



Workington Academy LAB Meeting
Thursday 26th September 2024, 5.30pm

Member support, questions and challenge in red
Responses in green
Actions in bold

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	• Clerk to send the NCSC training link to LAB members. • LAB members to look at the triangulation areas and decide if they are happy with the current sections and if they would like to double-up in some areas. <i>To be discussed later in the agenda.</i> The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.		✓ LAB members
3	<u>Safeguarding Report</u> KEK – to do safeguarding refresher at next meeting. Sandy Coleman is a wellbeing coach who has been into school to support a core group of students, mostly girls, who are really suffering with mental health issues. She is working on an ad hoc basis with us and hoping we can build upon this. We have spoken about the number of students experiencing issues with suicidal thoughts. There were 3 attempts in the summer holidays and one attempt at the start of term. We have offered lots of support to students with suicidal thoughts, and the Head will continue to keep the LAB informed, It is a massive worry for all the staff. Since last LAB meeting, we have done a 2nd lockdown drill on the basis that there was an intruder on site, so it was a full lockdown. and Chair – friend works for a Christian charity and has been in touch with the school about coming in on a regular basis. It is an offer of a safe space to talk for children and religion is only discussed if the student asks.	Chair to pass on contact details to Head	Chair
4	<u>Trust Services reports</u> a) <u>Finance report</u> The report is based in the position up to 31st July, period 11. The projected outturn shows a break-even position in line with the budget. To balance the budget in 2023/2024, there was approved use of reserves. Since the previous LAB meeting, the period 12 position is still showing a break-even position, but with a reduction of reserves of £84.7k, which takes into account the increase in support staff pay awards of an additional £6.2k. Despite the challenges through the year, the outturn shows a favourable position. Income has exceeded budget; variances due mainly to revised 16-19 funding and teacher employer's pension grant. Staffing costs have exceeded budget; variances due to additional cost in support staff pay aware, employer contribution and increased agency costs.		

	Non-staffing costs include a water rebate, educational supplies and clawback from permanent exclusions. A balanced budget has been set for 2024/2025. This has been updated to reflect the revised pay award. It is a fine balance and the budget will require close monitoring. The Year 7 applications and increased expected intake, means the Trust will be seeking to apply for estimate funding. MP – it is excellent that you have managed to clawback so much from the reserve funds. Head – it is very tight this year and we have top sliced so many budgets. DBi – we had a difficult year last year managing estimate funding, and now this year having to put on an extra class in Year 7 that we hadn't budgeted for. We will do all we can to ensure nothing is detrimentally affected. Chair – last year we were kept abreast of any financial issues as CF could articulate the reasons behind it, in LAB meetings. This additional class and financial issues linked, was something we were not expecting. DBi – it is really excellent work to be able to manage this addition. LAB member – did we expect so many appeals to get through? Head – not at all, and we did all we could to mitigate it. LAB member – what happens next year? Head – we have made our position clear, and we will follow the process again, but hope for a more favourable outcome. DBi – expect to be equally oversubscribed next year. b) <u>HR and People report</u> We have appointed two Maths teachers, 1 Science teacher and an Art teacher, but the turnover is steady which indicates stability. MP – the report informs us of any long-term sickness absence, but are there any concerns about levels of sickness? Head – it is more of a concern amongst support staff, but last year's sickness absence was the highest rate. WE also need to be mindful of mental wellbeing, as several staff cited that in the reason for absence. CK – there is a new HR and payroll system for the Trust, which will allow much better interrogation of sickness absence rates, and also allow us to better maintain the return-to-work meetings. c) <u>CET Update</u> Des Bird gave the CET update and document made available to LAB. LAB member – are the 4 new schools all secondaries? DBi – there are 2 primary and 2 secondary schools, but the primaries are big schools.		
5	<u>Student Achievement report</u> Year 13		

