



**TEES VALLEY EDUCATION – MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**

**(Company No: 09630999)**

**LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE – DISCOVERY SPECIAL ACADEMY**

**1:30pm Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Virtual and face to face Meeting**

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

**ATTENDEES:**

**Head Teacher** - Jennifer Duncan

**Community Representative** – Anne Kelly

**Chair** – Andrew Stogdale

**Parent Representative** – Philippa Booth

**Staff Representative**- Sian Lamb

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

**1. Welcome + Introductions**

Welcome to Andrew Stogdale the new Chair of the Local Academy Committee

**2. Apologies**

No Apologies

**3. Minutes of the last meeting: matters of fact and for approval**

Approved

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

Previous minutes were approved and agreed as a true reflection of the meeting.

**5. Headteachers report**

JD explained that head teachers reports are now only expected once a term. JD went on to explain the headteachers report with the key information as follows;

- Discovery have increased their pupils' numbers to 88 children, this includes the following - Rec to Y6 - 78 and 10 Nursery pupils.
- Discovery are currently running a split site between the Discovery site and Pennyman Primary Academy
- Discovery have increased the number of staff, due to this change of a split site and the rise in pupil numbers.
- Discovery now have 2 new assistant head teachers which form part of the new SLT team. The pastoral and welfare team also have full time staff - SL has taken up this pastoral roll full time and has already made a big impact both inside and outside of the academy.
- Discovery can confirm we have a 10 place nursery provision as of September 2021
- JD explained priority 1 and 2 – Nursery Early Years provision is a priority 1 along with mathematics to enable the closing of the gap due to COVID. Curriculum (Bespoke Reading provision) has been so successful with thanks to Michelle Armour Lead Literacy Co-ordinator this is now a Priority 2. Blended learning continues to be used using Showbie.

- JD discussed the move to the new build which is scheduled for week beginning June 20<sup>th</sup> 2022
- Discovery want to continue to explore the use of home/academy remote learning and communication and have continued to do this through the use of Showbie. PB raised a point in which android phones cannot access the Showbie app unlike iPhones, AS explained that parents can still access Showbie via the internet. JD suggested SL to host a coffee morning in relation to Showbie to ensure that our parents are confident in using it. CT also asked if all of our parents have access to the internet as Discovery can now provide routers for some families. SL to look into this further.
- Discovery continue to develop Welfare and Therapy sessions. It was arranged for Therapy dogs to come into a couple of classes to which has been a great success so far. SL has sourced a Y6 swimming programme which will begin in early January. There is also an opportunity at Easter for Y5/6 pupils to access the unicorn centre and take part in Horse riding.
- The minibus has proved to be a valuable investment, it has been arranged for 4 additional staff to receive training to drive the bus.
- JD is looking into developing stronger enterprise links between Discovery and Beverly school for Autism in the hope that they are able to support in the community garden at the Discovery new build.
- Discovery Special Academy has an increasing community of ASD children.
- JD explained that Discovery are applying for Autism accreditation and are putting selected staff member through the early bird training programme, this will enable us to offer more support to our families
- JD went on to say that Discovery are currently oversubscribed and only have two spaces available left in Y2. AS asked that when Discovery move will this make it possible for Discovery to have 110 pupils in which JD confirmed this.
- Discovery currently have 8 different languages across our families.
- JD expressed how she was happy that Discovery have a stable community. JD also expressed how important attendance is and that Discovery currently have a higher than average attendance rate for special schools. There has only been a 1-day exclusion since Discovery opened and the child was very quickly phased back into class.
- The website provides a positive window into the academy, this is something that Discovery are really proud of. A lot of the referrals to Discovery are because of how we are showcased on the website. The website is fully compliant.
- Safeguarding is fully compliant.
- Discovery were within budget last year.

## **6. Update on Planning New Build**

JD explained that currently there are no visit allowed to the new site due to the dark night's drawing in. The contractors are wanting to concentrate on making the building watertight before the winter sets in. JD described her visit to site in October half term, the footprint of the classrooms was very clear to see. JD will ask the site manager for some photographs of the site and possibly some drone footage to put on the website.

AK raised the point that she had some worries over the traffic accessing the site. Work traffic and deliveries are parking up on the pavements on the road leading to the site to which is causing obstructions. JD will feed this back to Carol White to raise this issue.

AS asked JD if the building work is currently running on time to which JD has said at this moment in time they are.

It is planned that Discovery will receive the keys to the new build Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022. JD explained that the removal company is booked for week beginning 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 which gives us the full week to move. For that week pupils will have two days of remote learning and the remaining 3 days will be taken as PD days. There will be opportunities for children to attend afterschool and holidays clubs once we have moved in.

AK explained about a project Tees valley Wildlife trust have planned, this is to plant 30,000 trees and shrubs. AK thought that Discovery could get involved in this project as some of the planting could take place on and around the new site, AK will share JD's email address so contact can be made and discussions can begin.

AS asked what will happen to the current Discovery classrooms to which JD explained they will just go back to the company as they are only on lease.

AK explained that there is a possibility that Discovery can access their new community allotment/garden on a Sunday. If JD is able to make links with other schools there is a possibility that they could also help and support the new community allotment/shop. CT is writing to local garden centres/business to try and encourage support/sponsorship to build raised beds and pathways etc.

## **7. Secondary Development and Consultation Update**

JD informed the group that conversations in regards to a Secondary provision began last year. The local authority has agreed that they are in full support and are able to offer financial support. Public consultation started November 9<sup>th</sup> all staff and parents have been notified and there has been positive feedback from parents.

JD explained that its only once Discovery have their first Ofsted that if planning is agreed that we can then progress.

JD asked AK what her thoughts were regarding the Secondary development. AK was very positive and in full favour of this second phase

JD explained to the group that the Local authority are aware our current Y6 pupils may want to change their secondary school preferences.

## **8. Update on Community Projects/Enrichments**

JD mentioned that we currently have a community garden/allotment at the Nature's World site. Gary Frankish provided (Discovery's garden maintenance man) much needed support in helping to clear the garden area.

JD expressed an interest in working with AS in the future in regards to enterprise.

## **9 Any other business**

JD asked AK if we could possibly take a group of children to visit Natures world site in which AK thought this was a good idea. This will take place this side of Christmas

AK asked to avoid Thursdays.

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

TBC