MERTON INFANT SCHOOL AND MERTON PRE-SCHOOL

MINUTES of the Full Governing Body meeting held on Monday 9th February 2026 at the school

Present Board Members:			**Attended:**
	Larissa James	Headteacher	Y
	Lee-Ann Dirienzo		Y
	Carly Jones		Y
	Jan Beard		Y
	Gaye Dove	Chair	Y
	Janel Richards		N
	Sophie Wells	Vice Chair	Y
	Tracy Ferguson		Y
Also in attendance as non-governors:	Laura Relf	Deputy Headteacher	Y
	Paula Bennett	School Business Manager	Y
	Mark Livesey	Clerk	Y

The meeting started at 6.00 pm.

		ACTION
1.	**Welcome and Apologies for Absence** Apologies: JR.	
2.	**Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interests** None.	
3.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2025** Agreed as a true record, subject to 2 minor amendments, to be made by the Clerk, to a) the header section of the minutes, where the text ‘N’ should be changed to ‘Y’ as JR had attended the meeting after giving her apologies that she would be late joining the meeting, and b) to the text “with another 3 staff starting during w/c 8th December” in the 4th bullet point under the “D Budget” sub-heading, changing the word “staff” to “children”. ***ACTION.***	**Clerk**
4.	**Matters Arising** **140725_16_2 Produce a report on the Strategic Planning training that she had undertaken (LD):** LD advised that there had been a discussion, after the last meeting, about the possibility of WGBT on Strategic Planning and that for this reason she will not be producing a report on the training on this topic that she had undertaken. Closed. **131025_11_1 Find out if there is a detailed description of what WGBT on the topic of Early Years would include (Clerk):** the Clerk had circulated a document summarising the sub-topics that would be included in any WGBT, on the topic of Early Years, if the GB booked this training. Completed & closed. **131025_14 Consider a name change to ‘Merton Infant School and Nursery’ and email their thoughts regarding this potential name change to the rest of the GB (ALL):** closed as there had been no objections to the name considered. **251125_16_1 Discuss the possibility of reorganising and focusing the agendas for the Autumn Term meetings while still ensuring that the statutory budget monitoring & reviews and important areas for discussion are included (LJ & GD):** carried forward to give LJ & GD time to discuss this matter. **ACTION C/F.** **251125_16_2 Check with Governor Services whether a governor of the Infant School serving on the GB of another school would be a conflict of interest (Clerk):** closed as the Clerk had checked with the School Governance Team and advised that there was no conflict of interest in the situation described.	**LJ/GD**

5.	**Review Outturn Closing Budget** PB talked the GB through the Outturn Closing Budget, the main points of which are summarised below: **Introduction** • she has produced the spreadsheets, which contain the original budget, the revised budget and the outturn budget **Y Budget** • she had been hoping to achieve the income figures anticipated in the revised budget • she has reduced the income from the After School Club from £32,000 to £28,000, although the income (on the 'Out of School Care' line) has not reached this figure yet • she believes that the Breakfast Club is more likely to be the club where the original income figure is met • nothing is likely to change with regard to the expenditure shown • she is hopeful and reasonably confident that the budget balance will end the financial year at £92,446, although this will depend on sufficient income being received **D Budget (Pre-School)** • originally the prediction was a surplus of £31,853, although the surplus is now £60,489 mainly due to the increase in funding resulting from more children being brought into the school • the agency staff costs have increased as the Pre-School has been employing agency staff; this has been necessary because no permanent member of staff has been recruited to look after the children • the funding on line 7697 may be a bit higher if the Pre-School can admit 2 more children between now and the end of term **O Budget (Main Budget)** ***Expenditure*** • agency cover has been increased because a teacher has been absent; it has been necessary to pay for a supply teacher for the last 2 weeks, and it is not definitely known at this point whether the teacher will return after Half Term; if the teacher does not return after Half Term, the situation will become increasingly expensive for the school which will adversely affect the bottom line of the budget • regarding the gas, electricity, water and sewage budget lines, she has not changed these in any significant way as sometimes charges can come through unexpectedly; expenditure on these lines will not go over budget • regarding other budget lines, she has reduced some of them because she knows that there will not be enough expenditure to cause the lines to become overspent, as what was due to be spent has already been spent; the Fire Equipment line comes into this category • she has reduced the PE funding as the school has spent what it was predicted to spend in the original budget • she has reduced the Education Supplies line, based on the knowledge of what has already been spent and what remaining expenditure will occur • she has reduced the Catering Equipment line a little, based on previous invoices received, resulting in some savings • the Photocopying line has been reduced slightly, as she has received the last invoice for the current financial year • there has been a slight increase in the Day Activities line • regarding the Training Activities line (5962), it is possible that the school will not need to spend the full amount shown ***Income*** • the Donations line was increased as the school received money from various sources, the school having not known that the various monies would be given by those sources • she has reduced the Additional Grants for Schools (i.e. the PE Funding) to the figure that was paid to the school • LJ advised that although the PE Funding is a per pupil amount, it does not include the Pre-School children • the EHCP funding has significantly increased since the beginning of the year; she is awaiting receipt of £4,134 for which she has received confirmation that the payment has been put through; this will increase the total EHCP funding to approx. £76,000 • there was a slight increase in Pupil Premium funding ***General*** • when she compiled the Y, D and O budgets they were accurate as they currently stood; since she compiled these budgets an anomaly has occurred on Payroll; she and the Payroll department are currently investigating the anomaly which involves quite a	

