

MERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held at the school on Monday 12th May 2025

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		N
	Julie Mead		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: None. JM was not present as she was attending a new governor induction course.	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interest None.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2025 (attached) Approved.	
4.	Matters Arising 170325_9_1 Circulate a spreadsheet containing LA Benchmarking data to everyone after the meeting (PB): Completed & closed. 170325_9_2 Prepare a suitable format for the LA benchmarking data (PB): Completed & closed. 170325_11 Submit the SFVS Return by 31st March (Clerk): Completed & closed. 170325_16 Make a minor amendment to the SEND policy (LJ): Completed & closed. 170325_18 Check current procedure for finding a replacement LA Governor and commence the procedure (Clerk): the Clerk advised that he had emailed the local Councillor, asking her if she could nominate someone as a potential LA Governor; he also advised that he will monitor his email for responses to his request. ACTION C/F. GD advised that she had received an email from Sajish Tom, the former LA Governor, thanking GD for her help regarding GB matters and conveying a 'goodbye' to the school and the GB.	Clerk
5.	Monitor spending against Budget Plan for i) O Budget (Main Budget) ii) Y Budget iii) D Budget (Pre-School) LJ advised some information, the main points of which are summarised below: - last week the GB had received WGBT (Whole Governing Body Training) on the topic of Finance; the mood had been rather downbeat as the main budget appeared as if it was about to become a deficit budget eventually - some money has been saved by recruiting an Admin Assistant, rather than an Admin Officer, for the office - the Budget Plan is based on 60 children joining the school in YR; although the current figure is 57, it was 54 a few weeks ago 3 of the children joining YR will have EHCPs, although the school will lose 7 children that	

	- have EHCPs from Y2 - she is applying for 2 further EHCPs for children in the current YR; if this funding is received, it will result in a significant positive change to the budget - there have been discussions today with the Pre-School management team regarding the possibility of increasing the Pre-School fees; she believes that there is an argument for increasing the fees, which would generate more income - more 2-year olds have joined the Pre-School; if more 2-year olds can be encouraged to join the Pre-School, this would also generate more funding - consideration can be given to increasing the Breakfast and After School club fees, which would increase the income	
i)	The GB then discussed staffing. O Budget (Main Budget) PB then talked the GB through the monitoring of spending for the main budget, the main points of which are summarised below: - there have been few budget movements so far this year; at this relatively early stage in the year, there are often few budget incomings and outgoings to report on - many of the financial outgoings that are commitments are annual, e.g. Grounds Maintenance, Catering Provisions (e.g. school milk), catering services provided by the catering company, photocopying - there has been nothing major in terms of expenditure - the items shown towards the end of the expenditure items in the Budget Plan are expenditures on SLAs, e.g. Teacher Insurance, Other Professional Services - there has not been a great deal of income, although there is income in the form of charges to parents from one day trip	
(ii)	Y Budget PB talked the GB through the monitoring of spending against the Y budget, the main points of which are summarised below: - the Y budget supports the running of the Breakfast and After School clubs Income - the Total Income figure was £4,908 Expenditure - the amount on the 'Pay Costs-Basic, NI, Sup etc' line, in the 'Actuals' column, was £2,347 - the amount in the 'Actuals' column on the 'Catering Provisions' line was £618, relating to the purchase of catering provisions from Sainsbury's - looking at the Detailed Report, the 'Subtotal Staffing' figure was £27,678; the 'Catering Provisions' figure was £6,000, and she will be looking at this area as it may be possible to find a supplier that charges lower prices, although food has generally increased in price - the income arising from the Breakfast and After School clubs has been set a little higher this year, compared to last year General - the Y budget has always been a positive budget, i.e. there has never been a deficit; if the documented figures are sustainable and correct, this budget will be nearly £95,000 positive by the end of the current FY	
(iii)	D Budget (Pre-School Budget) PB then talked the GB through the monitoring of spending against the D budget (Pre-School), the main points of which are summarised below: Income - items of Income, e.g. Fundraising and Sponsorship Income, Admission Charges, General Fees and Charges, and the 'HCC Schools – Additional Allocations' grant are shown near the bottom of the spreadsheet, together with the Total Income figure of £12,362 Expenditure - there has not been a great deal of expenditure from, or income received into, the budget - an amount of £105 appears in the 'Commitment' column on the 'Other Training Courses and Qualification' line; this relates to a training course that has been booked but not billed yet - there was a small amount of expenditure (£41) on the 'Confidential, Hazardous and Medical Waste' line - expenditure of £68 appeared on the 'Catering Provisions' line - some expenditure was shown on the 'Day Activities' line in connection with the booking of	

