



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 26 April 2023 at 6pm at school

Governors present: Dani Redhead (Chair-DR); Edward Ferguson (Head-EF); Matt Day (MD); Hugh Clough (HC); Jason Palmer (JP); Simon Hill (SH); Keren Sayir-Uziyel (KSU); Ave Wrigley (AW) David Carmona (DC); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS) *from item 6*; Yudan Ren (YR); Lucy Nethsingha (LN) *to item 10*

Also in attendance: Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB); Katy Holliday (KH) *to item 8*; Sarah Hellary (Early Year Improvement Adviser and governor at The Forest Federation)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies were received from Annie Hanekom (AH) and Aleks Jach (AJ).

2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None declared.

3. Governance Matters

The Chair introduced YR who is new to the governing body, and asked if any member would mentor her; KSU offered to do this. The governing body has a co-opted governor vacancy, which two individuals have expressed an interest in. The Chair read out their individual statements and following a discussion it was agreed that Nick Whitehead (NW) would be best suited to the co-opted governor role, and Niamh Sweeney (NS) as an associate member. DR proposed NW, seconded by KSU and agreed by 11 members. DR proposed NS, seconded by LN and agreed by 11 members.

4. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023

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 8 February 2023

- F0511:05 – Closed. Governors will do this at the non-staff governor meeting in the summer term
- F0802:01 – Ongoing. EF & DR to bring this to the next FGB meeting
- F0802:02 – Closed
- F0802:03 – Closed

6. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** (minutes previously circulated) – the Committee discussed separating the relevant sub-committee sections of the SDP to make it easier for the committees to target relevant areas.
- **Personnel and Finance** (minutes previously circulated) – the Committee reported that the finances were in a better position than expected, and the school has been able to present a strong, healthy budget for 2023/24, due in part to the staffing restructure.
Budget ratification – the budget document had been previously circulated, and the following questions were raised:

What assumptions have been made regarding staff costs going forward, given the Government settlement discussions are of considerable debate at the moment? All support staff have been given a £1925 flat rate and a 3% raise for teachers has been included. An email today has indicated that the school might get an extra £28000 but it's not clear if this is a new grant. The forward projections for 24/25 and 25/26 are more speculative and governors should be less concerned by them.

A governor asked for an explanation of the raise in lettings charges. The HT replied that lettings income in the budget is a reasonably conservative estimate. Compared to other schools' letting rates, this school has been undercharging. The ASC charges have risen from £5 to £10 per hour, but they are going to increase the club size by renting the hall to accommodate more children. The Nursery rate rise has yet to be finalised, but given they are a registered charity, the rate will be lower. The Nursery hours have increased slightly, and they are considering running a Rec/KS1 morning club as well.

A governor informed members that the Newnham Education Trust (NET) has accrued just over £13000 from donations. Some donations are to be used for specific purposes, but nevertheless is a good addition to the budget. Some formalities about changing the administration of NET are taking place.

Governors were asked if they were happy to ratify the 2023/24 budget. There were no objections.

- **Eco and Premises** (minutes previously circulated) – The Committee discussed formulating the school's next steps for objecting to the Owlstone Croft proposal, following the refusal of the first planning application, such as whether to approach Queens' College or the planners. Concern had been expressed about maintaining a good relationship with the College, so it was agreed to write a letter to the planners. The school's energy bills have increased by 50%; members of the Committee are to explore whether there is cavity wall insulation in the older parts of the school.

Following this brief outline of the EPC meeting, a discussion took place about Owlstone Croft. Governors were in favour of the school applying for Rule 6 status to put forward the school's position if needs be as part of any appeal by Queens' College. One member said she would recommend speaking directly to the College, who will be considering what to do next and may wish to have open dialogue with their neighbour.

7. Headteacher's Written Report (previously circulated)

A new initiative for this meeting has been for questions relating to the HT report to be submitted prior to the meeting. The following questions had been raised:

What impact will stepping in to the SENCo role have on the Y5 teacher's teaching responsibility, a role requiring a fair bit of time and attention – how will this be balanced with her teaching of a year group responsibilities? Although the school cannot commit to next year's staffing structure until after the May half term (teachers are required to give a half term notice before leaving), the hope is that she would not have a class-teacher role. Instead, her role would incorporate: supporting staff and children as SENCo; supporting our Pupil Premium children; and covering elements of teacher PPA. It is felt that having a SENCo without classroom responsibilities will allow them to really focus on our SEND provision.

