



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held at 6pm on Wednesday 12 February at school

Governors present: Edward Ferguson (Head-EF); Matt Day (Chair-MD); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS *from item 7*); Ave Wrigley (AW); Dani Redhead (DR); Katy Holliday (KH); Razia Mangera (RM); Hugh Clough (HC); Joseph Watts (JW); Simon Hill (SH); Emma Smith (ES); Matthew Crawford (MC)

Also in attendance: Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies received from NW, YR, AH.

2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None.

3. Co-option of an existing member and welcome to new governors

Following a parent governor election, the Chair welcomed the newly elected candidate, MC; JW agreed to mentor him.

MD's time of office as a parent governor expires in March, so he left the room whilst a discussion took place about co-opting him. SH nominated, seconded by EF and with an abstention from MC, was co-opted onto the governing body.

4. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024

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

5. Matters arising and review of actions from the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2024

- F1112:01 – Closed.

6. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** – January minutes previously circulated.
- **Personnel and Finance** – No minutes for this meeting.
- **Eco and Premises** – January minutes previously circulated. A committee member highlighted a discussion about possibilities roof repairs.

7. Governor Visit Plan

Members were reminded to organise their visits and to submit their reports quickly.

8. Governor Training

Members were reminded of the expectation for them to attend at least one training session per term. A skills audit will be scheduled so training needs can be prioritised.

Recent training includes:
SEN (ETS)
Health and Safety (ES/NW)
Chair workshop (AW)

9. Policies for Review:

- **Critical and Major Incidents:** from September the Queens' College site will not be available as an evacuation site; this will be addressed at the next EPC. The paper was approved unanimously.
- **Governor Monitoring Visits:** the policy has been paired down. Approved unanimously.

ACTION F1202:01 – EPC to discuss the location of a new evacuation site from September, when the Queens' site will become unavailable.

10. Headteacher's Written Report

The report had been previously circulated and questions invited by email; EF invited verbal questions:

Regarding the PAN reduction, does the school have discretion to over admit mid-term? No, it does not because it can impact on other local schools

In relation to ECHP funding, how much funding is released by different elements of children's levels, and are numbers lower than other schools? Historically NC has low SEN, PP and EHCP children. In previous years children would have a 1:1, however the school is expected to cover £6/7K of funding. In a lot of other schools all TAs support as 1:1, rather than whole class assistants. The school has a good system of supporting children, which works effectively.

Do you consider the PAN reduction and reduction of classes from 8 to 7 to be worthwhile? The previous County financial advisor supported the reduction and teaching a mixed class effectively means the teacher is required to teach 2 lessons, which is difficult. Historically, parents did not like mixed classes either.

What is the plan now for leading to 2030, when all classes will have a maximum of 30 children? The biggest problem going forward is that funding is unlikely to improve. The 25/26 budget stays positive, but with no carry forward. Some staff are going to reduce their hours which will help a little. The best outcome will be to not replace LSAs when they leave/retire.

Is there any limit/regulation on school being able to have private income? The HT was uncertain about the legalities, but will look into this/seek help from parents who work in fundraising. Basic costs must be covered by LA funding. Being creative with NET is a way of helping to balance the budget as it is not constrained like the PTA is, for example.

Has the school explored the use of AI to reduce time with some tasks? There is currently no education scheme that supports AI and so far, AI has only been used at a very basic level. A governor with knowledge of how AI may be applied in education, said he would be happy to demonstrate possibilities.

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.
No Prevent reports made.
1 prejudice-related comment reported.
1 Looked After child.
19 children on the SEND register.
No child exclusions.

12. Approval of SFVS

Historically, completion of the SFVS has been undertaken by the finance officer, however it is recommended that a governor undertakes the task. JW offered to take on the training. The SFVS was approved.

