

# MERTON INFANT SCHOOL AND MERTON PRE-SCHOOL

## Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held online on Monday 17th March 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       |                         | Y         |
|                                      | Sophie Wells     |                         | 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 2.00 pm.

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| 1. | <b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b><br>Apologies: ST had advised that he has resigned; JR & LD had advised that they may be late joining the meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |        |
| 2. | <b>Declarations of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interest</b><br>None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |        |
| 3. | <b>Appoint Sophie Wells as a Co-opted Governor with immediate effect</b><br>Appointed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |
| 4. | <b>Minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025</b><br>Approved subject to a minor amendment by the Clerk, i.e. change LR's role to 'Deputy Headteacher' from 'Acting Deputy Headteacher'.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |
| 5. | <b>Matters Arising</b><br><b>251125_14_2 Ask her employer if it would be possible for her to put up a governor vacancy flyer on the noticeboard at her employer's offices and report back to the GB when she has received a response (KR):</b> Closed as KR had resigned from the GB.<br><b>251124_18 a) Book WGBT on Finance (Course Code GT813), the training to be held in April 2025, and b) find out from Governor Services what will be covered by the training (Clerk):</b> the Clerk advised that he had booked the WGBT on Finance, with Governor Services having confirmed the date as Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May at 6.00 pm at the school; the subject matter in terms of what is to be covered by the training had been documented in the minutes of the previous meeting. Completed & closed.<br><b>110225_6 Meet with PB at 12:00 hours on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March to quality assure the financial checks (JM):</b> Completed & closed.<br><b>110225_7 Complete the SFVS return and circulate it (PB):</b> Completed & closed. |        |
| 6. | <b>Monitor spending against the Budget Plan</b><br>PB talked the GB through the monitoring of spending against the budget plan, the main points of which are summarised below:<br><b>Monitor spending against D Budget Plan (Pre-School)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some training that Kelly (the Pre-School Finance Manager) had included in the budget, and which will not be invoiced, was removed</li> <li>£900 was removed from the Premises Insurance line as the Infant School has not been charged for this; if the Infant School had been charged for this, the Infant School would have passed the cost on to the Pre-School</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |        |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kelly had increased the Furniture line as the Pre-School was going to buy some furniture to separate the 2-year-old area from the other areas; however this separation will now occur in the new financial year and the expenditure on this line has been reduced back to £295</li> <li>• £215 for software was removed from the 'Schools curriculum software' line for this financial year, although purchase of software will be included in the budget for the next financial year</li> <li>• there was a slight increase in the Admission Charges line as 2 more children joined the Pre-School</li> <li>• the 'HCC School - Additional Allocations' line, currently showing as £141,438, will be altered to £142,438, which makes the bottom line Carry Forward figure for the Pre-School for this financial year £22,269, this being approximately £10,000 more than anticipated at the beginning of the year</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitor spending against O Budget Plan (Infant School)</b></p> <p><b>Expenditure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she believes that when the payroll process is run in March there will be savings within the Salary line</li> <li>• there have been no major changes</li> <li>• regarding the Gas and Electricity lines, the school's finance consultant has advised that all schools have been affected by the gas &amp; electricity charges having been greater than the schools originally budgeted for, this having been due to the pricing having increased; it is still possible that the school may make some savings on electricity as the figure is currently on £8,000 and the school has budgeted for £11,000</li> <li>• there has been significant expenditure on the Cleaning Materials line; she will be looking at this line next year, as the school's caretaking consultant had advised that the school may be better off purchasing one cleaning product for all cleaning rather than a number of different products; she is hoping that expenditure on cleaning materials can be reduced next year</li> <li>• regarding the Equipment line, which documents the money that the school spends on PE funding, she has set this figure to £20,949 which is the amount that was spent; she has carried over the unspent £507 to the next financial year as the school will have to document what this money is spent on once it has been added to next year's funding</li> <li>• the school has spent less on the Educational Supplies line than last year, although she believes that the school can make a savings on this line; similar considerations apply to the Photocopying line on which the school has saved over £1,000 compared with last year</li> </ul> <p><b>Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she has increased the Fundraising line as there are a couple more activities before the school closes for Easter; the figure takes into account an estimate of how much the school will receive in income from those activities</li> <li>• regarding the Day Trip Charges line, for the last 2 trips it has been possible to obtain payment from most of the parents, with the cost of the last YR trip having been paid by all parents except one; this line has been increased slightly</li> <li>• she is still attempting to obtain £8,000 of EHCP funding; the school was looking for £12,000, £4,000 of this having already been received; she understands that the £8,000 is in the system to be paid, although it is not yet known whether this sum will be received during this financial year</li> <li>• the O budget is likely to end the financial