Head – we had real concerns about the Year 13 when they sat their AS levels, but the results were better than expected. CK – we were expecting the progress measures back for A level, and with a weaker than average cohort, the pure attainment measure may not be as favourable. We are still waiting to see, as the progress measure may not be published. We would prefer to see the progress measure as it gives more context to our results. It is important to note the comparison to 2019. We generally follow a 3-year trend and that has stabilised. DBi – the attainment measure is not comparable to 2022, which were generally softer measures post-Covid. CK – subjects to note; Art was really high performing, Science was disappointing, English Literature had a difficult start due to the sad death of a colleague at the start of last year but the staff rallied to deliver the course, Maths has vastly improved following input of a lot of resources. Product Design did not perform so well, due to staffing difficulties and a low-ability cohort. We will not be running Psychology again, due to staffing issues, but we were pleased to get students through the course. EPQ had really strong results, and Miriam Wilson is to be praised for her work with the students in this area. Vocational qualifications are a real strength in the school. The national average is 30, but most of our subjects are scoring 35, 40, 45. The provision we have is good for our students and they clearly benefit, so it is a real strength of the school. Head – the vocational students often go onto degree courses and high-level apprenticeships. CK – vocational courses were due to be defunded, but the Government has now paused that decision. We are keen to keep these courses as they benefit our students. T levels are not appropriate for our students. A level results are down, but they could have been worse. The vocational courses are propping up our overall scores. DBi – what lessons have we learned from the rapid improvement last year, and can we implement them again this year? CK – the Trust support was excellent last year and the Maths Lead working 1:1 with students was a key factor. Head – we also did a lot of after school tutoring, which 6th form really bought into it. Chair – queried if there was anything to flag as a risk this year? Head – Biology is a risk due to the significant numbers of U grades, along with the other sciences. There are new staff in English, and we need to develop the skills to teach 6th Form. Geography showed an improvement. Staff LAB member – students met their targets, and the average point score was up from last year. This was mostly down to a newer member of staff who had experience in teaching A level. Chair – taking into account the Year 13's who you expressed concerns about when they sat their AS exams, what about Year 12?		
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	CK – there has been a tightening entrance procedure, so there are no concerns about Year 12; as we have not lowered our entry criteria. LAB member – how many students have joined Year 12? Head – we have an intake of 68 this year. This is a good number for us that is manageable. DBi – between the two sites, this is the highest numbers we have had. LAB member – what is the maximum capacity? Head – we can go over 100 across both sites comfortably. Year 11 Head – progress 8 is -0.16 following the remarks. We thought it would be closer to zero, so are slightly disappointed, but the disadvantaged progress 8 is the best it has ever been, and the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged is the smallest. Standards have been raised and there are key reasons why we didn't reach zero. It looks like Workington and Whitehaven are the best performing schools along the west coast so far, but we will know more when the results are finally published. CK – the progress measures are provisional until the official figures are released, but we are generally pretty accurate. We have a 3-year trend and last year we were higher up the average band. English, Maths, Ebacc and Open are all consistent which is a positive. Art is to be praised as they are a full grade higher. English Language is at -0.43 which is a big slip. English Literature is where we expected it to be, so the language results were a surprise. We have submitted a lot of reviews of marking, but not much has shifted. We have also requested the vast majority of papers back so we can review where marks haven't been awarded and learn from it. German is solid, having been down in previous years. History did really well last year, and this year's results show nice consolidation. Geography has dropped, which is probably down to staffing issues, but we do have capacity to move it forward this year. Computing is negative, and the results are interesting due to the very different students in the same class. Technology is also negative with -0.5 of a grade down. Ultimately, this came down to a serious staffing issue, but we had good support from William Howard so it could have been a lot worse. The new vocational courses are more stringent, but we had good strong performances in Sport, Media, Health & Social Care and Child Care. Engineering is disappointing. Head – we are not running engineering in Year 10, due to the problems in terms of delivery. CK – we were also disappointed with Hospitality, but it was a very tricky cohort. Head – we have two groups in Hospitality this year and they are not a tricky cohort, so we are expecting much higher next year. The whole point of vocational qualifications is to get more level 2 for those students.		
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	Chair – we need to try the course to help these students’ life chances, but we need to fail fast and decide when it’s right to stop a course that is not giving student what they need. Head – the national trend is that girls outperform boys, but here it is the opposite, with up to 0.9 lower for girls in Maths. We believe this is down to the social, emotional and mental health issues that run through a significant proportion of our girls. We need to find out what is going on with the Workington girls, that is affecting their mental health so detrimentally. DBi – we have spoken about a mentoring programme for those girls who are really struggling. LAB member – do they not have the aspirations either? Head – it’s all built into the same issue. LAB member – are the issues in English reflected in William Howard and Whitehaven? DBi – not really. The higher sets haven’t performed as well here. We think we have got to the bottom of the issue and are keen to make sure it is not repeated. Head – it is a reading issue primarily, as the paper has an ‘unseen’ text which students then decode. It comes down to cultural capital if the text uses words they are unfamiliar with, and this would impact all schools who have a similar make-up to ours. Answers are banded into three; we know what answers in band one and band two look like, but we didn’t get it quite right when identifying answers graded as band three, so this impacted our students. Chair – do you know what a band 3 answer looks like now? BS – yes, and we have requested the papers back, so we have examples. Staff LAB member – each subject will also get an examiner’s report to explain. Chair – the fact we are closing the disadvantaged gap means we are helping our students, so we need to capitalise on it. CK – we do get natural variance amongst year groups. DBi – the current Year 11 won’t have progress 8 as a measure, because they didn’t sit SATs, so the intention is to measure the percentage of students with passes at 5+. This is something we need to focus on to ensure students are getting both English and Maths, so we will be working with those who are faring better in English than Maths or vice versa. With the current progress 8 measures, we will be in the top third, but when measured against the 5+ measure, we are a long way below. LAB member – how do you propose to run interventions without the additional funding? DBi – we will provide some money to fund an amount of tutoring in school, but it won’t be the kind of sums we had available previously. We have some money for it, but it won’t necessarily have the breadth as previous years, so it is really important the school targets the right students. Chair – whilst it’s important we talk about key measures and comparing ourselves against other similar schools, it’s also important that we are proud, as a LAB, that we provide challenge and ensure		
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	the health and wellbeing of every child in this school regardless of their potential attainment. <u>Behaviour and Exclusions report</u> The Deputy Head invited questions from the LAB about the report. LAB member – final school suspension figures read 2023/2024, should that not be 2024/2025? BH – that’s correct, it is a typo. Chair – the benchmarking section in the report was really useful. Chair – it has clearly taken time and hard work to figure out and all the strategies mentioned. Do staff have the time to do this? Head – the focus on INSET was behaviour, and the two-step approach was introduced to all staff. It is a method of talking to students in a calm manner that removes emotion and also keeps the student’s calm. There was also a session on positive regard. We are on a journey and are looking at the depth of staff to manage those medium and high-level behaviour and learn a range of skills to make this work. We have already had two INSET days and CPD on managing behaviour. Chair – we have proven to ourselves that we can buck the trend with attendance, so we need to do the same for behaviour. BH – ultimately, behaviour is the cause of poorer results for a significant number of our students. It is a smaller number than last year, but we do have nucleus of students who are still struggling to make the right behaviour choices. Figures are high, but we do everything we can to prevent a permanent exclusion, and it is never something we want to do. We have put a lot of interventions in place for those students and we are trying to source external providers, but it is greatly lacking in the area. LAB member – is there potential that the charity the Chair spoke about, might be able to help some of those children? BH – we will look into that.		
6	<u>Trust Improvement Plan</u> This guides school improvement work we do, and fits with our school OKR. The five areas identified:- • School improvement • Trust services • Organisational development • Growth • Civic duty – how all of us and trust work with local community. Chair – queried how some of these are measurable? DBi – there are ways which we are working on to make sure they are measurable. <u>School OKR</u> The five areas the school has identified for our OKR are:- • Behave well • Hard thinking • Reading		

