

MERTON INFANT SCHOOL AND MERTON PRE-SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held on Monday 13th October 2025 at the school

MINUTES

Present Board Members:			Attended:
	Larissa James	Headteacher	Y
	Lee-Ann Dirienzo		Y
	Carly Jones		Y
	Jan Beard		Y
	Gaye Dove	Chair	Y
	Janel Richards		Y
	Sophie Wells	Vice Chair	N
	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: SW.	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interests; Update Register of Pecuniary Interests (the Clerk will circulate the Register of Governors Interests forms for completion) The Clerk had circulated the Register of Pecuniary Interests forms for completion.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2025 Agreed as a true record.	
4.	Matters Arising 140725_16_1 Send TF a link to the website so that she can book herself on to the governor induction training (GD): GD advised that she had sent TF a link, although as TF had been experiencing problems accessing the HSS system she will resend the link and some possible induction course training dates to TF, with a view to TF asking GD or the Clerk to book her on a governor induction training course if there was a date that was convenient for her. ACTION C/F. 140725_16_2 Produce a report on the Strategic Planning training that she had undertaken (LD): LD advised that she has not yet produced the report although she will do so. ACTION C/F. 140725_20 Check whether the dates for the FGB Meetings & Governor Monitoring Days are included in the school's calendar and inform the Clerk accordingly (LJ): LJ advised that she had checked the dates and informed the Clerk accordingly. Completed & closed. Q. LD asked if a list of school events can be published or circulated to the governors. A. LJ advised that when she produces the list of dates in September she includes all the school events for the whole year. LD advised that she had noticed that the date of the Easter Egg Hunt had not been included in the current list of dates. 140725_23 Upload the final version of the GB Self Evaluation document to the HSS system (LJ): LJ advised that she had tried to upload the document, although unfortunately the document does not currently appear to be present in the HSS system. It was then agreed that if anyone wants to upload any documents relating to the GB to the HSS system and they are having difficulty uploading the documents, they can ask the Clerk to upload the documents for them. Action carried forward to give LJ or the Clerk time to upload the document. ACTION C/F.	GD LD LJ / Clerk

5.	Approve Pay Committee recommendations LJ advised that she has produced a report and will send it to the members of the Pay Committee, i.e. JR and SW; the report will include footnotes containing her recommendations. LJ asked JR and SW to approve the report when received.	
6	Monitor spending against Budget Plan and consider budgetary implications of the NoR (Number on Roll) PB talked the GB through spending against the Budget Plan, the main points of which are summarised below: Y Budget - on the Education Supplies line, only £400 was originally budgeted for, however when new staff joined for the After School Club there were not many resources available so the After School Club staff ordered a few more; she has therefore increased the £400 slightly - she is not yet certain that the income figures allowed for in the original budget, for the Breakfast and After School clubs, will be reached, especially for the After School Club; she believes that the reason for this is that these clubs are not as busy as they were. It is harder to assess what the clubs' income will be as some parents pay using Childcare Vouchers and there is no way of knowing how many weeks of club membership the amounts paid in this way are intended to last for - she advised that it may be worth raising the profile of the clubs, as they are not currently promoted in the newsletters - the Y Budget has a good carry forward of £95,155 D Budget (Pre-school) - a small cost had been included in the original budget for Supply Teachers/Agency; this has increased significantly as a member of staff left the school in July and has not been replaced, with the result that an agency person is being employed at present - a few of the budget lines are showing increased expenditure and a few are showing reduced expenditure, although there are no major issues - the 2 lines at the bottom of the budget document relate to income which has increased under code 7192 by approx. £4000 with the Additional Allocations having increased by £6000, the increases having resulted from increased pupil numbers - the 'Cumulative Surplus / Deficit C/fwd' figure was £52,200, having increased from £31,853 in the original budget O Budget (Main Budget) - the 'Cumulative Surplus / Deficit C/fwd' figure was a deficit of £154,209, this deficit having been reduced from the original budget figure of £169,897 - some members of staff have left the school, including cleaning staff, with a decision having been made not to replace them although one of the remaining 4 cleaning staff is leaving the school and it will be necessary for that member of staff to be replaced; an advert has been placed with no responses yet - there has been a slight reduction in expenditure on the Midday Supervisor Assistant line because of maternity leave; another lunchtime supervisor is leaving at Christmas and the school will attempt not replacing her - there has been expenditure on the Grounds Maintenance Contracts line, this having increased because of a significant amount of tree work that was undertaken during the summer holidays, although the cost was split with the Junior School - there is a dead tree in the Pre-School which will have to be felled as soon as possible, although there will be no cost to the school as it is covered by an SLA (Service Level Agreement) - regarding Fire Equipment, it was not necessary to replace many of the extinguishers - the budget for the Equipment line has increased; the original budget was only £7,000, as at the time the budget setting was carried out it was not known whether PE Funding would be continuing, although it is currently continuing - the Catering Equipment money is money set aside in case it is needed, for example if there was a fault in the kitchens. There have been no major equipment failures in the kitchens and it was agreed that the money would be rolled over at the end of each financial year, with approx. £2,000 being added each year - she has reduced the Education Supplies line by £1,500 - there could be a possible saving on the Catering line, depending on how many meals are taken from now until the end of April and how many meals the school has to pay for; although there are savings from having changed to the new caterers, the contract that the school has with the caterers is losing money for the caterers, as the number of children from the Infant School and the Junior school that are taking school dinners is lower than the caterers expected	

