



**Leighton Academy
PART 1 Minutes – SUMMER 1**



Date: Thursday 8th May 2025 at 5:00pm in school

Governors present:

**Rachael Dean (RD) – Chair
Diane Riding (DR) – Vice Chair
Jackie Beeston (JB) – Governor
Helen Holland (HH) - Governor
Nicola Kay (NK) – Parent Governor**

Apologies:

**Carl Lambert (CL) – Parent Governor
Michelle Noble (MN) - Governor
Nicholas Jones (NJ) – Staff Representative
Marie Speake (MS) – Staff Representative**

In attendance:

**Samantha Thompson (ST) - Headteacher
Dr Allan Howells (AH) – Director of Quality – TLP**

Clerk: Sharon Dutton (SD) – TLP Clerk

Governance and Administration

DOCUMENTS SHARED ON GOVERNORHUB PRIOR TO THE MEETING:

- Headteacher's Report 08.05.25 - various
- Attendance Report – item 8
- Attainment Report – item 10
- Demographic Report – item 10
- Y6 Demographics – item 10
- LGB monitoring reports – various – item 15
- LGB Members Visits and Training Spring 2025 – item 16
- LGB Chairs Forum 02.04.25 – item 21

1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations

- The meeting opened at 5:03pm.
- Quoracy was confirmed.
- Apologies were received and accepted from CL and MN.
- No declarations of interest were made.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the LGB (Local Governing Board) meeting held on 23.01.2025 were approved with one amendment:

11. Safeguarding

NK observed that the actions on the Safeguarding audit were RAG rated but that most had been carried out **to change to:** NK observed that the actions on the Safeguarding audit were RAG rated and most were already scheduled or underway and were added to track completion.

ACTION: SD to amend minutes and repost onto GovernorHub

UPDATE ON ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 23.01.25:

Minute Ref	Action	By whom	Status
Pg 2, item 2	RRS initiative feedback report to be added to agenda for next meeting 08.05.25.	SD/HH	Complete

Pg 5, item 13	Date of spring term staff wellbeing visit to be confirmed by the Trust.	AH	TBC Ongoing
Pg 7, item 14	Present English report at the next meeting Reports for RE and Art are also expected.	MN	Complete
Pg 8, item 17	Complete mandatory training before the next meeting.	ALL	Ongoing
Pg 9, item 23	Email bereaved staff member and pass on the condolences to the family on behalf of the LGB	DR	Complete
Pg 9, item 23	Include rescheduling of July's meeting on next meeting agenda.	SD	Complete

3. **Membership update**

- RD welcomed JB to the LGB as a new member.
- Currently one appointed governor vacancy and one parent governor vacancy remain.
- Vice Chair DR confirmed her intention not to renew her membership of the LGB at the end of the academic year. AH thanked DR on behalf of the Trust for her enormous and invaluable contribution to the school.
- Newsletter to include parent governor vacancy notice.

ACTION: AH to share his FAQ's with ST to be included in the school newsletter.

Proposal to pause Michelle's role due to personal circumstances was agreed.

ACTION: ST to write to MN to confirm proposal effective immediately and to be reviewed at the end of the year.

Discussion on improving board diversity and age representation, particularly as a reflection of the demographic diversity within the school.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities:

4. **School Improvement Plan Priorities**

See page 3 and 4 of the Headteacher's report. ST provided a comprehensive update on the progress of the School Improvement Plan, structured around the five key Ofsted areas:

Quality of Education

- **Phonics (Little Wandle):** Fully implemented across the school. Staff visited two other Trust schools to observe best practices. Initial inconsistencies in the use of shared language were identified and addressed through lesson observations and internal CPD.
- **Music Curriculum:** A new scheme is being trialled following staff feedback that the previous scheme was too complex and inaccessible. Early feedback is positive, with improved usability for non-specialist teachers.
- **Handwriting Policy:** Linked to Little Wandle and reviewed and embedded. All teachers are now delivering handwriting lessons in line with the updated policy.