	- significant amount of money although she does not expect the anomaly to affect the bottom-line budget figure as LJ has been seconded to another school as a result of which Merton Infant will not be paying LJ's full salary during this secondment - she is still hoping that the budget this year goes according to plan in terms of not going into overall deficit and currently believes that this desired outcome will be achieved and that an overall budget surplus of approx. £27,000 is a likely outcome; the one eventuality that could possibly prevent this happening would be having to obtain supply cover for an absent teacher, with the length of time that the supply cover is needed being a significant factor; the school does have teacher insurance, although the cover provided by the insurance is less than the amount that the school has to pay to the supply agency, and if the teacher absence continues after Half Term the school will be able to claim back some of the cost of the supply cover LJ advised that there is another member of staff who delivers the Discovery Room provision who has to be absent from school for 3 weeks after Half Term and ideally she would like to run that provision as she believes that it supports the Y2 children in particular; the member of staff concerned could be covered by another agency person although there is a risk that the supplied cover may not be as effective as the original provision would have been if the children were affected by the fact that they did not know the replacement person. **Q.** Regarding the Discovery Room provision, LD asked if it would be possible to arrange for an LSA to deliver the Discovery Room provision and for the replacement person from the agency to be in class. **A.** LR advised that a qualified teacher would be needed to deliver the Discovery Room provision. LJ advised that an HLTA could provide temporary cover for the Discovery Room provision although this would prevent the running of Speech and Language programmes and the provision of cover for the Deputy Headteacher. **Q.** GD asked about the lack of uptake of the After School Club in terms of the number of pupils that are hoped for. **A.** PB advised that she believes that there has been a slight increase in uptake. JB advised that the number of pupils attending the After School Club is better on some days than others, with uptake on Wednesdays and Thursdays usually being quite high and uptake on Fridays being very low. LJ advised that the school has advertised the Club via the newsletter and has also reminded the Junior School to advertise the Club via its own newsletters. PB also advised that there have been a couple of pupils attending the Club who had not attended it previously; she also advised that the Club is still making a profit and believes that the Club is competitively priced. **Q.** LD asked if anything has been heard from the government as to whether schools will receive funding for After School clubs and Breakfast clubs. **A.** PB advised that nothing has been heard from the government regarding this, although the school had received an After School Club grant when the school had to extend the timing from 5.45 pm to 6.00 pm. PB and LJ advised that they did not believe that the school would receive a grant for the After School Club or the Breakfast Club as the school is already running these clubs, as they believe that the grants are only intended for schools who are either setting up these clubs or extending the hours for these clubs. **Q.** LD advised that her understanding was that After School clubs would be free of charge to parents and asked how this could happen if the government did not provide funding for these clubs. **A.** PB and LJ advised that they had not yet received sufficient information to answer this question.	
6.	**Agree date for the School Business Manager and a governor to quality assure financial checks** *Agreed that:* SW will liaise with PB in order to arrange a date for her to meet with PB to quality assure financial checks. ***ACTION.***	**SW**
7.	**Complete SFVS Questionnaire for return by 31st March 2026** LJ advised that she did not believe that there have been any changes to the questions since last year and that last year's answers, comments and evidence can be used again this year. *Agreed that:* PB will look at the SFVS Questionnaire to see if there is anything that the school has done differently this year from last year and if she does find something she will update this year's Return accordingly and send it to LJ for assurance before sharing it with the governors. ***ACTION.***	**PB**
8.	**Review Staff Absence** The GB discussed staff absence. *PB left the meeting at 6.25 pm.*	
9.	**Receive Headteacher Verbal Report** LJ talked the GB through her verbal report, the main points of which are summarised below:	

