

Meadow Primary School and Wimbish Primary Academy Joint Governing Board Meeting Minutes



17th March 2025 at 6pm

Held in person at Wimbish Primary Academy

Governors Present: Neil Birkett (NBi), Liam Brennan (LB), Carrie Carter (CC), Chris Griffen (CG), Tom Littler (TL), Keith McKinley (KM), Nichola Pickford, (NP Executive Headteacher), Alison Weir (AW)

Others Present: Heather Lander (HL Governance Professional), Nicky Butcher, (NBu Deputy Headteacher)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Introduction	
	Prior to the start of the meeting, NP gave a tour of the school to the Governors. NP introduced HL as the new governance professional who had taken on the position in place of Jackie Sweeting (JS).	
2.	Appointment of Co-Chairs for the joint LGB	
	<p>JS had met with NBi and CG before her final day to provide more information around how a Co-Chair role would work, what it would entail and to provide a list of required “tasks” that could be shared between the two. Both NBi and CG confirmed that they would be happy to stand for the Co-Chair role, with a review in December.</p> <p>HL “chaired” the meeting at this point to ask if there were any other nominations for the role of the Chair to be considered. There were none. There were no objections from the LGB to the appointment of both NBi and CG to the role of Co-Chairs. Their appointment is officially minuted.</p> <p>HL confirmed that the appointment would need to be approved by the Trust Board. HL confirmed that the appropriate approval forms would be sent to NBi and CG for completion prior to HL arranging for submission to the Board.</p> <p>HL then handed the meeting over to NBi, as Co-Chair.</p> <p>Action: HL to arrange to submit Co-chair appointment approval forms to the Trust Board.</p>	HL
3.	Apologies	
	<p>Received and accepted from Nadeem Razvi (NR).</p> <p>An email had been received from Dillon Mistry (DM) confirming their decision to step down from the LGB. The appropriate action regarding central records will be dealt with.</p> <p>Action: central governance records to be updated.</p>	HL
4.	Declarations of Interest in relation to items on the agenda	
	There were no declarations relating to the agenda.	
5.	Minutes of the last meeting on the 06/02/2025 and matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting on the 06/02/2025 were approved.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p>	

	<p>From the minutes of the meeting on 27/11/2024, item 5.2: link governors were to agree dates for outstanding monitoring visits. NP confirmed that all monitoring visits would be completed by the end of the Spring Term.</p> <p>From the minutes of the meeting on 06/02/2025, item 8.2 Governor Monitoring - An Emotional & Literacy Support Assistant (ELISA) was in post at Meadow, managing a case load of 4 – 6 pupils at any one time. It had been agreed that Lizzie Beecroft-Sullivan (LBS) would provide some additional information about this post at a future meeting.</p>	<p>NP/Link Governors</p> <p>LBS</p>
6.	Vision, Values and Strategic Objective	
	<p>NP had provided School Development Plans (SDP) for both schools for consideration by the LGB prior to the meeting. Both documents were presented on the whiteboard at the meeting for NP to talk through. NP confirmed that the RAG column was rated around whether sufficient impact had been evidenced against each action.</p> <p>A governor raised a query regarding two items shown on the SDP for Wimbish rated as red? NP clarified that the action had been red in November 2024 but by February as shown on the SDP, it had changed to green as the intended impact had been evidenced. The SDP documents are live working documents and include a running rating of each action at the various updates. This makes the tracking easier to show the changes.</p> <p>A governor asked about the Eco Club impact and School Council impact which show Governor visits as one of the monitoring options. Do these fall into any of the current arranged visits or do the LGB need to schedule something for later in the school year? NP confirmed the governor monitoring visits had not yet been planned.</p> <p>Action: Governor meetings to be planned as appropriate</p> <p>NP explained the SEND charter shown on the SDP for both Wimbish and Meadow and the interaction with external stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition for pupils coming in to either school. The impact for Wimbish had not been rated yet as it is an action in the early stages. Meadow is slightly ahead, and Lizzie Beecroft-Sullivan (LBS) (SENDCo) is building the charter for Wimbish based on the actions from Meadow to co-ordinate the two.</p> <p>There is a huge project at Wimbish as part of EPINS (Essex Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools). The advantage of the project is Meadow staff can join Wimbish staff to share the training from the project. There has been a good turnout from parents/carers to the SEND parental workshops being actioned at Meadow. NP clarified there are some objectives related to SEND that are the same for both schools but there are some differences.</p> <p>A governor asked prior to the meeting that some of the items RAG rated amber on the SDP for Meadow would seem to be more appropriately rated yellow i.e. on track. Of the amber items, which causes NP most concern?</p>	<p>NP/Link Governors</p>