	• Conditions to thrive • Exam results above expectations. DBi – the Trust mandated objectives are strongly based in educational research i.e. not behaving well, means a child is not going to learn. Head – departments are also making their own version from school OKR Chair – do you have the capacity to deliver all that? Head – we have worked as a leadership team to write it and we do believe we have the capacity to deliver. Staff LAB member – on a department level, the document doesn't add to workload, it replaces something. <u>SEF</u> Head – the framework is changing so we will do a big re-write next year. The SEF was already tweaked in April, so this has been updated with this year's results.		
7	<u>Governance</u> LAB members discussed link areas and agreed the following:- • Quality of Education – NM • Behaviour and Attitudes – KR • Personal Development – SH • Leadership and Management – KR • Safeguarding – MS • Sixth Form – NM • Pupil Premium – DbA Chair – queried the training for LAB members that we used to have. Is this centrally organised or up to individual schools? DBi – we used to do lots of training but there were very low numbers attending. Chair – asked LAB members to look at where they felt there are gaps in knowledge, that cannot be filled using the available online courses and bring these to the next meeting. LAB member – could we see what is offered by the Trust first? MP – the board is meeting to finalise a training programme, so if it doesn't meet the need, please feedback at the next LAB.	Training requirements	LAB members
8	Policies to approve a) Child on Child Abuse policy b) Child Protection policy c) First Aid policy and procedures d) Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy LAB member – raised a question around the new AI technology which can manipulate photographs. Could this be referenced in the Child on Child Abuse policy? Clerk – to raise question with Kym Allan, before LAB agree to ratify.	Query policy change	Clerk
9	Any other business		

