



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 14 February 2024 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) *from item 13*; Ave Wrigley (AW); Emma Smith (ES); Katy Holliday (KH); Keren Sayir-Uziyel (KSU) *from item 10*; Lucy Nethsingha (LN) *up to item 14*

Also in attendance: Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB); Sue Bowman (SB) *from item 13*

The meeting was quorate.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies received from YR and AH.

2. Re-Appointment of Associate Member

Due to work commitments, JP has stepped down as an Associate Governor, but offered to continue to advise on eco matters. He was thanked for his work during his tenure on the governing body.

3. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

None declared.

4. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023

A governor reminded the committee that individuals referred to in governor minutes should not be named in published minutes. 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 6 December 2023

- F0507:01 – Closed
- F0612:01 – Closed
- F0612:02 – Closed
- F0612:03 – Ongoing

6. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** (minutes previously circulated) – No comments were raised.
- **Personnel and Finance** (minutes previously circulated) – YR and NW will conduct a kitchen audit in due course.
- **Eco and Premises** (draft minutes previously circulated) – The Croft Plot currently stands vacant so it would be good to find someone in the community to take it on. Two suggestions were to ask for volunteers at the Newnham allotment and the Scouts. Also, to ask if the volunteer supporting the Eco Committee may be interested.

ACTION F1402:01 – HT to connect YR and NW in order to organise a kitchen audit

ACTION F1402:02 – HT/NW to investigate possible volunteers to take on the management of the Croft Plot

7. Governor Visits and Monitoring Plan

The Chair thanked members for the visit reports submitted and also noted that there are a lot of visits coming up in the spring term.

8. Governor Training

The following courses have been attended by members:

- Induction training – a useful, clear overview of the role and structure of the school;
- SFVS – very useful to learn that this should be completed by governors and not the Finance Manager;
- Briefings.

The Chair encouraged members to book up LA training courses, with the aim of attending around 2 per term.

9. Policies for Review: None for this meeting

The following had been previously circulated for information only:

- Critical Incidents Plan
- Pay Policy

10. Headteacher's Written Report (previously circulated)

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

"A medium sized school" caught my thinking because our school only has 1 class each year, does it not make it a small sized school in the UK? Small schools are defined as having 100 pupils or less.

Could the TA work part-time for her recovery stage post operation? We structured a phased return for this TA when she first came back to work, starting off with 3 mornings a week and building from there. Our approach after her recovery consultation in February will depend on how she feels and her doctor's recommendations.

By now I am still struggling to match the staff names with faces. I wonder whether could include a photo of the staff board at the school entrance hall to the staff report? I might still forget, but it should help. I've just double checked with our Data Protection Officer and there is no issue with that. I have added the picture to the Key Facts PDF in the FGB folder on the Drive (although it is very small).

January is the usual UK SAD season. Could we propose an attitude of living: we all have personal challenges. Accept them so that energy will be saved to cope/solve them. That is definitely an attitude we try and encourage. As you can know, though, sometimes it is not easy to rise above issues and problems.

Is Learning Support Assistant for LSA? That's correct.

Seems the OFSTED is imposing a lot of psychology around staff at the moment. The Cambridge University school governor staff online community had a governor shared their recent experience: "I found the inspector really good - she was thoughtful, approached things well, spoke to us and the teachers professionally & with calm authority." Here is their [report](#). While this particular school had recently gone through many events that had negative impacts as I heard. It is understandable for some nerve-racking feelings, but a well managed school should stand well for any inspection at any time. Our confidence comes from the daily running of the school.

I completely agree and am as confident as I can be that we are always doing the best for our children. Nonetheless, it is an added pressure, however one tries to compartmentalise it.

It is good to learn: "OFSTED inspections were now more focused on areas of mental health during the inspection." How was the take-over for the schemes and programs of study - Kapow and Boost etc. since the subject lead staff left? Emily Palmer did a lot of work last term to ensure that MFL and Art were in positions of strength. Katie Wakelen is doing the same for PE this half term. Over the past 2 years, teachers have put in an enormous amount of work to create and develop the current curriculum structure - skills progressions, 2-year subject plans, topic overviews etc. This work means that, when a subject passes to another teacher, there is minimum disruption to the quality of teaching and delivery of that subject area. I have certainly found that when taking on MFL and Art this term.