	• the Health & Safety Audit report had been shared with the governors; the report had contained a couple of minor actions • Hampshire will be creating 157 SEND new school places; the expectation is that more mainstream schools should be admitting children with complex needs and that they will train staff up using the ordinarily available provision or any of the other school services such as Educational Psychology and the Primary Behaviour Service • there are significant surplus places for children to attend school and there is still a decreasing birth rate • currently Pupil Progress meetings are held in December; she believes that the school is on track to achieve its predictions • she anticipates some difficulty in YR in which there are 3 very high needs children; at the end of last year the proportion of reception children achieving GLD was 72% and the school needs to start looking at the government target of 75% by 2028; she has advised the YR team that she and the team need to look at the YR data with a) the data for the 3 very high needs children included and b) the data for the 3 very high needs children not included, by the end of this academic year, as this will provide a better picture of what the children's progress is likely to look like • the school is on track for its prediction of 75% of Y1 children passing the Phonics test, this being a slight increase • the prediction for KS1 Reading at the end of Y2 is 81%, with Writing and Maths predicted to be 67%, although she wants to see if a figure of 70% can be achieved for Writing & Maths • a teacher advert for the Pre-School has been placed; there is another application pending although the applicant has not yet arranged a date to come and look at the Pre-School • Whole School Prevent training for staff and governors will need to be undertaken; she is proposing that this should take place on the 1st June 2026 INSET; the training will commence in the morning when the governors should attend	
10.	**Discuss Governor Training, including WGBT if necessary** GD advised that she had contacted Governor Services about the possibility of arranging WGBT on the topic of Strategic Planning, which was not currently available as a WGBT topic; this topic would be relevant to the governors' responsibility for the 3-year to 5-year Strategic Plan for the school. ***Agreed that:*** GD will pursue, with the School Governance Team, the possibility of WGBT on Strategic Planning and that if this WGBT becomes available she will book it ***ACTION***	**GD**
11.	**Discuss reports from/review Governor Visits** LJ advised that she had received 2 Governor Visit Reports on the monitoring visits. TF advised that she was in the process of submitting a Report on the monitoring visits. The GB then discussed governor visits.	
12.	**Review Policies according to review schedule: – Fire Safety Management Plan, Health and Safety, Car Park, Emergency Evacuation Procedures** The 4 policies named above were approved.	
13.	**Discuss GB Membership** GD advised that after Christingle she had spoken to a person who had expressed an interest in being a governor. LR advised that she will mention to the person that GD had been trying to contact her. LD advised that when she has reached the end of her current term of office as a governor in July 2027 she will not be standing for re-appointment.	
14.	**Safeguarding** LJ advised some information regarding safeguarding, the main points of which are summarised below: • one child has stepped down from a Child Protection plan to a Child in Need plan • one inter-agency referral to the Early Help Hub has been completed • all Health & Safety documentation is up to date; another Fire Drill needs to be carried out A governor advised that she believes that a message should be sent to all staff advising that mobile phones should not be visible when there are children in the vicinity; she also advised that some staff let their children move around the school when the cleaners have got cleaning chemicals out for use and that she did not believe that this should be happening.	
15.	**Decide whether to continue subscription to the School Governance Team AST (Advice, Support & Training) package, with reference to an expected future email from the School**	

	Governance Team documenting the cost of the package *Agreed that:* • the GB will continue with the subscription to the School Governance Team AST package	
16. **(i)** **(ii)**	 **Review Clerking Service** **Agree decision regarding subscription to LA Clerking Service (i.e. whether to continue subscription or not), and also (if continuing) agree contracted hours as documented in the Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return 2026/27 when available (a draft Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return, together with an email from the School Governance Team regarding the cost of subscription to the Clerking Service, will be shared with the governors in advance of the meeting)** ***Agreed:*** • to continue with the Clerking Service and the subscription to it, based on the Contracted Hours as documented in the draft Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return	
17.	**Notification to the GB & Clerk of any events (i.e. the name of the event, date & start time) during the current academic year for which some governor presence is required** GD asked if there are any updates to the list of events that has already been published. JB advised that a newsletter will be published at the end of the week which will list all the upcoming events to be held, and all governors will be sent a copy of that newsletter. LJ advised that Pupil Progress Meetings are not included in the newsletter; the dates of these meetings are as follows: YR: 24th March at 3.00 pm, Y1: 26th March at 1.00 pm, Y2: 25th March at 3.00 pm She also advised the following additional information: • the LLPR visit takes place on 17th March, in the morning, with governor feedback to be held from 1.30 pm to 2.00 pm • the school is hosting a Parent Workshop on 4th March at 2.00 pm with the Mental Health Support Team; the workshop is about the Back to Basics Mental Health Support Team LR advised that on Friday 17th April there is the Y2 Windsor trip, and that governors are more than welcome to join this trip if they wish to.	
18.	**Receive IDSR (Inspection Data School Report)** LJ showed the IDSR on the projection screen and talked the GB through the document, the main points of which are summarised below: ***Contextual Information*** • for infant schools, the document does not inform the school to a great degree, as it resembles the comparison that is carried out at KS2 • the context of the school is included in the document • in order to be regarded as strong in an Ofsted Report for achievement, consistently above average scores for the 3-year period must be in evidence in the IDSR • the school is below average with regard to the number of CiN plans • there is a CP plan ***Guidance about staffing*** • the proportion of support staff in the school, i.e. cleaners, lunchtime supervisors, LSAs, admin staff and catering staff is high ***Attendance and Behaviour*** • historically, the FSM group and the SEN support group have been the worst groups for attendance & behaviour; she believes that the school needs to do more to boost attendance and behaviour for those groups, possibly by seeking Early Help Hub support • regarding the school's overall data for the Autumn Term, the Y2 group is the worst group (in which 2 children have EHCPs) • the school will produce the 'Am I well enough to go to school?' booklet; this includes guidance on the definition of a fever • there has been a relative improvement in attendance over 2 years; this will be considered to be quite good • there is a breakdown of suspensions in the report, although there were no suspensions in academic year 2024/25; the main reason for suspensions in the current academic year	

