



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 6pm at school

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

Also in attendance: Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB); Pat Tate (PT – *to item 5*); Leng Lee (LL – *via Zoom to item 5*);

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. There were no governor absences.

2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None.

3. Election of Associate Member

- The re-election of AH was proposed by DR, seconded by HC and agreed unanimously.
- Members formally voted to approve HC's nomination as a local authority governor on to the governing body; approved unanimously.
- It was noted that MD's tenure as parent governor expires in March. A parent governor election will be held in January ahead of this date. If he does not win the election, the governing body will vote to co-opt him to fill the remaining co-opted governor vacancy.

4. Proposal to elect two co-opted governors

Two candidates joined the meeting to give a short presentation to the governing body – PT in person and LL via Zoom – followed by a Q&A session. A brief résumé from each had been previously circulated.

MD proposed to co-opt LL, seconded by AW and approved unanimously.

MD proposed to co-opt PT, seconded by EF and approved unanimously.

5. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024

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 11 September 2024

- F0612:03 – Closed. No grants are currently available, but EPC will continue to monitor.
- F2404:01 – Closed. ES declared an interest in this action. Clerk made a note to review this again at EPC.
- F2424:05 – Closed.
- F1124:02 – Closed.

7. Vice-Chairs split roles

ETS – governor visits and monitoring; support to governors.

AW – governor training (governors are committed to sign up to at least one new piece per term); support to governors.

HT will conduct Safeguarding training for governors who missed it/new governors at 5.30pm before the meeting on 12 February.

Time stamped pdfs of the monitoring visits and training reports will be available at FGB meetings.

8. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** – September minutes previously circulated.
- **Personnel and Finance** – October minutes previously circulated.
- **Eco and Premises** – September minutes previously circulated. The Chair said it would be useful if all governors could share their views on premises defects and if anything is noticed to email him.

9. Headteacher's Written Report

The report had been previously circulated and questions invited by email, but EF reported verbally on the following:

The safeguarding visit involving a Section 47 Enquiry (child protection investigation) brought home the importance of the safeguarding processes in school, including relevant training. The school had acted appropriately and felt reassured that all processes are in place.

Health & Safety: Accidents requiring hospital treatment/reported to County: 0

Pupil Premium: currently there are 16 PP children who will continue to be supported by all staff and their progress and well-being monitored by the SENCo.

Reporting:

1 incident of child protection.

There have been no Prevent reports made.

There has been 1 prejudice-related comment reported.

We have no Looked After children.

We have 19 children on the SEND register.

1 child has been excluded.

Verbal questions raised:

A governor noted there have been a number of questions raised around the child with anger management issues, which is obviously an area of concern.

The HT explained that the child had problems regulating their anger, which poses a risk to themselves, children and adults. The quiet room has been made available as a safe area where the child can calm down in their own space. The parents are being very supportive and approve the actions taken by the school and the risk reduction plan. The room is in close proximity to the Y5 and 6 classrooms, so the children have been spoken to explain that the child is in the room for their own protection. The room is monitored from the outside, and the child is asked to reflect upon what brought him to such a fury using images depicting different scenarios that have been triggers previously.

A governor asked whether education psychologists have been involved. The HT responded that as much help and advice as possible has been sought. No extra funding is available, but an EHCP will be looked at if the pattern of behaviour continues and the SENCo has been investigating an early health assessment. EHCPs can take from 9 months to 1 year to process.

Governors asked whether the use of the quiet room was considered acceptable practice; whether it counted as an internal exclusion and how often it is necessary to use it. The HT said that the use of the room is considered acceptable, and that the room being used is the most suitable in the school. The use of it does not count as an internal exclusion. In the first week after half term the child used the room every day, but the need for it has been gradually reducing.

Finance update

The c/f of around £30000 is better than previously expected. The chair of the PFC noted that the £7.5 gap in the kitchen budget should start to improve with the increase in the price of a meal (from £2.50 to £2.65), the lunch survey and inviting parents in to share the lunch experience with their children.

10. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

SFVS Actions:

Matrix of governor competencies – to be completed by MD, YR and SH.

Terms of Reference - PFC (already approved)

DfE benchmarking statistics to be reviewed by PFC

Self-certification checks – SH

11. Q&As relating to HT reported previously submitted

Reading through the Safeguarding section, it looks like the child has moved to another school (please correct my understanding if this is not correct), I still wish to ask:

What is the school's acting plans from the class teachers to the SLT/HT for aggressive behaviour? Particularly, the child in the current Reception class. What is the "a risk reduction plan"? Are there potential actions as a school could take to try to help this child? Are there actions taken to protect other children who view/experience such aggressive behaviour? Is there extra support could be provided to the teacher/TA for such situation, such as training in challenging behaviour? Are there good enough attention paid to the staff well-being facing this problem?

We have discussed this extensively, as the child is the highest need in the school currently. Together with the parents, we have put together a risk reduction plan, which includes a quiet space that the child can go to if they have lost control. This seems to be effective so far and we are hopeful that the child will learn to self-regulate more quickly as we move forward. The SENCO, SLT and I have been fully involved in supporting the adults in Reception. There are 3 class adults and we swapped one of those for someone we felt would be better able to support a child with these needs. JT has researched extensively, including speaking to other SENCOs and the LA specialist teacher to seek advice, which has been shared with the classroom adults. Although initially, I think the Reception adults did feel a little left alone, they have reached out to the SLT and feel much more supported.

What are the "agreed holidays" contributing to the school attendance? Agreed holiday is for when a child is out due to, for example, a single parent needing to go on a business trip and not being able to find someone to look after their child, or for short religious holidays (e.g. Passover).

What are the details of the Premises section "14. Front of school has quotes"? How will this be prioritised when there is a deficit? The project will be funded completely from fundraising. No school money will be used.

In the Reporting section, what does this mean "There have been no Prevent reports made."? Prevent is a government scheme that was set up to prevent children being radicalised by extremists, whether through contact at home or online. If a child makes a comment that raises alarms (for example, expressed a negative opinion about a group/race/religion) the school must report it.

[Reading through the Safeguarding section, it looks like the child has moved to another school (please correct my understanding if this is not correct)] - according to your answer, this child did not move to another school but still at the current Reception class, is this correct? Please confirm this. This child was in a KS2 class and has moved to a school in another local authority. I have spoken with the new headteacher to establish how the child has settled in and to answer any questions that the HT might have. The child in Reception is a different case.

Please could you add specifically on: Are there actions taken to protect other children who view/experience such aggressive behaviour? Teachers will discuss behaviour that is seen with children if they feel it is appropriate and necessary. This will often fall within the PSHE curriculum, anyway, so is linked to that where possible. We also emphasise that learning to behave is, for some, challenging, just as learning to read is, for some, challenging. In terms of adults, the SLT support as and when needed. We have had several meetings with the EY team over the course of the past 3 weeks, offering support, listening to their concerns and discussing possible solutions.

You report that a child has been excluded. Could you provide some (obviously minimal and anonymised) background on this decision, and perhaps a bit of context on the standard process leading to an exclusion decision, and what that is likely to mean for the child? The child's behaviour had been flagged up by their previous setting, although for the first half term we didn't see much of the issues. However, since coming back after half term, they had begun to struggle with controlling their anger. This led to an incident where the child was unable to regulate themselves and begun being physically aggressive, including throwing objects at the classroom window. This necessitated the child being gently but firmly restrained by an adult. The child then bit that adult on the forearm, leaving a full set of teeth marks which subsequently developed into serious bruising. My reason for deciding to suspend the child for a day was so that the classroom adults, JT and I could have a day to meet and put a plan in place that would mitigate against this happening again, as much as possible. Generally, I am against any form of exclusion as I am not convinced they are an effective consequence for the child. However, when a member of the school is injured, I do feel that there needs to be a clear sanction, whilst also giving the school staff time to review our practice to minimise the risk of a repeat of the incident.

