

MEETING NOTES

FULL GOVERNING BODY: 28 JANUARY 2026, 18:00 AT LEEDON LOWER SCHOOL

VISION: EVERY CHILD LEAVES LEEDON AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN, WITH THE SKILLS, EXPERIENCES AND CONFIDENCE NEEDED TO DREAM BIG, ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND BE A SUCCESSFUL LEARNER FOR LIFE.

MEMBERSHIP

NAME	ROLE	TERM FROM	TERM TO
Nicola McIntyre	Co-Chair	25 March 2025	25 March 2029
Sam Russell	Co-Chair	08 December 2025	08 December 2029
Jo Shelley	Parent Governor	25 March 2025	25 March 2029
Nicky Thurgood	Parent Governor	29 November 2023	29 November 2027
Michelle Stewart	Parent Governor	01 December 2022	01 December 2026
Heena Howe	Parent Governor	29 November 2023	29 November 2027
Debbie Hull	Co-Opted Governor	09 October 2024	09 October 2028
Christina Reid	Parent Governor	02 April 2025	01 April 2029
Simon Coath	Parent Governor	02 April 2025	01 April 2029
Ian Watson	Co-Opted Governor	01 October 2025	01 October 2029
Gayle Raybould	Co-Opted Governor	01 October 2025	01 October 2029
Richard Benson	Headteacher – Ex-Officio	NA	NA
Marcus Ray	Interim-Headteacher	NA	NA
Vijith Vijay	Governance Professional	NA	NA
Paul Hussey	Observer	NA	NA

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action ID	Meeting Date	Agenda Point	Responsible Person	Status	Action
19	October 1, 2025	17	Richard Benson	Pending	RB to update the Uniform policy to be tabled at the next meeting.
20	October 1, 2025	17	Richard Benson	Pending	RB, SENDCo, GR, and NT will form a working group to review implementation to date.
21	December 8, 2025	7	Marcus Ray	Pending	To include nomination of staff governor update into the school briefing.
22	December 8, 2025	9	Marcus Ray	Pending	To share the refreshed vision with the governing body.
23	December 8, 2025	11	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	To share governor link roles with MR.
24	December 8, 2025	12	Marcus Ray	Pending	To share the Pupil Premium plan for 2025-26 with the board.
25	December 8, 2025	18	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	NM to liaise with MR to ensure that equalities policy objectives are linked to actionable goals.
26	December 8, 2025	18	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	NM/SR to table a support staff pay policy at the next meeting.
27	December 8, 2025	18	Marcus Ray	Pending	Attendance policy amendments to be made including removal of rewards and recognition section.

NOTES	
No	Description
Opening Items	
1	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
Apologies were received from MS . The meeting commenced at 18:04 with members present as listed. JS joined the meeting at 18:38 .	
2	Declarations of Interests
None.	
3	Matters to be raised under AOB as urgent
None.	
4	<p>Minutes of the Meeting on 8 December 2025 for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters Arising • Outstanding Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action 19 – Update to Uniform Policy ○ Action 20 – Accessibility Working Group ○ Action 21 – Staff Governor Nomination ○ Action 22 – Vision ○ Action 23 – Governor Link Roles for MR ○ Action 24 – PP Plan ○ Action 25 – Equalities Policy ○ Action 26 – Support Staff Pay Policy ○ Action 27 – Attendance Policy Updates
<p>Meeting notes were deferred as the document was not linked. These will be presented for approval at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action 19: MR will review the concerns raised under the uniform policy and update the policy accordingly. MR confirmed that schools have included reasonable adjustments relating to SEND and affordability. An example was shared of a child with a skin condition whose SEND needs result in feeling restricted by uniform requirements. GR requested that governors receive the amended policy; ACTION: MR to circulate this to governors.</p> <p>Action 20: NT to lead a meeting to facilitate discussion in relation to this action.</p> <p>Action 21: Actioned and closed.</p> <p>Action 22: MR and NM will liaise regarding this action. The action remains open.</p> <p>Action 23: Actioned and closed.</p> <p>Action 24: Actioned and closed.</p> <p>Action 25: Pending.</p> <p>Action 26: Pending.</p> <p>Action 27: MR confirmed that a meeting has taken place with the RISE team and that a further meeting will be arranged with the Attendance and Behaviour Hub to consider what amendments may be required to the attendance policy. Advice will be provided by the Attendance and Behaviour Hub. NM advised that any significant changes would require Board approval. MR noted that the removal of rewards and recognition has been discussed, but that formal advice will be sought from the Attendance and Behaviour Hub.</p>	

ACTION: MR to bring recommendations back to the Board.

5 Correspondence Received

Confirmation has been received from the DfE that the RISE programme provider now is **Pioneer Trust**. This decision has been made by the DfE.

IW has stepped down from the Board, having identified a potential conflict of interest. This relates to PST no longer being the provider and the appointment of Pioneer Trust, with **IW** being affiliated with PST.

HH queried whether there were any repercussions in terms of funding. **NM** confirmed that funding for PST has concluded. **GR** asked what support has been offered by Pioneer Trust. **MR** advised that Pioneer Trust has produced an action plan and is offering the same level of support previously provided by PST, including staff support drawn from their schools. Pioneer Trust is being supported by schools based in Luton and Wixams and has extensive experience in school development.

MR confirmed that discussions took place with Cori Bateman regarding funding support, including staff cover. The Attendance and Behaviour Hub has been recommended and is providing audit support for EYFS. **MR** noted that actions have already taken place within a very short timeframe.

DB asked whether there has been any significant change following the change in provider. **MR** confirmed there has not. **MR** also confirmed that amendments to the plan were discussed and that Cori Bateman has updated the success criteria, which **MR** considers to be strong.

SR added that staff were introduced to Pioneer Trust last week and had expressed concerns about whether plans would be changed or rewritten. **SR** confirmed that this has not been the case and that Pioneer Trust is building on the existing work.

6 Chair's Actions

None

7 Staff Governor Nomination

Three nominations have been received. Confirmation regarding the voting process will be provided within the next week, as one nominee has withdrawn from the role. **NM** advised that a new member will be formally welcomed at the March meeting.

School Improvement

9 Headteacher's report

MR shared an update on a significant number of new arrivals, including four pupils from Afghanistan. Further arrivals are anticipated due to ongoing rehousing, and it was noted that some families may be moved again following rehousing. **MR** highlighted a gender imbalance, with a higher proportion of boys in Years 3 and 4.

The number of pupils eligible for FSM is increasing. **MR** explained that when children initially join the school, families often have not yet applied for FSM, but the school actively encourages and supports applications. SEND needs have been identified among a number of pupils. While EHCP numbers have not increased significantly, several children with high needs are currently within the EHCP assessment process. **MR** noted that SEND numbers have increased but EHCPs have not, due to delays in diagnosis. The SENDCo was praised for her work with SEND pupils and her engagement with the assessment process.

Attendance analysis has been undertaken by **MR**, with discussions held with the RISE team. **MR** advised that most schools aim for attendance of 95% or above. Attendance had improved last year but dipped during the winter period due to seasonal illness. A key target within the RISE programme is to address persistent absence. Overall absence remains higher than the national average, largely because approximately 40% of disadvantaged pupils fall within the persistent absence group. **MR** noted that a 5% reduction within this group would raise overall attendance to 95% or above.

Work is underway to support this cohort, with patterns identified among certain pupils. **MR** has asked staff teams to consider what additional support can be offered and how this can be communicated effectively to parents. **MR** also referenced evidence that GCSE outcomes are impacted by poor attendance, linking this to primary-aged pupils missing the first week of school.

Appropriate fines and letters are being arranged to challenge unauthorised absences and leave requests. **MR** confirmed that while some holiday requests are not approved, the school is also considering trauma and other underlying causes of absence. **GR** suggested that the school should reconsider levels of leniency in authorising absence. **MR** clarified that absence is only authorised where there is evidence of trauma or where attendance is otherwise very high and close to 100%.

GR noted that while unauthorised absence appears low, persistent absence is high, highlighting a disparity and the importance of accurate reporting. **GR** asked for further clarity on the proportion of pupils who are SEND and FSM within the attendance data and also queried how many Reception children are of statutory school age and the possible causes of absence within this group.

ACTION: MR to provide this data at the next meeting.

NM asked how attendance culture is being addressed across the school. **MR** advised that discussions have taken place with the RISE team and that further guidance will be sought from the Attendance and Behaviour Hub before updated processes and expectations are communicated to parents.

MR reported that some disadvantaged and FSM pupils attend school very regularly, and that detailed analysis has been carried out across year groups. Year 2 attendance is consistent, while other year groups show fluctuations, partly linked to higher levels of illness. No systemic cause has yet been identified.

In relation to behaviour, **MR** confirmed that the number of suspensions remains very low, with most cases involving pupils with SEND and complex needs. This presents additional challenges, as safeguarding considerations must be taken into account when suspensions occur. The school is ensuring that pupils' needs are met within class wherever possible. Staff have been briefed on the rationale for suspensions and the circumstances in which they may be used.

NM asked whether any cases were reaching the number of incidents where the parents may request a review of the suspensions. **MR** advised that parents generally accept the behavioural concerns, although some express frustration due to the inconvenience of managing childcare during suspensions. Further guidance is being sought from the Attendance and Behaviour Hub. Suspensions tend to be spread out; **MR** noted that more frequent or longer suspensions would likely result in review requests.

GR asked whether suspensions were concentrated within a single class. **MR** confirmed this was not the case and noted that one pupil in Year 3 is no longer on roll.

MR also updated governors on internal exclusions. In some cases, safeguarding concerns meant that suspending pupils at home was not appropriate, and alternative in-school arrangements were made. While this placed pressure on staffing, decisions were taken to ensure pupil safety. **MR** emphasised the importance of consistency in how bullying is described, noting that some parental complaints had been investigated and found not to meet the definition of bullying, including incidents related to football disputes.

HH asked whether parents are always informed of incidents. **MR** confirmed that parents are notified. In some cases, repeated concerns involve the same pupils or friendship groups, often linked to the needs of individual children within those groups.

Two incidents described as racist were reported. **MR** explained that in one case a pupil with cognitive and language difficulties had used inappropriate terminology due to limited understanding and language barriers. This was addressed through re-education and appropriate support rather than being categorised as a racist incident.

Staffing levels have remained broadly stable. Several staff members are returning from maternity leave, one member of staff is undertaking KIT days, and two staff have requested minor reductions to part-time hours.

Health and safety updates were provided. Two incidents were reported, one of which required a RIDDOR submission. The incident involved a contractor working on drainage where an individual tripped in the work area. Although cones and signage were in place, a protective barrier had not been installed. A significant discussion has since taken place.

SR asked about the severity of the injury. **MR** confirmed it was significant enough to require medical treatment. The SBM is monitoring the situation and maintaining regular contact to ensure no further treatment is required.

DH asked whether water coming from the drains on the day of another incident had been resolved. **MR** explained that the main issue relates to water flow across the playground, with pooling caused by the gradient of the land. Some improvement has been achieved following recent tarmacking. Further remedial works, including the installation of new pipes to channel water into the ground, are scheduled for the half-term break.

Preventative checks are now being carried out early in the mornings during colder periods to mitigate risk. **MR** noted that insufficient salt had been available during recent icy conditions; this has now been addressed, with further deliveries arranged.

School Improvement

- 10
1. School Improvement Plan
 2. RISE external review report 3.12.25.docx
 3. Autumn Term Data Review

NM advised that a former HMI inspector attended to carry out an inspection as part of the RISE programme. The resulting report was described as a challenging read and was received following the recent change in provider.

MR confirmed that the report is thorough and accurate, and that the areas identified are already known to the school and reflected within the RISE plan. **NM** noted that, from a Board perspective, the scale of work required had not been fully understood previously. The report highlights inconsistencies which are now being addressed incrementally. Key priorities include behaviour and the establishment of basic routines and systems, which **MR** emphasised are not quick fixes.

NM asked how teaching staff had responded to the report. **MR** explained that the report was shared with SLT, and key messages were communicated to staff during INSET. While this was a difficult and challenging message for some, the majority of staff have responded positively.

