



Newnham Croft Primary School

Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 6 July 2022, 6pm at Newnham Croft

Governors present: Dani Redhead (Chair – DR); Andy Matthews (Headteacher – AM); Edward Ferguson (EF); Hugh Clough (HC); Jason Palmer (JP); Simon Hill (SH); Matt Day (MD); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS); Jason Gellis (JG); Keren Uziyel (KU)

Apologies: Lucy Nethsingha (LN); Aleks Jach (AJ); Ave Wrigley (AW); Annie Hanekom (AH)

Also in attendance: Natalie Lealand (Clerk - NL)

The meeting was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from LN, AJ, AW, and AH.

2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the Agenda.

None.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held 27 April 2022 (FGB01)

Approved and to be signed by the Chair.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

F0112:04 SDP examples – no one is prepared to share (AM). A governor commented that they were able to see some examples at training recently, although they were unable to save copies. Newnham Croft's headline objectives appear longer than others, but the SDPs are all a similar length in terms of page count. Each was formatted slightly differently (some were arranged around the 3 I's for Ofsted, for example). The governor was reassured, seeing these examples. The main thing to be sure of is to have a workable document for governors. CLOSED.

F0902:01 Summary sheet for SEF – on the second page of the school's SEF there is now a summary. CLOSED.

F2704:01 School policy re. weedkiller. When AM looked into this with the council, the policy talks about the effort being for the Newnham community. As the school feels part of the community, they will abide by it. CLOSED.

F2704:02 School curriculum leads to be visible on the website – done. CLOSED.

F2704:03 New format for proposed SDP – to be discussed later in the agenda. CLOSED.

F2704:04 Newsletter to be sent to staff prior to being made public – AM confirmed that the school has now started a staff newsletter. CLOSED.

F2704:05 Social meeting for governors to allow for informal discussion – lunch has been arranged. CLOSED.

F2704:06 Parent questionnaire done – CLOSED.

F2704:07 School Streets – AM has investigated with the council, but the funding has been stopped so this is not a thing the school can pursue. CLOSED.

5. Governance Matters

- **Meeting dates for 2022/23**

F0607:01 Share FGB and committee meeting dates asap following this meeting.

- **Membership of Committees 2022/23 (FGB17)**

A document was shared with governors detailing current committee membership, and governors were invited to note any changes during the meeting or to make contact with the Chair or Clerk following the meeting.

F0607:02 Check requirements for Chairs stepping down (particularly with regards to the headteacher's performance committee.)

A governor asked whether others were happy to have a link governor for outdoor learning – all were in agreement.

A governor proposed a link governor for the kitchen – all agreed.

6. Reports from Committees

- **Personnel & Finance – see PFC draft minutes (FGB02)**

The main issue discussed was the hygiene rating of the school kitchen. A committee member offered a summary of the health inspection and agreed remedies. AM has received feedback on the document he submitted and has been given 11 points where things could be clarified. Once this has been completed, AM is happy to pay for a new inspection.

Summary of governor visit: oversight in the kitchen is not where governors would like it to be. External management has been switched to internal management in recent years (the contract with Lunchtime UK was terminated on 31st March 2021). There had been concerns raised re. the auditing service provided by Lunchtime UK in the past – there are some invoices where there is no corresponding evidence of audits having occurred. Lunchtime UK have been informed and are looking to see if they can locate the audit paperwork.

The governor commented that this is a concern re. management of the kitchen and paperwork. They also noted that the lowering of the hygiene rating has the potential for reputational damage, and as such governors should

have been informed as they hold some responsibility for strategic issues. There also appear to be ongoing operational concerns within the kitchen aside from paperwork. The governor suggested that the school needs some oversight that is independent, and which ensures that the kitchen is managed safely and well.

AM confirmed that all training requirements have now been completed by staff. He is investigating other schools which manage their own kitchens, with a view to learning from those identified.

AM commented that he does not have kitchen management experience, and the document that needs to be kept on top of is 104 pages long. He suggested that some external management is required.

AM suggested freeing up Gillian to complete the paperwork. Several governors agreed that this would be a good idea, although an external auditor is still needed.

A governor raised the issue that removing Lunchtime UK from the job description of the kitchen manager occurred without any discussion with governors. AM explained that this was not when Lunchtime UK had their contract terminated, but that mention of them was removed to clarify other things (inspections etc.).

A governor suggested that there could be a governor presence in any meeting between the kitchen manager and external auditor to ensure good relations, but other governors commented that this is not a governor's role. Another governor commented that the external auditor just needs to get the job done, and if this kind of issue occurs again governors should be informed immediately.

This item involved discussion which has been recorded as a confidential minute.

F0607:03 Look at kitchen manager's line management, and ensure AM knows what he needs to know.

