



Coppice Academy Council Meeting Wednesday 4 December at 09:15 at Coppice School

Those Present:		
Natalie Swearman	Headteacher	NS
Zenab Khan	Parent Governor	ZK
Paul Burns	Chair/Safeguarding Link Governor	PB
Sara Johnston	Vice Chair	SJ
Also Present:		
Joanne Cliff	Executive Assurance Partner - Observer	JC
Lyndsay Foster	Nexus MAT Governance Clerk	Clerk
Janine Surgey	Assistant Headteacher – for Q & A	JS
Apologies:		
Beverley Fox	Staff Governor	BF
Paula Fraser	Parent Governor	PF
Lisa Suter	Nexus MAT Executive Regional Director	LS
Bethany Dimmock	Support Staff Governor	BD

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received for PF, BF, LS & BD.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted for PF, BF, LS & BD.	
1.3. Confirmation of Vice Chair Sara Johnston confirmed Vice chair position to continue.	
2. OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS	
2.1. Presentation to Staff Nominee(s) Presentation of awards took place with staff members attending the meeting. The staff awards were for Emily Knight, Anya White and Olivia Haworth.	
3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
3.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered Chair to determine any items of urgent business Bethany Dimmock ratified as new staff support governor.	
3.2. Resignation/End of Term of Office – Paul Burns, Chair of Governors PB confirmed he was resigning and retiring as of 4 th December 2024 and gave thanks to the school for his time as a Chair Of Governors, all AC members thanked for his time and commitment to the AC.	
4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
4.1. Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda None.	
5. COPPICE SCHOOL ACADEMY COUNCIL MINUTES	
5.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on the 17 th July 2024 were approved as a true record with no amendments.	
5.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.	
5.3. Matters arising from the Minutes PB asked about the issues raised regarding the café kitchen area highlighted on page 3, was it salvageable?	

NS stated that the builders were not able to save it and a new one has been purchased in its place.	
6. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>6.1. Headteacher Report</p> <p>The Academy Council received and approved the Headteacher's report.</p> <p>PB acknowledged strong progress in managing staff well-being and addressing sickness-related concerns effectively. NS provided additional details, explaining that absence review meetings were being conducted for any Level 1 triggers to address concerns proactively.</p> <p>It was noted that only one long-term sick case remained and the individual had chosen to resign due to health reasons.</p> <p>NS informed the Academy Council that the school had received the Green Flag Bronze Award and was actively working towards achieving the next level of recognition. Additionally, NS noted that the recent Parents' Evening was very well attended. However, NS expressed a desire to see similar levels of attendance at the school's workshops, indicating an area for potential growth in parent participation.</p> <p>JC enquired whether workshops could be run concurrently with Parents' Evening or if staff availability would be an issue if this practice was adopted?</p> <p>NS explained that staff are typically occupied during Parents' Evening, which often runs until around 6 PM and is quite demanding. However, NS noted that the curriculum day was also very well attended by parents and carers, suggesting that adding workshops to the curriculum day might be a more effective way to boost attendance.</p> <p>JS attended meeting for the Q and A around the headteacher report.</p> <p>Pupil A, representing Pupil Parliament, as well as being a Post-16 student, attended the meeting to deliver a presentation and seek input on ideas for Pupil Parliament. Pupil A showcased a PowerPoint presentation outlining the structure and roles within Pupil Parliament, emphasising the efforts to enhance student engagement and representation. The discussion explored various ideas, with notable mention of creating a "music zone" equipped with instruments and quiet background music to provide a calming yet engaging space for students during breaks.</p> <p>SJ asked was it for breaktime or lunchtimes?</p> <p>Pupil A clarified that they were open to suggestions for both, emphasising their flexibility in considering ideas to enhance student experiences during either period. JC proposed the idea of a silent disco, where students could have their own headphones and enjoy music individually. This suggestion was warmly received. NS shared those new additions to the playground area will include trampolines and larger swings, which are expected to enhance outdoor activity options for students.</p> <p>JS asked if they would like fitness circuit training at lunchtime?</p>	

Pupil A said yes, JS is currently doing this with Post 16 so can incorporate that at lunchtime.