has been physical assault against an adult

- at the time of the IDSR publication the school was not using any AP, although there is now; LJ verbalised the explanation for this change
- the report includes Phonics data over a 3-year trend
- the school's EYFS information is included in a new report which relates to 2025 and documents the school's Early Years GLD; the new report is quite useful and it explains the calculations and formulas used in its compilation
- the new report shows that the school achieved 72% for 2025, this being in line with the LA figure; as the national figure was 68%, the school was slightly above national
- the new report also shows that on a 3-year trend, the school is improving
- regarding the 3 YR children with EHCPs, she believes that the overall figure is likely to reduce
- among the school's lowest scoring areas are language development and managing self
- the new report contains a chart showing the difference between the school's figures and the national & regional figures
- one question is whether the school needs to review its PSHE programme of study that is delivered to the children, and whether it needs to arrange for additional interventions, although these activities are dependent on having the necessary staff to undertake them
- the new report shows the figures for the different groups of children; the EAL children are doing very well
- interestingly, the school's boys did very well, although the school's girls did not do so well
- there were 11 boys and 6 girls that did not meet GLD, whereas only one EAL child failed to meet GLD last year
- the new report included a graph showing how much better the EAL children had performed last year
- in summary, the report shows that building relationships and fine motor skills are 2 of the highest performing areas, with EAL and male children also being among the highest performing groups; the report also shows that the areas that the school needs to focus on are managing self and speaking
- a new document is the Attendance Report; the Report runs from the start of the Autumn Term until 12th December; the Report introduces a new term known as ABIE (Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectations)
- at the end of the Spring Term there will be an Attendance Report covering the Autumn & Spring Terms, and in the summer there will be another Attendance Report covering the whole academic year
- the Attendance Report names Merton Infant and other schools and documents how Merton Infant compares with those schools in terms of average attendance; it also documents that Merton Infant's attendance data needs to be 0.2% higher for academic year 2025/26 than it has been for the current term
- the Attendance Report also provides ideas on how the school can achieve the required increase in attendance and how it can make contact with the other comparison schools
- for the last academic year, the average attendance of the group of similar schools was 96.3%; Merton Infant's average attendance was 96%; the LA average attendance figure was 95.6%, with the national average attendance figure being 94.9%
- regarding the Y2 children, there were 4 children that were below 90% for attendance, one of these having been caused by illness
- the Attendance Report also showed, for the group of 20 similar schools, which 4 schools had the best attendance, and elsewhere in the Report there is information on how best to contact the 4 schools with the best attendance for advice if required
- attendance in the Report is also shown in graphical form, allowing the school to easily pinpoint any dips in attendance as a starting point for investigating possible reasons for the dips
- regarding the SEN group, attendance is slightly lower than in the last academic year, although the FSM group has slightly higher attendance compared with the last academic year
- she believes that the Report amounts to a positive picture of the different groups of children

LR advised that the attendance of EAL children is 36.4% in YR which is above the national level, with the national level being 23.4%.
Q. GD asked if it is correct that the IDSR report had been generated by Ofsted for this school, but not from the Ofsted visit that the school had. **A.** LJ advised that this is correct; as the report is published in the Autumn Term in November, the figures may potentially be different from when the

	school was visited by Ofsted as this took place in July 2025. **Q.** GD asked if the IDSR is a new report. **A.** LJ advised that the IDSR is not a new report, as the school has always had an IDSR report, although this report is a new version. **Q.** GD asked what the timescale of the IDSR report is. **A.** LJ advised that this is 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.	
19.	**Correspondence** None.	
20.	**Any Other Business** None.	
21.	**Date of next FGB meeting** – Monday 16th March 2026 at 6.30 pm online via 'Teams' *(please note the change from the usual start time of 6.00 pm).*	

The meeting closed at 7.41 pm.

These minutes are accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed__________________________________Chair Date__________________