

Local Governing Board (LGB) to The Learning Partnership  SPRING Term Minutes	 Wistaston Church Lane Academy
Date: Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 4:00pm (postponed from 29.01.26)	
Governors Present: Audrey Skidmore (AS) – Chair David Hastie (DH) Benjamin Leighton (BL) Gillian Louden (GL) Apologies: Sheridan Barnes (SB) Anthony Buckles (AB) Holly Hulett (HH) Dr Allan Howells (AH) – Director of Quality – TLP	In attendance: Cathy Elsley (CE) – Headteacher Clerk: Sharon Dutton (SD) TLP
Governance and Administration	
1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations AS welcomed everyone to the meeting which opened at 4:01pm. SD confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from SB, AB and HH. AH also sent his apologies. There were no declarations. 2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising a) To approve the minutes from the last LGB meeting. The minutes from the meeting held on 2 October 2025 had been uploaded onto GovernorHub. The Chair confirmed a small sentence modification requested at the last meeting had been made to remove identifying details. With this amendment complete, the minutes were approved unanimously. b) To review the action log from the previous meeting (02.10.25): It was agreed to remove the historic outstanding actions table and transfer any outstanding actions to the action table at the end of the document. 3. Membership Update The Chair confirmed no changes since the last meeting. The school continues to seek new Governors, and members were encouraged to share opportunities within their networks. A general discussion acknowledged the challenge across the Trust in securing new volunteers.	

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

4. School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self Evaluation (SEF)

a) To receive an update on progress

The Headteacher provided a detailed explanation of work completed to align existing self-evaluation to the **new Ofsted framework**. Key points:

- The new framework requires **evidence for every bullet point**, removing the previous “best fit” approach.
- Staff and SLT undertook a detailed audit, cross-referencing school practice against each aspect of the new framework.
- Staff are confident the school is **meeting expected standards in all new areas**, with some areas demonstrating emerging strengths.
- The SIP priorities remain unchanged because they still map appropriately onto the new framework (writing, behaviour consistency, and effective TA deployment).

Governors **asked** how evidence is collated and maintained and whether the school keeps a “portfolio.” The Headteacher **explained that** the SEF is a working document, continually developed, and would be submitted as requested at inspection.

b) To receive any School Improvement ROV reports

The School Improvement Visit undertaken by LH from the Trust was presented on Slides 12 – 15 of the headteachers report. In summary:

Slide 12 – SIP Priority: Effective Use of Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Focus: Improving TA deployment to increase impact on pupils’ progress.

Key Actions: Audit TA deployment, implement pre/post-teaching interventions, provide CPD, model lessons, and monitor impact.

Progress:

- EYFS has detailed intervention timetables with planned teacher support.
- Year groups 1–6 have structured TA timetables including phonics, reading groups, maths interventions, and EHCP/SEN support.
- Monitoring and coaching occur across year groups, with varying deployment models depending on need.

Slide 13 – Monitoring Timetables & Reducing Cognitive Overload

Focus: Monitoring Autumn Assessments to Evaluate Timetable Design

Actions: Analyse assessment data, compare with previous year, adjust timetables, gather pupil voice.

Progress:

- KS1 amended timetables (e.g., Year 2 grouping changes; Year 1 increased TA support).
- KS2 awaiting spring data; some adaptations for specific learners (e.g., Y4 using Y2 maths, Y6 targeted arithmetic).

Focus: Reducing Cognitive Overload in Lesson Presentations

Actions: Limit text, use visuals, highlight single ideas per slide, train staff on cognitive load, gather student feedback.

Progress:

- EYFS: less concern due to practical teaching methods.
- KS1/2: Slides simplified; visuals used more; interactive approaches encouraged; training delivered.

Focus: Reducing Cognitive Overload in Classroom Environments

Actions: Declutter displays, keep only purposeful materials, create checklist, promote pupil-created displays.

Progress:

- EYFS: purposeful working walls; need for more interactive/pupil-created displays.
- Whole-school audit completed (snow day task).
- Cognitive load checklist issued; working walls actively updated.

Slide 14 – Pencil Grip & Writing Assessment

Focus: Pencil Grip Implementation (EYFS & KS1 Priority)

Actions: Audit needs, purchase resources, train staff, monitor handwriting sessions, assess pupils.

Progress:

- EYFS running daily handwriting/motor-skills interventions (e.g., dough disco).
- KS1 increased handwriting focus and monitoring.
- KS2 addresses grip during handwriting but habits are harder to change by Y5/6.
- Yellow handwriting lines used across school.

Focus: Using Assessment Accurately to Identify Writing Gaps

Actions: Moderation, targeted interventions, progress meetings, ensuring prerequisite skills, standardised framework.

Progress:

- EYFS adapting writing tasks to new national framework; targeted blending/letter recognition support.
- KS1 implemented "write back" programme; training delivered.
- KS2 using writeback, mastery keys, and targeted interventions.
- Y6 focusing on stamina development built from lower years.

Slide 15 – Phonics & SEND End Points

Focus: Phonics Scheme Evaluation

Actions: Review fidelity to scheme, check tracking accuracy, identify pupils at risk, gather staff feedback.

