LEAVENING COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
'Together We Can'

Look and learn beyond the classroom | Have high aspirations and fulfil our potential
Care, share and belong | Lead, teach and learn with passion

LEAVENING SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETING		
Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 at 5pm		
Members Present	**Chair** - James Robinson (JR) (Parent Governor) (CofG) Elaine Phillips (EP) (Co-opted Governor) (VC) Emma Isaacs (EI) (LA Governor) Sian Mitchell (SM) (Headteacher) Jan Lomas (JL) (Co-opted Governor) Sue Schofield (SS) (Co-opted Governor) Hannah Cooke (HC) – Staff Governor	
Apologies	David Griffin (DG) (Co-opted Governor) Jane Price (JP) (Co-opted Governor)	
Absent No Apologies		
Also In Attendance		
Name Of Clerk	Laura Waites (LW) – NYC Clerk	
Vacancies		
School Vision And Values	• Look and learn beyond the classroom • Have high aspirations and fulfil our potential • Care, share and belong • Lead, teach and learn with passion	
Core Functions Of Governance	• Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; • Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and • Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.	

Colour coding Key – Highlighting Governor Core Functions / School safeguarding focus
Green – Safeguarding challenge question
Red – Performance / Strategic / Financial challenge question
Blue –Approval/decision taken

Item (Number)	Detail	Record Actions
Welcome (01.0326)	The meeting started 5.05pm JR opened the meeting and welcomed all. The meeting was quorate.	
Apologies for Absence (02.0326)	Apologies were reported and accepted from JP and DG.	
Declaration of Interests (03.0326)	Governors confirmed they had no additional declarations to note for any item on the FGB meeting agenda.	
Confidentiality (04.0326)	Governors were reminded of the confidential nature of the meeting and that other people's views should be respected. It was agreed that any items to be confidential and excluded from the main minutes would be highlighted during the meeting.	
Any Other Urgent Business (05.0326)	EI arranged a brand new fridge and a good price, anyone who wished to contribute was asked to. HT thanked all for the contribution.	
Minutes of the last meeting (06.0326)	The Board confirmed the minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2025 were an accurate record of events and they were approved.	
Matters arising (07.0326)	Governors considered progress for every item on the action log from the last set of minutes and any other matters arising:	

	• Commence new AI steering group with DG, JR and HT – *update to be given later in meeting* • Arrange with HT for AI specialist to share details with the group – *update to be given later in meeting* • Pilot termly staff F2F meeting and termly survey from spring term – *to commence next term*	
HT Report (08.0326)	The HT referred to her report which had been circulated to governors in advance of the meeting. HT gave a short update on the revised format of the report which incorporated aspects of the agenda and the new Ofsted framework. Governor feedback was that the format was very clear and the contents reflected the big issues currently going on. Governors also felt it generated its own questions. The following areas of the report were discussed further and HT gave updates / responded to governor questions: Q A governor asked about writing and what the scheme was called that the school had brought in? A HT confirmed the scheme was called the Write Stuff and is being used across the whole school. There was a very informative session done recently and it was acknowledged more work was needed on writing over reading as it is a more complex area to teach. Q A governor asked, what is holding the children back? A HT explained it was partly due to the percentage of SEND pupils (37%). As well as the new writing approach, the school is also responding to new government guidance on the writing framework and has started a new handwriting scheme. The pupil data is from the end of December so doesn't reflect the impact of the new schemes brought in as it can take a while to implement things. There should be improvements in the Spring term data. Q A governor noted, you told us you are content with what you are seeing in the classroom? A The HT confirmed she was content with the scheme, it is meeting the needs of Y1 to Y6 pupils and it is all about consistency in use and interpretation. It is a very rigid scheme and covers all aspects of the new writing framework. There has been a lot of work done on consistency and the pace of the delivery of the scheme. Q A governor asked if there were general issues in teaching and learning that were being worked on as well? A HT confirmed this was happening. Q A governor asked, by 'rigid' is this a negative regarding the scheme? A HT noted that no, it was a positive and the school will see the benefits of the new approach over the rest of this year. Q A governor asked, is there a connection between any attendance issues and writing / handwriting? A HT confirmed this was the case for writing because it is very hard to teach, especially if a child is not in school. Reading can be done at home and the maths foundations are there, however with writing, if a child misses a couple of weeks it can impact on progress. Governors acknowledged the teaching structure and demands Q A governor asked, what would a targeted writing intervention look like, in mixed classes how do you adapt the teaching? A HT explained the school's adaptive teaching approach and noted staff are attending a pathfinder project. HT gave examples of the interventions around ensuring children are really secure on transcription / handwriting / spelling and noted there was support in the classroom focussed on the basics. The school is also looking to use an experienced parent volunteer with a teaching background to do	

