



## Newnham Croft Primary School

### Meeting of the Full Governing Body held on Wednesday 3 July 2024 at 6pm at school

**Governors present:** Dani Redhead (Chair–DR); Edward Ferguson (Head–EF); Matt Day (MD); Eleanor Toye Scott (ETS) *from item 5*; Emma Smith (ES); Katy Holliday (KH); Razia Mangera (RM); Keren Sayir-Uziyel (KSU); Annie Hanekom (AH); Jason Gellis (JG); Yudan Ren (YR); Nick Whitehead (NW)

**Also in attendance:** Helen Bracey (Clerk - HB);

The meeting was quorate.

#### 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed members. Apologies received from HC, SH and LN.

#### 2. Declarations of interest relating to items on the agenda

ES declared an interest in the item about an injury on the low bar in Item 5, the EPC minutes.

#### 3. Review and acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024

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

#### 4. Matters arising and review of actions from the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2024

- F0612:03 – Ongoing
- F1402:02 – Closed
- F2403:01 – Closed
- F2403:02 – Closed

#### 5. Reports from Committees

- **Teaching and Learning** – These minutes will be approved at the September meeting. In brief, the Committee discussed the recent Ofsted visit and the SDP.
- **Personnel and Finance** (minutes previously circulated) – Amongst other things, the Committee discussed possible ways of improving the school meal uptake.
- **Eco and Premises** (minutes previously circulated) – The Eco Committee attended the meeting and explained their choice of design for the re-working of the school front garden area. Quotes are being sought for the work.

Also raised was the accident on the low bar to a Year 1 child, resulting in an arm fracture. The parent of the child had requested that the equipment be withdrawn from service pending an investigation. The Headteacher had approached the LA for advice, who responded that this type of equipment is common in schools, and no record of this type of injury has been recorded. The EPC Committee Chair suggested that the piece of equipment which was considered low risk, should now have a higher rating. The HT disagreed, saying that the H&S team at the CC, who always err on the side of caution, were clear that they

think this was an unfortunate accident. A discussion followed about whether supervision had been adequate, as the accident had not been observed by lunchtime staff, and some governors felt that because of this, the risk assessment should necessarily alter, should such an accident happen again. The number of supervisors is higher than in previous years, and supervisors are aware of the need to supervise the play equipment in that area. Following all incidents the school does review the risk assessment. It was agreed that the EPC would keep this on their radar and review the risk assessment.

**ACTION F2404:01 – EPC to review risk assessment of low bar equipment.**

**6. Governance**

Monitoring Visits – the Chair thanked all governors for their visits, noting that the visits had been recognised by the Ofsted inspector. Maths and Premises and the H&S visit have been moved to the next academic year, and those not yet completed were in hand.

**Governor roles and meeting dates**

- The list for governors to complete their areas of interest had been circulated with the agenda and was passed round during the meeting.
- Thanks were extended to the three outgoing governors.
- A parent governor vacancy will be advertised before the end of term.
- Governors were asked if they would be interested in the resulting LA governor vacancy, which would require some additional training and be LA approved.
- It was agreed that the support staff governor role be removed from the constitution.
- Two co-opted governor vacancies will be advertised locally.
- 2024/25 meeting dates were circulated.

**Skills training and succession planning**

- Ten governors had responded to the NGA survey. Two (out of three) governors who are due to leave did not respond. The scores for each governor, on average, were 3 or higher.
- The audit highlighted the following areas where some governors may want to consider taking additional training: equality, diversity, unconscious bias, EDI financial processes.
- Moving forward, the governing body should set some strategic priorities and goals for the next year or two, and to think longer term so there isn't a sudden exodus of experience.
- Governors interested in the position of Chair should think about taking on the training, which is quite intensive, but good to have more than one governor trained up. Supporting the HT is a large part of the role of Chair. The Chair said she is happy to continue until a replacement is found, saying it might be best for the school to have a Chair who has already done/partially completed the Chair training.
- The current School Improvement Advisor is leaving; the HT is confident that the new advisor, who is very experienced, will be able to provide the necessary support.
- Governors were encouraged to sign up for training as soon as it goes live as courses book up quickly. The Deputy Chair will find out when the training schedule will be published.

