

MEETING NOTES

FULL GOVERNING BODY: 2ND APRIL 2025, 18:30 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	Chair	25 March 2025	25 March 2029
Nick Neil	Staff Governor	09 October 2024	09 October 2025
Amy Herukka	Co-Opted Governor	01 December 2022	01 December 2026
Jo Shelly	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-Opt Governor	09 October 2024	09 October 2028
Steve Ellerton	Co-Opted Governor	05 March 2025	04 March 2029
Cristina Reid	Parent Governor	02 April 2025	01 April 2029
Simon Coath	Parent Governor	02 April 2025	01 April 2029
Richard Benson	Headteacher – Ex-Officio	NA	NA
Vijith Vijay	Governance Professional	NA	NA

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS: Discussed under Agenda Point 4

MEETING NOTES

1	WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE The Chair welcomed all attendees and commenced the meeting at 18:31. HH and JS joined the meeting at 18:34.
2	ANY PERSONAL OR BUSINESS INTERESTS TO DECLARE None.
3	MATTERS TO BE RAISED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS AGREED AS BEING URGENT

	None.
4	<p>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (05 MARCH 2025) AND MATTERS ARISING (NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA)</p> <p>For approval: Draft Meeting Notes - 5th March 2025.docx</p> <p>The following amendments were suggested to the meeting notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condense the information discussed about a member of staff under agenda point 14. • Pay policy notes to be added under agenda point 18. <p>The governors approved the meeting notes subject to the above-mentioned amendments.</p> <p>Previous Actions:</p> <p>Action 1: Complete Cost of chair recruitment service to be incorporated into the FY26 budget.</p> <p>Action 2: Pending NM & JS to discuss chair-experience requirements for recruitment.</p> <p>Action 3: Complete RB shared the notes from the PST review meeting with the board.</p> <p>Action 4: In-progress RB to share S175 Audit with the board.</p> <p>Action 5: Pending RB to conduct survey of parents and children.</p> <p>Action 6: Complete SEND Policy, Complaints Procedure and Remote Learning Policy to be updated by LH</p> <p>Action 7: Pending RB to share amended Staff Code of Conduct with all staff.</p>
5	<p>CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED</p> <p>None.</p>

6	<p>CHAIR'S ACTIONS</p> <p>None.</p>
7	<p>SUCCESSION PLANNING - CHAIR'S ROLE</p> <p>JS confirmed that LH has incorporated the cost of the recruitment service in the new budget.</p> <p>NM informed the new governors of her decision to step down as Chair and initiate the recruitment of a new Chair via Governors for Schools</p> <p>ACTION: JS to complete the application form and commence the recruitment process.</p>
8	<p>ELECTION OF GOVERNORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent governor roles <p>SC, JS, and CR submitted applications for the role of Parent Governor.</p> <p>JS continues in the role of Vice Chair.</p> <p>New governors (CR and SC) were appointed at the meeting.</p>
9	<p>SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PST improvement plan <p>For discussion: PST School Improvement review plan.docx</p> <p>NM explained that the school is currently rated 'Requires Improvement' and has been offered 10 days of support from PST (Pyramid Schools Trust). PST recently visited the school.</p> <p>RB noted that the document provided by PST highlighted areas for development, which the school has since addressed. Colin, Head of Ramsey Manor, conducted a review with Ebrahim Tafti, and ET will visit Ramsey Manor to observe the context behind the suggested improvements. Colin reported visible improvements within three weeks of the initial review.</p> <p>Question NM enquired whether Colin's findings had been shared with PST, to which RB confirmed they had.</p>

NN confirmed that 4 days have been allocated for reviewing reading and writing, and 2 days for mathematics.

Question:

NM questioned the limited mention of strengths. **RB** responded that it was more beneficial to focus on areas for improvement rather than listing numerous strengths.

NM emphasised that from a Board perspective, it would be valuable to understand what PST recognised as the school's strengths.

NN noted that while some suggestions were made regarding delivery methods, such as phonics, the school must adhere to the programme structure set by the providers. **NN** also observed that certain suggestions had been repeated across different contexts.

Question:

MS asked whether the EYFS review recommendation had been actioned.

RB confirmed it had not yet been incorporated.

ENVIRONMENT, TEACHING AND LEARNING:

Question:

NM asked whether book scrutiny was still being conducted and how weekly training is determined.