It is good to see the range of CPD staff are engaging with. How effectively do you feel learning points from these are being shared amongst staff and any actions implemented? All relevant learning points are always shared in the proceeding teacher/LSA meeting, with relevant actions discussed. We are trying to always ensure those actions are timetabled and followed up.

You mention an issue with broadband. How likely is the risk to the school in relation to this if you don't find a suitable provider by April 2025? There is no risk to the school as we have now decided on the provider. Although slightly more expensive, we are going with the ICT Service, who already support our tech, are reliable and have a strong educational reputation.

I noted that you mentioned that a member of staff that left due to ill health but now seems better by name, and I wondered whether it is appropriate to name individuals in relation to potential HR issues in a document such as this? Perhaps I need to think a little more carefully about what is appropriate. In the staffing matters, I share names and try to keep governors abreast of the ins and outs of staffing. I am conscious of trying to balance confidentiality against the governors being properly informed and included in the staffing. I would agree, upon reflection, that this information was unnecessary.

In relation to the child in Reception that is exhibiting challenging behaviour, what steps are staff currently taking to manage the impact on other children and what are the longer-term plans to ensure this child is supported? We have discussed this extensively, as the child is the highest need in the school currently. Together with the parents, we have put together a risk reduction plan, which includes a quiet space that the child can go to if they have lost control. This seems to be effective so far and we are hopeful that the child will learn to self-regulate more quickly as we move forward.

It is good to see an improvement in attendance. Is there anything specific that you can attribute to this change? Not that we can identify.

Under 'training' it was good to see that a recommendation from the Ofsted inspector is being implemented. How do you feel suggestions, more generally, from the Inspector have been actioned this term? The implementation of continuous provision in Y1 is the most obvious example. We have also had teacher meetings to discuss developing oracy, including training from the Eng adviser from the LA. On Wednesday 27th Nov we had No-Pen day to further advance this aspect of learning.

It is disappointing to see the Kitchen hygiene rating has been downgraded, especially given the work governors did reviewing processes etc last year and the training of staff members to ensure food was stored appropriately. Why do you think this has not embedded, and what plans do you have to support the kitchen staff going forward? It was an oversight from the kitchen and one that they were very disappointed with. The previous issues centred on the paperwork and record keeping, and there were no issues with this, so that is positive. I think that the kitchen audits are a good point of accountability and I need to ensure that the dates for these are set and followed a little more regularly.

How was the prejudice related comment mentioned managed in school? In the usual way. The children were spoken to in order to ascertain the nature and intent of the incident. Relevant parents were contacted so that they might speak to their children about such a sensitive subject with their child and I spoke to the children to emphasise the seriousness of using the word, without going into detail of why due to the age of the children.

Can you provide more details on why a child was excluded. Was this a permanent exclusion or a suspension? My understanding is that Governing boards must be notified without delay of all permanent exclusions and suspensions where a pupil is suspended for more than 5 school days (or more than 10 lunchtimes) in a term. Were governors involved in the decision to exclude this child? The suspension was for a day, in order for staff to make suitable plans to ensure the safety of everyone involved. I informed the CoG, including emailing a copy of the exclusion letter that was sent to parents. I also emailed the exclusion team at the LA, as required Cambs.

Do we have any instances of internal exclusions, where a pupil is removed from class for a limited time at the instruction of a member of staff? We haven't had any internal exclusions this term. Some children are asked to have a time out outside the classroom to reflect on their choices and what they need to do better to work more effectively in class, though this sanction is very rare and follows several warnings and encouragements to behave appropriately within the class.

Is the challenging child in year 1 disrupting the education of the rest of the class or risking their safety? Do they have a diagnosis? My concern is that they will follow the class throughout their school career and any, even minor, impacts could accumulate. NB - The child is in Reception.

The child has no diagnosis. Initially, there was concern at the risk to other classmates, but the adults and SLT had meetings to put a Risk Reduction Plan in place, to identify possible triggers and to establish procedures if things escalated. These include close supervision of the child, removal from room as soon as disruptive behaviour is noted and a safe, quiet room to take them to. Since these have been in place, the danger to other children has been significantly reduced.

Your concern about accumulated impact is valid. With similar situations in other year groups, the school has been able to largely mitigate those impacts, but they are inevitably present, no matter the support that is put in place. However, whilst the dynamic of a class is quite different if there is a child who can be disruptive, there are corresponding benefits that we have noticed, amongst them is the increased independence of the rest of the class; emotional maturity and empathy; a certain dynamic and energy.

Excellent improvement in attendance in all categories; I see that there was training linked to recording; is the improvement linked to changes in recording rules? The recording rules, in terms of the absences, would still be consistent, as far as the percentages are concerned. The changes have been to do with the codes and categories of absence. The only reason we can think of the improvement is that several of last year's Y6 children had very low attendance, and these are no longer affecting our data.

Is my impression that training is focussed on Early Years with very little undertaken for KS2 correct? If so, is this deliberate? There is more training for EY at the moment because the EY teacher is new to the role and so is keen to learn as much as possible. There is also a lot of CPD for the Y1 teacher due to the move towards a more Early Years approach to learning. Combining this with covering the Y1 curriculum has meant learning from other settings that are following this path, as well as attending the session on The Magic of Play, which was appropriate to EY and Y1 provision.

Can you provide any further information about the prejudice-related incident; the child protection incident and the reason for the exclusion? Prejudice related incident was with two younger members of KS2 who used a word that was racist. Having spoken to both children, I am confident that it was an experimental use of the language, with no real understanding of the connotations or meaning. I explained the severity of the word and the class teacher spoke with both sets of parents. Child protection incident was related to domestic situation and was led by social care, with the school being part of the process rather than leading it. The 1-day exclusion was for biting a member of staff and was used to allow the school adults to draw up a risk reduction plan to mitigate future possibility of this happening again.

12. Y1 continuous provision update

The Ofsted inspector had suggested that the model of continuous provision (where children can access resources independently in a self-directed format) used in Reception could continue into Year 1. The Year 1 teacher has visited a number of settings to look at their Y1 provision and is looking at ways to expand the resources available to children whilst still following the Y1 curriculum. The difference between Reception and Y1 is that the children are set more challenges. Whilst assessing success at this point in the term is difficult, the class are very enthusiastic and the maths and English learning is pleasing. It has been liberating to have the green light from Ofsted, and the aim is to try to make enthusiastic learners who enjoy school and are not turned off by it.

A governor asked whether this will filter up through the school? Y2 SATs are no longer obligatory, which gives more scope to move this to Y2 as well.

13. SDP 2024-25

Continuous provision – as discussed above, this is going well.

Developing children’s attitudes – how to develop meaningful targets for children are in progress.

Behaviour – discussed in the twice weekly staff briefings. Behaviour is also recorded in the briefing notes, which staff have access to.

14. Policies for Review:

- **Governor Monitoring:** this policy will be brought back to the February meeting.
- **Governor Induction:** approved unanimously.

ACTION F1112:01 – Governor Monitoring policy to be reviewed and brought to the February FGB for approval.

15. Strategy discussion

To improve the division of labour, the Chair encouraged members to consider topics they would like to be discussed as strategic ideas at FGB meetings, for example the state of the school buildings/roof and to send in suggestions for more general, broader discussions. A governor also suggested continuing to hold separate (non-staff meetings) to discuss ideas more informally.

16. Any other business

The Owlstone Croft development: the issue of air quality and noise have been raised with Queens’ College but no response has been received from with the College or the Council. The lack of engagement with the process has been disappointing.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.04 pm.

ACTION LOG:

Minute Item no.	Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
14. Policies for review	F1112:01	Governor Monitoring policy to be reviewed and brought to the February FGB for approval.	ETS	Feb 25	Open

Signed: 

Position: Chair of Governors

Date: 10 January 2025