



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 6pm via Zoom

Governors present: Lucy Nethsingha (Chair –LN); Andy Matthews (Headteacher – AM); Dani Redhead (DR); Edward Ferguson (EF); Hugh Clough (HC); Kate Fry (KF); Keren Sayir-Uziyel (KSU); Jason Palmer (JP); Simon Hill (SH); Matt Day (MD); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS); David Carmona (DC – *to item 9*); Aleks Jach (AJ)

Also in attendance: Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB); Sue Bowman (SB)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies were received from Rachel Rosborough (RR) and Shantha Baalham (SB).

2. Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Co-option

- KF proposed, LN seconded to elect DR as Chair of the Governing Body. The proposal was supported unanimously.
- KSU proposed, MD seconded to elect LN as Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The proposal was supported unanimously.
- DR proposed, seconded by LN to co-opted SB to the Governing Body. The proposal was supported unanimously.

LN continued to chair the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None declared.

4. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2021

JP highlighted some points of inaccuracy to item 13: Boiler Replacements. With these amendments recorded, the minutes were accepted as a true record, to be signed in due course by the Chair.

5. Matters arising and review of actions from the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2021

- F0707:01 – Closed

6. Governance 2020/22

- **Standing Orders** – adopted unanimously.
- **Terms of Reference** – the PFC and EPC documents have yet to be approved by the respective Committees so will be brought back to the January FGB meeting, along with the TLC ToR which have been approved.

- **Governor Code of Practice, KCSIE and Safeguarding and CP Policy** had been previously circulated. Governors to sign the record on Google Drive to declare they have read and understood them.
- **Individual pecuniary interests forms** to be accessed by Governors on Google Drive and returned to the Clerk.

F0610:01 - AM to send instructions to governors on how to access Google Drive.

7. Reports from Committees

- **Eco and Premises** – At the July meeting, the Committee discussed the replacement of the school boilers and are investigating options for rainwater harvesting. The new boilers should be operational on 15 October.
- **Personnel and Finance** – The Committee have had oversight of a current overview and forecast. Forecast revenue reserves will be £52000. There is a projected overspend of £4000 in the supply budget due to absences related to Covid.
- **Teaching and Learning** – The Committee discussed the SDP and agreed priorities for the Committee. Link governors to think about curriculum development, and how it fits with the national framework. Governor monitoring link roles have been circulated.

In relation to training, a governor asked whether governors are expected to attend courses on link subjects. SB responded that subject link training wasn't necessary, but training collectively on the types of things governors should be monitoring on any subject would be beneficial. Governors are expected to be monitoring systems and processes. SB to arrange a training date.

F0610:02 – SB to arrange subject link monitoring training for Governors.

8. Headteacher's Verbal Report and Key Facts (previously circulated)

Going forward, the HT will produce a written report for each FGB meeting, to be circulated with the agenda.

Update on Covid-19 situation in the school and Outbreak Management Plan

- Currently have 4 cases across the school (2 pupils and two staff from the same class).
- Some additional steps have been taken from the outbreak management plan such as tables returning to rows in that class, staff returning to wearing masks in corridors, assemblies reduced to Key Stage only with all classes separated by two metres and lunch hall arrangements used by this class.
- A CO₂ monitor has been installed in the hall in order to obtain some benchmark measurements for situations when the hall is heavily used with ventilation maximised. The lunchtime readings are over 1000 p/million (1,200 max), which should be considered a maximum figure for classrooms once the DfE CO₂ readers arrive. Must be aware of balancing the need for good ventilation whilst keeping the room temperature at an appropriate working level; awaiting guidance on how best to achieve this.
- Some families have chosen to keep their children away from school due to the cases in Year 1/2; these absences cannot be authorised. There has been evidence that new cases are emerging 4/5 days after contact, so parents have been advised to test children immediately and then again 5 days.
- Schools are carrying out all contact tracing.
- The Family Fitness Day did not result in any new cases, so will continue to plan for similar events; if cases rise then this might need to be reviewed.