	some focussed sessions. The HT is also encouraging staff in getting CPD and training. Governor passed on their thanks to Emma and others for the support they were giving to the school. Q A governor asked about nursery admissions and noted it was raised by the bursar in finance meetings as potentially being short. A HT confirmed the numbers who had put the school as first choice and second choice for September. Q A governor asked if more parents could be persuaded to use the early provision or if they were waiting until children were older? A HT noted if was currently a mix of ages. Q Governors commented that the school has good provision for 2 and 3 year olds and asked whether more marketing could be done? A HT updated on the range of marketing being done already and noted she didn't think much more could be done. There was discussion about the demographics of the area and wraparound care needs. Governors noted the provision was being used at Leavening and was there for those who need it. Q A governor noted the budget is very sensitive to the nursery numbers. They have made a difference this year and it was possible to generate a small profit. Is there anything you need from governors to support more promotional activity? A HT confirmed all the usual promotional and marketing work has been done. There was discussion about whether a governor-led strategic marketing group could look at future years when numbers are projected to be lower. Governors also discussed the range and reach of various promotional activities, potential of targeting other local villages and the impact of performance of other local schools on this school. Governors noted that it was pleasing to see the rise in numbers for this small school in a rural area and agreed need to keep an eye on numbers **Action:** HT to involve governors in any ideas to offer support. Consider targeting local villages. Review signage on the main road. At every finance meeting ,review the position regarding numbers Q A governor asked about the impact on HT of recent staff changes and how it was working? A HT noted how the school was addressing the workload and how staff and volunteers were being arranged. HT noted that in terms of benchmarking the school is in line with other schools. The needs of the children were being focussed on; several high need children will leave at the end of this academic year. There was a discussion on the strategic running of the school and how staff were stepping up. Governors noted the positive environment in the school. The HT confirmed how she uses the people and resources she has. Q A governor asked about future stability from September? A HT was not aware of any changes. HT noted the following areas for discussion on the agenda: • SEND updates, mainstream toolkit and Global Amphibians Project – covered in AOB agenda item • SEF- Discussion of governance and leadership section – covered in AOB agenda item.	HT