	several coaches there is flexibility in the budget, in terms of the possibility of the income increasing, with regard to a) the number of children that join the Pre-School each year and b) the possibility of increasing the Pre-School fees LJ advised that the school will continue to have children with more complex needs joining the school, with pupil numbers predicted to fall for the next 2 years; as the school will not be receiving any additional funding, a radical approach is required.	
6.	Discuss predicted pupil numbers and their budgetary implications This had already been discussed under the previous item.	
7.	Approve Draft Main Budget (input on SAP by May) PB talked the GB through the draft Main (O) Budget, the main points of which are summarised below: - the Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit) C/Fwd figure for the end of the current FY (Financial Year) was (£169,895) deficit; deducting the Carry Forward figures from the Y and D (Pre-School) budgets from this figure resulted in a figure of -£43,000, i.e. a £43,000 deficit - the £43,000 overall deficit figure should be considered in the light of the fact that she has not included the funding that may be received or that will be received for EHCPs for pupils joining the school in YR, as this funding is not guaranteed until the EHCPs are received - in addition, the £43,000 overall deficit figure does not take into account the fact that the Pre-School is full, will also have more children joining and will be increasing its fees; it also does not take into account the fact that the prices for the Breakfast and After School Clubs may be increased and if they are it will result in surpluses that can be used to further offset the overall deficit - the Main Budget dictates that the school needs to do everything it can to ensure that it receives 60 children into each year group, as each child brings £3,878 into the school - the Universal Infant FSM Funding that the school receives from the government has been increased to £2.58 per meal, although the school still pays £3.00 per meal - the PE and Sports Funding has only been confirmed up until August this year; therefore in the budget on line 7690 there is a figure for this year although the figures for the next 2 years have been set to zero; if there is a government decision to bring this funding back, then she will ensure that the figures for the next 2 years are populated - the school was advised to increase the budget for energy costs by between 5% and 10%, based on last year's budget; she has increased the budget for energy by 7% - built into the budget tool is a 2.5% teacher pay rise for the current FY, and 3% for the following FY's; also built in is a 3% pay rise for support staff - the school was advised to increase the budget for the Water and Sewage charges by 29% - there is a child in the school that attracts professional funding and additional funding; last year she had not included the additional funding in the budget as the school had been struggling to obtain it, although the school was paid the additional funding at the end of the FY, however this year she was confident that the school would receive the funding and she has therefore included the additional funding in the EHCP funding Expenditure - regarding the 'Purchase of IT Software' line, the school spends quite a lot on IT software packages, which are expensive - the PPA cover, such as the 'Music and Mindfulness', costs the school £7808 per year - expenditure on the 'Catering' line is shown at £70,000, although this depends on the number of meals that are taken and the number of meals that she is invoiced for; this figure was based on an average and may increase or decrease - the cost of the Football tutor is reflected in the 'Hired and Contracted Services' line which shows expenditure of £3,500 for 2025/26 - the 'Other Expenses' line shows the expenditure (£2,500) incurred by the school so that it can carry out fundraising; as the school does not have a PTA, all fundraising is undertaken by staff Income - the Fundraising income figure was set at £10,500, being based on how much the school made this year - the Universal Infant FSM Funding that the school receives from the government has been increased to £2.58 per meal, although the school still pays £3.00 per meal - the PE and Sports Funding has only been confirmed up until August this year; therefore in the budget on line 7690 there is a figure for this year although the figures for the next 2 years have been set to zero; if there is a government decision to bring this funding back, then she will ensure that the figures for the next 2 years are populated	