Next steps:

- **Review of Spelling:** A new Trust-wide initiative on the teaching of spelling is being launched. Further details were shared at the recent Headteachers' meeting.
- **Quality Marks:** Subject leads are preparing for Quality Marks in Science, History, and Geography. Relevant staff are receiving additional training.

ACTION: DR to meet with Geography lead to assess progress.

Behaviour and Attitudes

- **Playtime Provision:** Enhanced provision for Key Stage 1 has been implemented, including zoned play areas and new equipment funded by the PTA. This has led to a noticeable reduction in first aid incidents and behavioral issues. Governors expressed thanks to the PTA for their efforts in this area.

Next steps:

- **Behaviour Regulation Policy:** Scheduled for review in the summer term. No significant changes anticipated.

Leadership and Management

- **SEND Unit:** See agenda item 11 below

Personal Development

- **British Values and SMSC:** Staff training delivered. 'Kapow' scheme of work continues to be embedded and is well-received by staff and pupils.
- **RRS Silver Award:** See agenda item 5.
- **RSE Parent Steering Group:** Held on 02.05.25 to consult on curriculum changes. Seven parents responded; attendance and feedback to be confirmed at the next meeting.

Next steps:

- **Wellbeing Survey:** Pupil wellbeing survey results are still being analysed. An action plan is in development.

ACTION: SD to add feedback on RSE to next meeting agenda on 09.07.25.

Early Years

- **Reception Extension:** Completed and fully operational.
- **Outdoor Area (Phase 2):** Planning approved for September following the lifting of capital expenditure restrictions.
- **Staff Training:** Needs identified during the school improvement visit are being addressed through internal and Trust-led CPD.
- **Intervention:** Programme in place. Deep dive took place as part of SIV on 02.05.25.
- **Nursery:** At maximum capacity

Next steps:

- **Phase 2 reception revamp:** Outdoor provision to be planned and budgeted
- **Planning Review:** Teachers are working with the Trust Early Years Lead to refine planning approaches.
- **Monitoring:** Implementation programme.
- **Review:** Early Years planning

5. Rights Respecting Schools feedback

Silver Award Submission: All evidence has been compiled and a comprehensive presentation delivered to the assessor. The verification visit is scheduled for 20th May 2025. Confidence in the outcome is high, based on the depth and quality of evidence. The Rights Respecting School Council is actively engaged, including placing articles around the school to promote awareness. HH will attend the verification meeting and expressed confidence in the school's readiness.

ACTION: SD to include RRS feedback on next LGB agenda.

6. External verification visit 07.05.25

Focus Area: Early Years

Key Findings:

- **Staffing and Planning:** Reviewed in detail. Emphasis placed on improving consistency and quality of provision.
- **Outdoor Area:** Phase 1 completed; Phase 2 planning approved for September.
- **Training Needs:** Identified and being addressed through internal and Trust support.
- **Support from Trust Lead:** Trust's Early Years Lead is providing valuable guidance and delivering training.

Next Steps: Teachers will review and refine planning with Lead's support. Focus will be placed on improving the structure of continuous provision and enhancing the learning environment.

Education

7. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

See Page 5 of the headteacher's report.

There are currently 389 pupils enrolled and the Nursery is at capacity. Six in-year applications have been accepted and are processed to start before half term. These include families relocating from overseas and southern England, including NHS staff. Number of places accepted for Reception 2025 is 57 out of a PAN of 60. Year groups 1 and 4 are slightly under capacity, which impacts the school's funding due to reduced pupil numbers. Additional EHCP consultations are ongoing, and the school anticipates reaching full capacity by September. The Reception open day was a success.

Governor question:

Why are there so many leavers in Nursery?

ST response:

There have been no leavers since Christmas 2024. A few parents enrol their children into Nursery and then decide to delay their start.

