



Discovery Academy Council
Wednesday 17 December 2025 at 10:00
Discovery Academy, Park Grange Road, Norfolk Park, Sheffield, S2 3QF

Those Present:	Role	Initials
Darren Dickinson	Chair	DD
Joel Hardwick	Officer	JH
Rachael Kent	Vice Chair	RK
Daniel Shirazi-Nejad	Deputy Headteacher	DSN
Luci Windle	Executive Headteacher	LW
Emma Jayne Bennett	Support Staff Representative	EB
Andrew Hogg	Parent Governor	AH
Tayla Marsh	Teacher Representative	TM
Sarah Hill	Parent Governor	SH
Julie Hooper	Parent Governor	JH
Liz Marsh	Teacher Representative	LM
Also Present:		
Apologies:		
Warren Carratt	CEO Nexus	CEO
Vicky Brown	Governor	VB

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
<p>1.1. <u>To receive apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were received from CEO and VB.</p>	
<p>1.2. <u>To accept apologies for absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were accepted from CEO & VB.</p>	
<p>1.3 <u>Confirmation of Vice Chair</u></p> <p>It was confirmed that RK will continue serving as Vice Chair.</p>	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
<p>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>JH raised the recent Ofsted visit which will be discussed further under AOB.</p>	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
<p>3.1 Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda.</p> <p>None.</p>	
4. DISCOVERY ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNANCE MINUTES	
<p>4.1 To approve the minutes of the following meetings: Discovery Academy Council meeting held on 23 June 2025.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>4.2 Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.</p> <p>4.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p>All members confirmed completion of register of interests on Governor Hub.</p>	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>5.1. Headteacher Report</p> <p>LW discussed the increasing use of AI for administrative tasks such as generating EHCP witness statements and curriculum development, highlighting efficacy gains and the importance of GDPR compliance.</p> <p>LW outlined the decision to scrap the traditional IT curriculum in favour of a focus on digital skills, online safety and creative media, with new partnerships and curriculum pathways being developed.</p> <p><u>Pupil Numbers:</u></p>	

- Current roll: 121 pupils.
- 5 pupils successfully reintegrated into mainstream over 3 years.
- Over 210 placement requests declined due to capacity.

Tribunals:

- Approx. 4 per month; AI now used to draft witness statements (GDPR compliant), reducing workload significantly.

Staffing:

LW provided updates on staff turnover, recruitment of new teachers and support staff, and strategies to ensure leadership capacity and continuity, including training and internal development.

- Three teachers leaving (promotion, PhD, retirement).
- Recruitment successful; additional teacher appointed for leadership capacity.
- Fully staffed by February 2026.

Curriculum Development:

The group discussed the shift in the IT curriculum towards digital literacy and responsible digital citizenship, with AI being used to support curriculum planning and teaching, including referencing national curriculum standards and integrating with PSHE.

- IT curriculum to be replaced with digital literacy and AI safety focus.
- Integration of STEM subjects; launch of "Disco STEAM Fest" planned.

DD described the success of the e-sports program in engaging students, particularly those with attendance challenges, and noted ongoing expansion and partnerships with other schools and local authorities.

The Trust is working with the Department for Education and the University of Sunderland on digital skills development, ensuring the school's curriculum aligns with broader educational trends and government expectations.

Pupil Premium:

LW discussed pupil premium numbers, the impact of Covid-19 on eligibility anticipated changes to funding formulas and strategies to track and support disadvantaged students.

- 77 pupils eligible (approx. 64%). National SEND average ~47%.

- Funding used for personalized interventions; QA focus next term.

LW detailed the school's adaptation to the new Ofsted framework, leadership changes, external support roles, and the impact on development planning and quality assurance.

LW described ongoing challenges with building maintenance, including fire door replacements, air conditioning installation, and conversion of facilities to better meet student needs.

Building & Facilities:

- Ongoing issues with fire doors and glass panels; replacements underway.
- Plans for air conditioning and additional toilets.

LW and TM presented ongoing initiatives to improve independent writing, integrate STEM, develop teaching assistants, and enhance reflective practise among staff.

Attendance:

- Current: 88% (including 5 pupils not accessing school).
- Excluding these pupils: 92%.
- New attendance letters introduced to highlight days missed.

Behaviour:

LW reported on pupil engagement trends, behaviour incidents, attendance challenges, and interventions, including the use of attendance letters and collaboration with external agencies.

- Two suspensions due to violent incidents linked to external issues.
- Police support noted; CAMHS response remains limited.

LW stated efforts are underway to secure a CAMHS lead or practitioner nurse to better support students with mental health needs, with funding and staffing options being explored.

ACTION: LW to work with the Trust to explore the feasibility of commissioning a CAMHS lead worker for the school, including potential budget allocation.

Personal Development:

- Strong focus on sense of belonging; Makaton Choir highlighted as a success.
- Preparing pupils for post-16 pathways; college visits ongoing.

**ACTION:
LW
24/03/26**

<p>LW highlighted a group of students, primarily girls, have formed a Makaton choir, which has significantly improved their confidence, sense of belonging, and demonstrated increased kindness and positive behaviour.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerking services to send out meeting request to governors for training day scheduled for 3rd February 2026 09:30-11:30.</p> <p><u>Community Engagement:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas events well attended, positive parental feedback. <p><u>Complaints:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal; one serial complaint managed with Trust support. <p>5.1.1 Appendix 1 – Update SIP</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p> <p>5.1.2 Appendix 2 – School SEF</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p> <p>5.2 Draft School Dashboard Summary</p> <p>This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.</p> <p>5.3 Budget Report</p> <p>LW reported a healthy budget position with a projected carry forward, prudent spending on facilities, and manageable staffing costs, with oversight from the Trusts finance team. The schools expect a £147,000 carry forward, with in year spending focus on necessary building improvements and an additional teacher to support leadership.</p> <p>5.4 Teaching Staff Appraisal Outcome Report</p> <p>Several staff members are moving up the pay scale, but overall staffing costs remain manageable due to a mix of pay scales and prudent recruitment.</p>	<p>ACTION: Clerking services 18/12/25</p>
<p>6. TRUST MATTERS</p>	
<p>6.1. Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues</p> <p>JH provided updates on trust matters, including school conversions, potential mergers, e-sports curriculum development and ongoing work with local authorities on sufficiency and provision.</p>	

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
7.1 To consider any other urgent business None.	
8. CONFIDENTIALITY	
8.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting None.	
9. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	

Tuesday 24 March 2026	10:00 – 12:00	Discovery AC
Wednesday 08 July 2026	10:00 – 12:00	Discovery AC

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
Darren Dickinson		