



Discovery Academy Council
Monday 11 December 2023 at 10:00
Discovery Academy, Park Grange Road, Norfolk Park, Sheffield,
S2 3QF

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| Those Present: | | |
| Darren Dickinson | Chair | DD |
| Luci Windle | Executive Headteacher | LW |
| Jim McIntosh | Community Governor | JM |
| Lauren Pigg | Parent Governor | LP |
| Andrew Hogg | Parent Governor | AH |
| Rachael Kent | Community Governor | RK |
| Tayla Hamilton | Staff Governor | TH |
| Emma Jayne Bennett | Staff Governor | EB |
| Warren Carratt | CEO Nexus MAT/Officer | CEO |
| Also Present: | | |
| Rebecca Horne | Governance Clerk | RH |
| Apologies: | | |
| Sarah Hill | Parent Governor | SH |

| 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE | Actions |
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| 1.1. <u>To receive apologies for absence</u> Apologies were received from Sarah Hill. | |
| 1.2. <u>To accept apologies for absence</u> Apologies were accepted from Sarah Hill. | |
| 1.2. <u>Confirmation of Vice Chair</u> | |

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| <p>DD welcomed members to the meeting and introductions took place.</p> <p>The confirmation of the new Vice Chair is still yet to be determined. Anyone interested in this position please contact LW.</p> | |
| <p>2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> | |
| <p>2.1. <u>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered.</u></p> <p>None.</p> <p>2.2 <u>Confirmation of new Community Governors – Rachael Kent and Jim McIntosh</u></p> <p>RK and JM were confirmed as new Community Governors.</p> <p>2.3 <u>Confirmation of new Parent Governors – Lauren Pigg, Andrew Hogg and Sarah Hill</u></p> <p>LP, AH and SH were confirmed as new Parent Governors.</p> <p>2.4 <u>Confirmation of new Staff Governors – Tayla Hamilton and Emma Jayne Bennett</u></p> <p>TH and EB were confirmed as new Staff Governors.</p> <p>CEO explained that they have convened the Academy Council from the 1st September 2023 so therefore will backdate all new Governors start dates to the 1st September.</p> | |
| <p>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</p> | |
| <p>3.1. <u>Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda.</u></p> <p>CEO – Note, Staff Governors, item 4.4 on the agenda.as members of staff, they must declare a business interest in that item.</p> | |
| <p>4. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</p> | |
| <p>4.1 <u>Headteacher Report</u></p> <p>LW circulated the Headteacher Report prior to the meeting and discussed the main highlights.</p> <p>We are supposed to have 80 planned places however, we are currently at 97 pupils on roll.</p> <p>The biggest risk to school at the moment is the number of tribunals we are having. We have had 34 tribunals since September 2023. Due to this LW explained a SENCO has been appointed to work 1 day per week who also currently works within one of the other schools in the Trust. The new SENCO knows the correct procedure and deals with tribunals and also attends court for the actual tribunal process which has eased</p> | |

pressure on SLT's at Discovery hugely. LW reported there are currently 7 placed tribunals on-going.

LP – due to there being 17 over count on pupils on roll, and potentially more due to the ongoing tribunals. Do you look to change your staffing profile to accommodate the additional children? LW – yes, we have increased staffing. A new teacher will be starting in January 2024.

DD – in terms of capacity, do we have space for 97 children? LW – yes, we do. Our specialist rooms, English and Maths are not used as a form base so for the 80 children they would fit in our form rooms. We will also use these as form rooms.

DD – how can we grow as a school? are there any plans? LW explained there are a lot of models to look at with the turnaround being quite quick. The biggest need for the children will be Post-16 so if we are looking for any sort of growth it will be with this cohort of pupils not the general population.

DD – I am referring more to, is there an opportunity to grow within the site? What is the maximum the site could hold? LW – we could do this although one of the main limiting factors would be the toilets as there is very few toilets as the school is built on a DFE specification. Another issue would be general wear and tear to the building as it is built for 80 pupils.

DD – don't we have to provide so much space per child? LW, yes, we have already done this. The classrooms are designed, Health and Safety wise, for 9 children, but this doesn't hold up in tribunals.

Leadership & Management

LW explained in terms of Leadership & Management plan she has looked at the Development Plan and given an update what is happening.