The following points/questions were raised:

The LA governor reported that the school would be receiving a letter from the CC advising returning to the wearing of masks in corridors and communal spaces. The school might need to reconsider events and parents in school and whether governors should carry out on site monitoring visits.

The governor who provided the CO₂ monitors said that they have recorded regularly 800 parts p/million and peaked at over 1200 ppm on a few occasions, so ideally the hall should have a higher ventilation rate during singing or other activities. He also commented on opening windows in classrooms saying that in winter windows do not need to be opened too far when it is colder outside.

He was thanked for the provision of the monitor.

A governor asked whether the 5 Covid cases were all at the same time. AM responded that the cases were all within a ten day window.

Staffing update

- One TA is reducing her hours from 5 days to 3 days; currently advertising for a TA for 3 days a week.
- One of our longstanding cleaners has resigned. A replacement cleaner has been appointed.
- Advertising for an additional lunchtime supervisor, due to someone stepping down. Interviews for this role have been scheduled.
- All teacher performance management meetings are scheduled.
- Subject leaders are now getting additional release time.

Update on boiler room progress

- There has been a slight delay to the scheduled handover. At the moment this is not causing an issue with heat in the school, but this could change quickly if the weather gets colder.

Support arrangements from the Local Authority

- Having bought into Elements 1 and 2 of the LA's support for this year, Sue Bowman and other advisors have been allocated to support the school in its progress during the year ahead. The LA plan (previously circulated) has been created to help the school move forward and targets from it have been incorporated into the school's SDP.
- The advisors have already attended the school twice and have another 5 visits scheduled this term. For some aspects of these visits it might be useful for link governors to attend.

The following points/questions were raised:

A governor noted that having this extra support made it appear the school is not achieving. He asked what the impact on the staff would be, and whether it might leave a trail for an Ofsted inspection. SB responded that the information gathered will not be shared with Ofsted. She explained that the LA do have concerns about elements of the school and what is happening in the classroom, but reiterated that they are there to support the staff. EF reported that the advisors have identified some technicalities such as evidencing what is happening in the classroom, but he hoped that she would be reassured when actually observing in the classrooms. AM responded that he didn't expect staff to be phased as all the teachers are committed to the school and their own professional development.

A governor asked why the LA have concerns about the educational outcomes, when the school compares above nationally in every subject. SB responded that Ofsted have moved away from judging just on reading, writing and maths, but from across the curriculum. From the brief visits made so far,

concerns have been raised about what is being taught and progression across those subjects. When asked which subjects in particular she was concerned about, she said computing.

A governor said she felt this was rather a sweeping statement about the quality of education at this early stage. SB responded that they have an understanding of what a school should look like, basic things, and they hadn't seen this. She also said that the curriculum is not good enough yet; it doesn't match the 2019 framework.

LN added that whilst this situation was not comfortable for staff, it was significantly better than an Ofsted visit. It would only take one complaint from a parent to trigger an Ofsted visit. SB also commented that it would give Governors a certainty about what we are doing and why and it would be valuable if Governors link into the visits so her team can point areas that need improving.

EF added that whilst the visits initially felt threatening, it was important to approach them with a positive attitude; there are things the school needs to improve on, saying the subject leader focus, especially with the extra time, will significantly benefit the children.

Update on the development of the new curriculum and associated CPD

- Have completed a successful whole school topic of Healthy Me, which has been followed by the next set of topics.
- The school vision, Curriculum intent and all subject intent statements have been written. Now finalising the skills progressions for all of the foundation subjects, to be completed by Christmas. These are essential documents for tying together the planning for the topics to an appropriate outcome from the learning and ensuring that all pupils move on together and experience appropriately set work.
- Subject leaders have been gaining a deeper understanding for the progression in their subject by doing this, alongside the additional CDP for subject leadership.

The following points/questions were raised:

- Subject leaders have been booked on briefings throughout the year.
- Subject leaders are being encouraged to visit exemplar schools; Governors are encouraged to join these visits as well.

