

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE
OF LOSTOCK HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2025
5:00PM, IN SCHOOL**

GOVERNORS IN ATTENDANCE:	Graham Hamilton (GH)	Headteacher
	Clare Heyes (CH)	Co-opted Governor
	Dave Morgan (DM)	Meeting Chair
	Robin Muir (RM)	Parent Governor
APOLOGIES:	Mike Duzinkewycz (MD)	Parent Governor
	Sarah Simpson (SS)	Parent Governor
	Ben Sleeman (BSL)	Co-opted Governor
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Tina Carruthers (TC)	TTLP Finance Controller <i>(Left at 5:39pm)</i>
	Elizabeth Dockry (ED)	Head of School
	Rachael Palmer (RP)	SBM
	Marc Booker (CLERK)	Clerk to Governors

MINUTES – PART ONE

The meeting commenced at 5:03pm.

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Governors received and accepted the apologies of Mike Duzinkewycz (MD), Sarah Simpson (SS) and Ben Sleeman (BSL).</p> <p>There were no other items of business to consider.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no anticipated conflicts of interest with the business of the meeting raised by governors.</p>	
3.	<p>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR</p> <p>DM was appointed as Committee Chair until the first committee meeting in the Autumn term 2026/27.</p>	
4.	<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE</p> <p>Terms of reference for the Finance and Staffing committee had been circulated to governors prior to the meeting via Governor Hub; there were no changes.</p>	

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	Governors recommended the approval of the Terms of Reference for 2025/26 for ratification at the Local Governing Board meeting on 26 th November 2025.	
5.	<p>PART ONE MINUTES AND ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING.</p> <p>a) The part one minutes from the previous meeting on 10th June 2025 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Governors approved the minutes.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk to upload an electronically signed copy of the minutes to Governor Hub following the meeting.</p> <p>b) The Action log from the previous meeting was reviewed. It was confirmed that all other actions, which would not be addressed elsewhere in the meeting, had been met and closed as appropriate.</p>	CLERK
6.	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS</p> <p>a) A copy of the Trust Finance Business Partner’s report to Governors by TC had been uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>TC highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s year end position (£73k surplus). • Changes to the 2025/26 budget based on the Headteacher working 2 days per week and associated revised staffing. • A revised forecast surplus of £10.4k for 2025/26 but deficits in 2026/27 (£23k) and 2027/28 (£58k). • The budget has since come under pressure from the October 2025 Census which returned a headcount of 169 pupils (down 7) and will result in £26.5k less income than the budget for 2026/27 and an increased forecast deficit (£66k) in 2026/27 and 2027/28 (£96k). • Reception intake was an issue; only 21 pupils were recruited in 2025/26 – the budget assumes 25 in subsequent years. • LHS was not the only school in the LA or the Trust to experience this problem and the Trust CEO was organising a meeting with the Executive team to address the overall deficit and produce financial recovery plans for each school by January 2026. • TC and the Trust CFO were looking to improve the reporting of management accounts and tabled a LA-style report which could be RAG-rated and inform the conversation with the SBM and Headteacher. This report would enable more timely financial control of expenditure by the school. <p>Governors welcomed the increased financial detail. GH advised that one of his performance targets was to set a balanced budget.</p>	



TC discussed the Profit and Loss for EYFS and BASC for 2024/25, noting that EYS contributed a direct cost surplus of £17k and BASC £22.7k. Governors were invited to consider whether the school could not only increase pupil numbers but also other income streams.

Q: The BASC feels quieter than last year, is that right?

A: No, it is now split over two sites due to demand.

TC confirmed that there was no indication that BASC was quieter from the numbers.

GH advised Governors that in a recent survey, 80% of respondents cited choice of wraparound care as a reason to choose Reception. Pre-school provided a great transition to Reception.

b) Contracts Register

The SBM reported that on the back of the RPA Health and Safety Review, noted at the last meeting, a Trust-wide contracts system has been proposed. The SBM was producing a Lostock-version that would feed into the Trust system.

c) Asset Register

The SBM advised Governors that the new Trust-wide Smart Log system would contain the asset register. In the meantime, the Trust's IT support has documented all computer and ICT assets. The SBM confirmed that all classroom furniture over £50 has also been logged.

d) School Risk Register

A copy of the latest Risk Register had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting. Governors had reviewed the register and confirmed that they agreed with the RAG-ratings.

e) The School's Critical Incident Plan

The SBM confirmed that she was now more confident as to the school's resilience regarding cyber and Wi-Fi-security as a result of the involvement of the Trust's IT support. Governors noted that the SBM had recently attended a CE Briefing on national power outages – the local authority had asked the school to volunteer to be part of one of the community hubs which would come into operation in the event of a critical incident.

Q: Do the recent phishing attacks on a nursery owned by the Kido nursery chain mean that our staff need more training on prevention?