LW reported one of the biggest successes is the mandate groups. Each of the senior leaders are now in mandate groups. This is a fun and safe way of leading something in school. The Enterprise and Fundraising group raised a total of £1001 at the recent Christmas Fayre. This money will go towards developing the outdoor space. LW praised the mandate groups they have been amazing this year.

LW informed the members that 80k of the school budget has been put to one-side for the outside area. We are working with the children for ideas.

AH – you mention training is in place for safeguarding. How is this embedded? LW explained every week there is a safeguarding briefing called Andrew Hall. Andrew Hall is a National Advisor for safeguarding and sends a newsletter every half term. We also have Sheffield specific updates every half term **ACTION – LW to send a copy of the safeguarding briefing to AH.**

LW stated sickness absence is good.

LW reported they are currently looking for two new TA's:

LW
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- A 1-1 TA
- General TA

LP – when staff leave, is a confidential survey carried out? LW, yes and this also goes to the Central Team.

Quality of Education

LW explained she is really pleased with the curriculum this academic year. The curriculum is a lot more personalised and more of a research-based curriculum development. LW reported she is looking at developing the KS4 flight path and changes have had to be made already to the examination room since the building was built. Once the specific changes are in place the school can then apply to be an exam centre.

LW reported the vast majority of the KS3 pupils did sit their exams and did amazingly well.

In terms of writing, LW explained the need for developing writing spaces in the curriculum. The children's writing is amazing and LW explained the reason for keeping this in the curriculum is they can see another purpose for their writing. This is being used as more of a holistic approach for pupils.

LW described in detail what the Discovery Learning Cycle was aimed at. This gives a basis of what every lesson looks like.

DD – how are staff finding this? LW, learning is positive so far.

LW explained alongside their support and challenge, they also work with Nick Whittaker, Specialist in SEND which is through Learn Sheffield. Nick Whittaker came to Discovery to review the curriculum. Pupil interviews also took place. LW spent a day working with NW and found this very useful.

LW reported from a data form perspective there are 3 main priorities:

- Reading
- Writing – this has gone into this academic year's development plan
- Attainment in Maths needs to be raised.

LW explained they have invested in Dr Frost which is an online programme that goes up to A Level standard. The challenges this presents to the children has been really positive and the children are really engaged in it.

LP – assessments from a parent point of view, there was difficulty understanding the report. LW, this is an overview of GCSE level and where your child is predicted to be at. This probably needs to be made clearer.

LP – yes if we could have a breakdown of how we assess that would be helpful. LW, yes this can be done.

LW
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| <p>LW reported in terms of teaching learning priorities, every half term they have a number of main priorities that are focused on and are monitored. At the moment it is around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing planning and supporting staff and teachers. • Understanding learning outcomes for children. • Assuring children receive consistent meaningful feedback in their learning books. • Continuous assessment. <p>LW stated in terms of ring-fenced grant, they receive pupil premium.</p> <p>LW explained the sports premium is allowing them to get out a lot more and allows them to join in events.</p> <p><u>Behaviour & Attendance</u></p> <p>LW reported they continue to focus particularly on safeguarding. There is a trainer in school and they are looking at training 2 more members of staff to train as Team Teach Teachers.</p> <p>LW stated there have been no exclusions. They are beginning to introduce pre-exclusion meetings with some families to ease the difficulties.</p> <p>DD – in term of the governor’s pre-exclusion panel, what is the current plan for this? LW, 2-3 Governors would attend the meeting with an opportunity for the family to attend.</p> <p>AH, would there be an issue with after school public transport? LW, a means of transport is always on offer.</p> <p>DD – in terms of developing a pre-exclusion panel, what are the next steps with this? LW explained the proposed structure will be sent out to Governors to get their opinions. The reasons for getting to this stage will also be documented. This is work still on-going. ACTION – LW to continue work on this and to send the information out to Governors.</p> <p>CEO explained this is not a feature of the Trust Exclusion Policy and to be mindful of this.</p> <p>DD – bullying data, only been one incident. LW, will take a look at this again in the Spring Term. ACTION – LW will look at the dashboard and possible change that requires improvement judgement</p> <p><u>Absence Data</u></p> <p>LW stated they are highest in terms of attendance for Sheffield special schools. This year they are currently at 91% attendance.</p> | <p>LW 25/03/24</p> <p>LW 25/03/24</p> |
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LW explained in Sheffield there is an inclusion attendance team and we have regular meetings with them. This enables specific cases to be looked at in more detail and offers families more support if needed.