Have you noticed any changes in how staff support each other following the Courageous Conversations teacher meeting? The assistant heads have spoken with one of the TAs about areas of their role that needs developing. The TA in question is very lovely and eager, and in the past it might have been that the identified weaknesses would have been more obliquely (and, therefore, ineffectually) managed. As yet, no other examples stand out.

With regards to the budget and forecasting, were we oversubscribed in Reception this year? Do you have up to date information on the birth rate for Newnham and what the projected need is going forward? We were oversubscribed in Reception. However, interestingly, a third of the children that received places were from out-of-catchment, highlighting the popularity of Newnham, but also the pressure to maintain that. In terms of numbers going forward, the projections are never very accurate. The last projections seen for this area of Cambridge were for quite limited growth in the Reception age range and therefore school places.

Will governors receive a summary of the breakdown of specific Pupil Premium spending and the hours etc given to each child and the impact seen? An anonymous breakdown of provision is on the website for years 21-22 and 22-23. The 22-23 document also contains a review of the impact of the support the PP children received for the previous year. The school will review the impact of the 22-23 provision when looking at the strategy for 23-24 towards the end of this term. This will be shared with the PP link governor and will then go on the website.

Have you planned arrangements for the Sports Premium unspent funds from 21-22, together with the SP funds from the current year? Spending is planned for the coming year in the summer term and then published (in a government-approved format) on the school website (click for [link](#)). For 23-24, the SP lead and HT will be discussing at some point before the end of this term. *This question was submitted late.*

To make better use of this resource to encourage sports and exercises, such as before school sports/exercise groups, teaching staff used to run such clubs, which were well received by many families. The school are constantly looking at ways to spend the sports premium. The problem is that the [guidance](#) (click on link to go to government document) on what it can be used for is quite proscriptive. Newnham Croft has so much more infrastructure that other schools do not. As for the clubs, there are two lunchtime clubs funded out of SP (hopefully increasing to three for next year) and it is not really feasible to pay teachers out of the premium - they are never paid for the clubs they run as they are considered part of the teachers' role. As for extra-curricular clubs outside of the usual school day, we don't feel that is a valid use of the premium, within the guideline. *This question was submitted late.*

JG volunteered to research energy saving grants for the purpose of making further improvements to windows and external doors around the school.

A discussion arose around the HT report and in particular whether the HT should summarise the report during the meeting, as well as circulating it prior to the meeting. It was agreed to trial the HT

circulating his report as well as giving an abridged version at FGB meetings, as Governors find it very useful to hear and discuss aspects of the report and to ask questions at the time. Governors were also asked to email at least one strategic question prior to meetings.

The following was also reported:

Safeguarding

- No incidents of Child Protection; no looked after children. No prejudice related incidents.
- Use of MyConcern has been well received and all staff are happy with how to log concerns. There have been 7 incidents recorded since February, involving 4 different children. In all cases, parents have been spoken to and help offered. In one case, the parents were put in touch with the Targeted Support Service and Family Liaison officer at the LA.
- Accidents last year requiring hospital treatment / reported to County: 1 incident of child fracturing wrist in a PE session (15/3/23).

Attendance

- 94% for the term to date.

Finance

- The budget for 2022-23 has ended more positively than was anticipated. Due to a combination of making savings on budgets (e.g. using Higher level TAs to cover teacher training) and an extra payment from the Government of around £14,000 to help support children from Ukraine, the revenue carry forward is £44669 (less Sports Premium £18171 - £26498) which is much healthier than was feared in the autumn. Combined with the projected budget for next year (containing the new leadership structure and associated savings), the school is on a reasonably sound financial footing.

SEND

- The SEND register has been updated. All IEPs are in place and interventions established.

Pupil Premium

- 22 pupil premium children on roll. Provision continues to be as before - 1:1 tutoring for those most in need, funding of clubs, music lessons, trips, swimming, residential and after school activities.

