



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 6pm at school

Governors present: Dani Redhead (Chair–DR); Edward Ferguson (Head–EF); Matt Day (MD); Hugh Clough (HC); Jason Palmer (JP *Associate Member*); Simon Hill (SH); Nick Whitehead (NW); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS); Yudan Ren (YR); Annie Hanekom (AH *Associate Member*); Ave Wrigley (AW); Razia Mangera (RM), Emma Smith (ES)

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

The meeting was quorate.

1. Safeguarding for members not present at the start of year training was given by the HT from 5.30-6pm.

2. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies received from KSU, JG and LN.

3. Appointment of Associate Member

Due to work commitments, AH would like to move from the full governing body to become an Associate Member, with a particular role in staff wellbeing, leadership and the staff survey. DR proposed, seconded by AW and the change of role was supported unanimously. AH was absent from the room during voting. With this change of role a co-opted governor opening has arisen, which prompted a conversation about how to advertise the vacancy. The ideal area of expertise for a new member is legal or HR, so a suggestion was made to contact these types of companies, as well as volunteer agencies. AH was thanked for her worked as a full governor.

4. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None declared.

5. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023

The minutes were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters arising and review of actions from the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023

- F0507:01 – Ongoing
- F0410:01 – Closed
- F0410:02 – Closed
- F0410:03 – Closed
- F0410:04 – Closed

7. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** (minutes previously circulated) – No comments were raised.
- **Personnel and Finance** (minutes previously circulated) – No comments were raised.
- **Eco and Premises** (draft minutes previously circulated) – there is an opportunity to change the lighting in KS2 to T8 bulbs, creating a financial saving; gas and electricity usage was lower than last year but water was higher, probably due to the increased size of the after school club; 2 shipping containers are arriving 11 December; during a review of the Health and Safety Policy, the Committee agreed that an opportunity for staff to evaluate training should be raised in the staff survey; the kitchen has received a 5 star rating, which was praised by governors.

8. Governor Visits and Monitoring Plan

The Chair thanked those governors that had undertaken visits during the term and reminded governors to upload visit reports as soon as possible. The Chair encouraged all members to read the pupil premium and safeguarding visit reports, as both are areas Ofsted would expect governors to know about. Governors were also directed to the PP document on the website with the full breakdown of expenditure. ES will take over responsibility of monitoring PSHE and Art and Design.

9. Governor Training

The following courses have been attended by the Chair or Deputy Chair, with the course material available on the shared drive for other governors to look at:

- Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged pupils
- Handling Allegations Against Headteachers (and other Adults in Schools)
- Headteacher Appraisal and Capability
- Developing and Monitoring Primary Curriculum
- Safer Recruitment in Schools – the governor noted that the school’s annual safeguarding sessions and ongoing focus on My Concern is exactly as recommended.

Another governor had attended the Safeguarding training course. She had questions about the filtering and monitoring system and who monitors usage - Smoothwall and HT; who the Prevent leader is – HT.

A governor enquired whether there is an available time where children can ask questions about sex education? This is usually during PHSE lessons and Years 5 and 6 have specific relationship and sex education lessons.

A governor enquired whether there is a policy on pupil mobile phone usage? There is not a specific policy, but mobiles are not allowed in school; those children who do bring phones in have to hand them in where they are locked away until the end of the school day.

A governor asked how people are guided to use websites? Teachers share websites during the lessons and also educate children to think about how to refine searches e.g. to add ‘for children’ in the search question.

10. Policies for Review:

- **Governor Monitoring:** It was agreed that teacher names should only be used in monitoring reports with the teacher’s consent, and reports should be signed off by teachers before being shared. The policy was approved.
- **Governor Induction:** The policy was approved.

11. Policies for information only:

The following had been previously circulated for information only:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Behaviour. The governor who revised the policy was thanked for her work.

12. Headteacher's Written Report (previously circulated)

The following written questions had been raised following early circulation of the report:

In what way is the request being put to other schools – I'm assuming we are offering for them to visit Newnham Croft and for our teachers in turn to visit them? This seems odd that they would not want to reciprocate – can you say more about this? In terms of visiting other settings, it's a really frustrating situation and one we have experienced before. Everyone talks about collaborating and sharing practice but we have always found other schools to be reluctant. I put it down to people being busy and getting too caught up in the treadmill; but it is frustrating as it should be a really useful part of our CPD.