Governors noted that the kitchen manager needs an effective job description with measurable targets, which is clear about responsibilities. The school must ensure that essential things happen (no deep clean for two years). A governor commented that they would like transparency over changes to job descriptions re. things such as auditing, where ramifications could be significant.

- **Eco & Premises – see EPC draft minutes (FGB03 to follow)**

A committee member offered a summary of the latest issues. The idea of secondary glazing has now been switched to replacing Year 3 windows. Maintenance has a long list of jobs for over the summer, including fire safety and aesthetic concerns. The committee had explained that they thought fire safety items should be tackled first, and AM commented that he has now worked on a jobs list with maintenance to allow priority work to be completed first.

- **Teaching & Learning – see TLC draft minutes (FGB04)**

A committee member explained what was discussed at the last committee meeting. They have also completed a visit re. phonics teaching at which they were able to observe how staff are preparing for the change in programme. They explained that the system with Little Wandle looks to be a bit more formal, especially in terms of the timing of noting pupil progress.

There was also discussion re. behavioural issues and whether a governor behaviour statement is required. Attainment of girls in maths continues to be a theme – the school is to make it a strategic priority to investigate and tackle this. EF explained that he has been in discussions with some people regarding specialist assemblies and the possibility of a working group.

- **Safeguarding monitoring visit report (FGB05)**

Governors were invited to ask questions about the report. There were none.

- **Monitoring of Covid-19 catch up (FGB06)**

Governors were invited to ask questions. There were none.

- **RE monitoring visit (FGB07)**

A governor commented that there seems to be a lot of work to be done. AM said yes, but he confirmed that the school is moving in the right direction 'pretty rapidly'. A governor asked whether the work will be done by the beginning of next term. AM – in terms of curriculum structure, yes. More time will be needed for other things, but the school will be meeting its legal requirements by September.

A governor commented that RE was rated as 'nearly good' at the beginning of the year by the school. How can governors be confident that the judgements the school are making are accurate? AM – the observations have been quite limited. The subject lead thought the subject was good throughout the school, they had spent a lot of time on KS1. It was one of the later subjects the school looked at, in terms of reshaping the curriculum. AM explained that the processes need to be more rigorous in future – when making judgements they need to establish an evidence base, rather than relying on individual judgements.

A governor asked – how do we know that subject leaders are confident in their roles? AM – partly performance review, ensuring subject training is good, and working with subject coordinators on their ability to make good judgements. The demands on subject leaders have been very new to a lot of people at the school this year, and work needs to continue re. professional development and understanding of the role. A governor commented that subject leaders work hard, and they need to make sure that support structures for them, from leadership, is good.

AM – the pressures on the school this year have been huge, and the ability of the school to support subject leads has been limited. They need to give people more time, and recognise that not all subjects will flourish at the same rate. A governor commented that the subject lead they spoke to was not aware of the full extent of the role when they took it on, and so it is no surprise that they were not able to do the job fully. AM responded that although some subject leads have been part of the subject teams for a while now, the requirements for subject lead has come as a surprise to some – some staff are moving more rapidly through the journey of understanding than others.

A governor asked re. subject judgements – is this just about the curriculum being in place, or an assessment of more? AM – it is an assessment of various things.

A governor commented that they and another governor have been doing training on the curriculum recently, and that the governor's role in this area is very difficult to understand unless people bring a specialist knowledge to the role. Another governor explained that it is about the documents – have we seen the documents, and do they seem right? In terms of books being at a reasonable standard, they do not think they would be qualified to carry out that kind of assessment.

Another governor said that their understanding is that governors are to ask the right questions of teaching staff, not to make judgements on the quality of teaching and books. This is what enables governors to hold the school to account.

A governor commented that it comes down to trust between the governors and teachers.

AM said that it is acceptable for governors to ask where the evidence base is. And teachers can present that, and governors can ask 'what are you going to do next/why?'.

EF – what we need is consistency of visits. A governor commented that there have been 37 governor visits this year. EF clarified that visits need to be consistent over 2 or 3 years – they have been disrupted by covid.

A governor commented that governors' shared experience of visits is important – with reports being shared on the Drive, any changes or deviations can be observed and that is what is useful.

Regarding the RE curriculum, a governor asked whether this situation is a problem or just something that has surfaced that governors have just become aware of. AM – it is a problem in the sense that it is something that the school needs to work on. EF – that it has been uncovered is good, because then something can be done about it.

A governor commented that they would like staff to know that governors are there as critical friends, with the best interests of the children at heart.

A governor on MFL monitoring commented that they have observed similar issues to those in RE, especially regarding monitoring and evaluation, and giving feedback to children. Seeing it in two different subject areas does ring alarm bells. They noted that the school has shifted from providing Italian tuition – it has now been removed, and this was not brought to governors or the TLC. AM – Italian was only provided in KS1 and MFLs are not compulsory in KS1. The quality of the tutor was not good, as observed by teachers and AM, and there were also timetable issues.

