

Ipswich Academy Council Meeting minutes 13 May 2026 5.30 pm Introduction and apologies for absence

Present: Adam Wilding (AW) Principal, Jo Brown - Parent Director, Julie Trout and Kevin Brazier - Academy Council, 2 parents joined in person, Claire Cooper & Louise Leah – Academy Council joined online

Apologies for absence: None

Update on communication

AW is keen to improve communication and asked whether parents had any issues. Reception can be hard to get hold of and no one gets back to you. AW asked whether council members could raise on Facebook parents page. Jo is waiting for a response from parents. A parent had issues with Sparks access, AW apologised, system had to update logins, appreciated it was frustrating. Another parent had emailed info to check on unauthorised absences and hasn't received a response - AW will follow up.

A parent advised mixed bag – good response on one query, no response to another email, child taken ill at school – handled well, felt a direct email for attendance would be better. AW advised there was one attendance@ipswichacademy.org.uk. AW will include this in this week's newsletter. Council members were unaware there were year group emails having had students at the school for 5 years.

New parent members recruitment process

AW is trying to recruit as Claire, Louise, Kevin and Julie will be stepping down at the end of the year. Holly Booth is happy to be elected and will complete an application form, Barbara Pink has already completed a form. AW will keep working on it.

Attendance & parental engagement

AW working hard to improve attendance, need to publish high attendance, highlighting numbers of hours of learning missed. AW asked whether parents felt the school was doing enough to be clear and improve attendance. A parent asked what are you doing to improve, AW is looking at rewards. It is parents that would be punished if students are absent. AW asked if parents get enough info – all agreed they do. AW trying to outline expectations – a parent found it upsetting that we receive these letters as it doesn't apply to the majority of students. AW advised suspensions were down 60% from last year.

A parent raised that her child was asking to come home when not sitting GCSEs. AW advised he had switched / reworked timetable for year 11s, so they have appropriate lessons before exams and are required to attend school until last exam. He felt he had communicated with year 11s in assemblies, letters home, base groups. All parents of year 11s at the meeting understood and appreciated timetable switches.

A parent asked if there would be any concession for students that are absent for genuine reason or late for school, AW replied yes of course.

Timetable confirmation 2026 / 27

AW reconfirmed new school day timings will be 8.40 am – 3.10 from September. Currently classes are banded on ability, outside of English and maths. AW feels mixed ability is a better model, as it is currently clustered. Moving forward it will be mixed ability, this is based on research, discussions with colleagues and other schools. AW likened this to "ships rise in high tide".

A year 11 parent raised that they didn't realise their child needed a minimum GCSE grade 5 or entry level requirements to get into sixth forms. AW was surprised and will ensure at the upcoming year 10 parent meeting, preparing for year that this is covered. AW will also speak to department heads to make sure info is made available. A parent raised that their child had been spoken to by a teacher that they had been dropped down from triple to combined science but the parent was made aware until parents evening. Another parent raised this had also happened to her child, the parent hadn't been consulted. AW advised this shouldn't happen, parents must be consulted, he will ensure this is picked up.

Primary transition

AW advised that year 6 & 7s are being invited to school for a couple of days, a parents evening will also be held. The SLT are going out to feeder primary schools to meet students coming into IA before transition day, face to face. They will be asked to give the names of 4 friends they would like to be in base group with. Summer school will also take place in the holidays for year 6s.

Positive news

AW shared that a year 9 student with ITFC training school is going to Valencia. There is also a sailing trip, 6 x year 10 students have been selected for a half term trip, this made the local paper.

AW wanted to mentioned mentors that volunteer their time within the maths department. Some had given a decade of their time to the school, this is a real strength for the school. A parent suggested it would be good to get some press coverage on this.

Year 10s will be doing 2 weeks work experience this year. There are a couple of alternative activities days coming up which will look at character building. A parent asked if there would be any residential. AW replied not this year unfortunately but he is looking for appropriate opportunities.

AOB

Jo commented on the posters in the weekly newsletter on social media, really informative.

A parent asked about sparks maths homework. If you get stuck on a question you can't get a response. It doesn't scale back and she found it very demoralising for her child. She has sent an email and raised it at parents evening but would like support when stuck. Jo recommend Gauth app, provided good support.

Date of next meeting

1 July 2026

Meeting closed 6.25 pm