	<p>NP confirmed that they would have a look at the RAG rating and change if appropriate.</p> <p>Action: consider if any amber/yellow RAG rated actions need to change.</p> <p>A governor also asked at the meeting if there was anything difficult or being flagged from the monitoring that gave concerns? NP and NBu confirmed that lunchtimes were giving rise to some socialisation issues that were being addressed, mainly around the offering of lunchtime activities, particularly football. Meadow has been signed up to OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) to allow the children to be creative with other resources at playtimes. First sessions will be starting soon. Resources will come from the community with the PTA's help. The skills learned can be utilised between both schools. Wimbish has interactive playtimes.</p> <p>A governor asked if the school envisaged any opposition from children/parents? NP confirmed the children had been alright recently but there may be resistance from no football. There will be skills using balls delivered by Mr Howard, the sports coach for both schools.</p> <p>A governor asked if the children could have one day for football? NP clarified that the children have access to football in PE. Not having football at playtimes has made them much nicer. There will be skills sessions for all sports, delivered by Mr Howard. This includes things such as basketball, golf, football skills, hockey skills etc. In the summer term for after school clubs, football will be replaced with athletics and, the sports coach for the two schools is set up to deal with this for the children.</p>	NP
7.	Curriculum	
	<p>The headteacher report had been provided prior to the meeting, which included data on Safeguarding (for agenda item 8).</p> <p>A governor asked how the Safeguarding logs shown in the report (70/79) compared to other schools? NP confirmed this data was not available.</p> <p>A governor had asked prior to the meeting whether with Victoria Evans (VE) stepping down from the Meadow SEND lead position, whether their replacement by Kate Langford (KL) for one afternoon a week was enough? NP confirmed that VE had been appointed to be SEND for only ½ a day. KL has taken over for all admin tasks and LBS is still available. KL is undertaking training and works with complex children.</p> <p>NP confirmed that there is insufficient budget for any further staff, but LBS makes things work.</p> <p>A governor asked prior to the meeting that there is a disproportionate number of parenting concerns (24) noted for Wimbish; are these involving multiple children or repeated issues concerning the same few? NP confirmed it is a very small number and relate to parenting capacity.</p> <p>A governor asked what is being done to address this?</p>	

	<p>NP confirmed everything possible is being done. This includes weekly liaison with external professionals including social care.</p> <p>As Safeguarding link governor, LB reassured the LGB that everything is being done.</p> <p>NP clarified the process/timescales and reporting concerns that the school go through on both a daily and weekly basis.</p> <p>NP confirmed that there is no Trust leverage to social care. There are processes to follow, and these must be carried out properly. NP has made sure there are enough safeguarding members of staff across the two schools to do this.</p> <p>A governor asked if NP receives feedback from social care?</p> <p>NP confirmed yes. They also get feedback from other professionals. They will get told if a case does not meet threshold.</p> <p>A governor asked if there had been any change to the dynamics at Wimbish with the increase in the number of children?</p> <p>NP confirmed not, the new children had slotted in well. NP confirmed there was another starter in year 1 after Easter. The roll had increased to 40. Dynamics are checked regularly to ensure they are still good and there are TA's in place to cover where any children who join may need additional emotional support.</p> <p>A governor asked if there was any indication of the numbers of applications for Wimbish yet for next academic year?</p> <p>NP confirmed that Essex have a spreadsheet (Cambridgeshire do not) to deal with applications. Prospective children find a place through Essex CC but Wimbish had been removed and had no catchment showing on the Essex portal. A legal change was immediately needed to reinstate Wimbish. Cambridgeshire have a live portal where we can see the exact numbers and applications.</p> <p>The barracks are being supportive of Wimbish and there is a very good video of the school on the school website to show prospective parents/children around.</p> <p>A governor asked if there was a similar video for Meadow?</p> <p>NP confirmed there was not.</p> <p>A governor asked how the planning days across the two schools were going?</p> <p>NP confirmed the days were going very well. There was a lot of staff sharing planning between the two and lots of swapping/sharing of resources. Visits with the children between the two were also taking place.</p> <p>Yr 6 from both schools will attend a residential together.</p> <p>Staff are able to share workloads and experience.</p>	
8.	Safeguarding	
	<p>See item 7 for the Head Teacher report with Safeguarding data.</p> <p>LB is the link Governor for Safeguarding and confirmed prior to the LGB meeting that he was making arrangements for a catch up with NP.</p> <p>At the LGB meeting, LB reported that he had had an online meeting with NP earlier in the day and his written report would be available for the next LGB meeting.</p> <p>Action: Safeguarding written report for 15 May 2025 meeting</p>	LB