National testing arrangements for 2021-22

- It has been confirmed that the SATs tests for next year will be returning for Year 2 and Year 6. The Year 2 tests should now only run for two more years since the arrival of the Reception Baseline Assessment. They will also be going ahead with the new Multiplication Checker at Year 4 and resuming phonics screening for Year 1. This year there will not be any primary school league tables.

Provision for Reception and Year 1 children this year

- This year the school is trialling a different approach to managing the unusual PAN of 34 children across the Reception and KS1 classes. This has been driven by a desire to try to create a more consistent experience for the Reception and Year 1 children.
- Rec pupils who are in the registration class of Rec/1 join the rest of the Reception children for the whole day. For the direct teaching the delivery is managed by one of the two teachers in groups of about 17. This is mostly the Reception teacher, but also the Rec/1 teacher at times in the week. This leaves the Rec/1 teacher for the majority of the week working with the Year 1s, allowing them to follow the same curriculum as all the other Year 1s.

- The other important benefit from this is that there is now a genuine consistency and equality in the experience of all of the Reception cohort (33 children in total this year), and allows for greater socialisation opportunities for all these children too.
- This model does push the definition of the infant class size legislation of 30 per class, but the two teachers delivering the provision together are doing so for a combined 51 children across the two classes, albeit in an unconventional model. This model has been shown to the EYFS advisor who has in turn checked it with 4 other LA colleagues, and in their view this is permissible, as long as the school ensures certain practices. This will also be looked at by other senior LA staff to ensure the school is compliant.
- This trial arrangement will be reviewing half termly.
- This highlights the need for the school to carefully consider the impact of its PAN on what NC can offer the pupils at the lower end of the school. It also has a huge impact on how NC implement a consistent curriculum for all of the Year 1 pupils in the new curriculum model.

A governor said she had been alerted to the new arrangement in the Reception class by an unhappy member of staff, adding that there was a lack of consultation with staff who are directly impacted by this change.

Discussion about the school's PAN and its impact on provision in the school *(item 12 brought forward)*

Proposal from AM:

- For a number of years mixed Rec and KS1 classes has created issues for parents of KS1 children, particularly for Year 1 parents, in terms of equality of experience and friendship opportunities. It also creates a much tougher set of circumstances for the teachers lower down the school to work with.
- There is also a longstanding belief that the school has a cap on KS2 classes of 32. This has been confirmed by the County's place planning team to not be the case and that our PAN of 34 runs throughout the school.
- Proposing to start a consultation on reducing the school's PAN to 30, allowing the school to operate across 7 classes rather than 8 and manage the curriculum experience of the KS1 and EYFS children in a much more consistent way.
- The additional benefit of this is that the school would have much more say in how far it goes over a new PAN of 30 in KS2, allowing the school to essentially create its own cap of 32, if that is a number that we feel more comfortable with.
- The financial implication of losing 12 children in time from the school roll would amount to £48,000. However, with the reduced staffing required for 7 classes the saving would be between £72,000 and £78,000. The impact of this is would mean more funding available for the support of pupils in the remaining 7 classes and would also create a free room in the school to be used for interventions, smaller teaching groups, or even extending after-school provision.
- Would like agreement from the FGB to proceed with this consultation, to be started by 1 November in order to make any change in PAN for the 2023/24 year.

SB reported that the EY team and School Improvement team will work in conjunction with each other when considering the request to reduce the school's PAN to 30. Once a case has been put forward to the LA, a small working party will be put together to gather documents and evidence. The new curriculum is harder to teach across a mixed class (the focus being challenging progression and sequence) but if there are implications of reducing numbers for the local area, and if the school is already full, then it will be hard for the LA to justify reducing the numbers.

The following points/questions were raised:

- A governor commented that the school had been run on the model of mixed classes in Rec and KS1 for years, that there would be a financial implication, and that he has concerned about changing it.
- Another governor said that as a parent, the communication around the Rec/1 or Reception class was that parents were reassured that whichever class the children were in, it didn't matter because it was managed. It is therefore surprising to hear that it has not been working in the past when we were told it was. From a parent perspective, this model has not caused problems.
- Newnham Croft historically competes with private schools, with one of the advantages of the current model being that we can offer slightly smaller class sizes.
- A governor reported that the school's reputation in recent years had seen fewer children moving to private schools, with most children joining staying from Reception to Year 6. Data illustrating this picture was requested.
- SB suggested that the school invite a member from the Place Planning team to meet with governors.