RB confirmed book scrutiny is still being conducted.

RB explained that the SENDCo provides short training bursts to LSAs during assemblies, and both **RB** and **NN** deliver training to teaching staff. Monday staff meetings are followed up with Friday sessions, with brief segments addressing various focus areas.

RB mentioned that a shorter SLT meeting now takes place every Monday, and a broader SLT meeting is also planned to enhance discussion and decision-making.

With regards to point 7, **RB** explained that long-standing familiarity with the environment can cause clutter to be overlooked, as identified by PST. Having a fresh perspective helped identify this. The school site has reduced in size by 40%, necessitating the compacting of resources into a smaller space.

Question:

NM asked how these issues would continue to be identified and addressed.

RB stated that a checklist is now in place to maintain organisation and oversight.

SEND

Question:

NM asked if timeframes had been included in the SEND plan.

RB confirmed they had not yet been established but would be. The SENDCo is currently prioritising statutory responsibilities, with plans to explore wider adaptations next.

The use of walkie-talkies across the school has been returned to emergency use only. **NM** cautioned that over use may return if usage isn't monitored.

READING AND WRITING

NN confirmed there are now two literacy sessions, and monitoring will be spontaneous to maintain high standards.

RB acknowledged recent focus had been more on premises and building works than on classroom delivery, and that attention now needs to shift back to teaching and learning.

NN noted that some of the improvement suggestions by PST had originated from him.

MATHEMATICS

NN advised that the conversations around feedback from the review were led by PST but going forward **KR** will actively lead the conversation.

JS recommended that the Assistant Head at Brooklands who comes on Mondays could be good for coaching staff on how to share best practices at the school.

SCIENCE

RB shared that Pablo, the new science lead, discovered following the December review that teachers were not implementing the curriculum as expected. This has been part of his learning and transition this year.

NN added that the goal is to embed the new curriculum verbatim as recommended by the providers before making any adaptations.

Question:

DH asked about plans for remaining review days.

RB confirmed there are days allocated for subject lead reviews.

	<p>DH commented that reviews are limited to implementation of recommendations. RB acknowledged the limited time for thorough reviews. NM suggested splitting the review time.</p> <p>Question: NT asked whether the support cycle (10 days) would restart in September. NM replied that the support expires at the end of the summer term and additional support would need to be budgeted for. NM also noted that delays in rebuilding the KS1 building may prevent PST from considering the school join their academy. RB said the work has been assured to be completed during the summer holidays. DH asked if the building work required budgeting. RB clarified that the Local Authority would be responsible for both execution and funding.</p>
10	<p>FINANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Year actuals review • Budget 2025/26 • Staffing structure <p>For review: Leedon - Year End Actuals 2024-25.pdf Leedon - Second Draft Budget 2025-26 Govs Commentary.pdf</p> <p>For approval: 2025-26 Bedfordshire Report Pack (2nd Draft) Govs.xls</p> <p>RB explained that the school was previously in a £370k deficit due to various factors, but £250k has been recovered over las two years. This is the ninth consecutive year of deficit.</p> <p>LH reported a drop in pupil numbers from 351 to 320 due to reduction in PAN. As this year’s funding is based on last year’s numbers, income will fall while operational expenditure remains constant.</p> <p>The current deficit has been reduced to £113k. This year is expected to be the most financially challenging, with a forecast of reaching a surplus by Year 3. An in-year surplus of £18k is currently forecasted.</p> <p>An unexpected £32k income was received from the DfE to offset the increase in National Insurance contributions.</p> <p>SEND funding has been confirmed based on nine EHCPs, aligned with the October census. The school is in the process of applying for an additional nine EHCPs, aiming for a total of 18 by 2025/26. A further £100k in SEND funding has been applied for.</p>

RB explained that funding for new pupil admissions, such as a child joining in November, is only received in the following April, meaning the school operates in arrears.

A contingency of £10k is included in each of the next three years.
Supply teacher costs totalling £60k have been budgeted to cover until the return of a teacher currently on maternity leave.

Recruitment costs for the new Chair and £5k for lockdown security upgrade measures have also been included in the budget.

Lettings income currently stands at £5k and does not cover caretaker costs. Charges are considered low compared to similar settings, and there is a suggestion to increase them.

The pre-school continues to operate at a loss. According to the last census, 35 pupils were enrolled in pre-school; this rose to 46 in January and is expected to increase further in May.