8. Attendance

- **Persistent Absenteeism:** The school continues to experience a high rate of persistent absenteeism (pupils with attendance below 90%). A comparison with previous data was provided to show trends and progress.
- **Term-Time Holidays:** There has been a noticeable increase in unauthorised term-time holiday requests since the introduction of new DfE guidance in August 2024. Parents appear to interpret the guidance as allowing up to five days of leave, which has contributed to the rise.
- **Parental Communication:** The school has included attendance charts in the newsletter to raise awareness among parents about the impact of poor attendance. The charts highlight the number of days missed and the implications for learning.
- **Impact on Learning:** A correlation has been identified between poor attendance and lower attainment in Maths. Ofsted has raised questions about how schools are addressing this issue, particularly the challenge of reteaching missed content. There is evidence of unincreased anxiety levels for children taken out of school without authorization.

Governor question:

Are there any children with significant health issues who affect these numbers?

ST response:

Four pupils are on part-time timetables or awaiting specialist placements due to complex needs. These cases are monitored and reported, even when not required under Cheshire East's 12 weeks threshold. Two pupils have accepted places elsewhere but two pupils cannot find alternative provision to meet their needs.

9. Behaviour

See Page 7 of the headteacher's report.

- **Suspensions and Exclusions:** no new suspensions since the last meeting. Two previously open cases have been successfully closed.
- **Bullying:** no open cases.
- **Racial Incidents:** no racial incidents reported since the last meeting.

The school noted that recent interventions and support strategies have contributed to improved behaviour outcomes.

10. Progress and Attainment

- **Year 6 SATs Predictions:** Based on mock assessments conducted in March, a significant number of pupils scored just below the expected standard (98–99 marks). The school anticipates that these pupils will meet the expected standard in the actual SATs.

- **Reception (GLD – Good Level of Development):** Predicted GLD: 60% (up from 57% last year but still below national average). Contributing factors include high staff turnover and absence in Reception, 7 EHCP pupils in a cohort of 60 (approx. 12%) and limited access to outdoor provision due to construction work.
- **Year 1 Phonics:** Predicted pass rate: 74% (down from 85% last year). The dip is attributed to the lower GLD of this cohort when they were in Reception
- **SEND Unit Impact:** Pupils in the SEND unit will be included in school data, even if they are not working at age-related expectations. The school will provide data analysis both with and without these pupils to ensure fair representation.

Governor (JB) question:

How long has Little Wandle been operational?

ST response:

Phased training has been provided in the form of 3 x 6 hour sessions. Generally the school's staffing structure will remain a challenge for the next year and is currently being assessed

Demographic Context:

- ST had included two Demographic reports uploaded onto GovernorHub, one of which was general and one which covered Year 6 only
- Year 6 cohort: 76% "homegrown" (i.e. started at Leighton in Reception). 25% of the cohort joined later, which affects progress measures.
- 15 pupils on SEND support and 4 with EHCPs (approx. 25% of the cohort).

Governors commented on the high numbers of pupils with SEND.

Governor (AH) question:

Could an analysis of performance between homegrown and non-homegrown pupils be included in future?

ST response:

Yes, the school will analyse performance data by homegrown vs. non-homegrown pupils to better contextualize outcomes.

ST explained to Governors the concept behind Ever 6 FSM, confirming that schools now reassess the financial issues of parents and categorise accordingly. ST confirmed she would continue to share this information at future meetings.

11. SEN unit update

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been received, signed and returned. The sensory room is complete and being plastered. The first two pupils are expected to start on 2nd June and are two Year 5 pupils working at Year 1 level. The unit will gradually build to a capacity of 20 pupils across two classes (10 x 2). Trust is working with the school to assist with suitable enrolment. Staffing is currently one teacher and two TA's, with further appointments planned as the unit expands. The school reviewed 12 EHCPs and consulted with families to ensure appropriate placements. Pupils not meeting the criteria will not be admitted, ensuring the unit remains suitable for those with the highest need.