**ACTION F2404:02 – Deputy Chair to find out when the training schedule will be published and circulate the date.**

**7. Standing Item: Governor Impact**

A draft version of the Governors' self-review and impact 2023-24 had been circulated, and governors were asked to voice anything they felt had been missed out. Once completed the document will be available on the website. The Chair thanked governors for all of their hard work.

**ACTION F2404:03 – Governors to submit to the Chair additions for the self-review and impact document.**

## 8. Policies for Review:

- Charging and Remissions: no changes had been made and the policy was approved unanimously.
- Prevent: no changes had been made and the policy was approved unanimously.

## 9. Headteacher's Written Report (previously circulated)

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

***I took the % figures as the absence vs total days. Please let me know if this is not the case. The Support staff % improved a lot vs previous years. What do you think are the main reasons?*** The % figure is absence vs total possible days. Support staff absence has improved because there hasn't been a permanent long term absence, as there was in previous years. Generally, apart from one member of staff, the staff seem in good health.

***How do you fairly judge whether it is the case when staff claim the workload is high? If it is the case, what solutions will you propose?*** We gauge this by looking at the person's wellbeing; if they are happy/coping/positive, then I consider the workload to be okay. If it is clear that person is really busy, there has to be a point where that workload will reduce. I think pressure from workload is very dependent on the person and what they have going on in their lives. If workload is too high, we look to reduce it (for example we removed the SL role for a teacher last year when it was clear they were not coping with all the pressures they had in their life at that time).

***How much is MyConcern used in this academic year? e.g. how many children, how many concerns etc. Is it helpful?*** We have had 101 concerns filed this academic year. There are just over 50 children that these concerns have related to. Yes, it is useful. Having all the current concerns available for KM and my weekly meetings means we can ensure we are on top of the concerns that are in school and discuss actions/outcomes easily and quickly (as they are all available on screen rather than the old paper system).

***When talking staff absences you give teachers as 10.2 FTE, while your current management gives 8 FTEs.*** The reason we have 10.2 FTE is due to requiring spare teacher capacity to cover non-contact time for subject leaders/PPA and assistant head time.

***Attendance is a concern, especially for the most vulnerable groups. Did your case by case analysis identify medical or other valid reasons for the PP students?*** There has been more illness this year than we would normally expect. We judge the validity of illness by a child having consecutive days off (rather than a day here and a day there), so look for those patterns on the attendance forms. For the vulnerable children, there is one with severe medical needs, others that we can see an improving picture, one that comes in late every day, but we consider that a victory as we just want him in school (I shared this approach with the inspector and she was understanding of the context and the approach). Overall, we are aware of the reasons behind the children being away (the office manager has a reassuring depth of knowledge) so are able to decide on the most appropriate strategy/letter/approach.

***Are there 20 or 21 PP students on roll? Absence data and PP discussion give the different numbers.*** The correct number is 21.

***Are there 20 or 26 SEND children on roll? Again the two numbers are given under the two headings in your report.*** The correct number 26.

***It is really pleasing to hear that you felt well supported during Ofsted from all the staff. That is very encouraging. What do you think had the biggest impact in terms of how you prepared staff to***

**be in a good position for Ofsted's visit?** I think the culture of professionalism and the expectations that staff place on themselves is the main driver of the high standard and preparedness for OFSTED. I hope I managed to convey to staff that just by doing their jobs, they would be fulfilling all that OFSTED would expect of them. I also hope I managed to reassure and calm any anxieties by remaining calm and positive about their impending visit.