NS proposed to Pupil A that they oversee the final playground designs and plans once they are received from the contractors. These can then be brought to the Pupil Parliament for review and decisions. Pupil A agreed.

NS asked Pupil A how many members were in the Pupil Parliament?

Pupil A informed that there were 7 ministers involved and shared their names and roles. NS mentioned that all the priorities align with the TA teams and their priorities, and each one falls under a teacher lead, enabling the team to work together at all levels.

SJ stated 'I love that TAs are receiving feedback from Drop in's. I think it makes drop in's more inclusive and the class staff much more of a team rather than teacher and TA's.' She queried how have TAs responded and if they have, they found it helpful in developing their practice?

JS informed that they have two members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) go in at once, one Teacher and one Teaching Assistant (TA), with a focus on upskilling. They noted that the session was really strong and positive, although there were some areas identified for further development.

SJ asked do they get individual feedback from this?

JS stated that staff receive personalised, bespoke feedback via email. After the feedback is amalgamated and anonymised, it is shared at a staff meeting during whole-school staff training. The feedback received was highly positive, with staff appreciating the praise and the constructive information provided. It helped to boost morale and gave staff clear direction on areas for growth and development.

JC asked if there are any plans for Teaching assistants observing each other with a member of SLT?

JS confirmed that aligning the roles as discussed could be done easily. NS informed that after Christmas, they will be advertising for new roles, including PE tutors, Forest Schools staff, or even a rugby specialist, while also looking into sports funding.

JS mentioned that they are considering making HLTA roles more mentorship-focused. NS added that the well-being team and support work around EHCPs will also see more intervention-focused roles.

SJ commented that these changes will be very beneficial for new staff joining the team.

SJ stated OFSTED have highlighted those next steps for pupil progress were not always clear or identified.

NS clarified that the issue was a typing error when copying and pasting, but they were happy for it to be challenged and agreed for it to remain as a recommendation. The new planning that Jo and Janine developed was designed to support this.

JS confirmed that they were satisfied with the target which is already included in the SIP (School Improvement Plan) document. JS delivered training on Monday to all staff focused on the "Rise and Shine" initiative. A document was shared during the meeting for governors to review, with all subject leads, teachers, and SLT (Senior Leadership

Team) involved in the process. QA (Quality Assurance) was done collaboratively and Jo and Janine will conduct a final check this week. Confidence in staff has become more evident, and if a staff member is not leading a subject, they assist in supporting the lead subject.

PB asked how does school ensure parents are aware of all the processes for child progression and initiatives?

JS informed that they keep parents and carers updated through a termly newsletter and knowledge organisers, which are sent to each parent or carer. These are also uploaded to the school website for each class. The newsletter includes an overview for each term and subject, and is colour-coded for different groups. Additionally, they hold a curriculum parent day at the beginning of each term, where they inform parents about the topics and themes to be covered and provide guidance on how parents can support home learning.

ZK asked how is the learning cycle continually developed and how is the content quality assured?

JS stated that this information is included in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and discussed the document shared earlier this week during training. Each part of the cycle will vary for each pathway and it is linked to the 7 principles.

NS informed that when teachers cannot be present, the Teaching Assistants (TAs) will step in to deliver lessons if they are familiar with the material. The TAs are doing really well in this role.

JS stated they are planning to look into the teaching section after the half term and tailor it to suit all 19 classes, considering what works in both formal and informal settings.

ZH asked what processes are undertaken if a child is borderline?

JS stated that they will conduct a split review, which will require a longer review process due to the spiky profiles of the students. Some students may perform higher in one subject compared to another, so the review will be tailored accordingly. They plan to adopt a hybrid split approach, ensuring that each class receives a bespoke review based on the specific needs and strengths of the students in that class.

