

MINUTES

Minutes of the James Rennie School Local Advisory Board
Held at James Rennie School, California Road, Carlisle CA3 0BU
On 8th May 2019 at 1:15pm

Present:

Michael Manley	MM	Chair of LAB
Kris Williams	KW	Head teacher
Sarah Edgar	SG	LAB Member
Arthur Paynter	AP	LAB member
Jean Rhodes	JR	LAB member
Shane Byrne	SB	LAB Member
Michelle Graham	MG	LAB member
Sophie Dowling	SD	LAB member
Also present		
Michael Thomson	MT	Director for Schools
Kerry Dunbobbin	KD	Deputy Head
Lisa Hollywood	LH	Business Manager
Jan Cameron	JC	Clerk

Apologies

Jonty Hanlon	JH	Vice-Chair of LAB & Chair of Finance
Brian Eaton	BE	Trustee and LAB member
Joanne Gill	JG	LAB member

Absent

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Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
11/2018-9	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies were received from BE, JH and JG	
12/2018-9	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest for this meeting.	
13/2018-9	Minutes and actions from the last meeting. The minutes of the meeting on 13 th March 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record. Actions were dealt with under the agenda items	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
14/2018-9	Feedback from the Finance sub-committee KW reported that in terms of the budget for next year the LA had agreed to continue to pay, for the next 12 months at least, the additional funding that was received last year. In addition they are going to pay the additional monies needed to open the extra classroom. It was now anticipated that there would be a modest carry forward of around £89k. This was good news in that previous predictions had anticipated a deficit figure. The figures include the increases in employers' pension contributions for TAs and administrative staff, which will need to be met by the school. It was noted that Lisa had done an incredible amount of work to help to get us to this position. School had been unsuccessful in its CIF (Capital Investment Fund) bid to replace the roof but would appeal against the decision. It had been rejected because the DFE did not consider the roof to be in a bad enough state as it hasn't yet fallen through! LH analysis of the catering contract had shown a saving of £4k. The cost per meal for ingredients had been doubled, quality and variety has been improved, and workplace experience for some of the pupils was now taking place. KW confirmed that the pupils were enjoying the food and that the kitchen has received a 5* hygiene rating by an external auditor. Overall this has been an extremely positive move with some fantastic results and everyone involved is to be congratulated.	
15/2018-9	Feedback from the Pupils & Staffing sub-committee MM reported that staff welfare group seems to be working well and there had been very few issues raised via the staff comments/suggestion box. Both the trust and school were looking into staff workloads and it was emphasised that some work is statutory and that school does not push teachers to undertake unnecessary tasks. Comparisons with other local special and mainstream schools were made and examples highlighted. School is taking a different topic every half term to see if workloads can be reduced further. Staff sickness absence is down; however some staff had not been comfortable with the back to work interviews. KW explained that these interviews had been sporadic in the past and that they were now carried out in an equitable way. As well as reducing sickness absence, some staff have been supported by the school making short term adjustments to their working practices. This has positively helped some staff through difficult personal circumstances. The staff group felt there was a communication problem and that they weren't fully aware of the process. KW stated that staff had been informed throughout the year and detailed the various mediums used to convey the information. It was necessary for everyone to take ownership for their own absences.	

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	Staff had wanted school to pay for some private health care provision. Whilst this was not possible KW stated that he could look at negotiating favourable rates if that was what staff wanted. The committee had split tasks into groups which are reported in detail in the Pupils & Staffing minutes.	
16/2018-9	Head's report KW shared his report, and highlighted the following: • The Northern Hub is developing well with ongoing talks with Hexham as to how to develop together and in parallel with the Trust overall. • The festival day will be on 12th July, with a Circus theme. A Big Top has been given free for the day and there will be 'sensory' animals. A request has gone out for anyone with talent who would be willing to come and contribute to the day. Everyone is welcome. • Members were referred to the Pupils & Staffing notes for the detail of the Post 16 development. Mention was given to the change in the curriculum and that life skills to prepare for adulthood were now being taught lower down in school. It was agreed that Sarah and Shane would look at how best to present this information to parents and carers. • The PE grant is to continue into next year • The new financial top up still needs to be approved by the LA. The amounts received are likely to fall short of what might have been expected from a model/mapping exercise undertaken by KW. Members sought clarity on the Trusts involvement in the process and KW confirmed that the Trust had made a huge difference in our negotiations with the LA. It was felt that their leverage positively affected the outcome of talks. LH stated that she had felt much more empowered by having the Trust's backing. Had negotiations with the LA not been so positive school would have been looking to reduce staffing levels. MM asked what the staff views were regarding our joining the Academy. It was reported that in reality there was little change but some staff were concerned about their jobs and their specific roles and responsibilities post TUPE. There have also been some concerns regarding the recent request for copies of staff qualifications. It was explained that the rules had changed on what information needs to be collected and kept. After some discussion, it was recognised that it was human nature for some people to be cautious or sceptical about change. The Eden Trust newsletter that went out at the beginning of the year was referenced to with regard to CPP.	SE & SB

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17/2018-19	Leadership of the Northern Hub Members were made aware that MT was retiring and that KW was to take on some of his responsibilities. This would mean that KD would step up to take on some of KW workload and that cover would be needed for KD. Workloads and the financial impact were discussed in some detail.	
18/2018-19	Support for LAB members Some suggestions were made by KW and LH which included safeguarding, the new OFSTED frame-work and Finance. It was felt that a half-day session of around 3 hours would be manageable for most LAB members and that KW would talk to Liz at Hexham about joint sessions. In addition, the Trust is piloting an online safeguarding course. It was agreed that with SE's experience and contacts she would arrange for someone to come and talk to staff about how vulnerable people are targeted by 'County Lines' gangs.	SE
19/2018-19	School Improvement Cycle 2019/20 KW presented the School Development Plan highlighting the following: • The NAC accreditation re-inspection is now due. There has been a lot of work which had been firmly embedded throughout school. • There has been an overwhelming response for the summer play scheme, with 95% of parents wanting a 2 week placement. It is unlikely that this demand can be met so it is the intention to give as many parents a possible a place for at least part of their preferred option. The criteria for a place will be for pupils without access to any other facility, which in effect tends to be the under 8 year olds. Funds are available to run the scheme and school is going out to external advert for staff. • A staff INSET will look at the strategies we need to develop which will go to the Trust at the end of September. • Part of KD's job is to understand and analyse the data that we hold and this is reviewed on a half-termly basis.	
20/2018-19	Health & Safety The H&S report was noted by members. KW stated that Health Boards with symbols were now in the playground and the issue with the drains had been resolved. The state of the roof has the potential to become an H&S issue in the next 12-18 months if the CIF appeal is not successful. A critical incident involving the administration of medicine was explained. Systems have been reviewed and improvements made to avoid another occurrence.	

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21/2018-19	Safeguarding (for information) There has been no significant change; however, information has been received from the police about 2 families, where there has been domestic violence. Communication between the police and school has greatly improved as in the past this kind of information was not always getting through. SE is to pass on the positive feed-back to the team.	
22/2018-19	Feedback from the LAB liaison Chairs were impressed with what is on offer for Professional development in the South and are keen to extend that to the Northern Hub. The trust would also like to have a conversation regarding additional services for the North. Some time will be needed to develop a LAB member's role descriptor.	
23/2018-19	Any other business • There was a discussion around the University of Cumbria's SEN pathway and the various ways into teaching. Next year school will have a 'direct' student teacher. • LAB members felt that they had adjusted well to their new role. MT stated that he was pleased with the way the last year had gone and that there was good liaison between JR and Hexham.	
24/2018-19	Date of Next Meetings The dates of the next meetings for 2019-20: • Thursday 17th October 2019 @1:15 • Wednesday 29th January 2020 @ 1:15 • Thursday 19th March 2020 @ 1:15 • Tuesday 9th June 2010 @ 1:15	

Meeting closed at 2:40pm

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ACTION SUMMARY

Agenda item	Action	Who
16/2018-19	To look at how information on the curriculum is presented to parents	SE & SB
18/2018-19	To arrange for an appropriate person to talk to staff re 'County Lines'	SE