NM asked whether staff-related performance concerns identified in the report are being addressed. **MR** confirmed that a checklist has been introduced for teaching and learning, clearly setting out expectations for how every lesson should be delivered.

NM queried why classroom non-negotiables needed to be revisited, noting that this had previously been led by Ebrahim Tafti. **MR** advised that while expectations had existed, they had not been implemented consistently or effectively, which is why issues have re-emerged.

Rosenshine's principles have now been embedded through a classroom checklist. This has been modelled in class, with targeted support identified for teachers who require additional help. This approach is also being applied to phonics, where the phonics lead has modelled lessons, reviewed planning, and led staff meetings. Team teaching is in place until staff are confident, alongside ongoing monitoring and observation. **MR** and Nick Neil have provided feedback to class leads.

SR asked how governors can be assured that expectations communicated to staff are being embedded and how progress will be reported to the Board. **HH** raised concerns about the frequency of changes in providers. **GR** noted that, regardless of provider, the messages remain consistent. **MR** confirmed that all messages are drawn directly from the RISE plan.

GR asked whether the appraisal process has been completed. **MR** confirmed that it has. **MR** further advised that mediocrity in teaching has been identified and that SLT had not previously been sufficiently empowered or supported to raise standards. This culture has become ingrained and will take time to shift. **MR** was clear that if improvement does not occur, capability procedures will need to be implemented.

GR queried who had failed to support **SLT** and teaching staff. **SR** emphasised that there can be no regression, and that going forward those responsible will be held to account through appropriate processes. **MR** confirmed that SLT is now being empowered to lead the required changes, supported by interim leadership arrangements.

In the short term, **MR** continues to support the school. The LA is close to identifying a longer-term leadership solution. Pioneer Trust has increased its level of support and may form part of the leadership solution following half term. **SW** will remain in post until Easter, and a new Deputy Head has been appointed and will start after Easter. **NM** advised that **RB** is not expected to return in the immediate future and confirmed her ongoing support. **MR** and the incoming Deputy Head have shared a clear ethos around the use of CPD tailored to the school's context.

NM asked whether there are any concerns regarding data. **MR** confirmed that data tracking processes had previously been weak. Clear guidance has now been provided for pupil progress meetings, and staff are

being supported to use data more effectively. Previously, data was collected but not acted upon; interventions are now directly linked to identified needs. Data accuracy is improving, with more challenging targets being set to ensure pupils meet or exceed national expectations, in line with the RISE plan.

MR noted that the school currently uses four different data systems, all of which incur cost, and that much of this functionality could be delivered through Arbor. A comparison exercise is underway to identify redundant systems.

Concerns were raised regarding MTC outcomes in Year 4. **MR** confirmed that this has been reviewed with Kevin, the maths lead. Additional support is being provided in Year 4, though **MR** emphasised that foundations must be established from Year 1. A strategy has been developed to strengthen monitoring and accountability, with teachers taking greater responsibility. Limited access to devices remains a challenge. More focused MTC practice and improved tracking are beginning to show impact. Phonics outcomes are improving, and while maths has lagged, progress is now evident and there is confidence this will reach or exceed national levels by the end of the year.

DH asked whether attainment below expected is close to national levels. **MR** advised that there is no single national comparator at this stage, as current attainment will shift as pupils progress through the year.

GR noted that CBC has released some funding for IT, which could be explored. **MR** confirmed that Chris has applied for funding to support disadvantaged pupils and is submitting further applications.

GR asked whether the school uses TT Rockstars. **MR** confirmed that Arithmagicians is used instead, but that limited access to IT presents challenges. **MR** advised that staff have asked parents to support practice at home and encouraged children to attend with an adult to learn how to practise. Feedback has highlighted limited device access in school, embarrassment among pupils, and the reality that many disadvantaged families do not have devices at home.

GR suggested that breakfast and homework clubs could support this. **MR** acknowledged that a significant amount of work is required overall and that priorities must currently focus on the quality of teaching and learning. Enrichment and clubs have been deprioritised, and substantial work is needed to better support disadvantaged pupils.

GR asked where **PP** funding is currently allocated. **MR** confirmed that this information has been difficult to access due to **RB**'s absence. Now that clearer information is emerging, the PP strategy will be refocused to better support the identified priority areas.

11	Governor Monitoring Visits EYFS visit – Dec 25
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DH reported on an introductory visit and noted a lack of joined-up working between Little Learners (pre-school) and Reception. It was acknowledged that two members of staff are currently on maternity leave, which may be contributing to this issue.

NM asked about the condition of the outdoor space. **MR** advised that the area had accumulated a significant amount of rubbish and required clearance. A skip was arranged, and the area has since been cleaned and tidied.

NM advised that a plan should be brought to the Board to consider the funding implications of improving the outdoor area. **DH** suggested that parents could be asked to donate items to support this work. **MR** noted that funding is particularly needed for storage, as there is currently no adequate storage provision.

NM questioned why **SLT** had not taken greater ownership of this issue, given that it has been raised repeatedly. **MR** advised that he was unsure of the reasons but confirmed that actions were taken following the audit. **MR** agreed with **NM**'s concerns and added that **SLT** is now in a significantly stronger position and working hard to address these matters.

GR asked whether the pre-school provision is part of the school and, if so, why it appears to be treated as a separate entity with separate policies. **NM** suggested this may be a legacy issue from when the provision operated independently. **SR** confirmed that it is part of the school and stated that governors should apply the same level of scrutiny as they do across the rest of the school.

NM encouraged governors to schedule monitoring visits and advised that more formal subject-specific visits should be considered going forward.

12	SEND Report
<p>This item has been deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Invite Chris (SENDCo) to attend the next Board meeting. ACTION: Invite Cori Bateman to attend the Board.</p>	
13	<p>Grant funding</p> <p>Pupil Premium Strategy and Plan 2023-27 (annual review)</p>
<p>Not discussed as MR was unable to report on the progress.</p>	
<p>Financial & Premises Management</p>	
14	<p>Current Budget Position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income and Expenditure - P9 December 2025 - Q3.xlsx • Budget Monitoring report - P9 December 2025 - Q3.xlsx • Budget Planning for 26/27 • Approve SFVS 2025-26 Draft.docx • Leedon Benchmarking 2024-25.pdf
<p>CR reported that the SBM has prepared a worst-case financial scenario, assuming the removal of £40k of SEND funding. Under this scenario, a £240k deficit is forecast. It was noted that a cash advance from the LA will be required, as the school is projected to run out of funds by March.</p> <p>SR advised that a 3–5-year financial forecast is being requested, particularly in the context of there being no permanent Headteacher in post. SR noted that the school is not currently in a poor position, but that finances have been significantly tightened from a leadership perspective. SR emphasised that CBC must recognise the level of sacrifice the school has made to reach this point.</p> <p>GR raised concerns about long-standing, high-cost staff members who are not performing as expected. MR confirmed that a number of staff are positioned at the top of the pay scale and that HLTAs are currently providing cover.</p> <p>GR asked whether a staffing restructure is required. NM confirmed that staffing costs are approximately 80% of the budget and that the key issue is determining which roles are required going forward. NM concluded that a restructure is likely to be required, following the correct process.</p> <p>The SBM will model a range of budget scenarios for consideration at the next meeting.</p> <p>NM confirmed that the SFVS must be submitted by the end of February. Governors agreed to delegate approval of the SFVS to the Budget Working Group.</p> <p>Governors reviewed benchmarking information. NM noted that expenditure on educational supplies is high and is currently under review. GR asked why expenditure on bought-in professional services appears inflated. NM explained that this is due to a grant being offset within this cost centre. GR also queried the classification of “other staff costs” under code E07.</p> <p>ACTION: SFVS to be reviewed by BWG and recommended to the FB for approval</p> <p>ACTION: CR to check this with the SBM and report back.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the SBM will attend a future Board meeting to present and explain the budget. NM also welcomed governors to join the Budget Working Group to provide additional advice and support.</p>	
<p>Standing Items</p>	
15	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Attendance report.docx

- SCR check report.docx

Safeguarding Checklist for Governors 2025 Leedon.docx

MS reported on a recent safeguarding monitoring visit and confirmed that a SCR check was conducted.