12.	Discuss reports from Governor Visits LJ advised that she had received a good number of reports, including reports on the Leavers' Assembly in July and Governor Monitoring Days. A governor suggested the idea of having a 'SEND Zone' in the Newsletter, which would describe anything that had worked well in school during the current half term. This was generally thought to be a good idea. GD advised that she has submitted a report or reports for the Newsletter in the past, although she does not always know when the newsletters are going to be published. LJ advised that she or the school currently produces a newsletter every month and believes that at the end each term, when some information is included in the 'Governor Corner' or 'Governor News', possibly some information from a Governor Report could be included 3 times per year (in December, April and July), with a view to avoiding every newsletter containing a lengthy Governor Report which might have the effect of readers missing the main points of the newsletter. This was generally thought to be a good idea.	
13.	Agree Delegated Powers The Clerk advised that, assuming that the GB is happy with the delegated powers that currently exist, as documented in the FGB Terms of Reference, it will be sufficient to minute that the GB has agreed that it is happy with the current delegated powers. Approved	
14.	Receive Headteacher Verbal Report LJ talked the GB through her verbal report, the main points of which are summarised below: • she attended the Affordable Schools' Finance Workshop; the data presented had been interesting although the Hampshire pupil numbers are still dropping, e.g. the average class size decreased from 26.6 to 26.2 in 2024 and the school currently has the lowest NoR (Number on Roll) since 2009 • Hampshire is still the 26th lowest funded LA (Local Authority) per pound per pupil although Hampshire are trying to increase this and also produce a better algorithm of how counties are funding the education for all their children • schools are being strongly encouraged to look at staffing restructures • she completed the Safeguarding Audit which was submitted to County by the deadline of 30th September, with the Safeguarding Evaluation having taken place in July • there is now a new Y1 School Council with elections having been completed • the Eco Team presentations for Years 1 & 2 have also been completed, with the new Eco Team to be announced • LR presented the Diamond Award and her work on EAL with the LA, her work having been very highly commended; the school is being invited to talk to various networks and meetings to share their good practice, and has received emails from interested parties asking if they can visit the school to see the good practice • at her PM (Performance Management) meeting with the school LLP this week, she had said that she knows that the school outcomes are 10% lower than the LA outcomes although when the different groupings, e.g. FSM or EAL, including the school's SEND children, are examined in full detail the school's children are actually achieving higher than the LA and national levels; therefore, looking at those groupings, overall the school is doing very well • for the school's SEND children, she believes that it is important to look at the school's SEND support which is 13% across Years 1 & 2; no YR children have been nominated yet as the school is still learning about them, but the national figure was 14.2% and so there are probably a few more children that the school needs to place on SEND support • the school is already 7% EHCP children in YR; the current EHCP figure across the 3 year groups is 7% and the national level is 5.3%, i.e. the school is well above the national level • regarding the Ethnic Minority children, including the Pre-School children, the school is up to 46% with the national figure being 38%; EAL including the Pre-School children is 37% with no national figure being available; current FSM is at 19% with the national figure at 25.7% which appears very low and therefore school cannot argue that we are in a low deprivation area. • regarding Safeguarding, there are 3 children on a CIN (Child in Need) plan, one child on a CP (Child Protection) plan, these children representing approx. 2% of the overall cohort in the school • current Attendance is good and on target at 95.8%; on Wednesday last week there was one child off, therefore if that child had not been absent we would have achieved 100% attendance; at Friday's Celebration Assembly all classes had above 96% attendance; the weakest groups at present are SEND at 92.2% and unfortunately when attendance is	