Progress:

- Phonics tracker used rigorously, groupings frequently adjusted.
- Lead monitoring coverage and assessments.
- Trust exploring move to Little Wandle.

Focus: SEND: Defining Ambitious End Points

Actions: Review provision, define end points, communicate expectations, monitor termly, adjust provision.

Progress:

- Autumn SEND staff meetings held; SEN plans updated.
- Y6 annual reviews completed.
- Provision following TA timetables.
- End points tailored individually; sometimes ambitious, sometimes confidence-building as advised by the Education Psychologist.

Quality of Education

5. Admission and Pupil Numbers

To receive the latest data.

The headteacher reported that there are currently 416 pupils on roll, an increase of 4 since the autumn term 2025.

- **7 pupils** have left (relocations, families moving abroad, and one family unhappy with the school).
- There have been 11 in-year admissions in this academic year so far including recent Year 4 and Year 6 admissions and 6 nursery children.
- Reception first-choice applications stand at **52** against a PAN of 60.
- Due to regionally low birth rates, most schools are anticipating reduced cohorts.
- Although broadly positive, numbers are unlikely to reach 60, and Governors acknowledged potential budget impact.

A discussion took place regarding the feasibility of split-year classes should numbers become too low; the Headteacher explained this is undesirable educationally and only considered in financially unavoidable situations.

6. Curriculum Update

- Teachers are adapting their curriculum delivery while retaining core structure.
- There has been a push on handwriting (use of yellow guidelines) and sentence construction skills.
- EYFS staff are analysing links between children's nursery backgrounds and baseline outcomes.
- Governors were interested in the attributes of children arriving from other nurseries and how the school collaborates with external providers.

7. Pupil Performance

a) To receive an update on progress and attainment including groups (Pupil Premium, SEND, disadvantaged, gender)

The Headteacher presented the autumn term attainment data on Slide 9 of her report:

- Reception outcomes reflect expected early-year variation; the Spring assessment point is forthcoming.
- Reception baseline is completed in September; EYFS is the only year group with a formal baseline
- Teachers track GLD areas internally even though online systems display only reading/writing/maths mid-year..

Governors **asked probing questions** about large red sections in reading/writing, particularly in Reception. The Headteacher **clarified** that this reflects autumn assessments only and improvements are already being seen. Governors **asked** if there was any comparison data between children coming from WCLA nursery and children coming from other settings. The headteacher confirmed that early data suggested that children who previously attended the school's nursery have notably stronger maths foundations but no similar data has been captured for Reading and Writing.

ACTION: Headteacher to provide comparison data between in-school nursery baseline and other nurseries for next meeting.

8. Link Governor Monitoring

Governors reported their recent visits: Safeguarding (DH), Drop-off arrangements (AS) and Foundation Writing (GL).

- The experiences were extremely positive, with Governors praising staff, children and leadership.
- AS met with a reduced SEN team. She raised a key concern regarding the **Trust's 24-hour turnaround expectation** for LPAP (adaptive practice) responses. In WCLA, LPAP is delivered by a class teacher who has only **2 hours per week** allocated. This makes a 24-hour requirement unrealistic and risks staff wellbeing. The Head confirmed this has already been raised with the Trust SEND team, but Governors agreed it should also be escalated to the ES&P committee.
- Teaching Assistants' deployment is complex and intense

ACTION: AS to shadow a TA on her next link monitoring visit to better understand the model.

- Governors were reminded to always ask about **staff wellbeing** and **safeguarding concerns** during visits.
- BL confirmed he had been unable to conduct a link visit due to personal constraints but would undertake a link visit in due course.
- The following areas were allocated:
Climate Change – SB
EYFS – HH
Foundation Writing & early Reading – GL
PSHE - AB

9. Pupil Premium

a) To receive confirmation of the publication of the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement on the school website

- The **2025–26 Pupil Premium Strategy Statement** has been published on time.

b) To review the impact of the spending of the Pupil Premium funding

- Governors reviewed the impact of interventions and funding allocations.
- The change to **50% contribution** for PP pupils on the Year 6 residential (previously 100% funded) has had **no negative effect** on uptake or engagement with no parental concerns raised.

Personal Development

10. Attendance

a) To receive the latest data

- Attendance at 97.3% remains above the national average of 94.6%.
- Trust expectations on issuing letters are strict; “disappointing start” letters are sent immediately once threshold levels are reached and 14 have been issued since the start of the initiative.
- Pastoral Lead continues to work closely with families to ensure messages are supportive rather than punitive.
- Three families are not engaged with school attendance support. These will now be escalated to the Attendance Officer, an external service provider, who will conduct home visits after half term. This is the first time WCLA has needed to commission this service in recent years.

Governors **discussed** expectations and **explored** the reasons why families might engage with external agencies rather than school. The headteacher will supply feedback on the success of this initiative once more time has elapsed.