year with a deficit of £121,461; taking into account the surplus balances in the D and Y budgets, being approximately £100,000 in total, this leaves the school approx. £21,000 in deficit overall</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitor spending against Y Budget Plan (Infant School)</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Y budget includes the Breakfast and After School clubs</li> </ul> <p><b>Expenditure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• she has reduced the Educational Supplies line as she does not intend to purchase any further items during this financial year</li> <li>• the Bank Charges line was reduced as she does not expect to incur any further expenditure on this line</li> </ul> <p><b>Income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income from fees tends to fluctuate; this figure had been set at £16,000 at the beginning of the year and she has decreased the figure to £15,300, which will be received, with a possibility that the final figure may be more</li> <li>• she has increased the After School Club figure to £32,000; this budget item is already on £31,900 and she is sure that £32,000 will be received; it is difficult to produce an exact figure for these lines as parents often make payments online on a daily basis</li> <li>• this budget will end the financial year with a surplus figure of approx. £80,769</li> </ul> |  |
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|    | <p><b>Overall Budget Summary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if the school is able to obtain the £8,000 EHCP funding, this will ease the overall budget situation; if there are savings on the Electricity and Salary lines, there is a slight chance that the budget will be in positive territory, by a small amount, rather than in deficit</li> <li>she believes that Education Finance may visit the school to see how it is planned to reduce the deficit, however if the school continues with Wrap Around Care and if the income from the Pre-School increases, these factors will help to decrease next year's deficit</li> <li>a plan will be put in place to reduce the deficit</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                   |
| 7. | <p><b>Monitor spending of Devolved Capital allocation</b></p> <p>PB advised the following regarding Devolved Capital:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Devolved Capital Allocation was approx. £6000 which was spent on replacing the flooring; another Devolved Capital Allocation will be received in the next financial year although this will probably be less than £6,000 as the Allocation is based on pupil numbers which have decreased</li> <li>currently there is therefore no remaining balance in Devolved Capital</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                   |
| 8. | <p><b>Consider Draft Budget Plans for the following financial year</b></p> <p>PB advised a number of points as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>she has not prepared draft budget plans yet as it is a little too soon for them at present</li> <li>the Budget Share has been made available; it is based on pupil numbers of 179 for this year, the pupil numbers figure being lower than last year's figure</li> <li>the Budget Share figure is slightly higher than last year's figure owing to certain grants having been included in the main figure, these grants not having been included in last year's main figure; these grants include the Teacher Pension grant; the Budget Share figure is approx. £73,000 - £78,000 more than last year's figure</li> <li>the Budget Plans for the next financial year will be produced after Easter</li> </ul> <p><b>Q.</b> LJ asked why the Budget Share is based on 179 pupils, as when the Pre-School numbers are included the NoR (Number on Roll) is 217 (based on the last census). <b>A.</b> PB advised that the Infant School is unable to include the Pre-School pupil numbers for the purpose of the Infant School funding; she also advised that the Pre-School Finance Manager claims the Pre-School funding separately through the Early Years personnel (based on the number of children that are taken into the Pre-School) and not via the census figure that the Infant School reports.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                   |
| 9. | <p><b>Consider LA Benchmarking data</b></p> <p>PB advised that she has the LA Benchmarking Data in the form of a spreadsheet which can be populated and which she will circulate to everyone after the meeting; she then advised a number of points based on the various criteria that are used to compare the school's costs with other schools, these points being summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Pay as a percentage of Total Expenditure - typically over 70% of schools' expenditure is on Staff Pay and anything over 80% is considered high; the school's percentage was 75%, so that the school can be regarded as being in the middle of the range</li> <li>the Average Teacher Cost for the school was £50,236, this being below the county average of £59,458</li> <li>the school's Average Class Size was exactly the same as the county average</li> <li>the school's Spend per Pupil for Non-Pay Expenditure was higher than the county average at £1,975, the county average being £1,691</li> <li>the school's Pupil to Teacher ratio is 16 to 3, the county average being 19 to 9</li> <li>the school's Staffing as a Percentage of Total Income was 73.9%, the county average being 75.8%</li> </ul> <p>PB also advised that if the school is compared with other schools that Merton Infant knows, the following is found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Admin staff costs are more expensive than other schools, but not by a very large amount</li> <li>the LSA staff costs are more expensive than other schools, but not by a very large amount</li> <li>she is considering how best to present the Government Benchmarking data; she will prepare a suitable format for this data and circulate it to everyone after the meeting</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>Q.</b> GD asked if expenditure on resources could be broken down. <b>A.</b> PB advised that expenditure on resources per pupil breaks down into expenditure on catering, ICT, estate management, business administration, energy and curriculum supplies; the combined expenditure on these areas is divided by the number of pupils to produce the expenditure on resources per pupil figure. She believes that there are probably areas where expenditure can be reduced slightly.</p> | <p><b>PB</b></p> <p><b>PB</b></p> |