	○ Update on PEX/IRP – Head There have been 2 permanent exclusions recently that have requested an independent review panel. This has to be different panel to the LAB and they can agree to uphold the decision, ask the LAB to reconsider or ask the LAB to re-do the hearing. It has been very difficult to source the panel as the LA have stopped offering this service. We will let you know the outcome. ○ Catering – LAB member Several parents have contacted me to raise the issue around the dinners. There is a lack of food, it's more expensive and the quality is poor. Head – we do have new caterers, and it has been a challenging start. The service is improving, and they are using different food suppliers. DBi – the trust has been having daily meetings with the catering company and these comments will be fed back. We recognise the service in all the schools is not where we want it to be. Head – the meals cooked in-house is really good, but the general offer is not healthy or appropriate for our students. It is a daily issue, but the caterers have responded to our requests in some ways. MP – it is very disappointing to be in this position, as there was an awful lot of work and extensive enquiries made when procuring the new catering company. Chair – the burden of work in school is big enough, without having to take this on. It is failing one of the targets of the smooth running of the school. Poor quality and insufficient food will have a massive impact on our children. DBi – we have made things very clear to Aspens, and this conversation will also be passed on to them.		
Next Meeting: Monday 18th November 2024, 5.00pm			

Meeting closed 7.26pm

Signed: 

Kerry Rourke, Chair of Workington Academy LAB

Print: Kerry Rourke

Date: 18/11/2025

Minutes to be circulated to:
Mark Bedford

Kerry Rourke
Neil McNicholas
Dave Bailliff
Stephanie Hughes
Marie Steele
David Tennyson
Gemma Dooling
Margaret Payne

Summary of actions:

Item No.	Action	Who	By when
1	The Chair to complete the Safer Recruitment module available on the NGA platform.	Chair	Asap
3	Chair to pass on contact details of charity offering to support student wellbeing	Chair	Asap
7	LAB members to identify gaps in knowledge and bring to next meeting is unable to find online information.	LAB members	Meeting 2
8	Clerk to query possible change to policy relating to new technology	Clerk	asap