

Minutes from the Full Governing Board Meeting  
Held at Neale-Wade Academy on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Present:

Graham Horn (GH), Elaine Graham (EG), Jim Rowland (JR), Nick Morley (NM), Carole Spibey (CS)  
Lucetta Crosskill (LC) Chair, Katherine Nightingale (KN), Anna Betts (AB)

In Attendance: Hannah Warren – Acting Clerk to the Governors

Apologies: Anthony Chandler (AC)

Item no	Item	Action
1	<p>Welcome/apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies received from Anthony Chandler due to an unavoidable personal matter.</li> <li>• Introductions, including Nick Morley as recently appointed Vice Principal.</li> </ul>	
2.	<p>Declaration of Business/Pecuniary Interests &amp; Conflict of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KN – runs regular funded sessions/workshops at NWA with 20twenty Productions.</li> </ul>	Pecuniary Interests form issued to all staff/Govs in September by A. Long
3.	<p>Chair's Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LC – first FGB meeting as Chair. No action taken.</li> </ul>	
4.	<p>Membership of the Governing Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LC – appointment to Chair of Governing Board. Nominated and accepted appointment to Link Governor for Safeguarding.</li> <li>• AB – welcomed as recent appointment to FGB</li> <li>• KN – confirmed as Link Governor for SEND, Careers, Arts and Disadvantaged Children.</li> <li>• All Governors have received link via email to complete Handsam Safeguarding Training.</li> </ul>	KN, AB and AC to complete Handsam Safeguarding Training.
5.	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous minutes not available.</li> <li>• GH suggested the meeting is used as an opportunity for Q&amp;A due to recent new appointments to the Board.</li> <li>• LC spoke about the change in responsibilities of the FGB within a Trust in respect of policies being determined and ratified at Trust level. FBG becoming more of a 'Community Council' maintaining links with staff and students.</li> <li>• AB asked how FGBs work across Trusts.</li> <li>• GH explained that this depends on the Trust. ALT work to National Strategies and adopt the philosophy that each school has its own identity and culture. No set model.</li> <li>• KN asked if members of the Trust can be asked to join the FGB.</li> <li>• GH confirmed that this is the case and has been done by J Horn at Cromwell Community College. J Horn as Executive Head is looking at "What is an effective governance?" Responsibility of the FGB remains linked with the legality of policies and procedures within the Trust.</li> </ul>	Decide how to operate as a group. Quality of Education and Behaviour is a focus for all. Each Governor to have a specialism.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KN stated that she found presentation of data difficult to interpret under previous headship and has never had a walk around/tour of the entire Academy. She felt very much part of the community at the recent drop-down day and feels that it is an advantage for staff to get to know the Governors and what they do. LC agreed this would build good relationships.</li> <li>• AB suggested 2 meetings per term with visits during the day. Each Governor following an area of priority. Meet with staff, meet with students and come together later to discuss feedback in order to have a positive impact. GH suggested a visit attached to the FGB meeting to fit in with the School Improvement Plan.</li> <li>• KN asked what the Leadership Team expect from them as Governors. NM stated that feedback from conversations with staff and students are a useful tool to understand issues. JR said he would like to see Governors raising their profile with staff and students and helping to make improvements. CS agreed and noted that the FGB has previously appeared detached. It would be beneficial to receive an honest view of what is seen. KN would like to speak with a broad range of students that haven't been hand-picked by staff.</li> <li>• NM suggested that LC attends the Safeguarding Review.</li> <li>• KN asked how many Governors we need. GH suggested 6, possibly additional members within education.</li> <li>• GH invited the FGB to attend the AIG (Academy Improvement Group) meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July to form a link with ALT.</li> </ul>	<p>NM to inform AB of next Safeguarding review.</p> <p>GH to confirm time of AIG on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022.</p>
6.	<p>Business Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KN asked for a Health &amp; Safety update. EG explained the use of Handsam to assign tasks and support the annual H&amp;S audit. GH stated that the audit is a rigmarole and that it may be changing from September. He went on to inform the FGB that NWA received the highest ever audit score of any secondary school with 95.2%.</li> <li>• EG – submitted the 3-year budget to the Trust board early May for the Operations Director of the Trust to consider. Although this will not have taken into account any 31<sup>st</sup> May resignations, NWA has a 'carry forward' which was gained during Covid from having no full body of staff with no requirement to recruit during the lockdown period. The proposal sets out plans to use the 'carry forward' for planning projects to improve the NWA site, overstaff and develop the right curriculum/systems.</li> <li>• Budget submitted to ALT has Year 1 with a surplus of £24,681, Year 2 small deficit and Year 3 £210,000 deficit. The rebase budget will be submitted in September with all updates. KN acknowledged the impressive work done regarding this.</li> </ul>	
7.	<p>Principal's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GH summarised Self Evaluation and Improvement Plan – SLT objectives ragged (red, amber, green) half-termly. Report produced and added to the original version (LC provided with a copy). Improvement plan split into three sections under JR, NM and EG. Safeguarding to underpin all areas. Quality Assure everything – make sure it happens and is measurable. Ethos of NWA is the "School of Choice" amongst the community. Actions and Impact measured against success criteria and broken down as a summary for reporting.</li> <li>• Self-evaluation – devise an efficient way of evaluating. NWA is still RI, teaching and behaviour is not good enough.</li> <li>• LC asked what CPD looks like. Learning walks, book looks etc.</li> </ul>	