How is the Pupil Progress over all? Generally, pupil progress is in line with what we would expect to see at this time of year. As mentioned in the HT report, there are ongoing discussions about how to deliver consistency in assessments between different teachers but that isn't affecting the overall progress of the children.

What do you mean by 'extraordinary behaviour' in the office? This was referring to some of the parents/adults and the often exasperating/rude way that they speak to the office staff.

It is reassuring to see that PGCE students have been in school and that the experience has been positively received. I don't recall PGCE students being in school over the last few years. Did the request for PGCE students come from staff or from you, and will more students be expected? We often have PGCE students in. There was a student in September '22 and '23. It is something that is encouraged and often very productive. The challenge is for teachers who already feel at capacity, it can feel like another thing to add to the list.

It is good to hear that teachers are engaging in regular writing moderation. Have these sessions highlighted any areas that might need support? Not yet. At the moment, the aim is to build up knowledge of age-group specific writing criteria and what it looks like through practice and discussion with peers. This will lead to a more consistent approach to assessment and, more usefully, the way writing is supported in class.

With regards to cultural capital, is there agreement amongst staff as to what essential knowledge the children of Newnham Croft need to ensure they leave the school as 'educated citizens' and how confident are you that this is embedding across the new curriculum? There is agreement amongst staff and I am confident the curriculum is able to support this. However, we do review the curriculum termly in teacher meetings and CC is one of the things we look at (hence the list of activities and opportunities in the HT report).

It is helpful to see absence rates in detail. A back-of-the envelope calculation suggests about 20 children (excluding PP and SEND pupils) have attendance rates below 90%. Is that correct? Are there any patterns by age/class? I was wondering if illness etc might be hitting some classes harder or if there are any causes of concern amongst those children? Are any children also safeguarding concerns? Could I also clarify the SEND absence data on page 6 - I think the total number of SEND children should be 20, if 5 (25%) are persistently absent. Apologies - the SEND number is indeed 20. There are no patterns that we can discern. The way the Christmas holidays fell this year has contributed to a lot of children absences being pushed beyond the 10% barrier as well as more illness than is usual (although I am not basing that on analysis of numbers).

How many safeguarding concerns are you seeing? Have numbers changed since you last mentioned that staff were being encouraged to log all concerns even if minor? We have had 12

concerns logged since the previous FGB in December. Numbers noticeably increased when we discussed logging all-and-any concerns.

What is “First Class at Number”? First Class at Number is an intervention aimed at supporting KS1 children who are struggling with maths.

What are Kapow and Boost? Kapow and Boost are education companies that provide schemes of work for French, Geography, RE and DT (Kapow) and science (Boost). This gives teachers a starting point and ensures the school has coverage of the curriculum and a progression of knowledge and skills across the year groups.

The report swaps between initial and full names - totally understandable! Is there any reason (apart from brevity) not to use full names throughout? Initials are for brevity. I do apologise as it is lazy of me and not that helpful for governors not familiar with all the staff. I will include full names for the next report.

Where is the curriculum intent articulated for link governors? Curriculum intent statements are on the school website (click [here](#) for link).

What is school-led tutoring? Since the COVID lockdowns, the government has given schools a grant to fund tutors to help children who fell behind catch-up in their learning. School led tutoring is a route that allows schools flexibility to identify their own tutors. Generally for Newnham, this has been used to support Pupil Premium children and is led by Jo Turner (SENCo and PP lead).

Questions raised at the meeting as follows:

Questions and comments were raised around the cultural diversity list and cultural capital, including:

- Governors and staff should be able to articulate accurately the ethos of the school, eg international and eco elements which are very particular to NC.
- The central knowledge that children should be able to leave the school as successful citizens (the values of inclusivity, cultures and kindness)
- The computer skills children will need, and how to use the tool safely.
- Democracy and freedom of speech – experience in the skills of debating; how to assert one’s views, even if one’s peers might not agree.