	compared with the same period last year the school is down a little, although she will check the report cut-off dates with OUR Attendance Manager, Tracy Phelps, tomorrow • she shared the school's Early Years trend data, and also the LA data, visually with the governors; the school was slightly higher than the LA over the last 3 years, but is starting to plateau slightly; the school was slightly down in specific areas and she suspects that it is the Literacy that is bringing the figures down because of the more demanding criteria • she showed the governors the data for a comparison of the LA with each of the areas in Early Years, e.g. last year for 'Language, Attention and Understanding' the school achieved 80% compared with the LA figure of 86.7%; there are no comparisons with national figures • for Gross Motor Skills, the school achieved 93% compared with the LA figure of 94% • for Writing, the school achieved 75% compared with the LA figure of 75.9% • she showed the governors data regarding gaps between different groups of children and advised that generally the data did not show anything that was unknown to the school, although it is important to ensure that the Y1 curriculum addresses the gaps • she showed the governors the Phonics data; although the LA figures generally followed a plateauing trend, the school's Phonics data is dropping, although this has been affected by the number of EAL & SEND children; she has discussed with CJ the question of whether the school should move away from Rocket Phonics or whether the school should look at something different for the SEND children; she has also discussed this with the school LLP who believes that the school has the capacity to look at a different scheme • Attendance guidance has changed; schools are now authorised to issue penalty notices to parents who attempt to avoid penalties by scheduling holidays that fall below the threshold of 5 days • the IDSR data is not available yet and will probably be available in November • staff appraisals for teachers and LSAs have been completed, with the admin staff appraisals being undertaken this week • the Early Years baseline has been completed & uploaded • there have been no major H&S concerns although it is known that the school might have to arrange for the installation of new boilers; although it is likely to be quite expensive if it has to be arranged, she is hoping that the school will not have to pay for the boilers and the work • Martin's Law is a new standard tier system linked to Prevent; new guidance is due to be published about the evacuation, invacuation (staying in the building) and lockdown; schools have been advised not to take any action regarding their Prevent and evacuation procedures until further guidance becomes available • a Fire Drill was undertaken today and was completed within 2 minutes which had been the desired target • there was an After School Club resignation in addition to a cleaner resignation • thought needs to be given to the fact that the Pre-School will be a significant target for Ofsted moving forward; because the school is now admitting 2-year-olds, many previous pre-schools are now calling themselves nurseries; the GB therefore needs to consider changing the school name, particularly as it is the 2-year-old group of children that the school wants to attract to increase pupil numbers • the change of school name procedure is for the GB to discuss a possible name change at an FGB meeting, agree on a new name, and move the potential name change out to consultation; her understanding is that a form then has to be completed and submitted to the DfE • she is not sure whether the name change would generate a new Ofsted number, which might possibly generate another Ofsted inspection; although she does not think that this is likely to happen, she requires confirmation regarding this She then asked the governors to 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. ACTION. Regarding the school's achievement figures, a governor advised that if you add in the Y1 children and the Y2 children last year, i.e. the children that did not pass in Y1 and then passed in Y2, the school is actually 7% above the LA and national levels. LR advised that the teaching for Maths Mastery commenced last year and is continuing this year; the school is also delivering 'Mastery Number' which is a 10-minute fluency lesson in KS1. Q. GD asked, regarding baseline levels, whether LJ felt that the children were coming in at a lower level. A. LJ replied in the affirmative.	ALL
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	There was a discussion about the implications of having 2-year-olds at the Pre-School, as concern was expressed that at least some of the 2-year-olds would need afternoon naps. LJ advised that the plan that she currently favours is to have the current room at the Pre-School as the 2-year-old room; she is proposing that the current Owlets Room becomes the 3-and-4-year-old room; although a wall cannot be erected, for £1,000 the school can arrange for a gate to be set up between the 2 outside areas; the 3-and-4-year-olds can become Little Owls, and there will also be Owlets YR and Snowy Owls YR. The only downside is that there would be no Discovery Room in YR for SEND provision. Q. A governor asked, if the Pre-School is split up into 2 separate rooms, whether that would mean that the school would be looking to recruit more staff. A. LJ advised that the difficulty is that the guidance about having trained teachers in a Pre-School, with 2-year-olds and 3-and-4-year-olds, is not as clear as it might be; she also advised that another document has become available as a result of the Early Years reforms, and listening to the Ofsted inspection the school believes that having a qualified teacher to support in Early Years would be more beneficial in terms of developing the skill level in the Pre-School. LJ advised that she believes that the most important thing for the GB to focus on at present is the name change and how the GB and school go about that, and then start looking at marketing; she believes that the school should obtain the services of a strategic manager from Hampshire to help the school with marketing. LR advised that there will be a cost associated with the marketing and also potentially for some of the signage outside the school which will need replacing because of the name change; there is also the question of whether school jumpers need replacing. Q. LD asked if the Pre-School staff would need any uniform changes. A. LJ advised that the Pre-School staff wear a T-shirt and therefore this area needs looking at; also, the Pre-School do encourage the children to wear a Merton uniform although she does not believe that there has been much take up of the uniform by the Pre-School children. LJ advised that she had been considering whether the school and GB have celebrated the Ofsted outcome with the staff to a sufficient degree, and as she was not sure whether the school has said a big enough 'well done' to the staff for their contribution to the Ofsted inspection success, she raised the question of whether arranging a Wellbeing Day for each member of staff and herself is something that would be viewed favourably by the staff and the GB. She further advised that as she does not have the capacity to cover all the teachers and LSAs, the easiest plan would be to arrange for a Wellbeing Day to be held on the November INSET day, which would fit in well as the November INSET has not been earmarked for anything. She also advised that she would be happy for the governors to express their views on this idea. LR advised that she believes that provision of a Wellbeing Day on the day of the November INSET would be appreciated by the staff. Agreed that: a Wellbeing Day will be arranged for the day (24th November) that was originally scheduled to be the November INSET, and it will be made clear that if anyone wants to meet up with staff friends they will be welcome to do so although they should not include anything about it in social media.	
15.	Approve SIP (School Improvement Plan) Agreed: to approve the SIP which LJ shared with the GB at the meeting.	
16.	Discuss GB Membership GD advised that as JM has resigned from the GB because of other commitments, she is happy to take on what were JM's finance responsibilities for the time being. Q. LD asked if it would be possible for the school to send out a text asking anyone interested in being a governor of the school to contact the school or the Chair of Governors. A. LJ advised that this would be possible; she also advised that as Special Relatives Day is not far off, there is a plan to hand-deliver a few leaflets inviting people interested in being a governor to contact the school; in addition some leaflets can be handed out at a Parents' Evening on 21st October or 23rd October.	
17.	Review Annual Collaboration Agreement – confirm that St. Annes Primary School has confirmed that they wish to renew the Agreement	