Decisions like this, a governor commented, should be brought to the attention of the governors.

7. School Development Plan – highlighted for this year and items to be carried over or moved to specific action plans (FGB08)

AM summarised the state of the SDP. There was no expectation that everything would become green by the end of the year – it was an ambitious plan. Some items will move to the new SDP or be placed on a separate action plan.

F0607:04 Governing section on SDP to be updated.

The Chair commented that almost every governor has done at least the 3 required trainings this year, and some have done many more.

8. Current SEF – for information and discussion of key priorities (FGB09)

Governors were invited to ask questions.

A governor asked how governor monitoring fits into this evaluation. AM – governor monitoring reports will be quoted as evidence for things being done well or where improvement is required. Responses from parent questionnaires should also be included. Subject leaders update their subject sections (they are currently using different styles, which means they may look different, but AM sees no issue with this). The evaluations should be guiding the action plans for next year – link governors should observe that areas for improvement on the SEF are included in these plans.

EF – there has been a suggestion to have 15 minutes at the beginning of staff meetings for staff to work on the SEF. A governor commented that this is good, as the idea was that staff would have input on the SEF.

AM – the subject deep dive week should also be used by staff as an opportunity to add to the SEF. Would be useful if link governors coordinate their visit with these weeks.

F0607:05 Dates for suggested monitoring visits/deep dive weeks to be shared with governors.

A governor commented that giving teachers advance warning of these visits is not as good preparation for OFSTED visits. AM – such visits enable staff to learn how to articulate their understanding of their subject and how it is going, and as such does offer good preparation.

EF – it is not helpful to set governors up as fake OFSTED inspectors. The time for reflection as part of these visits is what is most useful for teachers.

9. Draft SDP priorities for 2022/23 and new format (FGB10)

The SDP is now under different headings – 4 areas which then contain actions. This gives governors scope to look at different aspects of the school across subjects, rather than ordering the document under separate subject sections.

A governor commented that it is 11 pages, and they may need to lower the font so it is easier to handle. AM agreed.

AM – There are 5 overarching objectives included. They may want to add a 6th overarching objective to tackle behaviour, given feedback from staff and parents. There are linked action plans within the document, so all subject action plans will be available through the SDP.

A governor commented that they think it is better than the old one, although they noted that difficulties with the old one (difficult to see a summary, and also a lot of items listed that have already been completed) seem to be repeated with this new format. AM responded that he thinks that all SDPs will look similar, as it is to show progress that has occurred and is a working document. A governor proposed this could be spoken about further at an informal governor chat.

10. Update on Owlstone Croft development (FGB11)

Governors confirmed that the objection letter to this development has been submitted.

11. Headteacher's Report (FGB12a, FGB12b)

Staffing update
CPD, training and LA support visit progress
LAIG (verbal update)
Health and safety
Safeguarding

LAIG update a few days ago – there have been 5 additional points which have been added in blue text. Governors' attention was drawn to these and they have been invited to read them following the meeting.

AM and governors extended their thanks to the Year 6 teacher for good results, after poor results at the beginning of the year.

AM – re. data on the teaching outcomes version of the SEF document, actual percentages from SATs have now been added.

12. Standing Item: Safeguarding

- **Safeguarding Annual monitoring report (FGB13)**

AM explained that this is pro forma - filled out every year.

A governor asked about concerns raised by parents regarding bullying, which is not picked up in this report. AM – the report does not really cover this, it's more about training.

13. Parent survey (FGB14)

A governor commented that the survey results do not make for easy reading, and the governors should take this seriously. Almost every family has responded, so response rate is not an issue.

Bullying or poor behaviour seems to be more prevalent than on previous surveys. AM – there are two sides to this. There are some things that the school can do – refresh and improve where there is low-level behaviour around school. He has had conversations with teachers, and where parental concerns re. bullying have been presented they would often not meet the standards to be classed as bullying. Bullying must be persistent, planned, and power based. Other incidents have been cases of poor behaviour rather than bullying. The school needs to heighten awareness of their bullying policy – what bullying is and what would be done if bullying was identified.

AM emphasised that he is not trivialising the findings, but that ¼ of children in the school are not being bullied (the figure suggested by the survey). There have been incidents, dealt with by teachers and leadership, but it has not all been bullying. Children and parents need to be careful about using the word bullying – the anti-bullying policy is quite stringent for issues of actual bullying. He believes there have been 2 incidents which could be classed as bullying this year.

