The Learning Partnership

Leighton Academy
PART 1 Minutes – SPRING 2025

Date: Thursday 15th January 2026 at 5:00pm in school

Governors present:	**In attendance:**
Rachael Dean (RD) – Chair	Samantha Thompson (ST) - Headteacher
Nicola Kay (NK) – Vice Chair	Marie Speake (MS) – Staff Representative
Jackie Beeston (JB) – Governor	Darren Locke (DL) – Governor in approval process
Michelle Noble (MN) – Governor	Dr Allan Howells (AH) – Director of Quality – TLP
Apologies:	
Helen Holland (HH) - Governor	
Carl Lambert (CL) – Parent Governor	**Clerk:**
Nicholas Jones (NJ) – Staff Representative	Sharon Dutton (SD) – TLP Clerk

Governance and Administration

1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations

The meeting commenced at 5:01 pm. RD opened the meeting and confirmed with the clerk that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from HH, CL and NJ. Governor in approval process DL was welcomed and introduced to the LGB and a round of introductions took place. DL declared an interest as his employer provides services to the Trust. Clerk confirmed this need only be declared annually.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

a) Minutes from the meeting held on 9th October 2025 were approved with no amendments.

b) To review the action log from previous meeting(s).

All historic actions were reviewed and closed.

ST confirmed that that the event calendar had been uploaded onto the GovernorHub noticeboard in November 2026

3. Membership update

Two vacancies remain, including one parent governor. Recruitment continues through Governors for Schools and local advertising channels. Governors acknowledged that whilst membership levels are broadly in line with national trends, strengthening governance capacity remains desirable, as this meeting demonstrated by only just meeting quoracy requirements.

There are no terms of office due to expire before the next meeting, but governors noted that MN's term ends August 2026.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities:

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

a. Headteacher Update

The Headteacher outlined progress against the SIP, explaining that the plan had originally been prepared under the old Ofsted framework but is now being fully updated to reflect the newly

implemented framework. The SEF has already undergone substantial revision. Updated SIP priority headings will be issued by the next meeting.
Governors recognised and welcomed the shift to the new framework, noting that this aligns with Ofsted's increased emphasis on curriculum depth, governance understanding, and statutory responsibilities.
ACTION:

b. Records of Visit (RoV)

Several school improvement visits occurred during the autumn term:

- School Improvement (Lise) – November 2025
- Early Years (Sally Earl) – two visits, reflecting the heightened focus on EYFS improvement
- Safeguarding and Attendance reviews

These visits continued while the Headteacher was absent, ensuring ongoing scrutiny. Reports demonstrate strong progress, particularly in Early Years, with an improving cycle of assessment, environment and provision. Further RoV reports (including one from the day of the LGB meeting) will be uploaded to GovernorHub.

Governors were particularly pleased to see the progress of the Early Years. A discussion took place around how Governors should submit their questions around published papers. The headteacher responded that comments and questions posted on GovernorHub before meetings was the most effective.

Quality of Education

5. Admission and Pupil Numbers

The Headteacher presented an update on current numbers:

- Orchard provision: **13 pupils in January**, expected to rise to **17 by Easter**. Recruitment for an additional TA and later a second teacher is underway.
- Nursery is almost full earlier than usual due to the recently widened childcare entitlement and will be full by Spring half term.
- Mobility remains influenced by families relocating to work at the local hospital, with **six new pupils starting the following Monday**. Governors **discussed** the ongoing lower cohort sizes in **Year 2** and **Year 5**, which reflect historic dips in birth rates and pandemic-era population patterns. This continues to have financial implications due to reduced funding in those year groups. This has also impacted on plans for the annual trip to Cologne where classes may have to be combined in order for it to go ahead or to change it to a biennial event

6. Curriculum Update

White Rose Maths Trial

The Headteacher and curriculum leads gave a detailed update on the move from **Power Maths** to **White Rose Maths** in Year 2 and Year 6.
Reasons for the trial include:

Smaller steps reduce learning gaps

Breaks learning into smaller, more manageable steps, meaning pupils build understanding gradually rather than being moved on too quickly. This assists staff identify misconceptions earlier and prevents gaps from forming unintentionally. Pupils who need extra support are more able to keep up with the lesson sequence.

Resources more interactive and better aligned with independent work.

Teaching resources are designed to encourage discussion, modelling, and consistent practice. Because the independent tasks mirror the teaching examples more closely, pupils can apply what

they have just learned with greater confidence which reduces the cognitive load and leads to improved independence during practice activities.

More oracy and STEM sentence opportunities.