Why to advertise "a fixed, one-year contract for 24-25"? We will be moving to 7 classes (as opposed to the current 8 classes) in September 2025. This is because the school is reducing our year group PAN (published admission number) from 34 children to 30. Therefore we will no longer need 4 classes for 3 year groups in KS1 and EY, where there is a limit of 30 children per class. We will need one less teacher/TA, ideally accomplished without redundancy.

What are the details regarding the unwell TA and what are the difficulties in finding a solution? If you are referring to the sickness absence of this TA, the difficulty is between balancing our duty of care to our employee, who is struggling with her health, with the need to ensure high quality provision for the children and support for the teachers.

Since the "a lot of challenge that individual staff members continue to face in their personal life", alongside the CPD, is there any other plans? e.g. staff resilience training, or personalised well beings? All members of staff report feeling well supported by senior leadership and colleagues. As the issues are personal ones, all we can try and do is mitigate any unnecessary extra pressure from school. However, this is challenging as the nature of the job of teachers (and a lesser extent TAs) is extremely pressurised. Whatever we take off the shoulders of one of the members of staff has to be taken on by another. To be honest, I think the staff have shown incredible resilience, and the school has a fantastic environment of support and kindness.

Who is SB? The "prompt sheet" is a great plan. Look forward to reading it. SB is Sue Bowman, LA advisor.

"...try and cover as much teacher time from now with TAs to save money. The decision on when we can cover will be based on impact on the children's learning." I understand this as: to cover the teacher time when teacher(s) is (are) on leave with TAs - please let me know if this is incorrect. If the understanding is current, I feel maybe alternative plans could be better. Such as at least to cover the class missing the teacher with certain amount of hours of teacher's teaching, then the TAs cover the rest hours for exercises etc. Even just 1 hour of teaching might be able to cover the main learning points for the day, and TAs could follow those points and organise the class better? We have used this before. It is never a long term solution (for example, if a teacher is off due to illness for a period of time). TAs are used to cover a morning or afternoon if the teacher is training or has a medical appointment. The teacher always provides plans and guidance.

It is very encouraging to see the wide-ranging CPD the staff are engaging in. Have you observed an impact yet in school as a result of the additional CPD and if so what? Following on from the exemplar lesson and discussions in staff meetings, structure of lessons have been adapted to increase engagement through increasing pupil voice and ensuring suitable pace. Lesson observations indicated that this was successfully maintaining children's focus. As yet, pupil voice hasn't been captured.

In Reception, the approach to maths and content of lessons has been subtly adapted to accommodate the new pedagogy RM is trialling. Initial impressions from RM are of a positive impact. In observations, EF has seen evidence of the new 'noticing' approach and engagement of children with the new language and thinking ("What do you notice?").

How many safeguarding and MyConcern reports have been raised this term? There have been 24 new concerns since the last FGB (4/10/23). Several of the concerns have notes added to their "Chronology" which updates any actions taken, conversations had with parents and outcomes of actions.

How many children are attending the GetSet club? 15 - although not all children attend every session due to arriving late.

Questions raised at the meeting as follows:

With the part time Year 4 teacher leaving, how will this affect the class? The substantive teacher has taken ownership of the class and will continue to write the reports and host consultations on her own. She will be well supported by staff and the supply teacher who will be working 2 days per week. He has worked at NC for years and is well known amongst children and staff.

In the SFVS, the benchmarking link says that the school is in the bottom 10% of schools on staff spending. Could you please explain that? Due to adding two ECTs to the staff over the last 2 years and the change of leadership structure, we have had a reduction in teaching wages. However, HT was surprised we were in the bottom 10% and will look into this further.

ACTION F0612:01 – HT to investigate the school's benchmarking in relation to staff wages.

The HT spoke generally about the supportive culture at school and how many parents who have newly joined the school have commented on and expressed their gratitude for the kind and welcoming atmosphere. New children tend to settle in very quickly and those with no English are well supported and pick up the language remarkably quickly. A governor commended the HT and encouraged him to write down names and conversations to capture these tributes as evidence for potential Ofsted questions.