MR advised that the LA is scheduled to carry out a safeguarding visit on 9 February, which will include a further SCR check, following on from the safeguarding audit completed last year.

MR explained that there had been three strategy meetings and two referrals in a single day, highlighting the scale and intensity of safeguarding activity currently being managed by the school. These cases were largely linked to safeguarding concerns arising from non-school and external factors.

MR confirmed that additional processes have now been put in place to ensure gate monitoring is maintained if **MR** or **SLT** are unavailable, following an incident where a gate was left open for approximately 20 minutes.

16 Wellbeing

MR confirmed that he, alongside **SW**, has offered to speak with any staff members who may need additional support. It was noted that there is some uncertainty among staff regarding whether **RB** will be returning and concerns around his wellbeing. Staff are also discussing anxieties linked to leadership changes and the appointment of a new Deputy Head.

MR advised that the school has Mental Health First Aiders in place, who provide feedback and escalate concerns to him as appropriate.

17 GDPR

No breaches reported. 1 SAR received.

18

Policies for approval:

1. SEND policy.docx
2. Suspension and Exclusion policy.docx
3. Remote learning policy.docx
4. Complaints procedure.docx
5. Behaviour and bullying policy.docx
6. Relationships and Health Education policy 2024.docx
7. Teaching & Learning Policy.docx
8. Governors-allowances-and-expenses-policy.pdf

NM raised concerns regarding a lack of clear ownership of policies, an issue previously highlighted by Maxine Powell. **NM** advised that the current process is not sufficiently robust and requires urgent attention.

MR confirmed that improving systems, including policy management, is a key target within the RISE plan. **GR** highlighted a number of inaccuracies within current policies, noting that the SEND policy contains errors and that the behaviour policy is not fit for purpose. **GR** further advised that suspension and exclusion policies are separate from the bullying policy, when these should be aligned, and that current policies reference statutory guidance that is over three years out of date. Several required elements are also missing. **GR** stressed that behaviour and bullying policies need to be comprehensively revisited.

SR expressed surprise that the LA does not provide standardised policies. **GR** advised that a governor portal is available via CBC, which includes access to model policies used by other local schools.

GR asked who holds responsibility as behaviour lead. **MR** confirmed that **SW** is the behaviour lead and has been working extensively on policy development.

SR highlighted that inaccurate policies present an Ofsted risk. **NM** reiterated that policies should be owned and led by the relevant staff members within school. **GR** again referenced the availability of model policies via the CBC website.

MR confirmed that this work will be prioritised over the next two weeks, with behaviour, exclusion, and SEND policies addressed as a priority.

Governor Training and Development

19 Governor Training Attended or Scheduled

DB confirmed attendance at Early Years training scheduled for tomorrow and advised that a session to hold leaders to account will take place next Tuesday.

NM confirmed that training sessions led by Maxine Powell will be scheduled during February 2026.

20 Any other business

There were no further items. **MR** expressed his gratitude for being a part of the school. **NM**, on behalf of the Board, expressed thanks and appreciation to **MR** for his continued commitment and leadership.

CLOSE OF MEETING AT 20:15, NEXT MEETING 18 MARCH 2026

Minutes approved by the Governing Body on: 14.04.2026

(ACTIONS OVERLEAF)

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27	08 December 2025	18	Marcus Ray	Pending	Attendance policy amendments to be made including removal of rewards and recognition section. MR to bring the updated policy to the board.
28	08 December 2025	18	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	NM and IW to liaise on wording amendments
30	28 January 2026	9	Marcus Ray	Pending	MR to provide data around attendance for SEND and FSM pupils to the board.
31	28 January 2026	12	Sam Russell	Pending	To invite SENDCo to attend meeting on the 18th of March 2026
32	28 January 2026	12	Sam Russell	Pending	To attend Cori Bateman to attend a meeting.
33	28 January 2026	14	Cristina Reid	Pending	SFVS to be reviewed by BWG
34	28 January 2026	14	Cristina Reid	Pending	CR to check with SBM regarding costs under E07 - "other staffing costs".