Safeguarding

- MyConcern continues to be used effectively. No obvious patterns emerging. Families of higher concern continue to be closely monitored and supported.
- No Prevent reports made.
- No prejudice related incidents have been reported.
- No incidents of Child Protection.
- No Looked After Children.

Attendance

- 95.04% for the term to date.

Finance

- SFVS completed and submitted to the LA.
- The LA financial adviser is happy with the projected c/f and we are hopeful, students numbers permitting, that the school is in a sustainable position.

SEND

- The SEND register has been updated, with 20 children on the register.

Pupil Premium

- 20 pupil premium children on roll. The SENCo continues works with PP children each Tuesday.
- PP meetings took place at the end of the Autumn term and included information from the assessments. The teachers, SENCo and HT reviewed provision and support for each child.

Sports Premium

Shelving has been installed in the new PE storage.

13. (brought forward) SDP 2023-24

A governor was unclear about the layout of the document. Governors should think about the overarching objectives, but also need to refer to the success criteria and planned actions, which will provide monitoring visit questions. If governors are unsure, HT suggested they contact him and he would help.

12. Data presentation

The teacher assessment data had been previously circulated.

A governor asked about the Year 2 writing assessment, asking if is low because of particular children? The school is trying to make writing assessments a little more robust so there is no inflation of moderations before children reach Year 6, but also to make assessments more accurate, which will lead to more consistency across all year groups. The teachers are at an early stage in this process. A letter has been sent to parents explaining this.

A governor enquired whether the On Track Autumn 23 data refers to being on track on that date or at the end of the year? The aim is to reach OT at the end of the year.

14. Preparation for an OFSTED inspection (SB)

A PPT presentation to governors ensued; the presentation will be circulated to all members.

The following points were raised:

- A 2 day inspection is now called a Graded Inspection.
- 'The Quality of Education' is a limiting judgement – if it is not judged 'good', then nothing else can be 'good'.
- Upgraded Inspections (1 or 2 days) doesn't change the grading. If an ungraded inspection is carried out, the next inspection would be a graded one.
- Before an inspection, website information, particularly curriculum information, will be viewed.
- Parent View – the school doesn't use Parent View, but has its own internal parent questionnaire which is used as a management document/tool as well as an information gathering tool, which should be viewed as a bonus!
- Ofsted priorities and focus areas are phonics and early reading; SEND and PP; eg a question such as, What do you know about how phonics is taught? might be asked.
- Governor evidence – do governors challenge the school during FGB meetings? ie ask questions.
- Safeguarding – are governors checking the culture of safeguarding during monitoring visits – ask a child, Do you feel safe in school?
- Filtering and monitoring – all County laptops and computers are monitored using Smoothwall. If someone accesses an inappropriate site, it flashes up on Smoothwall and is reported to the HT. The school can look at which website was accessed and can track which class was using the device (laptops are booked out with a date and time).
- Attendance – a key line of questioning. Attendance is monitored by the HT and Office Manager with termly low attendance letters sent to parents. Children with persistent

absence are closely monitored and a diary of conversations is maintained by the HT and OM. Reasons for absence are also noted on the daily registers.

- Quality of education in Early Years question – How is the curriculum in EY preparing children for moving to Y1?
- Adaptive Thinking – key focus around SEND. Make sure all children can access learning at their level and what they need at their own rate.
- Evidencing impact.
- Key questions – plan a meeting to discuss the key questions.

ACTION F1402:03 – Governors to meet to discuss Key Questions

SB was thanked for her very helpful presentation.

15. Any other business

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

ACTION LOG:

Minute Item no.	Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
18. AOB	F0612:03	EPC to explore funding applications for a school decarbonisation plan.	JG/JP	Jan 2023	Ongoing
6. Reports from Committees	F1402:01	HT to connect YR and NW in order to organise a kitchen audit	HT	March 23	Open
6. Reports from Committees	F1402:02	HT/NW to investigate possible volunteers to take on the management of the Croft Plot	HT/NW	March 23	Open
14. OFSTED	F1402:03	Governors to meet to discuss Key Questions	DR	March 23	Open

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____