- GH spoke about curriculum planning – staff leaving with some not being replaced. £750,000 cost to run the timetable each year. Looking at the options that are available to students, size of class groups and keeping staff that are not needed. Over two years we have been 90 hours over requirement. Savings re-invested to support students, NM in post as Vice Principal. James Crawley as Alternative Provision and Safeguarding Lead, Kirsty Gallagher KS3 Behaviour Lead, Sam Mandley KS4 Behaviour Lead.
- JR summarised his team: Sarah Thomas Professional Tutor, Claire Howlett KS3 Quality of Curriculum, Mel Henman, Assessment and KS4 Lead.
- CS explained structure of Sixth Form as a slightly separate dept: Carole Spibey Quality of Education Focus, Cathryn Gribble Assistant Head, Sharna Ayres Admin Assistant in a more developed role supporting day-to-day tasks, UCAS and Enrolment.  
Carole explained that she line manages IT & Media, Social Sciences; Sociology, Psychology and Criminology. Also has close liaison with Cromwell and consultant support; Jenny Milsom, former head of Sixth Form at One College in Ipswich. A valuable set of eyes to assess and share expertise.  
Teaching and Learning Conference – focus on Sixth Form. Student lead, engaging, interactive learning, staff have had CPD. Students are asked for feedback. Return visit in April. Repeated the process – not consistent but improvements have been observed by students. Feedback was positive. Half termly sixth form meetings; Curriculum Leaders and all staff, to discuss visions and strategies.
- GH – CS as Head of Sixth Form has operational influence as SLT for curriculum plan and recruitment. How can teachers be held to account when they aren't specialists in the subject they are teaching?
- KN clarified roles – Heads of Year line managed by NM. CS – curriculum review meetings. Meets with Heads of Faculty to discuss Sixth Form. GH pointed out that the current Interim Head of Maths isn't aware of qualifications held by his team. GH pointed out the importance of specialism. KN agreed that this would give them credibility. JR added that working out of your specialist subject impacts on workload as you must learn what you are teaching. LC asked how many teachers currently teach out of subject. JR confirmed 25 staff teach across 2 subjects. Some are happy to be moved over.
- AB asked about staff retention. JR confirmed that it is relatively low compared to others, but retention is generally low in the Fenland area. Substandard teaching is tolerated to keep a known face rather than using agency cover. Moving forward, this needs to be eradicated.
- EG referred to the previously used 'speed-dating' service to recruit overseas teachers pre-Covid. We have not needed to use this method since, we have been able to adopt the practice of "if they're not good enough, we won't appoint". LC acknowledged that it is difficult to "get rid of" substandard teachers.
- GH spoke about the positive aspect of NWA's recruitment process using an early curriculum plan, advertising early and being able to recruit quickly. Overstaffing meant that we lost 2 Science teachers but only needed to replace 1. Savings have gone into the expansion and re-investment of pastoral care. GH went on to summarise new appointments such as Lead Practitioners and Heads of Dept. Science and Geography are difficult areas to recruit due to shortages in specialists.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AB asked if trainees are considered. GH explained Sarah Thomas' role as Professional Tutor training ECT1s in the hub at Cromwell. Placements are advertised nationally and at the University of Bedford and Leeds, so this is a good source for recruitment.</li> <li>• KN asked about how staff well-being is supported. EG explained the Well-being Charter and NWA Well-Being Committee which deliberately doesn't include members of SLT, encouraging staff to talk and share ideas about what can be done to improve. The DfE produced a charter which will be given to every staff member to read and sign up to in September 2022. There are currently 2 Mental Health First Aiders on site with the plan for additional members across the departments.