ZH asked do staff that have subject and area leads need further training to develop their leadership roles?

NS informed that they have put sessions in place for staff CPD, focusing on four key areas of development. JS assigned tasks related to intent and encouraged staff to take ownership of these tasks, ensuring they stay up to date. NS also mentioned that there is a need for dedicated time and release time for staff to fully engage with these tasks and make progress.

ZH asked whether bridging the curriculum for 14+ in terms of Functional skills and Preparing for Adulthood qualifications is going to support and assist the direction students are going to take post 16?

JS stated that there was a meeting in the summer focused on bridging the two curriculums together, specifically looking at how to introduce functional skills and make learning more meaningful. By providing a solid foundation over the next five years, the

intention is to help students achieve higher grades. The focus is also on independent life skills, preparing students for life after Coppice and ensuring they are well-equipped for their future.

ZK asked what does new middle leaders' roles in Social Emotional and Mental Health for Lorraine and Lisa entail and how are they being developed?

NS explained that the focus is on the new subject leads, with three teachers on staff and the emphasis on pupil well-being. They are working on covering PSHE (Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education) with a focus on creating a "happy-centred" school environment. There are plans to bring in experts from the "Happy-Centred Schools" initiative for an upcoming inset day to further support this development.

ZK asked is the number of pupils monitored higher than at this time last year and does having team Teach Trained staff make it easier to manage?

NS shared that the school had 277 incidents this year, a reduction from 365 last year. This decrease is partly due to the fact that two students are no longer in the school, one due to medical reasons and another staying home while alternative provision is being explored. JS and Tracey, both Team Teach-trained, have completed the five-day training, and refresher courses for staff are now underway.

JS emphasised that Team Teach focuses 95% on de-escalation techniques, equipping staff with skills to manage situations effectively. Now that JS and Tracey are certified trainers, they can provide tailored, bespoke training to individual classes and staff members across the school.

NS mentioned that additional empty rooms would be beneficial. Currently, two rooms in the upper school are being converted into small sensory spaces. The school is also considering the use of Nook sensory pods, which JS saw at a recent conference and described as effective for blocking out sound. A company representative from Nook is scheduled to visit next week to discuss how their products might be integrated into the school.

Additionally, NS has submitted a bid to the Local Authority for funding for one student who is being reintegrated into the school. The sensory pods cost approximately £7,000 each, offering a promising solution for student re-engagement.

SJ asked if you can design them inside to what you need and want?

NS confirmed that there are both sensory pods and workspaces available. These are moveable and mounted on wheels, making them versatile for use in different areas of the school. They are particularly beneficial for helping students with regulation, especially as classroom sizes increase. This flexibility allows them to be easily relocated to support students in various settings throughout the school.

6.1.1. Appendix 1 - Updated SIP

Document for information distributed prior to the meeting for information. Will discuss further at additional meeting on 29th January 2025.

6.1.2. Appendix 2 – SEF

Document for information distributed prior to the meeting for information. Will discuss further at additional meeting on 29 th January 2025.	
6.2. School Dashboard Summary	
Documents distributed prior to meeting for information.	
6.3. Budget Monitoring Report	
Document distributed prior to meeting for information.	
6.4. Teaching Staff Appraisal outcome report	
Document distributed prior to meeting for information.	
7. TRUST MATTERS	
7.1. Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues	
JC confirmed that the Trust's Quality Assurance system has been updated. Schools are now working closely with the Executive Assurance Partners (EAPs), who conduct three visits per year. During these visits, they review the school's dashboard and assess the progress made against the five allocated school improvement days, which are selected during the support and challenge meetings. This process ensures that schools receive targeted support and guidance to drive improvement effectively.	
8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
8.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair	
None.	
9. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK	
9.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting	
None.	
10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	

Wednesday 26 th March 2025	09.15 – 11.15	Coppice Academy
Wednesday 16 th July 2025	09.15 – 11.15	Coppice Academy

Minutes approved.

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE