

Local Governing Board (LGB) to The Learning Partnership



Wistaston Church Lane Academy
SUMMER 1 Minutes



Wistaston Church Lane
Academy

Date: Thursday 15th May 2025 at 4:00pm

Governors Present:

Audrey Skidmore (AS) – Chair
Mike Finnigan (MF)
David Hastie (DH)
Holly Hulett (HH)
Benjamin Leighton (BL)
Gillian Loudon (GL)

Apologies:

Anthony Buckles (AB)
Sheridan Barnes (SB)
Dr Allan Howells (AH) – Director of Quality – TLP

In attendance:

Cathy Elsley (CE) – Headteacher

Clerk: Sharon Dutton (SD) TLP

Governance and Administration

The following documents had been shared on GovernorHub in support of the meeting:

- LGB meeting minutes – February 2025 – agenda item 2
- Headteacher's Report – May 2025 – agenda item 4
- Rethinking Timetabling – agenda item 8
- CCTV Policy – Trust – agenda item 16
- EDI Survey – agenda item 20
- Parent Guidelines – agenda item 21
- Parent Guidelines feedback – agenda item 21
- School Visits Summary – agenda item 21

1. Welcome, Quoracy, Apologies and Declarations

The meeting opened at 4:06pm. AS welcomed everyone to the meeting, welcomed new parent Governor GL, and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table. SD confirmed that the meeting was quorate. Apologies were received and accepted from AB, SB and AH.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- a) To approve the minutes from the last LGB meeting (06.02.25).

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising.

- b) To review the action log from the previous meeting (06.02.25).

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS:

| Minute Ref | Action | By whom | By when |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------|--------------------|
| Page 4 | Produce a monitoring schedule for the remainder of the academic year in consultation with CE. | AS/CE | 15.05.25 |
| UPDATE: See agenda item 12 | | | |
| Page 5. Item 12 | Action the policy schedule. | CE | Before Autumn term |

UPDATE: CE/SD to liaise on policy renewal schedule and tag an appropriate governor to review each one and feedback any comments to CE directly.

Governor question:

If we are covering more than one area, can this be done in one visit?

CE response:

This depends on the availability of staff. Every visit should include an element of Safeguarding and wellbeing.

Governors observed that feedback from their visit reports would be useful for further reporting.

ACTION: MF and DH to liaise and plan their visit.

3. Membership Update

- a) To confirm any changes to the membership of the LGB and consider current vacancies on the board.

SD confirmed that there had been one new member appointed to the board and AS welcomed GL to the LGB. Due to MF's retiring at the end of the academic year, two appointed governor vacancies will remain. Succession planning was discussed with governors who were asked to consider nominations for the Vice Chair role. Governors thanked MF for his long-standing contribution to the LGB since 2017.

A discussion was held around improving diversity and inclusivity in recruitment, referencing the Trust's EDI priorities and governors were encouraged to consider candidates from underrepresented backgrounds and younger demographics. The school is still registered with Governors for Schools and governors were encouraged to examine their own community links for new recruits.

ACTION: HH to send details of a prospective new governor to AH.

Strategic Direction and Progress Against Priorities

4. Headteachers Report & SIP including headline data

See Pages 8 – 11 and 12 – 14 of the headteachers report.

The headteacher presented a detailed report covering key areas of school performance, strategic priorities, and curriculum development.

a) School Improvement Priorities and SIP Monitoring

The headteacher outlined the current school improvement priorities, which are being monitored through regular visits from the Trust's Director of Primary Education.

The SIV (school improvement visit) in the Spring Term focused on:

- Transition from Reception to Year 1.
- Effectiveness of interventions.
- Curriculum engagement and pupil outcomes.

A follow-up visit is scheduled for the week beginning 19.05.25 to review progress against actions identified in the Spring SIP report. The headteacher welcomed the SIV with enthusiasm.

Governors were provided with a summary of SIP feedback and the school's responses, including adjustments to teaching strategies and curriculum delivery.

b) Data and Attainment

Comparative attainment data was shared, showing progress across year groups in reading, writing, and Maths. Year 1 cohort identified as having lower GLD on entry; targeted support and interventions are in place. The headteacher explained that the new assessment model allows for more diagnostic use of data, helping teachers identify gaps and adjust teaching accordingly.

Governors noted the importance of tracking the impact of the new timetable on both lower-attaining and higher-attaining pupils.

c) Budget and Staffing Implications

The headteacher highlighted significant budget pressures for the next academic year, including:

- Unfunded pay rises.
- Increased National Insurance contributions.
- Reduced flexibility for enrichment activities and external provision (e.g., music lessons, counselling).

Staffing will be absorbed as maternity cover and potential staff relocations will require internal reallocation of responsibilities. There will be fewer support staff available for interventions.

The curriculum changes are partly a response to these constraints, aiming to maximise impact with existing resources.

d) Enrichment and Community Engagement

Despite budget constraints, the school continues to prioritise enrichment:

- Year 6 music therapy group (Live the Beat) visited Richmond Village, fostering intergenerational engagement. This initiative will continue.
- Outdoor learning continues, although Forest School provision has ended due to staffing changes and budgetary constraints.

Governors praised the school's efforts to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum under financial pressure.

Governor question:

How have the children reacted to the discontinuation of the Forest School?

CE response:

It has been replaced with other initiatives, but the area is still being used albeit without all the activities. One child is struggling but it is hoped that curriculum changes will assist with this.

Governor question:

Will the Busy Bee initiative be reintroduced?

CE response:

At present it is no longer required but will be when needed. It is cohort driven.

Education

5. Admissions and Pupil Numbers

See Page 5 of the headteachers report

- Unusually for mid-term, 18 new pupils have joined since the last meeting, including 4 in Year 6 (3 relocations, 1 school transfer).
- 2 children have moved to elective home education and the local authority have been informed.
- 3 children from the Chimney House have been "dispersed".
- Reception 2025 intake is full (60 pupils) with a waiting list. This is an improvement on 45 at the same time last year.
- Nursery numbers are expected to be lower next year; one class model planned.

Governor question:

If Nursery is to be reduced, what happens to the additional staff?

CE response:

Maternity covers will absorb all additional staff.

Ongoing concerns were raised by governors about the “dispersal” of children from the Chimney House as these children left the school without destinations being confirmed and there has been difficulty tracking them due to lack of communication from local authority.

ACTION: CE to escalate this issue to the Trust for further investigation.

6. Attendance

See Page 6 of the headteachers report

Attendance remains above national average.

- The school’s attendance procedures are being used as a model across the Trust.

7. Behaviour (including suspensions and exclusions)

See Page 7 of the headteachers report

- 3 racial incidents and 16 incidents of sexualised behavior reported, the majority in Reception. Behaviour support provided through pastoral lead and hub access.
- One suspension issued this term.
- One child dual registered at Cornerstones

Governors discussed a specific incident involving hub access and communication breakdown which the headteacher agreed to follow up.

ACTION: CE to investigate hub access issue.

8. Curriculum – Progress and Attainment

The headteacher presented a detailed overview of pupil progress and attainment across the school, supported by comparative data tables for reading, writing, and Maths. The discussion focused on trends, cohort-specific challenges, and the impact of recent curriculum changes.

Data Overview

Governors were provided with a comparative dataset showing attainment levels for each year group across two academic years (2023–24 and 2024–25). The data was RAG rated to highlight attainment levels. Year-on-year comparisons allowed governors to track cohort progress as they moved through the school.

Key Observations

Year 1 was identified as a lower-attaining cohort, with a high proportion of pupils not meeting expected standards in reading, writing, and Maths.

Governor question:

What interventions are being carried out to improve these numbers?

CE response:

This cohort had a low Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception. It is worth noting that was their first experience with formal assessments, which may have impacted results. Year 2 and Year 6 showed more stable attainment, with clearer progression from previous years. The greyed-out data represents pupils without prior data (e.g. new joiners), which affects cohort averages.

Interpretation and Use of Data

The headteacher emphasised that the data is used diagnostically as it can sometimes be skewed due to the small numbers involved. Teachers analyse question-level data to identify specific gaps in understanding. Patterns in incorrect responses help inform planning and targeted interventions.

Governor question:

Are the interventions in place proving effective?

CE response:

While some progress is evident, the full impact of interventions and curriculum changes will take time to assess. Teachers are becoming more adept at using assessment data to adapt teaching in real time. In the past pupils were becoming disengaged but have responded well to system changes

Curriculum Adaptation and Impact

See Rethinking Timetabling document on GovernorHub

A significant change to the school timetable was introduced in the Summer Term 2025: The new model is expected to support improved outcomes by allowing more frequent revisiting of key concepts across the board, reducing pupil anxiety around core subjects and providing more time for foundation subjects and practical application of skills. The headteacher noted that pupils are already showing increased engagement, particularly in Maths, where anxiety had previously been a barrier.

- Maths and English sessions reduced to 30 minutes.
- Additional sessions throughout the day/week allow for reinforcement and deeper learning.
- One day per week is now dedicated to foundation subjects and enrichment activities (e.g. science, art, DT), with no formal Maths or English lessons.

Rationale:

- Address pupil disengagement, particularly in Maths.
- Reduce cognitive overload and improve curriculum breadth.
- Support teacher workload and enable more creative, cross-curricular teaching.

Staff initially found the change challenging but are adapting well. Early pupil feedback has been positive, with children reporting greater enjoyment and engagement.

Governors discussed the importance of monitoring the impact on attainment and ensuring curriculum coverage remains robust.

Governor question:

Has this been trialed in other schools?

CE response:

Yes, it has, and improvements have been made.

Governor question:

How does this affect the transition into high school?

CE response:

It has encouraged pupils to think more independently, which is important when moving out of the primary setting into secondary.

Governor question:

How have the staff reacted to this?

CE response:

Initially they found it quite difficult to adapt but are now getting used to it, realising that they can teach more creatively. The children are enjoying it and finding classes interesting and wide-ranging.

The headteacher encouraged governors to engage pupil voice on this area during their monitoring visits.

Challenges and Considerations

Small cohort sizes and demographic variation (e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium) can skew data and limit statistical comparisons.

Governors discussed the importance of balancing support for lower-attaining pupils with continued challenge for higher-attaining pupils and the headteacher confirmed that differentiation and stretch remain a focus in planning and delivery.

Governor Reflections

Governors appreciated the clarity of the data presentation and the contextual explanations. They congratulated the headteacher on the school's ability to adapt in response to the data. They requested continued updates on the impact of the new curriculum model, particularly in relation to Year 1 and Year 6 outcomes and it was agreed that future data presentations should continue to include visual comparisons and narrative interpretation.

Welfare

9. Safeguarding

See Page 15 of the headteachers report.

- One child is currently on a child protection plan.

The safeguarding caseload was reviewed and the headteacher explained that the DSL and DDSLs are holding weekly meetings to discuss safeguarding and to triage cases. Concerns were raised about elective home education (EHE) cases. Two children have been de-registered this year and the school followed all procedures and notified the local authority. Governors questioned the robustness of the local authority follow-up.

- RSHE annual parent meeting was held. 14 parents attended the meeting and there were no questions, and no changes requested.
- New staff received induction training including safeguarding
- All staff checked for usage of CPOMS, and given further training where required.

Governor question:

What is involved with a child protection plan?

CE response:

Meetings are conducted to create an effective plan that involves a multitude of relevant agencies.

10. Welfare and wellbeing – students

See Page 16 of the headteachers report

- Enrichment activities highlighted, including a music therapy group visit to Richmond Village.
- Forest School provision ended due to staffing changes; alternative outdoor learning opportunities maintained.
- Curriculum changes expected to support broader engagement and wellbeing.

11. Welfare and wellbeing - staff

See Page 17 of the headteachers report

- Budget pressures are impacting staffing and enrichment provision.
- Measures have been put in place to reduce workload including simplified marking, planning expectations and report writing and reduced assessment frequency.

Governors acknowledged increasing demands on teachers and the importance of wellbeing support. The headteacher confirmed that the school had enlisted the help of those parent volunteers with appropriate DBS checks.

Governor Links and Training

12. Link Governor Monitoring

- Reports from MF and HH were noted.
- SATs arrangements praised for being well-organised but resource intensive.
- Governors were encouraged to include safeguarding and wellbeing in all visits.

A discussion ensued around the implication of the SATs data and demographics. It was observed that SEN issues are often diagnosed quicker with boys than with girls due to behavior.

Governor question:

What are the criteria for additional arrangements during SATS?

Response:

A variety of issues including any EHCP in place, SEN, previous testing etc.

13. Link Governor Monitoring Schedule

All governors expected to complete at least one visit per term and visits to be arranged flexibly with staff availability in mind.

14. Governor Training Update:

SD reminder governors to complete the mandatory training (Safeguarding, Prevent, and Exclusions before the start of the new academic year. Governors were reminded to complete and log their training. Individual email reminders will be sent. Clarification was provided on misleading GovernorHub training prompts; governors advised to ignore automated messages unless directed by the Clerk.

15. Feedback on Chair's Forum

Topics included:

- AI-generated minutes.
- SIP reports.
- Governor conference planning.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives.

Local Matters and Stakeholder Engagement**16. Local Policy approval:**

- a) Feedback on school policies issued for review:
- Parent Conduct Guidance

Governors robustly discussed this issue, and it was agreed to finalise the wording within GovernorHub. Once approved it would be uploaded onto the website at the beginning of the 2025-26 academic year.

- b) To confirm receipt of the following Trust policy:
- CCTV policy

This policy does not affect the school, but governors received and noted the policy which had been uploaded onto the Trust website.

ACTION: CE/Clerk to action the policy schedule.

17. Stakeholder Engagement – Parents/Carers

See Page 18 of the headteachers report.

The proposal to issue a parent survey to gather feedback on communication and curriculum changes was discussed and confirmed. Governors to contribute survey question ideas via GovernorHub.

ACTION: Draft LGB parent survey on GovernorHub

18. Stakeholder Engagement – Wider Community

See Page 19 of the headteachers report.

The headteacher reported positive feedback on community engagement activities (e.g. Richmond Village visit).

19. Communication to the Trust

See item 6 of the minutes – Chimney House pupils' status.

20. Communication from the Trust

- a) Equality and Diversity Survey

Results of this survey have been uploaded onto GovernorHub.

b) Skills Audit

Results of this survey will be uploaded onto GovernorHub after the meeting

c) Governor biographies

SD thanked WCLA for their 100% response rate and advised their biographies would be the first group published on the school website.

d) Governors' conference 2025 – 14th June 2025 – governors were encouraged RSVP as soon as possible, even if they were unable to attend.

21. AOB

- At the beginning of the meeting a discussion took place around the residential funding of trips. The headteacher had shared the School Visits Summary for governors' information. It was agreed that going forward DH and SB continue investigating this item for feedback to governors. It was established that the outcome of this collaboration was to find a way to make the funding of visits as equitable as possible for all pupil categories and to give guidance as to the most effective category of trip to achieve this. An investigation of other Trust schools' trips was suggested. CE confirmed that the number of residential was going to have to be reduced due to budgetary constraints and that as much notice as possible was to be given in order for parents to plan effectively.
- Nursery hours changes come in effect following the recently issued DfE statutory guidance around charges to parents of Early Years children as part of its roll out of 30 funded hours of childcare for working families. The new guidance states that the 6 hours of funded education/childcare must be in a continuous block which means the school can no longer charge for lunch supervision.

ACTION: DH & SB to continue to liaise on school trips.

ACTION: CE to reissue summary to include details of categories of trips

The Chair and headteacher thanked the Governors for their attendance and commitment.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 17th July 2025 at 4:00pm Meeting Closed at 6:06pm

ACTION LOG FOR MEETING 06/02/2025

| Minute Ref | Action | By whom | By when |
|-------------------|---|----------------|----------------|
| Pg 2 Item 2 | Liaise and plan safeguarding monitoring visit. | MF/DH | After meeting |
| Pg 2 Item 2 | Send details of a prospective new governor to AH. | HH | After meeting |
| Pg 4 Item 5 | Escalate Chimney House (dispersed children) issue to the Trust for further investigation. | CE | After meeting |
| Pg 4 Item 7 | Investigate hub access issue. | CE | After meeting |
| Pg 7 Item 16 | Action the policy schedule. | CE/Clerk | 17.07.25 |
| Pg 8 Item 21 | Continue to liaise on school trips. | DH/SB | Ongoing |
| Pg 8 Item 21 | Reissue school visits summary to include details of categories of trips | CE | 17.07.25 |
| Pg 8 Item 17 | Draft LGB parent survey on GovernorHub. | ALL | 17.05.25 |