

MEETING NOTES

FULL GOVERNING BODY: 8 DECEMBER 2025, 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	Chair	25 March 2025	25 March 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
Vijith Vijay	Governance Professional	NA	NA
Marcus Ray	Acting Head	NA	NA
Steve Wareham	Acting Deputy Headteacher, Observer	NA	NA
Paul Hussey	Observer	NA	NA
Sam Russell	Observer	NA	NA

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

NO.	Date	Agenda Item	Lead	Status	Action
14	Tuesday, July 15, 2025	15	Nicola McIntyre	Complete	Table equalities policy
15	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	7	Nicola McIntyre	Complete	Include the nomination for staff governor
16	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	7	Vijith Vijay	Complete	Conduct a poll to seek nominations for the role of chair
17	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	14	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	To share safeguarding refresher training link.
18	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	17	Richard Benson	Complete	Share revised Attendance Policy for approval
19	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	17	Richard Benson	Complete	RB to update the Uniform policy to be tabled at the next meeting.
18	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	18	Nicola McIntyre	Pending	To share the Ofsted training information on the new framework.
19	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	19	Nicola McIntyre	Complete	To share the draft pay policy with all governors online for review.
19	Wednesday, October 1, 2025	19	Richard Benson	Pending	RB, SENDCo, GR, and NT will form a working group to review implementation to date

NOTES

Opening Items

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Meeting started at 18:00. Apologies were received from **GR**.

2 Declarations of Interests

None. **SR** was not in the room at the start of the meeting, so declarations of interest are yet to be completed.

3 Matters to be raised under AOB as urgent

None

Minutes of the Meeting on 01 October 2025 for Approval

- 4**
- Matters Arising
 - Outstanding Actions
 - Action 17 – NM to share safeguarding refresher link
 - Action 18 – NM to share Ofsted training information
 - Action 19 – Accessibility Plan Working Group Status

IW confirmed that he will not be a member of the pay committee.

NM confirmed that funding for Maxine Powell has been cut back under the RISE support programme and therefore she will no longer be attending Board meetings as part of her consultancy.

ACTION 17 is complete.

ACTION 18 is complete.

ACTION 19 remains outstanding.

The meeting notes were reviewed and formally approved.

5 Correspondence Received

None.

6 Chair's Actions

Confidential Updates from Chair

NM advised the board that, following **RB**'s absence, support for the school was secured from the **LA** and **PST**. Confidential matters were addressed at the end of the meeting.

IW formally thanked **NM** for taking prompt and effective action.

7	Appointment of staff governor
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NM confirmed that the process for the election of a staff governor has not yet been completed within the school.

ACTION MR to include call for nominations in the school briefing.

8	Nominations for the role of Chair of Governors
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Appointment of New Co-Chair

SR introduced himself and advised that he has been involved in school governance for almost 20 years, including serving as Chair of a trust in Bushey for the past nine years.

NM nominated **SR** as a co-opted governor, which was seconded by **JS** and approved by the governors.

NM further nominated **SR** to stand as Co-Chair. This nomination was seconded by **CR** and formally approved by the governors.

School Improvement

9	Headteacher's report
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MR provided a verbal update to the governors, advising that he has been in school for two weeks and one day. Alongside **SW**, he has begun putting in place key actions to address priority areas and to ensure staff understand the wider strategic picture of the school. For example, one immediate issue identified was the absence of a dedicated member of staff for EAL pupils, which is now being addressed alongside other operational gaps.

MR confirmed that there has been regular contact with CBC, specifically with Michelle Pickering, and that CBC is fully aware of the school's targets and current areas of focus. The school's priorities were discussed, with early signs of increased stability for pupils and the community through visible leadership and clearer communication about expectations and next steps.

It was clarified that the RISE programme had not previously commenced due to capacity constraints within school leadership. Although PST had invested significant time, none of the intended actions had been implemented. **MR** and **SW** have now started to action this, ensuring staff are aware of the RISE plan, the respective roles of **MR** and **SW**, and how PST will be supporting the school. School capacity has been adjusted to enable effective engagement with PST.

Processes relating to behaviour and routines have been reviewed and amended to allow **SW** to be released for key duties and to enable PST to work directly with **SW** on behaviour.

Staff wellbeing has been a key consideration given the current context. Leadership is seeking to keep staff as well informed as possible. Time has been spent clarifying the roles of **MR** and **SW** to all staff to ensure consistency, particularly in behaviour management at both school and classroom level.

MR shared that the progress made during the first ten days of support provided by PST (last year) is being used as a baseline reference point. **NM** requested a copy of the report from the external review, and **MR** confirmed it will be shared with governors once fully reviewed. **MR** also commended the **SBM** for their efficiency, and teachers were praised for their commitment and professionalism.

ACTION – MR to share the progress report with governors.

An update was provided on the new build, including preparation of rooms. It was noted that wall cleaning had not been included in the original works schedule. **NM** queried funding, and **MR** confirmed that CBC has agreed to fund part of this work. Works remain on schedule.

MR shared the RISE improvement plan with the board and explained that the existing SIP contained multiple targets not aligned to RISE. The current focus is on prioritising actions that will have the greatest immediate impact, ensuring the RISE plan aligns with and strengthens the SIP. Attendance was identified as the first priority area within the RISE improvement plan, with a need for a shared attendance culture among staff, pupils, and parents. Responsibility for this sits with the Headteacher.

NM noted that the board had previously been advised by **RB** that attendance issues were largely due to lateness. **MR** confirmed that a meeting with the School Secretary is scheduled to review attendance data in detail, including whether figures are skewed by pupils on part-time timetables. Removing these pupils from the data shows some classes achieving up to 96% attendance. This will be reviewed further using Studybugs, the school's attendance monitoring software.

MR confirmed that morning gate closures are now being enforced consistently, addressing both attendance and safeguarding concerns. A 'Key Children' document is in place to track pupils monitored for attendance and absence, ensuring the right staff are having the right conversations.

In response to **DH's** query about the same children contributing to the absence figures, **MR** confirmed that the attendance issues relate largely to the same group of pupils, many of whom have attachment or SEND needs and had not previously been followed up consistently. The SENDCo is currently working on this area.

MR advised that staff and pupils had not previously had a clear or consistently reinforced understanding of the school's vision and values. These will now be revisited regularly through assemblies, staff meetings, and SLT meetings. The values, including "Ready, Safe and Respectful", are being reinforced and aligned with CPD and the RISE plan. **NM** asked what had changed, and **MR** confirmed that while the policy remains the same, expectations are now being consistently reinforced and clearly understood by SLT.

Leadership time is being reviewed to ensure staff are using it effectively, and to strengthen governance's ability to provide informed challenge. Training under Quality of Education was discussed, including phonics, GLD, and MTC being at or near national averages. Strategic interventions and targeted reteaching are being planned, including revisiting prior learning where gaps are identified.

MR confirmed that while the SIP has been updated, it remains **RB's** plan for the school. The SLT agenda includes a standing item to review the SIP at every meeting. Behaviour inconsistency was identified during early learning walks, and leadership agreed that consistency is essential.

NM asked if the inconsistency was regarding behaviours in school or behaviour management. **SW** clarified that the issue relates to both behaviour management and behaviour itself. At **HH's** request, **SW** provided examples of individual behaviour plans addressing physical behaviour, poor language, and disruption. These plans include structured rewards linked to learning and opportunities for pupils to reset behaviour across the day. Early impact has been positive, with improvements noted in pupil safety and learning.

MR added that this approach enables leadership to work more strategically rather than reactively. **SW** emphasised the shift from a reactive to a proactive model, providing pupils with tools to self-regulate. **NT** queried if this approach is for across the school including SEND pupils. **MR** confirmed that approaches are adapted for SEND pupils, recognising that some reward systems may increase anxiety, while ensuring equality of opportunity.

A specific success was shared where a pupil achieved five consecutive days on a star chart, having previously struggled to complete even one day. Overall, the strategy is positively impacting behaviour and safety, with strong SLT buy-in.

NM reminded the board that setting the vision and values is a governance responsibility and asked whether there were any objections to the introduction of 'Ready, Safe and Respectful'. **IW** queried whether stakeholders would need to be consulted on any changes to the vision. **NM** asked whether the board was content in principle, and **MR** confirmed that the approach sits within the existing behaviour policy but requires reinforcement. It was agreed that parents and pupils should be informed.

ACTION MR to share the refreshed vision/values with the governing body.

MR confirmed that Colin will work with Hannah (Teaching and Learning lead) to embed and communicate the vision with staff and pupils swiftly. **SW** added that while the school has clear values, they need to be consistently lived day-to-day rather than treated as short-term themes. **NM** emphasised the importance of collective buy-in.

On CPD, **GR** had sent a query on capacity to deliver the volume of training and whether staff had input into identifying their own training needs. **MR** confirmed that a confidence audit had been circulated and that CPD priorities also stem from RISE team observations during the initial ten-day period.

10	<p>School Improvement</p> <p>Draft School Improvement Plan.docx</p>
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Covered under 9

11	<p>Link Monitoring Visits Reports</p> <p>Governor visit report - Maths October 2025.docx</p>
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CR and **DH** conducted a Maths monitoring visit. **CR** reported that it was a very positive experience meeting with Kevin and Hannah, during which two meetings were held, and data and pupil progress were reviewed.

Some concerns were identified, notably that staff had been briefed about the monitoring visit and yet, pupils were observed colouring during a scheduled Maths lesson. **SW** responded that timetables must be adhered to consistently and confirmed that this issue had already been identified through leadership reviews.

DH added that, while maths leadership has invested significant effort into planning, some staff have not been taking delivery of the plans seriously. **MR** confirmed that this concern has been raised with staff and expressed disappointment, noting that increased leadership presence in classrooms through morning and afternoon learning walks is intended to drive improvement and accountability.

Both **CR** and **DH** stated that they were highly impressed with the quality of work and planning demonstrated by Kevin and Hannah.

NM asked whether management time is allocated only to Maths and Literacy. **MR** confirmed that some subject leaders receive time for other subjects, but this now needs to be more tightly targeted in line with the RISE improvement plan.

NM queried how confident subject leaders are in holding colleagues to account. **MR** advised that a firm conversation had taken place following the external review and that this may progress to a more formal process if required, noting that some staff have not previously experienced robust challenge.

NM asked whether there is a school schedule for monitoring visits for governors to join. If governors are unable to join these, **NM** asked for the scheduling of additional monitoring visits at a time they could do. **MR** requested for link roles to be shared to better organise and plan the visits.

ACTION NM to share governor link roles with MR. MR to share school monitoring schedule.

NT reported that space has been an issue for the SENDCo, with improvements anticipated once preparations are completed. **MR** added that intervention spaces can be utilised as meeting spaces to ensure a more professional environment. It was also confirmed that the car park, where the modular unit currently sits, will be resurfaced, with costs already included within planned works.

NM advised governors to ensure their link governor visits are booked in for next term.

12	<p>Grant funding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pupil Premium Strategy and Plan 2023-27 (annual review) 2. PE & Sports Premium Grant Expenditure 2024-25.pdf 3. PE & Sports Premium Grant Impact 2024-25.pdf
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NM asked whether the PP strategy could be carried forward to the next meeting to allow **MR** sufficient time to review the documentation and develop a clear plan. **It was agreed that this item would be tabled at the next meeting.**

ACTION MR to share the 2025–26 PP plan at the next meeting.

SW added that provision for **PE** for PP pupils at Leedon is commendable.

Financial & Premises Management

13	<p>Current Budget Position</p> <p>Income and Expenditure - P7 October 25.xlsx</p>
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CR advised that a Budget Working Group meeting took place last week, during which the **SBM** presented the November budget monitoring position. It was noted that £44k of expected EHCP income has not materialised. The **SBM** advised that the position could be worse and that the overall deficit may increase further.

MR added that EHCP funding often takes time to be processed and queried how this level of income had originally been factored into the budget. **NM** stated that future budgeting must be based on more realistic expectations and that projected EHCP income should not be overstated.