13. 2025/26 Budget

- As mentioned above, the carry forward will be reduced to zero.
- The budget is based on a role of 223 children.
- An assumption of 3% pay increases for staff.
- Staff costs need to reduce; some support staff have offered to reduce their hours.
- The extra government grant to cover the rise in National Insurance will only cover 90% of the increase.
- All Cambridgeshire schools have had to find a new broadband provider as County are no longer covering this. After researching the alternatives, the school has gone with the ICT Service and JISC who provide the most secure filtering and monitoring service. The extra rise in costs is around £4k.
- Staff insurance costs have gone up.
- The ASC is no longer hiring the hall on a Friday afternoon, meaning a drop in lettings income.

Going forward the hope is that staff numbers will reduce due to natural wastage – how will this work in supporting the pupil numbers we have? LSAs may need to be shared between two classes. Two fixed term contracts will be ending this year, but the school will need another member of staff to leave by 2026/27.

14. Reduction of PAN reduction - discussed above.

15. Pupil Progress Data Presentation (KH & RM)

Due to the slight concern that historically writing assessments have been too high, a new process of moderating has been adopted, resulting in the percentages looking a little low. However, looking through books it seems the assessments are not as low as indicated. The DHT's have been to other schools for moderating comparisons and writing is discussed at teacher meetings to ensure teachers are unified and accurate in their judgements. The school improvement advisor has been in school recently, who considered the writing to be good. It is important that there is a balance between exciting writing pieces, writing for purpose and writing for different audiences, and all must include the technicalities of writing.

Does 'on track' mean the standard that is expected at the end of the year? It means the child is expected to be at the standard by the end of the year. It does not mean that they know all the skills/knowledge at the time of the assessment, but that the teacher expects them to once all the curriculum has been taught.

When looking at the data, governors need to ensure that the school has a credible explanation as to why it has reached these numbers. It is hard to understand the figures with the movement in a

cohort and EAL children, but overall it looks positive; the ultimate goal is to get progression. In a small school like NC, numbers and percentages constantly change.

Have you looked at the metrics just for these children who have in school from Reception to Year6?
No, but we can use SONAR, where leavers can be excluded.

It would be helpful to see the full track from previous year comparisons. Yes, this can be achieved following the summer assessments.

In Early Years, Ofsted doesn't look at data, and as well as literacy and maths, it has to include expected levels of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language. NC is close to the national average at the moment.

What is the area you are most concerned about? Writing! Nationally, writing is always considerably lower. The challenge is to get children to understand the purpose of punctuation and why it matters; why full stops and capital letters are imperative.

16. SDP 2024-25

- For the next half term, there will be a whole school child-led project where all classes will be given an area of learning (e.g. rainforests). Children will plan and structure the lessons, share how they will do this, what they are looking at and how will they present the data.
Fundamentally, the drive for this came from Ofsted, who noted that the children were well behaved, but questioned whether they are fully engaged. Hopefully, the project will engage them and allow children to challenge themselves, whilst developing social and teamwork skills. The skill for the teacher is to trust the children!
- The SDP has taken a back seat of late due to time taken up with finances and the child in care.
- A monitoring log of children is now in place.
- The HT is working on HR protocol and has signed up to a workshop with EPM.
- There has been progress with succession recruitment for governors.
- Child voice is becoming standard practice.

17. Any other business

Food survey – the survey was undertaken following concerns around the financial situation and uptake of meals. The survey was quite positive overall, with portion size the main concern raised.

Queens' College Owlstone Croft development – three governors have spent many hours looking through paperwork, as representatives of the school. They have requested other governors to help to share the workload. It was suggested that the HT write to the Director of Education, which the HT will do. Acknowledgement and thanks were extended to the three members.

ACTION F1202:02 – HT to write to the Director of Education to express concerns over the impact of the building works on the school.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

ACTION LOG:

| Minute Item no. | Action ref | Action | Owner | Deadline | Status |
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| 14. Policies for review | F1112:01 | Governor Monitoring policy to be reviewed and brought to the February FGB for approval. | ETS | Feb 25 | Closed |
| 9. Policies for Review | F1202:01 | EPC to discuss the location of a new evacuation site | NW | May 25 | Open |
| 17. AOB | F1202:02 | HT to write to the Director of Education to express concerns over the impact of the building works on the school. | EF | Feb 25 | Open |

Signed: 

Position: Chair of Governors

Date: 11 March 2025