A governor commented – taking into account different definitions of bullying, parents are self-defining it as bullying in their own understanding. There are two issues – parents don't feel as though communication is good surrounding behavioural incidents, and it seems that children don't always feel listened to. AM accepts that there are some things teachers need to look at in practice. What the school does say is that this is a place where children should not be afraid to make mistakes, and children will make mistakes. Parents will not always be involved with every case of poor behaviour. The governor commented that they are thinking of cases of violence – AM responded that the school will involve parents where violence is concerned. The governor commented that they have been approached as a governor, by parents whose children do not want to be considered a snitch.

AM has spoken with the lead re. the PSHE curriculum and they are looking at covering issues of bullying and poor behaviour as priorities.

A governor commented that they would like the school to take this seriously, as it accompanies concerns on the staff questionnaire re. behaviour.

A governor commented that their children have shown a reluctance to tell teachers about persistent bad behaviour in the playground because they felt that individual incidents would be seen as minor.

A governor said that there is a sense that things are out of kilter in terms of how safe children feel at school. Mention of 'popular' children, expensive football kits, and attitude problems signal this. Another governor mentioned peer pressure relating to things such as expensive football kits.

AM – he knows that teachers do track low level issues, such as friendship problems, as he has had teachers speak to him about patterns of behaviour.

A governor suggested that staff could look at the questionnaire, suggesting actions that may be useful.

F0607:06 A letter to be sent to parents in response to the questionnaire.

A governor asked how the school deals with parent contact following incidents. AM – it depends if it meets the criteria for bullying. Parents should contact the class teacher in the first instance, who will sit down with them and discuss actions. This will then be monitored. If a pattern of behaviour continues it would move to senior leadership and start to meet criteria for bullying (persistence, planned, power).

The governor commented that they understand that certain behaviours may not meet the school's criteria for bullying, but if it does not meet the criteria is it then not dealt with? AM – no. Every incident reported is dealt with by teachers. Pupils should expect to give some kind of apology and/or consequences to their behaviour. A governor commented that their concern is a communication issue. Is there going to be a follow up? AM – sometimes parents do not feel that their concerns have been taken seriously.

A governor commented that they do not want parents to feel they are not being taken seriously.

EF – the school needs to work on things that can reassure parents and children. The school used to have two bells – at the first, children lined up, at the second everyone was quiet. This is not as organised as it used to be.

A governor agreed that resetting expectations is important.

A governor asked – has there been a low level degradation of behaviour in the school? Several governors responded yes. The governor - isn't that pretty serious? Others: Yes.

F0607:07 Issue of behaviour to be brought to the next meeting. Look for evidence that the issue is being tackled.

Tutoring – a governor asked how we can know that the good results in the school are down to the school's teaching - ¼ of respondents are using private tutors. Although education should be a joint effort, this would be good for the school to know.

14. Governor impact (FGB15, FGB16) and performance management

The Chair noted that governors have participated in training and conducted 30+ visits this year. Conversations regarding impact and future planning will continue at an informal meeting of governors.

15. Policies for review

None

16. AOB

This item was subject to a confidential minute.

With no further business, the meeting ended at 8:15pm.

ACTION LOG:

Action ref	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status
F0112:04	AM to forward other examples of SDPs to Governors.	AM	March 2022	Closed
F0902:01	AM to develop a summary sheet from the SEF for governors.	AM	March 2022 June 2022	Closed
F2704:01	EPC to propose a school policy re. use of weedkiller.	EPC	June 2022	Closed
F2704:02	AM to ensure curriculum leads are identified on school website.	AM	June 2022	Closed
F2704:03	AM to develop new format for proposed school SDP.	AM	June 2022	Closed
F2704:04	AM to arrange for newsletter to be sent to staff prior to it being made public.	AM	June 2022	Closed
F2704:05	DR to set up a social meeting to discuss governor impact – possibly facilitated by the LA.	DR	June 2022	Closed
F2704:06	Volunteers needed to help coordinate the parent questionnaire (contact DR).	DR/others	June 2022	Closed
F2704:07	AM to investigate 'School Streets'	AM	June 2022	Closed
F0607:01	Dates for next year's FGB and committee meetings to be circulated asap.	AM	Aug 2022	Open
F0607:02	Check requirements for Chairs stepping down (particularly with regard to the headteacher's performance committee.)	NL	Sep 2022	Open
F0607:03	Look at kitchen manager's line management, and ensure AM knows what he needs to know.	AM	Sep 2022	Open

F0607:04	Governing section on SDP to be updated.	AM (input from DR)	Sep 2022	Open
F0607:05	Dates for suggested monitoring visits/deep dive weeks to be shared with governors.	AM	Aug 2022	Open
F0607:06	A letter to be sent to parents in response to the questionnaire	AM	Jul 2022	Open
F0607:07	Issue of behaviour to be brought to the next meeting (place on agenda). Look for evidence that the issue is being tackled.	DR and FGB	Sep 2022	Open

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____