CR further advised that additional premises costs have arisen and that the SBM is reviewing learning resources expenditure, which has exceeded budget. **MR** confirmed that a meeting is scheduled with CBC to discuss the financial position.

It was noted that unexpected agency staff costs, along with the costs of the Acting Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher roles, were not budgeted for and have significantly increased the deficit. **SW** has agreed to remain on secondment until Easter.

The projected deficit currently stands at £213k, and it was confirmed that the school will run out of cash, requiring a cash transfer from CBC. **NM** has asked CBC whether there is a contingency or emergency fund available, as this situation was not anticipated. No response has yet been received, although a meeting with **MR** has been agreed.

MR advised that delivering the RISE programme will be extremely challenging given the current financial position. Releasing teachers from classrooms requires cover, which is currently being provided by HLTAs for leadership and management time. However, these staff are not trained to the required level, necessitating additional review meetings to support delivery. In the absence of sufficient internal capacity, supply agency staff must be used. Staff absence has further exacerbated this issue, making consistent delivery of the RISE programme difficult.

It was also noted that requests for staff leave are being received, but there is no clear record of prior discussions or agreements made with **RB**. Meetings are now underway to clarify this situation.

NM highlighted the long-term risk that the school may be unable to meet the three-year plan to eliminate the deficit. **NM** also expressed concern that, once the RISE programme concludes, the school's intention to join a trust may be jeopardised, as a trust is unlikely to accept a school with a significant deficit.

CR concluded by noting that the SBM is actively cutting costs across all areas, but that these measures alone are insufficient to address the scale of the deficit.

14	Health and Safety Report Verbal Update from SC
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SC and **IW** conducted a site visit on Tuesday, undertaking a walk around the school. They observed congestion and parking difficulties involving both parents and staff.

Asbestos training was discussed, noting that this had previously been due to be undertaken by **RB**. It was confirmed that the SBM will now complete this training. **MR** emphasised the importance of ensuring continuity in the SBM role over the longer term. **SC** added that the SBM is reviewing delegation arrangements to mitigate risks arising from staff absence or unforeseen contingencies.

It was noted that the caretaker and SBM are working effectively together. Discussion took place around what additional training would be beneficial for the caretaker, and the level of support available to them. It was confirmed that Brooklands Middle School is extending support in this area.

The SBM is seeking to commission a condition survey for the school. **NM** advised that CBC is due to undertake this work. **MR** added that CBC has indicated there are delays as they work through a backlog and that they have been unable to locate up-to-date site plans reflecting changes made to the school.

The SBM raised the need for a new perimeter fence, with the caretaker reporting eight break-ins to date. The pond area was inspected, where it was noted that a gate was unlocked and there was a hole in the fence further along, presenting a potential escape route for pupils. The caretaker will address this. **MR** added that

while the area serves a purpose, remedial works will require both time and funding to ensure it remains safe and fit for use.

IW emphasised that site security is paramount, and **SC** suggested that a temporary or makeshift repair could be implemented as an interim measure.

The Anderson shelter was also inspected and noted as currently unused. **SW** advised that the SBM has held initial discussions regarding potential removal of the structure. **MR** expressed concern about the need for asbestos checks prior to any decision or works.

SC raised the issue of a willow tree, which **MR** confirmed is scheduled for removal by the landowner. **IW** commented on the age of the building and formally thanked **MR** and the wider team for their ongoing efforts.

Standing Items

15 Safeguarding

A follow-up conversation has taken place with Amanda Maddox to arrange a revisit to review progress against actions arising from the safeguarding audit in July. This revisit is scheduled for Spring 1.

No additional safeguarding concerns were raised.

SR asked whether any actions remain open from the previous safeguarding audit. **MR** advised that he has not yet had the opportunity to fully review the outstanding actions but will update the board once this has been completed.

16 Wellbeing

SW reported that, while there was an initial concern, staff are currently feeling positive and perceive that they are being appropriately challenged, which is encouraging.

