



**TEES VALLEY EDUCATION – MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

**(Company No: 09630999)**

**LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE – DISCOVERY SPECIAL ACADEMY**

**10.00am Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Virtual Meeting**

**TEES VALLEY EDUCATION – MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**  
**(Company No: 09630999)**  
**LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE – DISCOVERY SPECIAL ACADEMY**  
**10.00am Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021**  
**AT THE ACADEMY**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Head Teacher** - Jennifer Duncan (Chair)  
**Community Representative** – Anne Kelly  
**Chair** - Carol White  
**Staff Representative** - Sian Lamb

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** **Clerks** – Carole Tonner, Megan Appleyard

**1. Welcome + Introductions**

**2. Apologies**

Gemma Harrison - Parent representative

**3. Minutes of the last meeting: matters of fact and for approval**  
Approved as a correct record

**4. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda**

CW – Previous minutes have wrong saved date, MA to amend.

**5. Headteachers report**

JD confirmed we currently have 60 children on role. JD went on to explain the types of needs our children have and what the abbreviations stand for in the Head Teachers report. SLD (severe learning disabilities), ASD (autism spectrum disorder), SLCN (speech, language and communication needs), PD (physical disability), HI (Hearing impairment) VI (visual impairment) and SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) and other being how many children have disabilities such as epilepsy and Down Syndrome.

CW asked with the growing number of children with autism, what does this mean in terms of learning.

JD went on to explain that it can depend on where they sit on the autism spectrum. Currently we have a range of children on the spectrum in school and are catering for their needs. In terms of the new build, we have therapy rooms that have been designed to help. We have 22% of children in school who receive informal learning, this meaning that they have very personalised lessons. We then have 78% of children as semi-formal, which means it is a mixture of learning and more formal teaching which also meets their needs.

. There are 14 places for the new reception class in September. We have had 11 first choice preferences for Middlesbrough for whom places have been agreed and a further two from Redcar and Cleveland. Place for another child is currently under discussion. CW explained

that, when the DfE agreed the free school application for Discovery in 2017, the local authorities had only been prepared to commit to commissioning 12 places although our application had proposed up to 14 places. It now seems that this higher number is already required and will continue. Following discussions with the DfE, CW confirmed that the new building will be able to accommodate up to 14 pupils in each year group.

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JD updated the group to say we have another referral for a Y3 pupil in which they will also start in September.

JD gave an overview of the finances, DSA have continued to provide free school meal vouchers, work packs were provided and delivered to homes by a range of staff. All additional teaching/sensory and working areas are now complete and in use. Following this expenditure at the start of the school year, it is now hoped to achieve a balanced budget by the end of the year.

Supply costs continue to be higher than anticipated due to COVID related isolation and absences in staff across the academy. It is hoped that the academy will be able to claim some of these costs back through the COVID grant.

The new Minibus is hoped to be in operation after Easter depending on COVID regulations. We hope to have every class take part in at least 1 trip out, this may include a trip to Nature's world.

CW reported that once the contract had been signed between the DfE and Interserve (now known as Tilbury Douglas) the site will belong to TD.

JD reported to the group the findings of a recent annual health and safety inspection. It went well and is a real credit to CT. The report stated that Discovery had a strong controlled environment. The only action was to ensure that our care beds were serviced. This is something that has already been followed up and completed.

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JD explained how she has concerns over the fact that some of our children may not be receiving the family support that they need. Families are not always having appropriate social worker input before their referrals. This is something that JD is investigating.

JD informed the group that attendance has dropped slightly due to current circumstances. During the recent lockdown, the vast majority of pupils have attended. JD went on to explain that with it being the first day back she can confirm that most pupils were in school today.

JD shared that the amount of persistent absences had decreased slightly. CW asked whether the higher proportion of the children not coming into school were the children where English is an additional language. JD explained the English as additional language children have had good attendance within school.

JD confirmed that the majority of staff at Discovery have now had their first COVID vaccine and will be getting their second one by Easter.

Despite restrictions JD shared with the group that the Discovery curriculum has been broadened. Health and wellbeing and physical health being a big focus.

Discovery has developed an outdoor area to promote physical and mental wellbeing. This has impacted on the pupils' return which was very settled.

JD informed the group that we have now gone back to a split site at Pennyman. This class being one of our most complex needs classes. The classroom environment has been set up to a high standard that meets the needs of our children. The children entered the classroom very relaxed.

External agencies such as Treetops have still been able to work with our children during this unprecedented time. SL has planned to work with our external agencies to set up workshops for Discovery parents.

CW asked if Discovery has been able to arrange the school nurse coming back into school. JD informed the group that the school nurse will be back on site twice a week, starting from this week.

## **6. Update on Temporary and New Build**

CW informed the group that there had been various delays arise in the process of starting the build for the new building. Work on the site will start in June with work on the actual building due to commence in September. DfE are now in the final stages of negotiating the contract with their preferred contractor, Tilbury Douglas. DfE will fund the extra classrooms needed on the temporary site for 2021/22. This accommodation will be provided as part of TVED's capital project to install a cooking kitchen and additional classroom space in Brambles. The DfE has agreed to contribute to this project so that Discovery can use this additional classroom space in 2021/22.

CW confirmed if all goes to plan site clearance should begin July/August and September to start the actual build. It can't be definite as it all depends on the contract.

Tree clearance has started at the site but no further work will be taking place until the contract between the DfE and Interserve is resolved. As far as TVED is concerned, it is non-negotiable that the building work is to be finished by 31st May 2022.

CW has requested 3 visits to the site: The trustees December 21, Staff Nov 21 and the children some time near completion.

CW asked JD if there had been a decision made in regards to the walkthrough video. JD reported that Discovery are unable to share it on the website however if the restrictions allow us we are planning an open afternoon for parents in the summer. JD plans to show this walkthrough on the screens in the classroom.

CW confirmed that architects are happy for us to show the walkthrough anywhere as long as it has their logo or company shown in some way.

AK reported concerns that as a result of the tree clearance, the security fence around the site had also been removed. This now left not only the school site but also the rest of the former Nature's World site open and instances of vandalism have been reported. CW assured AK that she would raise this with the DfE as a matter of urgency and JD would let AK know how and when the matter is being addressed.

## **7. Appointment of New Chair**

CW reminded the group that she will be standing down from her role as Chair in July.

JD informed the group that there was someone interest in the chair post but they have had to withdraw. JD confirmed that a trust advert will be re-released.

CW concluded that the academy will need to think about future meetings, which will stay virtual and which ones will take place as face to face in the academy.

## **8. Suggestions for community projects/enrichment during restrictions**

CW asked JD if Discovery has started to use the minibus. JD informed the group that Discovery is unable to use the minibus due to the current COVID restrictions. We are hoping after Easter we will be able to start making arrangements for some trips out.

JD asked AK if there were any projects that pupils at Discovery could undertake. AK agreed that this was a very good idea and she will feed back to her group for suggestions.

AK suggested that, covid restrictions willing, it should be possible for pupils to visit the area outside the new school site. JD agreed that this would be safe and a good activity for older children.

## **9 Any other business**

SL to get in touch with GH in regards to being a parent representative. If not, a new parent representative needs to be appointed.

## **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021- 10.00am