Question

DH enquired about maximum pupil capacity.

LH confirmed the aim is to fill 30 places per session.

LH expressed an intention to increase enrolment of 2-year-olds, due to the higher funding rate. Plans include advertising, signage, social media marketing, and engagement with local children's centres.

An idea was shared to host an open day to engage parents and explain the funding application process, encouraging them to become more involved in the school.

DH noted that the board could contribute marketing expertise. **NM** highlighted the need for a digital marketing strategy, pointing out that the school does not appear on Google when searching for Early Years provision. Developing SEO was suggested.

JS proposed advertising wraparound care, as this may appeal to working parents. **DH** observed that signage only helps current families, and reaching the wider community is vital. **SC** suggested leaflet drops in new residential developments.

RB informed governors that the school website is being migrated to a new provider, offering an opportunity to address SEO.

Question:

NM asked for the reason behind the migration.

RB explained it is due to a change in ownership of the current provider.

LH confirmed three staff members (one teacher and two LSAs) will begin maternity leave in August.

	<p>Question: NM asked if this had been budgeted; LH confirmed it had.</p> <p>Last year, the school had budgeted for a 3.5% pay award, but the actual increase was 5.5%, with the DfE covering the difference. This year, the DfE is advising 2.8%, and the school has budgeted for 3%.</p> <p>Over the past two years, the school has repaid £50k towards its deficit and has been commended by the LA's finance team for its repayment progress.</p> <p>Question: SC queried what the £5k allocation towards the pedestrian gate upgrade meant. LH explained the current gates are manual, and the school wishes to install an automated system for better control of site access. SC offered to get in touch with a company that could offer a quote.</p> <p>ACTION: SC to get in touch with the recommended company for the pedestrian gate upgrade.</p> <p>NM raised a concern about the School Improvement Partner support beyond this academic year, as the current 10 days support from PST will soon expire.</p> <p>Question: NM asked whether this should be budgeted for. RB and LH will meet tomorrow to discuss this further.</p> <p>NM suggested purchasing additional support from PST to maintain continuity. LH confirmed this could be accommodated within the in-year surplus.</p> <p>DECISION: Governors approved the budget, subject to inclusion of SIP support costs and its submission to the Budget Working Group for final review.</p>
11	<p>SAFEGUARDING</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>
12	<p>WELLBEING</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>

13	<p>GDPR</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>
14	<p>Policies for review (any changes highlighted):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Protection • Allegations against staff (incl low level concerns) • Induction Policy and procedures • Physical Intervention policy <p>Question: NM enquired if the school is staying with the current DPO? RB confirmed that this was right.</p> <p>The governors have approved all policies.</p>
15	<p>GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING</p> <p>SE confirmed that he completed the NGA induction training course and a safeguarding course by the Central Bedfordshire Council has been scheduled.</p> <p>ACTION NM will set up CR and SC on the NGA for induction and safeguarding training.</p>
13	<p>ANY OTHER MATTERS AGREED AS BEING URGENT</p> <p>DH has taken on the PPG link role. SC and CR agreed to be added to the WhatsApp group. JS confirmed that ET has provided dates for the monitoring schedule during the weeks commencing 29th April or 6th May. These dates will be shared in the WhatsApp group.</p>

Minutes approved by the Governing Body on: 21.05.2025

Signed (Chair):

NMhtgre

NEXT MEETINGS
21st May 2025
9 th July 2025

(Actions – Continued on the next page)

Approved

ACTIONS

Action ID	Meeting Date	Agenda Point	Responsible Person	Status	Action
2	Wednesday, March 5, 2025	7	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	NM to discuss with JS offline regarding the requirement for previous chairing experience and update the recruitment advertisement.
4	Wednesday, March 5, 2025	15	Richard Benson	In-progress	RB to share the S175 audit with the board.
5	Wednesday, March 5, 2025	16	Nicola McIntyre/ Richard Benson	Pending	NM to conduct staff survey. RB to conduct surveys of parents and children.
7	Wednesday, March 5, 2025	18	Richard Benson	Pending	Amended staff code of conduct to be shared with all staff to inform them of the changes.
8	Wednesday, April 2, 2025	6	Jo Shelley	Pending	To complete the chair recruitment application form and commence the recruitment process.
9	Wednesday, April 2, 2025	15	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	NM to set up CR and SC on the NGA for induction and safeguarding training.