White Rose places a clearer focus on mathematical language and sentence structures, supporting pupils to articulate their thinking aloud. The use of STEM sentences helps pupils explain methods, reasoning, and problem-solving steps more clearly, strengthening conceptual understanding and improving classroom talk.

Trial extended to Y2 to offer KS1 perspective.

The trial, originally planned only for Year 6, has been expanded to include Year 2 to ensure the school can evaluate how effectively the scheme works across different stages. Adding a KS1 year group provides insight into how the scheme supports early conceptual development and offers a fuller picture before considering whole-school adoption.

Governors **asked** how the new system aligned with SATs and were **reassured** that White Rose better prepares pupils for SATs wording and structure. A decision will be made before the summer term Power Maths order is due, allowing the school to fully roll out the new system if appropriate.

ACTION: Feedback on the White Rose trial to be presented at the next LGB meeting in May

MN joined the meeting at 5:21 pm.

Forest School

- Two TAs have completed Forest School training.
- PTA funded additional tools and equipment.
- Sessions will begin in Spring 2 once the site is made fully safe.
- Aimed at vulnerable pupils, including SEND and children requiring nurture provision.

The Headteacher confirmed that governors will be invited to inspect the new space once it is fully complete. Governors welcomed the initiative.

Early Years

- An ECERS audit has been conducted and significant progress has already been achieved. This audit forensically measures the quality of the environment.
- Assessment accuracy remains an identified need; staff are receiving additional training.
- Speech and language interventions are now fully in place.

Governors **noted** the positive shift and look forward to seeing improved data accuracy at the next data drop.

The Orchard

- Pupil numbers are 13 for January 2026
- Supply TA is currently in post with an advert out for a Spring 2 start
- Numbers planned to be 17 by Easter, recruitment for 2nd teacher to take place
- The Local Authority have requested the school take pupils from Reception and a consultation is due to take place the day after this meeting.
- TLP Trustees have visited the facility and were hugely impressed.

7. Pupil Performance

The Headteacher confirmed that the most recent data drop occurred during her absence and that progress reviews take place next week. Governors, led by the Chair, posed questions on:

- Gender gap

- Attainment gap
- Low Year 1 percentages

ACTION: The Headteacher is to prepare a written report on data for circulation, and this will be appended to the official minutes once received.

8. Link Governor Monitoring

The Chair reviewed link governor roles and confirmed updates:

- Safeguarding & Attendance: NK and DL
- Quality of Education: CL, MN and DL
- Behavior & Attitudes, Personal Development: RD, DL& HH
- Early Years: JB, RD
- All groups will be joined by either ST or NJ

A Quality of Education monitoring visit is confirmed for **Thursday 22 January, 1–3pm** and will include curriculum monitoring and SIP-linked questioning. Governors discussed maintaining strategic focus and avoiding duplication with operational roles.

9. Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement was published ahead of the **31 December deadline**. Governors reviewed the highly detailed impact evaluation provided:

- **20.5% of pupils (Rec–Y6) receive Pupil Premium.**
- Main challenges identified: **mental health**, **retention**, **early language**, **writing**, **attendance**.

Key Support Provided

- Targeted **teacher/TA support** in English and Maths.
- **Individual and small-group reading** interventions (Stile, guided reading, accelerated reader).
- **Speech and language therapy, pastoral support**.
- **1:1 TA support and specialised programmes** (Cool Kids, Talking Partners, handwriting, Ready Steady Write).
- **Tutoring** and additional after-school sessions (especially Year 6).
- Priority access to **before/after-school clubs** and **counselling**.

Curriculum & CPD

- Strong focus on **phonics and reading** through Little Wandle (resources, CPD, audits).
- **Adaptive teaching**, walkthrough guides, and additional staff training.
- Makaton training and OAIP training for key leaders.
- Ongoing investment in therapy programmes and behaviour regulation (“Stronger Together”).

Year Group Highlights

- **Year 6**: targeted tutoring and additional adults supporting Maths and follow-up sessions.
- **KS1**: structured writing units and increased phonics intervention (Y1–Y3).

Attendance

- Some PP pupils have **ongoing attendance concerns**; school increasing support and family contact.
- Additional staff training planned to strengthen attendance work.

Support for Access

- Funding provided for **trips, residentials, and swimming** to ensure full participation.

Monitoring & Assessment

- **Provision maps** and **Venn diagrams** updated half-termly to track support and impact.
- Continued use of **Accelerated Reader** with additional resources and STAR reader tracking.

Governors **noted** the low uptake for free school meals and were informed staff are working with parents to correct this.