Sports Premium

- We are still waiting to hear back from Sports Premium admin regarding the unspent funds from 21-22. However, the Government has confirmed that the SP will continue for at least the next two years.

8. Pupil performance data

The Y6 teacher presented the performance data with headlines only as she had been unable to download all the data due to an error with the tracking software provider, Sonar. The following was highlighted:

Year 1 – the year group is generally where they would expect to be but maths will be looked at (though around 20% not on track is the same nationally).

Year 2 – both reading and maths are on track; writing has been affected by the cohort having both SEN and new to English children.

A governor enquired whether the above and below expectation refers to the national expectation.

The response was that yes, it is national, but she also noted that in a small school, the makeup of the cohort can make a huge difference to the percentage results.

Year 3 – this year group has certain barriers to their learning. The focus is on writing in this year group.

Year 4 – this year group has a large proportion of children new to English, hence the low score in Writing.

A governor noted that writing is a stumbling block for those children new to English, but why is reading not so affected? The teacher responded that reading definitely comes first. Scores are often higher nationally for reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Year 5 – there are a large proportion of SEN children in this cohort which had an effect on the attainment.

In describing the trends across the school, the teacher said the school is working on girls as mathematicians and the school is driven by wanting girls to improve their maths and to feel as confident as boys are in the subject. In some classes some girls are not reaching the standard or greater depth, so extra classes for girls are given by two adults in school, and a third volunteer who takes mixed classes. The maths lead is also working with teachers from other schools on methods on how to improve girls' attainment in maths as part of year-long project.

She noted that in the Year 6 March tests, of those who reached GD in maths, 2 were girls and 2 were boys. In reading the picture is more balanced, but in SPAG more girls reached GD, and only 1 boy. There are also fewer girls working at the standard in Maths – 5 this year. In previous years this has included boys too.

Pupil Premium children (22), 59% are on track with maths and 27% at GD. In reading 55% are on track and 14% at GD. In writing, 50% on track and 9% working at GD. Some of these children who are on track are on the SEN register.

In relation to PP children, a governor asked whether extra-curricular activities are being provided for, as in the past? The teacher responded that yes they are, in addition to booster groups to ensure they are being given the best access possible.

Noting that there are more PP children than historically, a governor enquired whether broadly speaking, in terms of attainment, the latest results are better? The teacher responded that yes, the results are more positive, especially at GD.

In terms of encouraging maths sessions as girls only groups, do you use other strategies to encourage girls to feel confident in some other ways rather than girls only groups? The school is trying as many different solutions as possible. Positively discriminating had limited success, so other approaches are being trialled in different year groups.

A governor noted that he knew of a large number of children having additional maths tuition outside of school, but he was reassured by these figures. He also noted that EAL children's writing must be affected. The teacher responded that EAL children struggle more in EY and KS1, but writing improves as they progress through the school and in fact by the end of Year 6, some EAL children often match or out perform their English peers.

Following the presentation, the teacher was thanked for extremely helpful report. This reporting will continue to be presented termly to governors and is usually much more detailed and includes trends and comparisons to national levels.

9. Governor Impact Review and Actions

The report from the CC Governance Advisers (previously circulated) was generally very positive and the Advisers were impressed with governors' progress at NC.

In terms of actions, two governors are still completing the induction process training. It was agreed that it would be useful to review the induction process now that it has been in place for a year, to assess impact. Governors were reminded to engage in regular training and asked to set a training target, to be discussed with the Chair or Vice Chair, to look at what will have the greater impact on individuals, and were reminded that roles and responsibilities and Safeguarding are really important. Governors are all invited to attend the staff safeguarding refresher and Prevent training on 1 September 2023 and governors that have not specifically undertaken safeguarding training were urged to do so. Governors were also asked to give a brief overview of meetings and training attended.