Welfare

12. Safeguarding

See Page 8 of the headteachers report.

The school is currently managing a significantly high safeguarding caseload, with 36 children on formal plans. This is a substantial increase from the previous meeting and is notably higher than comparable schools in the Trust (e.g., one school reported only 9 cases). The increase is attributed to a combination of new cases and escalations from early help to child protection plans.

Governor (DR) challenge:

Is this sustainable?

ST response:

At present I am the DSL. The school is monitoring the situation closely. If the caseload continues to grow, the leadership team may need to consider upskilling additional staff to take on safeguarding responsibilities, particularly around early help and family support.

- In addition to the 36 formal cases, a further seven children are being supported at a pre-early help level, indicating a broader need for intervention and monitoring.
- The school has implemented a new early year's intervention programme called "Monkey Bob", designed for children who have witnessed or experienced domestic abuse. A teaching assistant has been trained to deliver the programme, which was provided free of charge by Cheshire Without Abuse. The intervention is currently being delivered to one child, with three more identified for future support.

Governor question:

Have these safeguarding cases been working up through the school?

ST response:

Some have been and some are completely new.

13. Welfare & wellbeing – Students

- The school has completed a pupil wellbeing survey, but the analysis and action planning are still in progress.
- ST committed to completing the student wellbeing action plan before the final LGB meeting of the academic year. Governors requested that the completed action plan be shared at the next meeting to ensure appropriate oversight and support.
- The school recognises the importance of addressing pupil wellbeing in a structured and measurable way, particularly in light of the increased safeguarding caseload and the wider national focus on mental health in schools.

ACTION: SD to include feedback on the wellbeing action plan on the agenda for the next meeting.

14. Welfare & wellbeing – Staff

- The school is awaiting confirmation of the Trust-led staff wellbeing visit, which was originally scheduled for the spring term. However, there is concern that this may no longer be a priority and may not take place this academic year. If the Trust visit does not go ahead, the school will consider conducting an internal wellbeing review to ensure staff needs are being addressed.
- ST acknowledged the ongoing pressures on staff, particularly in light of the high safeguarding caseload and the demands of supporting pupils with complex needs.
- Governors expressed support for the school's proactive approach and encouraged continued focus on staff wellbeing, including the use of internal mechanisms if external support is delayed.

Governor Links and Training

15. Link Governor monitoring feedback.

English (Reading and Writing)

Monitoring was retrospective, based on a meeting held in the autumn term.

Focus areas included:

- Implementation of the Accelerated Reader programme which had a smooth start in September although increased teacher engagement is required.
- Reading fluency training delivered during an INSET day; strategies were implemented immediately.
- Phonics (Little Wandle) training was delivered via twilight sessions and is now embedded.
- Writing improvements included live modelling of sentence accuracy, now consistent across the school.
- SEND pupils are being well supported in writing.

Next steps include:

- Monitoring the impact of reading for pleasure (15-minute daily sessions).
- Development of cross-curricular writing units.
- Evaluation of SATs outcomes and the impact of phonics and fluency strategies.

RD reported that the PTA had funded a reading spine for the Reading for Pleasure unit and the governors thanked the PTA for this initiative.

Art – verbal update from ST

- All year groups are contributing to a Trust-wide art exhibition at “Crewe Create,” themed around “Community.” The exhibition will be open to families and also available as a virtual tour. It is open to both primary and secondary pupils.
- No recent curriculum monitoring due to staff absence; subject lead is due to return on 14th July and will resume leadership.

RE (RD)

- The RE curriculum (SACRE) was introduced in July 2023 and is now well embedded.
- The subject lead is part of a local RE network and received high praise for the school’s approach to assessment and delivery.

Key developments:

- Refinement of enquiry questions to improve clarity and focus.
- Use of individual books in Key Stage 2 to track progress.
- Group books retained in Key Stage 1 due to consistent teaching by one teacher.
- Colour-coded assessment sheets are in use.
- External support from a local minister continues, providing CPD opportunities for staff.