	• School Development Plan – covered in circulated HT report • Update on AI working group - covered in GB update agenda item. • Premises, health & safety – covered in circulated HT report • Staffing update – covered in in circulated HT report and Wellbeing agenda item	
Attendance project with DFE update (09.0326)	The HT noted an attendance monitoring meeting was held with JL today. The LA has been regularly reviewing attendance and the latest SEA Attendance Targeting Support Meeting report from December 2025 was circulated for governors to review. Governors were updated on a DFE attendance pilot project which the school has signed up to. As the school recently did a Pathfinder project on behaviour and belonging, this project is more focussed on attendance. There are some areas the school could develop around attendance culture, systems, everyone being aware of patterns of attendance, level of diligence (safeguarding) and sharing formal processes with staff so they are more aware of patterns of absence. HT has discussed next steps with JL. The DFE attendance summary monitoring report for the Autumn term was circulated for governors to review. Governors noted it is useful for the school to have these links. Governors reviewed the latest attendance data including whole school, SEN and Pupil premium children cohorts. There were no concerns and persistent absence is being closely monitored and shows a clear trajectory of improvement (reducing from 14 children after Covid to now being 8). Q A governor asked if there was any link between persistent absence and lateness? A HT responded that she can't see a link. Some is unavoidable and connected to specific needs; some is due to holidays. Governors noted that a rural school is likely to have more parents who are seasonal workers and the need to be aware of the issues of a rural environment and small school environment. Q A governor asked, is absence in the last week of summer term a pattern? A HT noted there was no pattern to requests for holidays in term time. Q A governor asked, are you getting many requests; are any just going without being authorised? A HT noted there were a lot of term time holiday requests and they are all turned down. This is affecting persistent absences as parents go anyway. Governors noted some parents don't see an issue with children missing school in term time. Governors also noted the school is doing an excellent job with attendance management.	
Safeguarding (10.0326)	There was an update from the safeguarding governor (EI) on her safeguarding monitoring visit and checks carried out in school. EI noted all checks were up to date and several new checks had been put in place for health & safety e.g. for the defibrillator. EI also confirmed the SCR checks have been done and no issues found. The safeguarding advisor had visited the school and no concerns were raised in their report. In the SEF, the school is safeguarding compliant and the advisor was satisfied that there was a sound approach to safeguarding. EI noted that all parents are assured of the school's safeguarding approach and who to contact. Governors noted how well safeguarding was being managed in the school and thanked EI for her role in this.	

Finance (11.0326)	EP gave an update on finance and referred to the following circulated reports: School Financial Value Standard – the document was reviewed by EP and JR and it is recommended for governor approval The Board approved the SFVS for submission. Budget monitoring summary report - EP has queried the most recent reports with the Bursar. There is a slight improvement, with a small surplus forecast. Start budget – with revised nursery numbers – There is an additional £10k of funding to come in which will help with the impact of a slightly different nursery position next year; the bursar is working on the final start budget. It may be possible to get to a £20k surplus next year, putting the school back to where it was pre-Covid, before all reserves are used. Governors thanked the HT for the robust budget management of the school and good decisions on staffing and cost management, and thanked EP for her financial oversight. Governors noted it has been some time since the Board was in a position to review the HT teaching commitment and that this could be considered in the near future if the budget allows.	
GB Update (12.0326)	The Chair noted the following were on the agenda for discussion in this item and could be covered at the forthcoming Governor Away day. • Governor strategic plan • Discuss curriculum link roles • Approach to Ofsted training and preparation • Work undertaken and planned re Artificial Intelligence (AI) There was a brief discussion of the items: Governor strategic plan – The Chair noted the plan is in development and will be brought to the Away Day. Curriculum link roles – Governors noted the current arrangements are working well; some adjustments have been made and governors are being flexible. Monitoring is being done in a consistent and well developed way and is helping governors to have confidence in the school. Q A governor noted in the AI steering group there was discussion of the link roles and making sure monitoring oversight of AI is included. A. Governors noted there is to be some training and further discussion as well as input from staff deploying it. The governor monitoring role will look at ensuring there is consistency. The practice of making some comments on safeguarding when monitoring was discussed and it was agreed to tailor the governor monitoring template to include both AI and safeguarding .It was noted that the HT continues to moderate the monitoring reports. **Action:** Update the governor monitoring template to include monitoring of AI and safeguarding. Q Were there any other suggestions or improvements to the reports from staff or governors ? A. Nothing was raised. The Chair noted that there was no resistance from staff to governors coming in to do the monitoring and that this stems from good	HT