MR added that a few staff members are being monitored regularly and that **SW**'s work on behaviour has had a positive impact on staff morale.

NM asked about pupil wellbeing. **MR** responded that children are coping well and have asked about **RB**'s return but overall are managing positively. Break times will be staggered from next week to ensure pupil safety.

DH highlighted behavioural issues arising from older and younger children mixing during break times. **MR** confirmed that this concern had been raised previously by staff and **SW**, and following consultation, break times will be adjusted. This change, which also affects PE and intervention schedules, will be implemented from next week and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

17 GDPR

No data breaches reported.

18

Policies for approval (any changes / comments highlighted):

1. Health & Safety
2. Working at height

3. Severe Weather
4. Supporting Children with Medical Conditions and Administering Medicine
5. Bereavement
6. Teachers pay policy
7. Equality information and objectives policy.docx
8. Attendance Policy
9. Asbestos Management Plan

Health & Safety Policy – Minor amendments made; approved.

Working at Height Policy – No changes; approved.

Severe Weather Policy – Approved.

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy – **GR** suggested through notes some minor amendments; approved subject to these amendments.

Bereavement Policy – No changes; approved.

Equality Policy – **NM**, as equalities link, made amendments and updated the policy. Policy approved.
ACTION NM to liaise with MR to ensure objectives are linked to implementation.

Attendance Policy – **DH** asked whether pupils are informed of their attendance; **MR** confirmed they are not. **NM** queried whether rewards should be removed from the policy. **MR** explained that pupil needs are complex. **IW** suggested rewards could be shared in an agreed format. **HH** noted that reported data may not accurately reflect most children’s attendance. **MS** suggested using Studybugs to track and reward progress made in improving attendance rather than overall attendance. It was agreed that rewards should be given for attendance progress. **HH** asked about persistently absent children; **SW** confirmed the same process would apply. **DH** noted that for the majority of pupils with good attendance, this is less relevant.

SR suggested that rewards and recognition be separated from the attendance policy, allowing greater flexibility. **NM** recommended that rewards and recognition be removed from the policy and managed as an internal procedure. **GR** asked whether attendance targets should be added to the policy; governors agreed they should. **CR** suggested moving the Studybugs reference before the section on phoning parents.

ACTION Attendance Policy – Approved subject to the above amendments.

Asbestos Management Plan – CBC cannot supply updated plan until staff training is completed. To be brought forward once supplied.

Teachers’ Pay Policy – **NM** confirmed the policy was sent to unions, with only one response received; this was shared with EPM and their suggested amends were in the comments. **IW** noted that two performance review cycles must be completed before a teacher becomes qualified. **NM** and **IW** to liaise on wording amendments. Policy approved subject to amendments.

ACTION – A Support Staff Pay Policy is not yet in place and will be tabled at the next meeting.

ACTION - NM and IW to liaise on wording amendments in the Teachers’ Pay Policy.

19 Governor Training and Development

- Leedon GB skill audit analysis 11.2025.xlsx

- Bespoke Board training

IW shared insights from the recent audit with the board and recommended that further discussions on finance would be beneficial.

It was highlighted that the RISE plan includes a budget for bespoke training. Specific governance training on link roles would be valuable; however, coordinating a date to align with **Maxine Powell**'s availability may be challenging. **NM** confirmed that **Maxine** will share dates for training in the new year.

JS, GR, and **NM** have completed the Ofsted inspection training.

DH asked whether parents have been updated on actions taken since the last inspection. **NM** acknowledged that communications have occurred regarding the RISE programme and suggested that a high-level update could be shared with parents.

It was agreed that at the start of the new year, some information should be sent to parents. **MR** noted that biweekly postcards are currently being shared with staff to communicate short-term priorities, and a similar approach could potentially be used for parent communications.

20	Any matters agreed as being urgent
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None

CLOSE OF MEETING AT 20:10, NEXT MEETING 28 JANUARY 2026

Minutes approved by the Governing Body on: 14.04.2026

ACTIONS TRACKER

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

29	Monday, December 8, 2025	9	Marcus Ray	Pending	MR to share the progress report with governors
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