A: All staff have undertaken cyber crime training which includes preventative action on phishing. Movement to the Cloud will also provide additional security of digital assets.

Reviewing the Emergency Contacts list which had been circulated Governors recommended the addition of the Headteacher's/ SLT emergency contact numbers since in the event of a critical incident affecting



	<p>IT infrastructure, it might not be possible to access the system to search the number – ACTION.</p> <p>Q: Do you have a paper-deck of critical materials? A: Yes.</p> <p>f) Income Generation Sources The SBM advised Governors that the Forest School, After School Club would be receiving an annual increase in rent which reflected the cost of accessing the site. This was effectively £10-12.50 per session. The modest increase would be passed onto parents by the Forest School organiser. Governors supported the increase and agreed to keep a watching brief on the need for further increases.</p> <p>g) Use of the Sports Grant and the impact on pupils Governors were able to review the reporting on the PE and Sports Grant expenditure which had been published on the school's website. The school confirmed that Sports Grant funding had been fully utilised and that funding was supporting the delivery of the Forest School outdoor provision. Governors noted outcomes for 2024-25 including the positive impact in pupils' PE attainment, the increase in pupils' physical activity levels and increase in pupils participating in school sport. GH advised Governors that PE provision delivered by Little Sports Coaching had positively supported teachers' confidence and competence in teaching PE; over time it was less impactful as school staff were upskilled.</p> <p>h) Use of the Pupil Premium and the impact on disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the funding The recent School on a Page document discussed at the Curriculum Committee meeting indicated a maximum of four Pupil Premium (PP) pupils in each year group. GH advised Governors that three-quarters of PP pupils had made progress to the extended standard. The deadline for publishing the Pupil Premium report is 31st December 2025. Governors would be able to review the 2024/25 outcomes further in the Spring term.</p> <p>i) To review the admissions over-subscription criteria This item did not need to be reviewed; there were no changes.</p> <p>j) To review the pre-school session cost This item was discussed in an earlier part of the meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>TC left the meeting at 5:39pm</i></p>	GH
7.	<p>GDPR</p> <p>There have been no data breaches or Subject Access Requests (SARS) since the last meeting. Governors noted that all staff were aware of GDPR requirements.</p>	



<p>8.</p>	<p>PREMISES</p> <p>a) Health and Safety update The SBM confirmed that systems management focused actions identified by the RPA audit were being implemented. The CE Health and Safety had not resulted in any actions. Governors noted that RP was attending further RPA webinars as part of her professional development. Governors also noted that from 2026/27 the Trust was purchasing a Health and Safety package from Derbyshire LA.</p> <p>b) Review of Estate Management Plan The SBM reported that the school’s Site Maintenance Officer, Keith Hafield, continued to carry out his schedule of maintenance checks. One common issues identified were blocked urinals. A recurring matter was that of water ingress when there was heavy precipitation onto flat parts of the roof.</p> <p>Q: Will the Trust fund repairs to the roof? A: It is under warranty.</p> <p>c) Review of SCA bids Governors noted that the replacement of the artificial grass surfaces hadn’t been completed during the summer holiday; a contractor had provided insufficient credentials, and it was too late to find an alternative. GH advised that this activity would remain in the development plan. Work could only take place during certain times of the year as it required two complete weeks.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the following works had been completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV installation around the site • Resurfacing of tarmac to school entrance • Installation of visual warning lights to toilet areas as part of the fire alarm system • Renewal of roller shutter to Kitchen • Installation of cycle shelter <p>d) SCA Priorities for 2026/27 GH advised Governors that the school was looking to bid for £450-£500k via the Trust to fund a building extension which would house new nursery provision. This would be further discussed under Item 11.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>STAFF WELLBEING</p> <p>GH and ED confirmed that staff wellbeing was generally good and carefully reviewed by the SLT. Whilst the first half of the term had been more challenging, the change of approach to Christmas events this year, involving an external provider, had reduced the impact on staff.</p>	