AH – in terms of holidays, what is not authorised? LW explained they look at each individual case, but ultimately holidays are not authorised.

Personal Development

LW explained they regularly review and develop staff's expertise and understanding on autism.

LW reported there has been really positive input regarding the Sensory OT. Podcasts are being recorded for staff to listen to.

LW explained the careers curriculum is continuing to be developed.

LW informed the members that sporting events will be added to the diverse curriculum we currently have set in place. The number of children who are now attending out of school events is amazing and the pupils have coped tremendously well. After a recent trip outside of school, EB reported this had been a really positive outcome.

LW explained they do offer an after-school club; however, this is not very well attended. This maybe due to after school pick up issues for families.

DD – in terms of personal development and the dashboard, is it more around embedding. LW, yes, it is.

LP explained there has been work on class dynamics, based on their abilities. From a personal point of view has worked really well.

LW responded yes this has worked really well. We have 35 Year 8's this year. This almost makes 3.5 classes. The specialist class in particular works really well. LW stated these groups will keep moving forward.

Community Voice Report

LW reported on a whole the parents are really happy with the school. Seesaw is still used in terms of communication with families. They also have the year calendar which was sent out. This is also really useful for families.

LW reported that tribunals and Sheffield City Council are their biggest challenges. Progress has been made and this will be sustained as they move forward as a school. LW has put together an over view of the events they had last year. All events had a positive outcome.

LW explained they will continue to follow the Development Plan. LW stated they are working closely with Nexus and Sheffield City Council to tackle the requests for the tribunals. In terms of refusal placement there is currently a total of 154.

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| <p>4.1.1 <u>Appendix 1 – Updated SIP</u></p> <p>CEO explained this was sent out for information.</p> <p>4.1.2 <u>Appendix 2 – School SEF</u></p> <p>CEO explained this was sent out for information.</p> <p>LW explained the year calendar has been added for reference.</p> <p>4.2 <u>School Dashboard</u></p> <p>LW explained they have been open for 15 months and are already moving into a stronger position.</p> <p>DD stated it is moving in the right direction and praised LW for her work.</p> <p>LW explained that every SLT has their own copy of the Dashboard. The SLTs then 'rag' rate this themselves.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Budget Report</u></p> <p>LW explained they are currently in a positive position. There is revenue in the capital around developing the building in line for the children's needs.</p> <p>LW reported there is surplus in this year's budget and partly adding to that surplus is the additional children they are enrolling. Next year there are plans to reduce the numbers in each classroom down to 10 from 11.</p> <p>LW reported in terms of long-term plans, next year work will take place in relation to IT. The children's ability to write and write in a creative way, if this could be translated into programming this could have a really positive outcome for pupils.</p> <p>4.4 <u>Teaching Staff Appraisal Outcome Report</u></p> <p>LW gave an overview of where teachers are moving. They do have 2 unqualified teachers who are due to submit their evidence for QTS in February 2024. They will then start as an ECT.</p> <p>LW explained training their own teachers up was really positive and would do this again.</p> | |
| <p>5. TRUST MATTERS</p> | |
| <p>5.1 <u>Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</u></p> <p>CEO gave an update on the current process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bents Green School are applying to academize to join Nexus. | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Trust has now moved into Enterprise Works, formally known as the Source at Meadowhall. With the Central Trust Team only occupying so much of the building, space will be opened up to create more KS5 capacity for Sheffield City Council through existing schools. Talks are taking place with Sheffield City Council and Sheffield College to see if a partnership can be put in place to utilise Peaks College at Crystal Peaks, which was due to close. Sheffield City Council and Sheffield College would like to set up 200 high needs places, this is still yet to be determined. | |
| 6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS | |
| <p>6.1. <u>To consider any other urgent business</u></p> <p>LW will circulate a date for next half term for a Governors Developmental Session. No minutes will be taken at this meeting.</p> | LW 25/03/24 |
| 7. CONFIDENTIALITY | |
| <p>7.1. To consider any other urgent business</p> <p>None raised.</p> | |
| 8. DATES OF NEXT MEETING | |

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| Monday 25 th March 2024 | 10:00-12:00 | Discovery Academy |
| Monday 24 th June 2024 | 10:00-12:00 | Discovery Academy |

Minutes approved

| CHAIR | SIGNATURE | DATE |
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