	LJ advised that she had mentioned renewal of the Collaboration Agreement to the new Headteacher at St. Annes who had advised her that she is putting the matter of renewal of the agreement before her governors.	
18.	Review Self Evaluation Monitoring Schedule (as arranged at July FGB meeting) Agreed: to approve the Self Evaluation Monitoring Schedule.	
19.	Notification to the GB & Clerk of any events (i.e. the name of the event and start time) during the current academic year for which some governor presence is required The Parents' Evenings had already been mentioned earlier under item 16.	
20.	Safeguarding LJ advised that she had provided any updates relating to Safeguarding in her Headteacher verbal report earlier.	
21.	Correspondence None.	
22.	Any Other Business LD advised that at the Governor Monitoring Day, the possibility of obtaining the services of someone who could manage the school's social media such as Facebook and also communications relating to Ofsted visits or awards for EAL children, was discussed. LJ suggested that it may be worth sending out a text inviting anyone interested in managing the school's social media and communications, with a business background in social media and marketing, to contact the school. Agreed: that the school will draft a suitable text, inviting suitably qualified people who would be interested in managing the school's social media & communications, tomorrow and arrange to send out the text.	
23.	Date of next FGB meeting – Monday 17 th November 2025 at 6.00 pm online via 'Teams'.	

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm.

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

Signed _____ Chair Date _____