Personal Development (PD) (HH)

- The “Kapow” scheme is fully embedded and well-received by staff and pupils.
- Books show clear links to British Values, SMSC, and pupil voice.

Non-negotiables include:

- Three key vocabulary words per lesson
- Pupil definitions
- Article references from the UNCRC
- The Rights Respecting School Council is active in promoting articles across the school.

Next steps include:

Further embedding of SMSC and continued development of pupil-led initiatives.

Music – verbal update (ST)

- Due to staffing changes, there was no handover from the previous subject lead. ST is currently the music coordinator. A new subject lead will be appointed once staffing is confirmed for the next academic year.
- Kapow has a music curriculum which is being trialled by each year group, with early feedback indicating it is more accessible for non-specialist teachers.
- Year 4 instrumental tuition continues, with discussions ongoing about instrument choice and storage logistics.
- Final choice of instruments is still under consideration due to storage and insurance issues.

Early Years (RD)

- The Early Years extension is complete and in use.
- Phase 2 of the outdoor area development is planned for September.
- Staff are working with the Trust Early Years Lead to refine planning and provision.
- Nursery is developing a sensory area and improving zoning and display of children’s work.
- Monitoring will be adjusted to observe morning sessions where core teaching (e.g., phonics) takes place.

MFL (German) (RD)

- The new subject lead has made a strong start, supported by her personal connection to Germany.
- She accompanied Year 5 (33 pupils) on the Cologne trip and has integrated cultural elements into the curriculum.
- A German library has been established with books, games, and puzzles.
- Letter exchanges with the partner school have been scaled back due to capacity issues on the German side.
- Focus remains on Year 5 pupils who are most likely to engage in exchange activities.

PE and DT (CL)

- No update provided due to the absence of the link governor.

ACTION: CL feedback to be carried over to the July meeting – SD to include on the agenda

Discussion on Link Governor Roles

- The Trust has advised that schools focus link governor roles on SIP priorities rather than covering every subject.
- Governors discussed the benefits of this approach, including:
 - Reduced workload
 - More meaningful monitoring
 - Opportunities for mentoring new governors
 - Capture of pupil voice
- It was agreed that this model would be explored further for implementation in the next academic year. This could include inviting staff members to deliver presentations on their core subjects at LGB meetings which in addition would enhance their PD.

16. Governor Training Update

- a) SD reminded governors who had already not done so to complete their mandatory training on Prevent and Safeguarding and upload certificates onto GovernorHub (or inform clerk).
- b) SD reminded governors to complete training on Suspensions and Exclusions before the end of the Summer term

Governors discussed the challenges of accessing the NGA platform and agreed to support each other in completing the training.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement**17. Local policy Approval:**

- a) List of school policies requiring review - ST is working on this.
- b) Review critical incident and lockdown procedures.
Changes to this policy include training for staff and a training exercise is due to take place on 11.06.25. The drill will include an off-site evacuation to the field behind the school. Communication will be managed carefully to avoid unnecessary concern from the local community.
- c) Governors acknowledged receipt of the Trust CCTV policy.

18. Stakeholder Engagement – Parents/Carers

- A Reception intake evening is scheduled for 25th June 2025. Parents have been invited to attend without their children to allow for a more focused presentation. The session will cover "Reception Readiness", including expectations around toileting, independence, and routines. Induction will take place at a later date.
- Home visits will be conducted for children joining Reception from external nurseries. This replaces the previous practice of visiting children in their current settings.
- The school is responding to an increasing number of children entering Reception without being toilet trained or ready for school routines.

Governors supported the school's proactive approach to parental engagement and transition planning.

19. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

ST reported ongoing collaboration with local councillor James Pratt, who has been proactive in supporting the school on several local infrastructure and safety issues:

- Road Closure Issue: A section of road near the school, which was planned to be closed to improve safety, remains open. Councillor Pratt is challenging Cheshire East Council to follow through on the original plan.
- Pathway Accessibility: Concerns were raised about the condition and accessibility of footpaths at the rear of the school. Councillor Pratt is liaising with the local authority to address these issues.
- Traffic Incident: A recent road traffic accident outside the school resulted in damage to the perimeter fencing. Councillor Pratt intervened to ensure that Cheshire East prioritised the repair to maintain pupil safety.

Governors welcomed the councillor's involvement and noted the importance of maintaining strong links with local representatives to advocate for the school's needs.

20. Communication – to Trust

The following reports were submitted to the Trust:

- Spring 2025 Members' Visit and Training Report: Summarised governor visits, training completed, and key observations from the spring term.
- Spring 2025 LGB Summary Report: Provided an overview of governance activity, including monitoring, training, and stakeholder engagement.

These reports are part of the Trust's governance assurance framework and help inform Trust-wide strategic planning and support.

21. Communication – from Trust

- a) The Trust has completed an internal Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) survey across all LGBs and Trust Boards.

Key findings:

- Representation across the Trust is broadly in line with national averages. However, there is a recognised underrepresentation of governors under the age of 30 and from certain ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- The Trust is committed to improving diversity and is encouraging schools to proactively recruit governors from underrepresented groups and use community networks and targeted outreach to attract diverse candidates.

Governors discussed the importance of reflecting the diversity of the community they serve and supported the Trust's direction. AH confirmed that the Trust was also aware of the lack of diversity amongst the Trustees and that actions being taken to address this.

- b) AH thanked the governors for their response to the Skills Audit – only CL's is outstanding. The Trust will analyse the results to:

- Identify training needs
- Inform succession planning
- Support targeted recruitment

- c) Most governors have submitted their biographies. These will be used for:

- School website updates
- Trust governance records
- Public-facing materials to promote transparency and engagement

- d) The Chair's Forum was described as an open and collaborative space for chairs to share feedback and shape Trust strategy.

Key themes included:

- Governor recruitment and retention
 - Streamlining link governor roles to align with SIP priorities
 - Planning for the upcoming Governor Conference
- e) The Governance Conference will run from 9:00am to 1:00pm at UTC Crewe.

Format:

- Short keynote introduction
- Three workshop sessions (with multiple options per session)

- Networking opportunities and refreshments

Workshop themes include:

- School improvement and the role of link governors
- Community engagement and stakeholder voice
- Exclusion panels and SEND governance
- Induction and support for new governors

Governors were encouraged to attend and to complete the registration form. Partial attendance is permitted if full attendance is not possible. AH confirmed it will be a good opportunity for governors to network, receive focused training and meet the Trust SLT.

22. AOB

See Part 2 Minutes

It was confirmed that the next LGB meeting would take place on 9th July 2025.

There being no further discussions, RD thanked all the governors for their hard work and attendance and the meeting closed at 7:00 pm.

Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday July 9th 2025 at 5:00 pm

Minutes approved:

Date:.....

ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 08.05.25

Minute Ref	Action	By whom	By when
Page 1, item 2	Amend minutes and repost onto GovernorHub	Clerk	After meeting
Page 2, item 3	Share FAQ's with ST to be included in the school newsletter.	AH	After meeting
Page 2, item 3	Write to MN to confirm proposal effective immediately and to be reviewed at the end of the year.	ST	After meeting
Page 2, item 4	Meet with Geography lead to assess progress.	DR	09.07.25
Page 3. Item 5	Add feedback on RSE to next meeting agenda	Clerk	09.07.25
Page 6, item 13	Include feedback on the wellbeing action plan on next meeting agenda.	Clerk	09.07.25
Page 8, item 15	PE & DT feedback to be carried over to the July meeting – SD to include on the agenda	CL/Clerk	09.07.25