</li> <li>• KN asked about student well-being. NM summarised the challenges around 70-80 dominant students with behavioural issues that under-skilled staff struggle to manage. GH said that behaviour governs the culture at NWA and that structural change and staff views/philosophy needs to change, in some cases, to evoke improvement. NM explained the proposed structural change from Year Teams into Heads of Year (focusing on recognition and celebration of 90% of students) and Student Services Team (focusing on safeguarding, attendance, poor behaviours, students in crisis) Attendance is currently 86%, with the target being 97%. Early intervention work is key. CPD will involve 30 minutes of training around SEND, Safeguarding and Behaviour. Processes and systems must be consistently used for positive steps to be made. LC pointed out that P1s are awarded less often which is disappointing from a parent's perspective. NM – Heads of Year will focus on this. GH confirmed that consistency is key and that systems should not be undermined by staff. NM added that seven weeks into the C3 Defiance System, staff, pupils and the community are beginning to make their own decisions about what a C3 is. GH read the C3 defiance script to the Board Members and gave an example of a recent situation where the system had been undermined. He added that consistent recognition means more to students than a selected group being taken on a trip. KN asked how safeguarding issues are communicated to staff to ensure a considerate approach is taken towards behavioural issues. NM acknowledged this is not currently done well and will be improved with the support of Student Services circulating a coded message to relevant staff. NM confirmed that student passports are fully used following the AIG. KN said that she was surprised by the lack of staff visible around the school during the drip down day. GH said that staff often prefer to stay in their room rather than potentially be faced with an incident to deal with. This is partly down to lack of confidence.</li> </ul>	<p>DfE Well-Being Charter to be given to all staff to sign up to in Sept 2022.</p> <p>Implementation of change in structure – Heads of Year and Student Services Team.</p>
8.	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Safeguarding report provided to each member of the Board and summarised by NM.</li> <li>• NM explained the increased capacity of DSLs. The use of coloured lanyards to identify DSLs and posters around the site. KN notice the posters during the drop-down day.</li> <li>• Referrals of safeguarding concerns are very low, possibly due to fragility and lack of confidence from staff. Training needed. Full Governing Body to be trained in September 2022. GH discussed a worrying culture where doors and gates are left open. Signs need to be recognised. Questions asked to check understanding.</li> <li>• NM – questionnaire to be sent to staff. Experiment to allow a visitor to bypass reception and see how far they get.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NM informed the Board of a County Lines assembly on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Visit from the Safe Team, Police and a video put together for all year groups. Discussions will be had with students and a Safeguarding questionnaire issued during N Rowe PSHE lessons to check understanding. NM keen to share intel within the local area. KN suggested Young People March could be involved.</li> <li>Attendance monitoring to be ramped up. Early intervention and prevention before fines are issued. Discussion around impact of cost of living, how families can be supported once children have transitioned from Primary School to Secondary School. Suggestion that KN, NM and Student Leadership team could plan strategy for identifying where support for families is needed.</li> </ul>	
9.	<p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GH gave an overview of policies. Each member given a copy of the policies in their pack.</li> <li>EG presented the Lettings Charging Structure for 2022/23. This was ratified by the Board.</li> </ul>	
10.	<p>Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniform review – Governors to be part of this.</li> <li>AB suggested communication with the community could be improved. GH suggested AB attend Comms Strategy meeting with ALT.</li> <li>GH gave update on Student Voice and will invite Megan Holden as SV Coordinator to the next meeting.</li> <li>LC closed the meeting by stating that she feels confident NWA is heading in the right direction.</li> </ul>	
11.	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FGB Meetings: Wed 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 Wed 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Wed 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 Wed 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Wed 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023</li> <li>AIG dates to be confirmed.</li> <li>Communications Strategy Meeting to be confirmed and strategy sent out in preparation.</li> <li>Governors to be informed of extra-curricular events</li> </ul>	