Action F0610:03 – Historical data illustrating the migration of children from Reception to Year 6 to be circulated to governors.

The Chair asked members if there were any objections to putting in a notice to the LA informing them that the school is considering reducing its PAN to 30. She emphasised that this would not be a commitment or decision to move forward. One governor objected. With a show of hands the proposal was agreed.

Census figures and potential impact on funding for April 2022

- School roll of 226 (3 pupils higher than 2020 October census). This will mean about £12,000 in additional funding for the 2022/23 year.

Health and Safety

- A full Health and Safety site inspection was carried out by NW on 5 July.

Safeguarding

- 3 incidents of CP concerns since the last FGB
- 1 prevent
- No exclusions

Pupil Premium

- Currently no LAC.
- 13 children eligible for PP ad FSM.

9. Draft School Development Plan – *document previously circulated*

- Targets have incorporated items suggested by the LA.
- This working document will evolve, and is the core of what the school is trying to achieve this year.

10. Governor Visit and Monitoring Plan

A document detailing link roles had been previously circulated.

11. Leadership and governance review arrangements for 8 October

- SB will be leading teacher discussions, and George Hayes the governor discussions.

- The aim of the review is to gather information on where leaders are at and whether they are effective and empowered as leaders.
- Feedback and recommendations will be given to the governing body Chair and Vice Chair and Head and Deputy Head at the end of the day.

12. Discussed above.

13. Presentation of the plan for a boundary path around the school field (*a mock-up of the proposed plan was shared on screen*)

The cost will be £20000; £10000 to come from Sports Premium, with match funding from elsewhere.

A governor asked what other options were considered for the SP money. A climbing wall was considered but the path was the most popular amongst staff.

A governor asked what the benefits of an all weather track are and what the maintenance costs would be. To allow for year round use and to provide easier access to the field and wild spaces during winter months. Maintenance costs are expected to be low, and the track itself to have a 25 year life expectancy. JP said he would made enquiries about a similar track at King's School, which has deteriorated very quickly.

A governor enquired whether different aspects of sport that have been affected by Covid, such as extra swimming lessons, would be considered for SP funding. AM responded that there is still a substantial amount of money to spend in other areas, including swimming.

A governor said he would like to have the other ideas presented to governors; another governor said the eco impact and a consultation or awareness of how children use the field would be helpful. It was proposed that the member of staff responsible for SP come back with a thorough report about the project so governors can consider whether this is the right project to spend the £10000 SP money on. Staff should also be consulted. To go to TLC first, then to FGB. It was also noted that due process should be followed, including obtaining multiple quotes and validating the company.

F0610:04 - The member of staff responsible for SP to present a thorough report about the project to Governors. To be discussed at TLC first, then to FGB.

14. Policies for Review: *the following had been previously circulated:*

- Safeguarding and Child Protection – approved unanimously.
- Complaints – with the correction of some typos, approved unanimously.
- Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints - with the correction of some typos, approved unanimously.

15. Any other business

It was noted that ITV News are to interview kitchen staff and LN for an article about food supply issues.

With no further business, the Chair thanked governors for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

ACTION LOG:

Minute Item no.	Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
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6. Governance	F0610:01	AM to send instructions to governors on how to access Google Drive.	AM	Dec 2021	Open
7. Reports from Committees	F0610:02	Sue Bowman to arrange subject link monitoring training for Governors.	Sue Bowman/AM	Dec 2021	Open
14. Governor monitoring	F0610:03	Historical data illustrating the migration of children from Reception to Year 6 to be circulated to governors.	AM	Dec 2021	Open
13. Boundary path	F0610:04	The member of staff responsible for SP to present a thorough report about the project to Governors. To be discussed at TLC first, then to FGB.	AM/KW	Dec 2021	Open

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____