	leadership and a HT wo is willing to work in partnership with governors. Work undertaken and planned re Artificial Intelligence (AI) – It was agreed that there was no need for AI to be a focus at the away day. The steering group was in place and training for staff / governors has been arranged. The school is using a subscription system (Teachmate) that is compliant with all aspects of AI and ensures risk are minimised in the use of AI. Q A governor asked about the financial implications of using it ? A It was confirmed the cost of the system will be monitored by the finance committee. Governors were impressed at how far the HT had progressed will AI arrangements and how the steering group was working. Approach to Ofsted training and preparation – It was agreed to cover the following at the Away Day: - Focus on leadership and governance in the SEF and the checklist that is expected by Ofsted as the expected standard for a school and as the strong standard. HT noted there is evidence that the school is meeting the expected standard and wants to review it with governors, then move onto the strong standard. - Review the new Ofsted framework through the national college training that governors have been asked to do. - HT to talk about the experience of other schools on the inspections since January. - Review the key shifts in thinking – HT to deliver training for staff and will do same for governors.	
Governor Monitoring Visits (13.0326)	Governors noted the circulated Maths monitoring visit report from DG.	
Wellbeing update (14.0326)	JL updated on the meeting with HT today which discussed wellbeing as well as attendance. The pilot of the staff wellbeing chats for JL as wellbeing governor to attend is being progressed and will start at the beginning of next term. Documents are being developed to support the pilot and will be shared with governors and staff. Q A governor asked, at some stage will there be questionnaires for staff and stakeholders? A There will be a reflection sheet as part of the process and it will be confidential to that meeting. Analysis will be shared with the GB. There will be a refinement of the current survey system and this should enable more deep dives into any issues by having a conversation. It was noted that due to her involvement in the pilot, JL could not be a member of any disciplinary matters. If additional capacity is needed in future NA (former governor) is available to participate in investigations.	
AOB (15.0326)	There was discussion of SEN. It was noted the government are promising more money and there are a high number of SEN children in school. There was a discussion on marketing of the school. The Chair noted the school is operating as a successful small school and has written to the local MP inviting them to visit the school and see how well the school was doing.	

	The Chair also made the point to the SEA that we don't see any celebration in NYC and there was a need for some recognition and acknowledgement that there is a positive role for small schools. Governors discussed the viability of the school and acknowledged the numbers look good and the school is a secure and good place for the children. Q Has the imperative in the white paper for academisation by 2030 gone away? A HT noted a new white paper is coming which is saying all schools have to become part of a trust over the next 5 years from September 2027, however the LA can also become a trust. Governors noted it is not a current threat but is not going away. Governors noted this is a unique school in being a small school that still has a HT. The focus for further marketing of the school was discussed.	
Impact of meeting (16.0326)	Governors acknowledged that there was a healthy relationship between staff and governors which was good for the school. The positive budget position was noted. The work on attendance management, safeguarding, AI and staff wellbeing was noted.	
Date of next meetings (17.0326)	**Governor Away Day 14th April, 9.45am, Burythorpe House** Agenda items to include: Ofsted framework Leadership and governance Governance Strategy **FGB 8th July, 5pm, At school** It was agreed that approval of the Start Budget by the May 2026 deadline be delegated to the Finance Committee.	

Meeting closed at 7.05pm

Signed By **Date**

ACTION LOG

Item	Action	Person	Opened	Comments
1	Add item on discussion on curriculum link roles to next FGB agenda	Clerk	Oct 25	Discuss at future meeting
2	Add item on governor strategic plan to next FGB agenda	Clerk	Oct 25	Discuss at future meeting
3	Updated SEF / SIP to be brought to a future FGB meeting	HT	Oct 25	Done
3	Recruit to parent governor vacancy	HT	Oct 25	Agreed to leave vacant for now
4	Complete all safeguarding training	Govs	Oct 25	Done
5	Commence new AI steering group with DG, JR and HT Arrange with HT for AI specialist to share details with the group	Chair	Nov 25	
6	Pilot termly staff F2F meeting and termly survey from spring term	JL HT	Nov 25	
7	HT to involve governors in any ideas to offer support. Consider targeting local villages. Review signage on the main road.	HT	March 26	
8	At every finance meeting ,review the position regarding nursery pupil numbers	HT	March 26	
9	Update the governor monitoring template to include monitoring of AI and safeguarding.	HT	March 26	