	- the budget includes an element for an increase in National Insurance, as schools receive a grant for this, although the amount received does not cover the full increase in the Contributions - the Additional Grant (the PE Funding), in the income line typically more or less matches the amount in the expenditure line, as the school has to spend the Grant on PE equipment General - the school has tightened up on paying staff for time off for dependants - by making savings where possible, and some changes such as doing a little more fundraising and reducing the amount of photocopying, she believes that next year the school could still potentially not enter a deficit budget situation Mrs James advised that she believes that the school can cut back on use of the IT software package 'Twinkle'. Q. JB asked, with regard to PB's reference to the new YR's joining with EHCPs, whether the EHCPs are already in place so that the school can expect to receive the funding associated with them straight away. A. LJ advised that the EHCPs already exist. Q. A governor asked if the school will receive a grant for National Insurance every year. A. PB advised that she believes that the grant is payable across 3 years. The O Budget figures were as follows: Total Expenditure: £1,364,994 (One Million, Three Hundred and Sixty Four Thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety Four Pounds) Total Income: £1,297,875 (One Million, Two Hundred and Ninety Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy Five Pounds) In Year Surplus/(Deficit): (£67,118 deficit) (Sixty Seven Thousand, One Hundred and Eighteen Pounds deficit) Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: (£102,777 deficit) (One Hundred and Two Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy Seven Pounds deficit) Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit) C/Fwd: (£169,895 deficit) (One Hundred and Sixty Nine Thousand, Eight Hundred and Ninety Five Pounds deficit) <i>Agreed to:</i> - approve the O Budget	
8.	Approve Y Budget The Y Budget figures were as follows: Total Expenditure: £34,178 (Thirty Four Thousand, One Hundred and Seventy Eight Pounds) Total Income: £47,600 (Forty Seven Thousand, Six Hundred Pounds) In Year Surplus/(Deficit): £13,422 (Thirteen Thousand, Four Hundred and Twenty Two Pounds) Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: £81,293 (Eighty One Thousand, Two Hundred and Ninety Three Pounds) Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit) C/Fwd: £94,715 (Ninety Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifteen Pounds) <i>Agreed to:</i> approve the Y Budget	
9.	Approve D Budget (Pre-School) The D Budget figures were as follows: Total Expenditure: £153,375 (One Hundred and Fifty Three Thousand, Three Hundred and Seventy Five Pounds) Total Income: £160,457 (One Hundred and Sixty Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty Seven Pounds) In Year Surplus/(Deficit): £7,082 (Seven Thousand and Eighty Two Pounds)	

	Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: £24,771 (Twenty Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Seventy One Pounds) Cumulative Surplus/(Deficit) C/Fwd: £31,853 (Thirty One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty Three Pounds) <i>Agreed to:</i> • approve the D budget	
10.	Discuss spending of Devolved Capital allocation PB advised that although the Devolved Capital allocation has not yet been received, she is expecting the allocation to be approx. £5000 - £6000; she also advised that no Devolved Capital had been carried forward from last year.	
11.	Review Staff Absence The GB discussed staff absence. PB left the meeting at 7.07 pm.	
12.	Appoint Tracy Ferguson as a Co-opted Governor, her term of office to start immediately Appointed.	
13.	Receive Headteacher Verbal Report LJ talked the GB through her Headteacher Report, the main points of which are summarised below: • Attendance is very good at 96%, the weakest group being the FSM group at approx. 94% • the second EYFS moderation visit, when the school's assessments are validated, is scheduled for Friday 16th May • she has produced a Staffing Structure, although she will not announce this until after Half Term • the Y1 Phonics Screening is currently presenting very well and the school is on track to meet its 75% target in June • there are currently no major Safeguarding concerns • 2 of the reduced hours provision children have increased their hours, this being a positive change with one child now attending full time and there being a review meeting on Wednesday regarding another child • the Quality of Education remains good; she has yet to formally observe Y2, but when she has undertaken her informal learning walks she has been happy with the provision; at the last Pupil Progress Meeting there had been an indication that everyone is making progress from their starting point, and for anyone that is not making progress it is being identified now in the planning • there have been some staffing difficulties in Y1, although the Y1 team have concentrated on Phonics which is what the school wanted to happen • the current NoR is 57 • she was going to share the current SEF context as there have been some changes, i.e. a couple of EHCP children have left the school; she will email the SEF context to the governors tomorrow ACTION • there is a Governor Monitoring Day next Wednesday, when a Culture Day will be held to support the school's revalidation for moving from the Gold Award to the Diamond Excellence Award • although the school did not have a target from the last Ofsted Inspection, she favours the idea of spreading out the school's assessment periods more evenly; she has undertaken the Effective Assessment Webinar and looked at the non-core subjects and having learnt from the webinar she has been working with all the curriculum managers; as a result, she and the curriculum managers have produced a plan which she will send to the governors ACTION • taking History as an example, there are 7 different strands to the subject, including 'Cause and Effect' and 'Chronology'; as it is not possible to assess all the different strands in every subject, the school has therefore decided that it is not going to assess in Art, Music and DT, as these subjects are believed to be ones to which 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' applies and she believes that the school could be placing a limit on the children's assessment for these subjects • in History there has been recognition that Chronology is the one skill that the school has to get right and the school will therefore be refocusing on this strand • she believes the plan will show the school's forward thinking, the workload agenda and what is important for the school's curriculum • there are ongoing areas; in PE, there are 5 basic shapes which the school teaches in Gymnastics, and there are also ongoing areas in Maths and English which the school will assess each half-term	LJ LJ