16. OFSTED (this agenda item was brought forward)

The HT and LA advisor have been working on potential questions that an Ofsted inspector might ask; a list of questions had been previously circulated. The Chair raised the question about whether it would be helpful for governors to carry out a similar exercise. Following a discussion, it was agreed that the LA advisor be asked to attend an FGB meeting to discuss potential questions with governors.

ACTION F0612:02 – HT to arrange for LA advisor to join an FGB meeting to discuss potential Ofsted visit questions.

Safeguarding

- MyConcern continues to be used effectively.
- No Prevent reports made.
- Two prejudice related incidents have been reported.
- No incidents of Child Protection.
- No Looked After Children.

Attendance

- 95.54 % for the term to date.

Finance

- Support staff pay award of £1925 (pro-rata) has been approved.

SEND

- The SEND register has been updated, with 17 children on the register.

Pupil Premium

- 21 pupil premium children on roll. The SENCo continues works with PP children each Tuesday.

Sports Premium

PE storage has been upgraded.

14. SDP 2023-24

Some areas around lesson observations are yet to be filled in; writing and presentation will be worked on; attitude to risk will be worked on through the year. Generally the school is setting achievable targets and making good progress.

15. SFVS

A question was raised about where voluntary funds are accounted for, ie PTA and NET. The HT will investigate this area. The SFVS was approved unanimously.

17. EY Information and summary of English visit from LA Advisor (RM)

The LA English Advisor has been extremely helpful and supportive; there has been a huge focus on phonics across the country.

- Little Wandle – The Advisor has observed interventions and is very happy with what she has seen. Phonics is nicely embedded; the next step is KS2 reading.
- There is a greater emphasis for children from Year 3 to be reading fluently.
- Now using fluency assessments, eg echo reading, where a teacher will model reading.
- LW has introduced a new spelling programme which continues from where LW finished in Y1/Y2.
- School is investigating a new reading framework.
- Introducing a book progression through the school to encourage reading for pleasure and information and to ensure there are good visual displays to make reading appealing.
- The Advisor is looking at the 3 phases of writing and fluency for KS2. Need to make sure there are no gaps between the phases so a child can realise the piece of writing at the end.

A governor asked how much the school would like to link this to topics such as Geography or History? The school needs to make sure in cross curricular subjects that the focus is on the English. The school is looking at the whole English curriculum with the Advisor. She offers us best practice and works in lots of schools.

A governor noted that writing is where the school has underperformed historically, asking if the schools expects there to be a difference now with external assistance? Underperforming in writing is common countrywide. Spelling is a particular focus on the SDP at the moment; in future different areas of writing will become an annual focus. With LW being consistent, and the spelling programme following through, the school is hopeful this will make a difference. However, results may not be seen immediately. Also, if keeping things precise, like LW, means children can write for purpose by Year 3, writing will become more enjoyable.

A governor asked how LW helps disadvantaged pupils? LW assessments are carried out every 5 weeks, meaning that any gaps are picked up quickly, ensuring that the gap doesn't grow. Children with gaps that have had 'keep-ups' (extra session) have made massive progress. In older children the extra tuition is called 'rapid catch-up'.

18. Any other business

The clerk's email address is to be altered to finance@newnhamcroft.cambs.sch.uk.

Following the appeal being granted, the Owlstone community is looking to take it to judicial review; the school might be asked to contribute.

In relation to repairs and insulation to the school roof, an associate member offered to draw up a decarbonisation plan. Decarbonisation funding might not pay for the roof repairs, but could replace lights, for example. He would apply for a government funded grant which would pay for his company writing the plan. Another governor said we would have to look in to how this work with conflict of interest. It was agreed that the EPC would look into funding applications.

ACTION F0612:03 – EPC to explore funding applications for a school decarbonisation plan.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8pm.

ACTION LOG:

Minute Item no.	Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
6. Reports from Committees	F0507:01	The monthly finance papers will be circulated to all governors and also loaded on to the Drive.	LS	Dec 2023	Ongoing
12. HT report	F0612:01	HT to investigate the schools' benchmarking in relation to staff wages.	HT	Dec 2023	Open
12. HT report	F0612:02	HT to arrange for LA advisor to join an FGB meeting to discuss potential Ofsted visit questions.	HT	Dec 2023	Open
18. AOB	F0612:03	EPC to explore funding applications for a school decarbonisation plan.	JG/JP	Jan 2023	Open

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____