



Discovery Academy Council
Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 10:00
Discovery Academy, Park Grange Road, Norfolk Park, Sheffield, S2 3QF

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	Actions
1.1. To receive apologies for absence Apologies were received from DD, EB and DSN.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence Apologies were accepted from DD, EB and DSN.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered None.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1 Individual Governors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda. None.	
4. DISCOVERY ACADEMY LOCAL GOVERNANCE MINUTES	
4.1 To approve the minutes of the following meetings: Discovery Academy Council meeting held on 17 December 2025. The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. 4.2 Review of Action Tracker LW provided an update on the ongoing exploration of commissioning a dedicated CAMHS worker. Progress is slow due to shortages in specialist staff. Sheffield Children's Hospital has approached the Trust, noting potential workforce reductions that may open new opportunities for partnership. Work continues with South Yorkshire Police including intelligence sharing, proactive safety measures and proposals for regular site sweeps of school grounds and Norfolk Park. The school reported increasing community based risk linked to Norfolk Park, with evidence of contraband drop offs and increased local incidents. A Governor asked, could a CAMHS worker be jointly commissioned across multiple SEMH schools? LW confirmed discussions are ongoing across Discovery, Vector, Kingfisher and Kenwood sites. A Governor asked, can the police support proactive safeguarding beyond school grounds?	

LW explained police offered community sweeps and intelligence support, aligning with ongoing partnership work. Actions: LW/CEO to continue direct liaison with Sheffield Children's Hospital. LW/CEO to follow up with South Yorkshire Police to schedule site sweeps. 4.3 Matters Arising from the Minutes None.	Actions: LW/CEO 08/07/26
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
5.1. Headteacher Report LW presented a detailed report covering inclusion, curriculum, teaching, achievement, behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and staffing. Key points included: <u>Inclusion</u> - Discovery continues to prioritise placements for pupils with ASD diagnoses. Over 300 placement requests have been received since September. - School continues to work closely with Sheffield Local Authority to ensure placements are appropriate and to reduce unnecessary tribunal escalation. <u>Curriculum Teaching</u> - Quality of teaching continues to be strong, and new staff have settled in well. - The school is developing a STEM-integrated approach, supported by a teacher who is dual qualified in Maths and Science. - Writing, vocabulary development and phonics continue to be priorities. Pupils show increased enthusiasm for writing, especially when topics align with their interests. <u>BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Score) Language Assessments</u> - Pupils' receptive vocabulary varies widely, with some pupils functioning significantly below chronological age. - BPVS outcomes are informing placement discussions, curriculum access and expectations for mainstream reintegration. A Governor asked, are kinship care pupils included within Looked After Children data? LW confirmed only pupils who are formally under Virtual School oversight (CLA) are included. A Governor asked, can pupils qualify for exam access arrangements like extra time or sensory breaks?	

LW responded that only if testing (RAT scores below 84) supports need. Sensory breaks are permitted but must comply with JCQ supervision rules.

A Governor asked, could pupils with poor attendance or anxiety be referred to Chapel House?

LW confirmed that only if a medical consultant states they are medically unfit for school. Current cases do not meet this threshold.

Action:

CEO and VB to develop a sensitive approach for reporting BPVS score to parents.

**Action:
CEO/VB
08/07/26**

Attendance

- Younger pupils show the highest attendance rates; attendance dips after holidays and around medical appointments.
- Several pupils struggle with chronic absence linked to community issues, behaviour and anxiety. Coding rules continue to present challenges.

Behaviour

- Behaviour across the school is generally positive. Pupils demonstrate strong engagement and respect during events, including recent off site visits.
- There has been a small increase in exclusions, including one significant incident involving online threats which led to a 5 day suspension.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding remains high need with 10 pupils categorised as Red and 12 as Amber.
- E-safety remains a priority; uptake from parents at the recent online safety meeting was low.

5.1.1 Appendix 1 – Update SIP

This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.

5.1.2 Appendix 2 – School SEF

This was circulated for information prior to the meeting.

5.2 Draft School Dashboard Summary

The CEO clarified the purpose of the site safety dashboard for board level oversight. LW described recent fire door repairs and ongoing plans to address site safety concerns.

5.3 Budget Report

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6. TRUST MATTERS	
6.1. Trust Verbal Update of Key Issues The Trust CEO reported that the Trust is expected to expand to between 24 and 25 academies by the end of the calendar year, reflecting continued organisational growth. Two additional special schools, Stubbing Wood and Willow Park, are set to join the Trust due to structural need, highlighting increasing demand for specialist provision. The CEO also raised concerns about significant national pressures within the SEND system, including rising demand for placements, an increasing number of tribunal-driven decisions and substantial high needs funding deficits faced by Local Authorities. These challenges are compounded by government guidance that is increasingly restricting Local Authorities from expanding specialist provision, despite clear evidence of growing need. In response to these pressures and to strengthen its strategic position, the Trust is exploring a potential merger with a mainstream primary trust, with the aim of increasing its influence on national policy and enhancing its overall capacity and resilience.	
7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS	
7.1 To consider any other urgent business A governor training session will be scheduled for the next half-term.	
8. CONFIDENTIALITY	
8.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting None.	
9. DATES OF NEXT MEETING	

Wednesday 08 July 2026	10:00 – 12:00	Discovery AC
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Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
Rachael Kent (Vice Chair)		