	- the school used to carry out the Salford Reading Test and then changed to the PiRA Reading Test; it has now decided that it will only carry out the PiRA test in Y2, although the school will have some copies available for YR or Y1 in case she needs to carry out an EHCP for them - the school had devised its Vision for Inclusion which contained the barriers to learning, and strategies that the school could put as universal that the school always provides for them, and also the targeted support and the specialist support; Hampshire, to support SEND and try to reduce the number of EHCPs that schools are receiving, have produced an OAP (Ordinary Available Provision) which is very similar to the school's Vision for Inclusion	
14.	Discuss Governor Training The GB discussed Governor Training, the main points of which are summarised below: - JM is attending New Governor Induction training - LD is undertaking Coaching training on Thursday - TF will undertake the New Governor Induction training; once she has been set up in the HSS system she will be able to book herself on any training that she requires or is interested in - the GB had undertaken WGBT in Finance It was agreed that it would be beneficial if TF and SW, and also JM, could produce a 'pen portrait' of themselves for the school website.	
15.	Discuss reports from Governor Visits LJ advised the following information: - she had received several Visit Reports from GD on the topics of Pupil Progress Meetings, Central Register, Finance and the Easter Play - LD had sent her questions, to be asked, to include in a report and she had sent the information to LD - governors would be more than welcome to attend the next Pupil Progress Day on the 23rd June INSET, even if they just wanted to join one particular year group - governors would also be more than welcome to attend the Leaver Assembly on 18th July	
16.	i) Approve policies according to review schedule – Updated Child Protection, Updated Safeguarding, Behaviour Management, Physical Intervention, Pupil Discipline Committee Terms of Reference Behaviour Management LJ advised that regarding the Behaviour Management policy, originally the intention had been to challenge the Y2 children; however, as the needs of the children are becoming more complex, the children are not achieving the higher numbers and it has been decided to limit the number of pebbles to 5 per year group per half-term and to have more treats for the children so they feel that they are being recognised more readily for what they have been doing; she will amend the policy to reflect this. The policy was approved subject to LJ amending the policy. ACTION It was also agreed to approve the other policies listed under this agenda item. ii) Adopt the MOPP version of the Exclusion of Pupils policy Adopted.	LJ
17.	Complete Governor Self-Evaluation – how well are we doing? LJ advised the following information: - she believes that the GB does the things that it needs to do well, although it would be beneficial if the GB's workload could be shared a bit more - in previous years, the main outcomes recorded in the GB Self Evaluation documentation had been that the GB had acknowledged the need to do improve the results of its recruitment efforts and that, having completed its statutory business, the GB believed that it was between Good and Outstanding It was then agreed that LJ will collate the information from the previous GB Self Evaluation and share it with the governors who would either approve the Self Evaluation or, if they have a question about any of the answers they were free to send their question to LJ who would explain why a particular answer was entered. ACTION	LJ
18.	Elect Vice Chair SW was elected as Vice Chair.	
19.	Safeguarding, including discussion of the arrangements for completion of the Annual Safeguarding Return (to the LA by 30th September) which is due to be approved at the July FGB meeting It was agreed that LJ will complete the Safeguarding Return and share it with the GB before the July	

	FGB meeting when it can be approved by the GB. ACTION	LJ
20.	Discuss GB Membership, including membership of the Pay Committee & HTPM Panel It was agreed that the Pay Committee members and HTPM Panel members would be as follows: Pay Committee – JR, SW HTPM Panel – GD, TF It was also agreed that GD will ask JM if she would consider being a third member of the Pay Committee. The following new appointments to specialist roles were then agreed: JM as the Finance Governor (a new specialist role) and SW as the Safeguarding Governor. This resulted in the specialist roles being filled as follows: Safeguarding Governor: SW Attendance Governor: GD Safer Recruitment Governor(s): GD Inclusion Governor (includes EAL, SEND & PP Governor roles): LD Health and Safety Governor: JB Training Link Governor / DTG: The Clerk Forum Representative: GD Nominated Governor to liaise with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for allegations against the Headteacher: JR Mental Health Governor: CJ Finance Governor: JM LR advised that Y2 are starting swimming lessons on Wednesday 4th June from 10.30 am to 12.00 am and that governors were welcome to attend; she would be attending the lessons from 10.30 am to 11.30 am and CJ would be attending from 11.30 am to 12.00 am.	
21.	Correspondence None.	
22.	Any Other Business LD advised that on 23rd May (Sports Day) she will be running a selling stall and that if any governors wanted to help they would be most welcome to do so. Q. JB asked whether the GB would be prepared to write a letter to a parent who is currently very reluctant to pay After School Club fees that they owe the school. The parent had come in to pick up their child from school early on the next day, and was reminded in person about the fees, after which they had stated that they would pay the fees. The parent has also been sent about 4 texts as well as 2 reminder letters. A. It was then agreed that GD would write a letter about the fees to the parent.	
23.	Date of next FGB meeting – Monday 7th July 2025 online via Teams at 6.00 pm	

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

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

Signed _____ Chair Date _____