- Two pupils are on part time timetables are now referred to as Transition Timetables

b) To receive any attendance reports from the Trust

Nothing to report

11. Rewards and Behaviour

To receive the latest data including number of suspensions and exclusions:

- Behaviour is very good across the school.
- One racial incident was recorded; no sexualised behaviours and no dual registered children.
- No exclusions this term.
- Year 5 Mental Health Champions continue to excel, operating confidently and independently, wearing badges identifying them to peers. They contribute strongly to lunchtime culture and pupil communication, modelling positive behavior. Their award nomination is a significant achievement.
- Kindness Week was celebrated with great enthusiasm, culminating in a chain long enough to circle the hall and accompanied by signing and singing.

Welfare

12. Safeguarding

a) To receive an update on the current caseload within the school

- The Headteacher explained to the governors how Operation Encompass works. There has been an Operation Encompass notification received and a disclosure from a child with both managed appropriately and pupils and families supported by pastoral team.
- One child remains on a **Child Protection Plan**.
- Other families are being supported via Early Help process.
- Safeguarding Governor's visit was completed; the Governor thanked staff for making the process supportive and clear.

b) To review any actions from Safeguarding audits

- SCIES audit review is due **summer term 2026**. Safeguarding Governor will be invited to attend the review.

13. Welfare and Wellbeing – Students

- Mental health initiatives are well embedded.
- Year 5 Mental Health Champions
- Class ambassadors
- Yellow positive noting tags
- Lunchtime hub in KS1 and KS2
- Counselling continuing in 2025-2026 through Safe and Sound
- Mental health champions in Year 5.

14. Welfare and Wellbeing – Staff

- Staff continue to manage a heavy workload, particularly as SEND and attendance cases grow. Governors noted the positive and proactive culture despite pressures.
- Time is given to complete training (staff meetings) to avoid this encroaching on personal time.
- Mentors for new staff.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

15. Policies

The following policies were reviewed and **approved**, with amendments noted:

- **Charging & Remissions Policy** – Clarification required on refund arrangements for wraparound care (to align wording with current practice).
- **Digital Safety Policy** – Smart watches added to banned items requiring hand-in.
- **Dyslexia-Friendly School Policy** – Clarified that school does not fund external dyslexia assessments, though NESI screening is provided.
- **Educational Visits Policy** – Local area visit provision updated in line with new guidance; more streamlined Evolve system.
- **Uniform Policy** – Updated provider name: Her Place Charitable Trust (formerly Motherwell).
- **Walking Home Alone Policy** – Preferences for Year 6 pupils reiterated; registers now also taken at the end of day to strengthen fire drill accuracy.
- **Adverse Weather Plan** – Not a policy; school will consider creating a simple parent-facing summary.

16. Governor Training update

All training is up to date except for AB's.

ACTION: Clerk to chase AB's training records

17. Stakeholder Engagement - Parents/Carers

- Excellent response (103 entries) to the recent **Access to School** survey.
- The implemented road restriction has significantly improved safety, supported by **85%** of families.
- One parent is strongly opposing the change, escalating complaints to the school, MP, and Trust. In response AS has visited the school and confirmed to the Headteacher that all correct measures have been carried out by the school.
- A follow-up survey has had lower uptake; Governors suggested putting it into the school newsletter and sending it out as a mobile text.
- The Chair emphasised that the school's duty to keep children safe overrides individual inconvenience.

Governors **discussed** communication, social media reactions, managing harassment and explored ways in which the restrictions could be managed and signposted. It was generally agreed that whilst some parents felt inconvenienced due to the changes, in time parents will know no difference.

18. Stakeholder Engagement - Wider Community

- Strong community involvement over Christmas period.
- Mystery Readers initiative to begin shortly.
- The school remains highly visible and active within the local community.

19. Communication to the Trust

Governors agreed the following should be fed back to the ES&P committee:

- Unrealistic **24-hour SEND response expectation** where LPAP is delivered by class teachers with minimal release time.
- Increasing challenge of TA deployment and capacity.

20. Communication from the Trust

a) Feedback from ES&P Committee

Governors received the ESP feedback document providing general SEND feedback, mainly noting ongoing Trust-wide work.

b) Governance matters:

- Governor training events:

Ofsted training (GovernorHub – The Key) - to be completed in governor's own time and updated onto GovernorHub.

Prevent training – only to be refreshed by those who have not completed it or last undertook it prior to 2025. This affects AB, AS and HH.

- The following TLP appointments were noted:

Trustees: Margaret Cheshire and Sean Houston

Members: Sharon Dempsey welcomed.

Noted that TLP Member, Vic Croxson has stepped down WEF 31 Jan 26.

- Governance Conference 2026 - scheduled for 25 April 2026; workshop-based format with possible external speaker on Ofsted.

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21. AOB

- BL offered early apologies for **19 July** due to a two-day corporate conference in London.

There being no further items to discuss, the Chair and Headteacher thanked the Governors for their attendance and continued commitment.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 21st May 2026 at 4:00pm

Meeting Closed at 5:37pm

ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 04.02.2026

Ref	Action	By whom	By when
7.	Headteacher to provide comparison data between in-school nursery baseline and other nurseries for next meeting.	HT	21.05.26
8.	AS to shadow a TA on her next link monitoring visit to better understand the model.	AS	Next link visit
16.	Clerk to chase AB's training records	Clerk	21.05.26