Personal Development

10. Attendance

a. Latest Data

Attendance remains below national and the SLT are working closely with parents. Key points:

- 35 holiday requests received since September
- Almost all requests are for full-week holidays
- 7 penalty notices issued, further notices pending
- Snow disruption affected attendance in early January but did not significantly worsen overall figures

b. Trust-led improvements include:

- New tracking spreadsheet
- Streamlined automated letter-issuing
- Attendance Action Plans for targeted families
- Ongoing work with the **Education Welfare Officer**

Governors discussed the limitations of reward systems, noting financial pressures on families and avoiding penalising children for parental decisions. Governors recommended increased positive messaging and embedding attendance importance into parent events. DL recommended the school look at local school Ruskin's Facebook page attendance initiative which was proving successful.

11. Rewards and Behavior

- One additional suspension since the last meeting: **two pupils suspended for three days**.
- A sudden cluster of **racial incidents** occurred in Year 6 in one week. These were unrelated incidents but dealt with robustly: parents were met individually, restorative work undertaken, and additional PD sessions delivered. No further incidents have been reported.
  Governors praised the swift response and emphasis on education, not punishment.

Welfare

12. Safeguarding

a) Current Caseload

- 28 pupils on plans
- 11 pupils supported internally
- 3 registered young carers

Themes include domestic violence, parental mental health, substance misuse and family separation.

b) Safeguarding Audits

The S175 audit was completed in June 2025 and the Trust audit has been completed.

ACTION: NK and DL, as Safeguarding link governors, to liaise and then approach Emma Hooley at the Trust to arrange refresher Safeguarding training which they had previously missed.

13. Welfare and Wellbeing – Students

Years 3–6 will complete the new Trust pupil survey before half-term. It has been significantly improved from last year's version with more input from headteachers. Results will be shared at the next meeting.

ACTION: Clerk to add student survey results to May's LGB meeting agenda.

14. Welfare and wellbeing – Staff

No new updates reported.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement

15. Policies

The following policies were reviewed and approved:

- **Conservation Policy** (new)
- **Forest School Ratio Policy** (new)
- **Forest School Risk Management & Assessment Policy** (new)
- **Medical Conditions in School Policy** (amended)

Governors commented positively on the thoroughness of the Forest School risk assessment.

16. Governor Training Update

Governors discussed:

- Recent data training delivered Trust-wide by the Director of Primary and undertaken on a voluntary basis. AH thanked the headteacher for her provision of the school hall and support staff to enable the Crewe based session.
- Prevent training – Clerk confirmed this need to be refreshed only if previously completed prior to 2025.
- New Ofsted framework webinar – 27.11.25. All governors asked to view this in their own time.

17. Stakeholder Engagement - Parents/Carers

- **Reception intake evening** was highly successful, with approximately 40 families attending and asking insightful, well-informed questions. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classrooms were opened up for inspection.
- **Christmas performances** were very well attended, and governors praised the school for the high standard of the events; the introduction of £1 ticketing did not reduce attendance and allowed the school to fund books and enrichment items.
- **Parents evening** for Key Stage 1 and 2 were held in the classroom and hall respectively and was well attended. The next event is planned for later in the Spring term.
- Governors suggested using parent events as opportunities to positively reinforce attendance messaging.

18. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

- The local authority has **decided not to implement** the planned road closure, but a new footpath will be installed as part of local development in the long-term plan, improving safety. School has no information about when this will be.
- No updates regarding potential development building or children's home.

19. Communication to the Trust

The Chair shared her report for the Education, Standards & Performance Committee, highlighting:

- Early Years progress
- Orchard expansion
- Attendance improvement work
- White Rose Maths trial
- Monitoring visit schedule

- Trust data training sessions well received

AH thanked NK for her assistance with Permanent Exclusion review panels at Sir William Stanier– her additional commitment is proving invaluable to the Trust.

20. Communication from the Trust

Updates from Allan (Director of Quality):

- Governors received the Trust's feedback paper
- 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.

21. AOB

Part 2 – update on Stage 2 complaint - covered in Part 2 minutes.
There being no further business to discuss, the meeting finished at 7:03pm

Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 7th May 2026 at 5:00 pm

Minutes approved: …… Date:……

ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 15.01.26

Ref	Action	By whom	By when
6	Feedback on the White Rose trial to be presented at the next LGB meeting in May	HT/Clerk	07.05.26
7	Headteacher to prepare a written report on Attainment and Gender Gap data to be appended to the official minutes once received.	HT/Clerk	After meeting
12	Safeguarding link governors, to liaise and then approach Emma Hooley at the Trust to arrange Safeguarding training.	NK/DL	After meeting
13	Clerk to add student survey results to May's LGB meeting agenda.	Clerk	07.05.26