**How did the LA specialist SEND teacher rate the provision in place for children and what areas did she recommend for development?** The specialist teacher was generally positive about what the SENCo has been doing. She made a couple of suggested improvements to the documentation for the education plans for individual children (now called APDRs - Assess, Plan, Do, Review being the cycle that is undertaken when providing extra support for a child with SEND)

**What were you hoping Provision Map might be able to offer the school and is there still a need for support in this area?** This was a piece of software that a school had mentioned to the SENCo. In theory, it brings together all things SEND into one interconnected whole. In reality, the SENCo felt that, while it would be useful for retrieving information quickly in an OFSTED inspection, it had limited real world use beyond that and didn't justify the near-£1000 annual cost, particularly with our relatively low numbers of children with SEND.

**Are there any areas for development that governors should be aware of, following on from the LA English advisor's writing moderation visit?** Strengths identified:

- "A very broad range of evidence available - wide range of text types and levels of formality."
- Well prepared
- Teachers clearly able to explain strengths/next steps for pupils.

Development points:

- "N/A"

**It is concerning that persistent absence among PP children has increased, given the interventions put in place. Do you have any thoughts on why over 50% of PP children have persistent absence?**

It is concerning, and it is complicated. In a sweeping generalisation, some of the PP families do not value attendance (and education?) as highly as other families in our community. There are attendance habits that some have formed that are hard to break (especially post-pandemic). For a couple of children, there are very real health concerns. Some of our PP children are from Ukraine and have taken holidays to visit family, usually in school time due to cost. We continue to work hard to adapt our methods of trying to increase their attendance. Recent letters have included link to the NHS webpage "[is my child too ill for school?](#)" which aims to raise the bar for when a parent decides a child is too ill for school.

**What actions has the school taken to review the piece of equipment that the child broke her arm on, and are there any risks that it might happen again?** As with all similar incidents, we immediately checked to see if the equipment was in any way faulty. We checked that the piece of equipment had previously been a source of injury. We looked at whether the child had been using the equipment in an unusual way. I checked in with the adults on duty that day to ensure that supervision was appropriate and in line with expectations and our risk assessments. I emailed the LA H&S team to check if they had any record of issues with similar equipment in other playgrounds. They replied: "This equipment is common in schools and while there are incidents these are often due to issues with the surface or if the equipment is in disrepair, or if there was a lack of supervision and a failure to ensure that the equipment was being used safely. This incident was reviewed, and it was deemed that neither of these were present. Has the child used the equipment before without injury along with her peers? This would suggest that the equipment is age appropriate." **Assistant Health and Safety Advisor.**

## **Safeguarding**

- No obvious patterns in the types of safeguarding concerns emerging. Families of higher concern continue to be closely monitored and supported.
- No Prevent reports made.
- There have been no prejudice related incidents to report.
- No incidents of Child Protection.
- No Looked After Children.
- 1 child was excluded for a day

#### **Attendance**

- 94.68% for the term to date.

#### **Finance**

- Due to the resignation of a LSA, the budget forecast has seen around an £8000 improvement.

#### **SEND**

- The SEND register has 26 children on the register.

#### **Pupil Premium**

- 21 pupil premium children on roll. The SENCo continues to work with PP children on Tuesdays, often in groups. In one sessions she supports children in class.

#### **Sports Premium**

SP continues to support swimming lesson provision and the necessary travel costs involved.

### **11. Ofsted Inspection 18 and 19 June 2024**

The Ofsted report has been received and circulated to parents, and will be go on to the school website. The report is generally very positive, and the inspection had overall been a positive experience. Areas to note were:

- The inspector scrutinised the area of challenging pupils across all subjects. She said she felt some children are not as engaged as they could be; working against this the school needs to ensure they are properly challenged.
- The scheme of work extension activity is sometimes not challenging enough.
- She noticed a disparity between what she saw in books and discussions in class. Conversations in classrooms facilitated by teachers were of a higher quality than the work recorded in the books. There also too many photocopied worksheets used.
- She praised the use of floor books in Reception and suggested they could be used higher up the school, which in fact was already happening.

With the inspection out of the way, the HT said the SLT feels they have been given permission and the confidence to trust in their instincts.

***A governor raised how challenging children can be evidenced?*** The inspector had suggested this can be shown in alternative forms to just showing the work, such as video and floor books.