ACTION F2604:01 – Training and Governor Safeguarding to be added as a standing items on the FGB agenda

The Chair read out the 'Next Steps' section from the external review report, noting in particular the following:

- DR and EF to bring a proposed Scheme of Delegation to next meeting to provide further clarity around roles and responsibilities
- Governors will commit to focus on the strategic direction of the school by revisiting the vision and values
- Look for and note evidence, particularly once SEF is presented at next meeting;
- Safeguarding questions should be asked at every visit;
- FGB minutes should document the HTPM and staff performance management to evidence they have happened;
- Governors to continue to maintain strategic oversight of policy compliant, and to revisit and refine the work done on ensuring monitoring visits are impactful and that reports are increasingly consistent in detail;
- Performance and progress – governors to give more scrutiny to SDP at committee level and evidence scrutiny and look for impact;
- Governors, and particularly committee chairs, to continue to be mindful of good succession planning and ensure the work of governance is evenly spread.

The HT thanked governors for their hard work and conscientious approach to their roles, and also for their support.

10. Training Updates

Individual governors spoke briefly on key messages from the following recent trainings:

- Ofsted training – included how to gather evidence and a list of useful questions for governors to ask themselves in anticipation of a visit.
- Preparing for inspection – limiting judgements are safeguarding and quality of education.
- Governor induction – a helpful understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Annual Conference – the Chair spoke at the conference and made useful connections.
- Funding and budgeting – all members should receive monthly budgeting reports (these are shared in the Drive)

- Safeguarding – a reminder that this is so important for the whole governing body and must be kept at the forefront.
- Developing and Monitoring Curriculum – how to effectively monitor curriculum at whole-school and subject level and examples of questions to ask about different aspects of curriculum.

11. Governor Monitoring Visits

Some areas highlighted in yellow on the plan – these should be prioritised for completion during the summer term. The vice chair will support governors with this.

ACTION F2604:02 – governors to each review the Monitoring Visits document in the shared drive and complete any outstanding items

12. Staff Wellbeing Survey

The Chair highlighted the 2021/22 and 2022/23 charts to illustrate the huge improvement to the picture this year, with improvements noted across all areas of workload, school culture, communication, staff wellbeing, working together, school development and leadership. Governors acknowledged the hard work of the HT with a round of applause!

13. Report on LA RIG meeting

Listed below are the 5 key points from the meeting and read out to members:

1. Leaders and governors have made significant changes under new personnel and have an accurate view of ongoing priorities
2. Whilst a minority of staff feedback highlights workload and wellbeing concerns, this is not uncommon within the sector currently and is recognised by leaders
3. The school’s emerging SEF suggests that the school is consistently “Good” – which external validation and evidence would support
4. Partnerships with other schools are beginning to provide more opportunities for sharing ideas, support and practice
5. As a result of the improvements secured, this will be the final LA review meeting. That said, the LA remains on hand to support the school, if/where leaders and governors identify this moving forward.

The Chair thanked everyone for all their hard work, noting the report was a positive endorsement for the school.

14. Policies for Review:

Responding to Critical Incidents - it was agreed to review this policy at the next PFC meeting. The Chair of the EPC will also attend.

ACTION F2604:03 – Responding to Critical Incidents to be reviewed at the next PFC meeting, with the Chair of the EPC as well

The following had been previously circulated for information only:

- Collective Worship
- Reading, Phonics and English
- Intimate Care
- RE
- Debt Recovery
- Disciplinary Rules and Procedures for all Employees

– Staff Induction

15. Any other business

Grade descriptors and 20 Questions – both documents had been circulated for discussion at a later date. It was agreed that governors will meet to look at the documents collaboratively.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.08pm.

ACTION LOG:

Minute Item no.	Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
5. Structure and membership	F0802:01	DR to circulate sample Scheme of Delegation proforma. EF & DR to bring this to the next FGB meeting	EF/DR	June 2023	Ongoing
9. Governor impact review	F2604:01	Training and Governor Safeguarding to be added as a standing items on the FGB agenda	DR/HB	June 2023	Open
10. Governor monitoring	F2604:02	Governors to each review the Monitoring Visits document and complete any outstanding items	DR/all	May 2023	Open
14. Policies for review	F2604:03	Responding to Critical Incidents to be reviewed at the next PFC meeting, with the Chair of the EPC at attend	HC/JG	June 2023	Open

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____