	<p>ED had advised Governors as to two extended staff absences at the Curriculum Committee meeting; one member had been subject to a Stage 1 meeting as part of the normal absence process and would now be seen by an Occupational Health partner. Another staff member was undertaking a phased return to work. To provide continuity for pupils, their work had been backfilled by a new staff member who had settled in well.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT Governors were advised that Trust allocated training was undertaken by staff. Staff had also completed their three-yearly Basic Awareness Safeguarding training with the CE SCiES team. Two members of staff were undertaking the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's (SENCO) National Professional Qualification (NPQ). Another member was completing the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL). GH had completed 40 hours of training on the new Ofsted Framework as an additional inspector.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE: Governors noted the information provided within the Headteacher's Report on the school development plan. In addition to premises works noted under Item 8, GH highlighted the installation of the new signposting of school on Chester Road and leasing of ICT equipment.</p> <p>As highlighted in Item 8, GH had proposed that the Trust support the expansion of the pre-school, which would have a beneficial impact on the numbers transitioning to Reception, overall school numbers and the financial security of the school. This would resolve capacity issues in the current nursery provision and enable to 0-3 provision to be offered on site, in addition to the current 3-11 provision. The school would look to engage with private providers and lease space to them to supply the 0-3 provision. Governors reviewed some tabled architectural drawings which showed an extension of 150 square metres.</p> <p>GH explained that via the Trust, the school would seek to produce a SCA bid to the DfE for upwards of £450k-£550k, plus contingency funding. The school would also apply for a DfE grant of £150k which is available to extend nursery provision. To submit valid bids required the creation of architect drawings.</p> <p>Governors were advised that the school would also have to submit its proposal to CE local authority. The local authority would have to agree that the proposal meets its 'locality' criteria. This would require the school showing evidence of parental consultation. One barrier noted was the fact that the local authority used live births data within its boundary and didn't take into account future demand and extra-locality demand.</p> <p>GH noted that the Trust CEO had bought into the proposal; the Trust received £950k CFA allocation, some of which could provide an alternative source of funding.</p>	



	<p>Q: Would the age range of the school change? A: No, that would remain 3-11. A private provider would supply the 0-3 provision. It would amount to 30 spaces which would ultimately improve numbers transitioning to Reception.</p> <p>Governors supported the proposal.</p>	
12.	<p>ADMISSIONS / PUPIL NUMBERS Pupil Numbers were discussed in Item 6. It was noted that there are currently 169 pupils in Reception to Year 6.</p> <p>ED explained the work that had been undertaken to support out-of-area applications (e.g. from Woodford) following the recent Open Day, including follow-up emails with tailored application instructions. Governors noted the benefit of children showing prospective parents around the school.</p>	
13.	<p>GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT a) It was agreed to add Governor Training to the forthcoming FGB meeting agenda. b) There were no governor monitoring reports to receive.</p>	
14.	<p>DIRECTOR'S REPORT A copy of the Autumn Term Director's Report had been uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of the meeting. The Clerk highlighted section 3.4 Supporting Families and Schools: Increasing Access to Income-Related Free School Meals (IRFSM) to the Committee. Whilst there was no direct action for governors, schools were asked to help raise awareness of the upcoming auto-enrolment initiative.</p>	
15.	<p>POLICIES: The following policies were not available to review and approve, and would be deferred to the LGB meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TTLP Pay Policy • TTLP Teacher Appraisal Policy <p>Governors received the Trust's Attendance Policy, which had been amended to reflect the local school context. CH provided detailed feedback to ED on amendments to be made to pages 6 and 18 – ACTION. The LGB would ratify the final amended policy.</p> <p>Governors noted the latest attendance data (97.4% attendance rate) and the recent announcement by the DfE that all mainstream schools will receive an attendance baseline improvement expectation (ABIE). The new minimum expectation will be linked to support and will come into effect in September 2026.</p> <p>Q: How is persistent absence calculated?</p>	ED



	<p>A: The DfE paper https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/methodology/pupil-absence-statistics-methodology notes that a pupil is classified as a persistent absentee if they miss 10% or more of their own possible sessions. Therefore if an enrolment's overall absence rate is 10% or higher they will be classified as persistently absent. Persistent absence rate = (Number of enrolments classed as persistent absentees / Number of enrolments) X 100. A pupil is classified as a severely persistent absentee if they miss 50% or more of their own possible sessions.</p> <p>ED noted the impact that one family group can have on persistent lateness and measures being taken to reward pupils for 100% attendance.</p> <p>ACTION: CLERK to add Pay Policy, Teacher Appraisal Policy and Attendance Policy to LGB meeting agenda.</p>	CLERK
16.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS There were no items of other business tabled for discussion at this meeting.</p>	
17.	<p>POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT/COMMUNICATE TO THE LGB AND TTLP Governors thanked TC for her valued input to the meeting.</p>	
18.	<p>IMPACT OF THE MEETING Governors helped to move the school forward in the following ways during this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors reviewed the financial performance of the school noting the impact of pupil numbers on school finances, improvements to management account reporting, and consideration being given by the Trust's CEO and Executive Group to delivering balanced budgets. • Governors considered and supported the proposal to create a 0-3 nursery provision which would ultimately increase transition to Reception from the school's nursery provision, helping to mitigate against risks to recruiting pupils and secure a financially sustainable future for the school. • Governors considered staff wellbeing, training and development. • Governors reviewed the SCA funded improvements to ensure timely completion and value for money. 	
19.	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS: The date of the next Finance and Staffing Committee meeting is Tuesday 3rd March 2026, 5pm.</p>	

The Part One meeting closed at 6.27pm.

There was no Part Two meeting except to agree the Part Two minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th June 2025, which were accepted as a true and accurate record.