***A governor suggested there could be a risk if the school follows all the inspector's advice, as another inspector might have other suggestions.*** The HT agreed. He explained that the National Curriculum would still underpin our approach, but that it was important to have the confidence to use the extensive experience in the staff body to enhance the curriculum.

Building on the inspector's comments on the advantages of continuous provision in Y1, the YR teacher (who will teach Y1 in September) spoke about her plans for introducing continuous provision from September. Reception children leave the year with great skills, which can often get lost in Y1. Learning through play impacts on their wellbeing and she is excited about bringing this change to KS1. Assessments in Y2 have also changed, meaning a removal of the need to show ALL the National Curriculum objectives in books. So this, combined with the removal of a mixed Y1/2 class, means this is the right time to introduce continuous provision.

***A governor asked whether this new approach to Y1 will raise challenge issues?*** The response was that no, the approach gives the children the means to apply what they have been learning, though it will mean more observing from staff. The provision will develop over the year and aims to cater for all abilities.

The Chair said the inspector hadn't captured this in her Ofsted report. An Action was raised to request her notes from SB.

**ACTION F2404:04 – Chair to get new notes from SB.**

**12. Parent Survey**

A summary of results was presented with the report FGB14a. The survey showed a positive picture of parental satisfaction overall. Due to parents responding to the questions via ParentView, questions not raised included behaviour, topic overviews, homework, EAL and catering, but will be included next year.

A conversation about the drop-off in school meal uptake ensued. Questions about why this might be ranged from affordability, portion size, parental challenges on the quality and the day to day unpredictability of whether to have a packed lunch or school meal (eating a packed lunch makes it quicker to go out and play!). Suggestions included asking parents to commit to schools meals at least a week in advance; school meal requirement is compulsory in some schools. Year 6 had carried out a survey amongst pupils which showed that some younger children do not always choose balanced options. Governors noted the importance of hearing the pupil voice. The Chair proposed sending something to Year 6 parents before they leave, and then to all parents in the autumn term.

**ACTION F2404:05 – A letter/survey re school meals be go to Year 6 parents before they leave, and then to all parents in the autumn term.**

**13. SDP 2024-25**

The HT noted that compared to last year, this year's SDP was much better judged in terms of teaching targets. Targets can often take more than a year to embed and some will be revisited. LSA observations have been successful in making sure support is more open.

- Children's writing for purpose – lots of letters have been written this year; it is good to have a target of writing an internal piece at least once or twice per term.
- Presentation in books – still needs to be worked on; there is a trade-off of having lovely presentation in books and getting the work done!
- Attitudes and taking risks – this will roll on.
- Creative solutions to absence – still a problem for a minority of children. Besides the termly attendance letters, the HT speaks to parents regularly.
- Purposeful links with other schools – the reciprocal relationship with Bewick Bridge and Ridgefield will continue next year.
- Governors and senior leaders – monitoring visits have been excellent; governors are skilled in looking at their subjects and staff feel less stressed by the scrutiny, which is now more of a dialogue.

**14. Any other business**

The Chair expressed her thanks to the three outgoing governors and cards were given.

With there being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.00 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/EF | Jan 2024 | Ongoing  |
| 5. Reports from committees | F2404:01   | EPC to review risk assessment of low bar equipment   | NW    | Sep 2024 | Open     |
| 6. Governance              | F2404:02   | Deputy Chair to find out when the training schedule will be published and circulate the date.                          | MD    | Sep 2024 | Sep 2024 |
| 7. Governor impact         | F2404:03   | Governors to submit to the Chair additions for the self-review and impact document.                                    | DR    | Sep 2024 | Sep 2024 |
| 11. Ofsted inspection      | F2404:04   | Chair to get new notes from SB   | DR    |          | Sep 2024 |
| 5. Parent survey           | F2404:05   | A letter/survey re school meals be go to Year 6 parents before they leave, and then to all parents in the autumn term. | HT    | Oct 24   | Sep 2024 |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_