for staff to arrange due to the number of appointments needed.

Quality of Education including curriculum developments

The Council received an update on the tiered system the academy has developed for providing learning for students if/when they are learning from home. The daily timetables in classrooms have been produced so that they can be followed at home at the same time. The aim is to have live lessons via Microsoft Teams for students at home. Students need to be able to manage their camera, microphone and hand up functions etc. The academy is also exploring the use of One Note to post worksheets and lessons to students to complete and return for feedback. It's important that teachers can provide feedback on work as this process was difficult in the last lockdown. Various groups of children and children who are isolating are trialling these systems. These developments will work alongside the current online learning the academy offers through external websites. Children still complete their homework online and will continue this if/when a group is in isolation.

The council offered feedback around making the class email addresses clearer on the website and having the first blog entry as a fixed message at the top of the class page. (ACTION SH)

Staff have found communication via email helpful.

There are 3 tiers to the remote learning offer. The first tier is for students who are off for a few days while awaiting test results for themselves or family members. There is a pack of work on the website and paper copies are also available for those without online access at home.

The second tier is for student who needs to isolate for 14 days because a bubble is out or a family member has COVID. This tier is the most challenging for staff as it is likely that they are working with both students in the classroom and students at home. The timetable for the group will be in same in both settings and work will be available on One Note for children to complete at home. Everyone will be working on the same materials. There will be communications via the phone and teams to isolating children and families as well as online lessons.

The council asked how students who don't have access to tech or internet will be supported during isolation.

The academy has benefitted from a DfE allocation of laptops based on the number of PP students on roll and the number of children off. The allocation is 3 laptops. The academy is able to also lend equipment from its stock to families in need of a device. Families are supported on an individual basis.

The third tier is when a whole class is working from home, including the teacher.

This has all been discussed with children in class to set expectations and understand how it will work so they are prepared for if/when it happens.

The Council suggested creating support materials for parents using One Note and Teams, the website and where work will be posted.

The academy is producing a letter to parents communicating the system along with a short video on who to log in, find a lesson and how to guides for parents.

The academy is also linking with local schools and schools from across the trust to fine tune and develop high quality blended learning.

Achievement & Standards

The academy had an Academy Review Visit with the Executive Principal this term. They focussed on the AIP for action plan as well as having conversations with children to establish attitudes to learning and pupil voice.

Students still remember the ethos and strategies and are able communicate them.

Students fell a sense of being involved and belonging through areas such as the project boards. They feel trusted.

The team was able to carry out a reading health check and understand whether staff who read with adults have the skills to know what to look for and identify gaps. Feedback was very positive in this area. Catch up funding has been used to provide extra time to dedicate to listening to reading. Gaps in reading skills have been identified nationally and the academy has noticed the same in some year groups in particular. Currently reading is the strongest area for Y6 pupils so this needs to be maintained throughout this year.

The academy had an ARM (Academy review meeting) where the executive team and leadership team discuss the priorities for the academy and the AIP and provides leaders the time and opportunity to reflect, review and think strategically. This is especially important when so much work is operation in the current circumstances and strategic planning can be pushed down the priority list.

There is an ARV in November that will focus on assessment and feedback as well as looking at practices and a focus on Maths.

The council spoke about the importance of being part of a MAT and how the academy feels about the trust that it is a part of. The academy has welcomed the trust and vice versa, including each class enjoying a welcome cake. The transition has been very successful thanks to the attitudes, tone of communication and engagement.

Attendance

Attendance data is collated and shared by the CLF Data Team who work with academies to ensure that they have access to data. The council received an update on the current attendance levels and reasons for any absences.

Quality of teaching and learning

Staff are encouraged to engage in CPD and professional development in a different way this year and especially, given the current circumstances, to take time to focus on investing in staff, their development and CPD. The CLF Conference was held virtually in October and all staff were given the opportunity to attend training sessions, resources and videos. Councillors are also welcome to access these materials via the CLF PD website. Staff have been set professional development targets, held coaching conversations and received feedback. There will be termly reviews going forward.

PP & LAC

The Council discussed the academy's tiered approach to PP. The council asked how PP funded is allocated to individual students.

Pupil Premium funding is pooled so as to be able to ensure quality first teaching for all and provide support and interventions for those in need.

The Council asked how the academy is closing the gap for PP students in writing and maths.

Every child has a pupil progress meeting that looks at the child as an individual and addresses their needs with interventions whether they are in receipt of PP funding or not. Examples of PP spending would be Number Stacks and Literacy Box for developing literacy and numeracy skills.

The Council studied and discussed a summary of student outcomes including the gap between PP and non-PP. The council went on to discuss the government's catch up fund this year. The CLF has topped this up which has enabled an additional Y5/6 teacher. This will enable a 4 class timetable with smaller groups for more targeted teaching. There are 3 adults in every class in years 3 & 4 and there are additional hours available for a Teaching partner and a Learning mentor.

The council asked if there has been consultation with parents about an additional class in Year 5/6.

The academy has used this intervention in previous years for half day sessions, however due to the current COVID restrictions, bubbles can't mix, which has resulted in the need for it to be an entirely separate class. When the class groups are decided, friendships will be considered and if possible, groups will be able to mix if restrictions allow. The intention is to start this timetable in January. Communication with parents will start shortly.

Policies that require review:

Policies were circulated prior to the meeting and noted by the AC. All policies are based upon CLF standard templates. Councillors with any errors or suggestions in policies should forward them to SH.

Governance

n/a

AC membership/training/feedback

Councillors discussed link roles and agreed upon the following:

Safeguarding – SH

Health and Safety – TB

SEND, PP & LAC - LJ

Matters for the Board or COAC

n/a

AOB

n/a

Summary of actions:

- The council offered feedback around making the class email addresses clearer on the website and having the first blog entry as a fixed message at the top of the class page. (ACTION SH)
- Councillors with any errors or suggestions in policies should forward them to SH. (ACTION ALL)

- The council agreed that pupil voice would be brought to the council via the Student Advocate councillor going forward including pupil voice, feedback from PSHE sessions and student feedback during Academy Review Visits (ARV) so that the AC minutes can become the formal record. (ACTION AB)

Approved:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Hand', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Date: 8th December 2020