	LB provided a brief verbal summary of his meeting and highlighted that considerable time is being taken by NP and her teams to deal with safeguarding issues, with a lack of external support. This is having a knock-on effect and ways that the LGB can support need to be explored.	
9.	Inclusion	
	<p>Various documents had been provided in advance of the meeting including the report from the SEND link Governor.</p> <p>A Governor raised concerns of reports of very inadequate external agency support and long delays in creating EHCNAs and EHCPs with delays of 30+ weeks commonplace and asked what is the Trust doing to escalate this beyond departmental level in the relevant LAs (Local Authority)?</p> <p>NP explained that the team who deal with “out of time” claims are much slower than the team who deal with current claims. The latter are trying to stop children from going “out of time”.</p> <p>Challenge in this area is coming from OFSTED.</p> <p>A lot of assessment of children is being carried out remotely rather than face to face. Reports then have to be agreed by the local authority. Discussion took place around how the reports work.</p> <p>LBS (SENCO at both schools) had provided a document for each school – SEND in a nutshell. These provided all relevant information for the LGB to have insight into the SEND provisions for each school and the monitoring undertaken, all in one place. NP clarified the data for Wimbish was slightly out of date as the number of children on the SEND register had changed due to new admissions. The numbers can change quickly.</p> <p>A Governor asked when NP gets the numbers? NP confirmed a few days before but the numbers keep changing.</p> <p>NP confirmed Wimbish school is attending lots of events/meetings to promote the school.</p>	
10.	Governance and Central Team Matters	
	<p>LB had provided a comprehensive report from the last Anglian Learning Academy Governance Forum (AGF) meeting held on 10 Feb 2025. Specific subjects LB covered were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust has expanded further with new schools joining. • Focus on work around Governance and an LGB Chairs conference planned for the summer. • Emerging trends around SEND needs and Artificial Intelligence challenges. • Finance areas around draft budgets and falling pupil roles. <p>There was a discussion about the budgeting for Wimbish due to its size but optimistic about future pupil numbers.</p> <p>NP confirmed the census funding based off pupil numbers at both schools should be slightly increased for Meadow and more so for Wimbish as there are predicted more pupils on roll at both schools for the October 2025 census. Funding for this is lagged to September 2026 though.</p>	

	<p>LB confirmed there would be a request for LGBs to provide a report to the Trust Board about key issues they face. Since the LGB meeting, a link to the feedback form has been provided to the Chairs for completion by 25 April.</p> <p>Action: Co-Chairs to complete LGB report to the Trust Board by 25 April.</p> <p>HL confirmed that the skills audit completed by the LGB had been passed across following Jackie Sweetings' departure. HL will pick up on this with the Co-Chairs to take forward.</p> <p>Action: Skills audit to be reviewed by Co-Chairs/HL.</p>	<p>CG/NBi</p> <p>CG/NBi/HL</p>
11.	AOB	
	<p>NP suggested it would be good to have something in writing from the Governors to be sent out to parents in the school communications. This could then be shared to both schools and help raise the LGB profile.</p> <p>Action: LGB to consider suitable communications for the parents of both schools.</p> <p>Similarly, it would be good to have Governor presence at school events. There was discussion about attendance at parent evenings in future and an open evening in the summer term.</p> <p>NP confirmed there is a weekly newsletter on the school websites for the LGB to see what events are taking place that they would be welcome to attend. Events for May/June/July have been included.</p> <p>NP confirmed SATS would start the week of 12 May in the mornings. NP invited any of the Governors who had time and wanted to be involved to let her know so they could come along as an extra independent person to experience and help with the process.</p> <p>NP confirmed there would be an event at Wimbish which would involve the barracks. It would be good to have a presence from the LGB if anyone wanted to attend.</p> <p>Action: LGB to consider attendance at events/SATS.</p> <p>NP confirmed that ID badges for the Governors would be available soon. There are some outstanding photos that are being waited for.</p> <p>Action: As link governor for PSHE, CC will prepare a report for the next LGB meeting on 15 May 2025.</p>	<p>LGB</p> <p>LGB</p> <p>CC</p>
12.	Date of the next meeting	
	15/05/2025, 6pm at Meadow Primary School	
13.	Items for the next meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Strategic Plan for 2024/25 and initial planning for 2025/26. • Achievement Tracking. • Professional Learning review. • People & Leadership Executive summary. • Staff survey feedback • Review key risks 	

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2	Submit Co-Chair appointment approval forms to the Trust Board.		HL
3	Update central records for resignation of DM as governor.		HL
5	Provide more information about the ELISA role at a future meeting		LBS
5/6	Arrange any remaining/outstanding link governor visits.		NP/Link Governors
6	Consider any changes to RAG rated colours		NP
8	Safeguarding Link Governor report for meeting on 15/5/2025		LB
10	Co-Chairs to complete LGB report to Trust Board.		CG/NBi
10	Consideration of skills audit.		CG/NBi/HL
11	Consider communications to the parents		LGB
11	Consider attendance at events/SATS		LGB
11	PSHE Link Governor report for meeting on 15/5/2025.		CC