

MINUTES

Minutes of the James Rennie School Local Advisory Board meeting held via Zoom at James Rennie School, California Road, Carlisle CA3 0BU on 18th March 2021 starting at 1:15pm.

Attendance:

Arthur Paynter	AP	LAB member
Brian Eaton	BE	Trustee and LAB member.
Kris Williams	KW	Head teacher
Michael Manley	MM	LAB Chair
Michelle Graham	MG	LAB member
Sophie Dowling	SD	LAB member
Jonty Hanlon	JH	LAB member
Sarah Edgar	SE	LAB member
Also present		
Jan Cameron	JC	Clerk
Kerry Dunbobbin	KD	Deputy Head
Lisa Hollywood	LH	Business Manager

Apologies:

Joanne Gill	JG	LAB member
Shane Byrne	SB	LAB member

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
20/2020-21	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies were received from JG	
21/2020-21	Declaration of interests and offer/receipt of gifts or hospitality There were no new declarations.	
22/2020-21	Minutes and actions from the last meeting The minutes were agreed as a true record. Matters arising All actions were completed with the exception of the working group to look at IEP's which will now be deferred until after lockdown.	

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24/2020-21	KW re-joined the meeting Covid update - Locally the infection rate currently stands at a total of 23 people per 100,000. Overall things are looking positive but the next few weeks will give a better indication. - Staff and students are pleased to be back in school, however, we have: 1 member of staff shielding 4 pupils shielding 1 pupil on a phased return 5 pupils not in school because they think it would not be safe to return. - All staff and pupils are being tested twice a week and the process is working well. - The Recovery Plan is gradually moving to fully reopen in June/July. After school and lunch clubs to begin again after Easter in bubbles, as well as inviting non-essential visitors back into school. Pupils will start moving around school independently and classes will start to return to how they have been operating during the previous 12 months. School has received £36k from the ring fenced Government Recovery Fund to support the programme. The fund will be used to look beyond purely academic achievement and will focus on all the needs of our school population which is to be broken down into 4 strands: Curriculum; Academic; Therapeutic and Community. The details of this, together with indicative allocations can be found in the Covid Recovery Plan paper. The funds for class recovery will be open to a bidding process via the subject leaders after Easter, when school will have a baseline of pupil's progress and needs. It was highlighted that due to difficulty in getting therapists, school is looking to commission private therapists and would look at dual commissioning with another special school to minimise costs. <u>KW asked the Board for their thoughts:</u> <u>MG suggested another possible therapist contact</u> <u>SE said that she thought that the plan was the way forward and we would need to see how it worked out in each area, she also thought that it was a good idea to get parents back into school.</u>	

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	<u>AP expressed his dismay at the way at the way the therapist service has been pared back and felt that this service should come from Health.</u> <u>SD referred to the specialist teaching time for the pupils who have fallen the furthest behind saying that there would need to be an analysis of need which could be matched within existing class staff, possible IT and/or teachers with particular specialisms. She also liked the idea of STAs to carry out follow up work, to which KW agreed saying that it would also be an opportunity for career development.</u> <u>MG wanted to know how STAs would be chosen and it was confirmed by a simple application form from interested parties.</u> <u>MM liked the spread across all the 4 areas of the report as it reflected our ethos</u> SE gave her apologies as she had to leave the meeting	
23/2020-21	Heads' update • It is looking likely that we will have an OFSTED inspection in late 2022. OFSTED is looking at subject leaders but we are developing subject teams. • The ongoing situation with pupil places continues and we are still oversubscribed. We are at the maximum capacity of where we believe we can safely accommodate the pupils. The LA, however, are pushing school to take more pupils. They have offered to create an additional classroom by dividing the existing food tech room, which is bigger than it needs to be, to create an additional classroom. <u>LAB members commented that it wasn't just about the space, resources, budgets and staff capacity to support pupils with behavioural needs also need to be considered.</u> <u>MM asked for KW views.</u> Kris said that it was a difficult situation as school wanted to take the additional pupils as this would be the best outcome for the families concerned. However, he had to have regard to the consequences of additional pupils and to the safety of all the children in school. The	

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	LA was aggressively pressurising school to take more pupils. <u>MM asked if being part of the Academy could influence the situation and it was explained that the LA could direct pupils under its statutory powers.</u> All the special schools are meeting regularly to discuss the LA shortcomings. There is a collective belief from all the Special School Heads that stronger action is now required. There are proposals being sought by the LA to decrease special schools funding contributions from main stream allocations; whilst at the same time larger than expected funds are being directed to the PRUs. <u>Members commented on: their frustration at this situation; the process involved in free schools applications and ultimately what could be done about the situation.</u> <u>It was agreed by all in the meeting to support further action. KW to contact absent members in order to ensure unanimous agreement. The form of the action is yet to be decided but it was recognised that it would have to be a clear good and factual argument.</u> <u>It was agreed that KW and JH would come back with possible suggestions and rather than wait for the next meeting suggestions on the course of action could be given via email or zoom.</u> <u>Any action would need support from the Trust and our parents.</u> On a more positive note to end the meeting: ○ A pupil had done a lovely painting of the cathedral ceiling which will appear on the cathedral's media pages and MM has written a letter of thanks to the pupil. ○ Mr Nibbles, the therapy dog has received his diploma and is now qualified. ○ A pupil who has been very poorly has taken his first walk in the park	KW KW/JH

The meeting ended at 3pm

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 8th June at 1:15 pm via zoom

ACTION SUMMARY

Action		Who
14/2020-21	To form a working group to look at IEP's, deferred until after lockdown.	AP/SB/JG
23/2021	Contact absent members re further action	KW
23/2021	Suggestions for further action to be disseminated.	KW/JH