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| 10. | <b>Review Staff Absence</b><br>The GB discussed staff absence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |       |
| 11. | <b>Approve completed SFVS return for submission to LA by 31<sup>st</sup> March</b><br>Approved.<br><b>Agreed that:</b><br>The Clerk will submit the SFVS return by 31 <sup>st</sup> March. <b>ACTION.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Clerk |
| 12. | <b>Presentation by Maths Curriculum Manager</b><br>LR gave a presentation on the teaching of Maths.<br><br>GD thanked LR for her presentation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |       |
| 13. | <b>Receive Headteacher Written Report</b><br>LJ advised some information regarding her HT Report, the main points being summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the percentages that have been calculated for previous reports were calculated for the whole school, including the Pre-School; she has therefore taken those figures out of the groups for SEND, EHCP, Current FSM, Disadvantaged, Service and PP children; it can therefore be seen that the percentage figures are significantly higher than the national average figures for 2024; she has retained the whole school numbers for the Ethnic Minority and EAL groups, as in the Arbor system the overall percentages are included</li> <li>there has been quite a lot of staff training, especially in Maths</li> <li>there has been one suspension this term; all relevant paperwork has been completed, with either the agencies or the parents supporting the school</li> <li>regarding Attendance data, overall attendance is currently 95%, this being very good and the desired level, with the Pre-School children having been included in this figure</li> <li>there were 17 PA (Persistent Absence) children, being 10% of the cohort and not including Pre-School children; the national level of PA is 16%</li> <li>the SEND and EHCP children are the weakest groups for attendance</li> <li>Attendance is on track at 94% for the PP and Current FSM groups</li> <li>there has been a thorough handover of attendance-related documentation and procedures from Juliet Stroud, the Attendance Manager and Senior Admin Officer who is retiring</li> <li>the attendance of all the various groups of children has surpassed that for the same time period last year</li> <li>she is happy with the progress made with regard to the school improvement priorities</li> <li>she has prepared an OFSTED staff and a governor preparation information sheet and will email the sheet to all governors</li> <li>Pupil Progress Meetings are being held next week with any governors interested in attending any of the meetings being most welcome to do so; the dates of the meetings are Y1 25<sup>th</sup> March, Y2 26<sup>th</sup> March and YR 27<sup>th</sup> March, with all meetings starting at 3.00 pm and it being possible for governors to join the meetings on 'Teams' if they wish</li> <li>Special Relative Day is being held on 28<sup>th</sup> March</li> <li>regarding the Parent Questionnaire, 2 of these were returned after the cut-off date for her analysis; all the questionnaires returned were positive</li> <li>regarding 18% of parents being unsure regarding question 10 ("The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour"), she wrote the paragraph, explaining how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, at the end of the questionnaire to address this</li> <li>the Vision for Inclusion document is continually being reviewed; she now attends the SENCO circles and updates and believes that the document will continue to be reviewed as the school develops its practices and procedures; the document makes staff realise what tools are available and how they can problem-solve themselves before they seek help from an agency or a SENCO</li> </ul> |       |
| 14. | <b>Discuss Governor Training</b><br>GD advised that the Clerk had booked the WGBT (Whole Governing Body Training) for Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May at 6.00 pm at the school.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |       |
| 15. | <b>Discuss reports from Governor Visits</b><br>There was nothing to discuss regarding this item.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |       |
| 16. | <b>Approve policies according to review schedule – Curriculum, Assessment, Collective Worship, SEN Information Report, SEND</b><br>Approved subject to LJ making a slight amendment to the SEND policy. <b>ACTION.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | LJ    |
| 17. | <b>Discuss report from Leadership and Learning Partner (LLP)</b><br>Discussed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |       |
| 18. | <b>Discuss GB Membership</b><br>The GB discussed GB membership.<br><b>Q.</b> LJ asked what the procedure is for finding a replacement LA Governor. <b>A.</b> The Clerk advised that                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |       |

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|            | he will check on the HGS (Hampshire Governor Services) website as to what the current procedure is, but in summary, unless the procedure has changed, he believes that he will need to contact the local councillor and ask them for a nomination. When he has checked the current procedure, he will start that procedure off and report back at the next FGB meeting. <b>ACTION.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Clerk</b> |
| <b>19.</b> | <b>Consider 'Internal Audit Findings for Schools Autumn 2024' document</b><br>LJ advised that the normal procedure is for the audit team to audit a number of schools and then produce a report based on those audits; she and PB then have a look at the report with a view to identifying what areas the audit team had been looking at and how Merton Infant compares with the audit findings; she has not gone through the 2024 audit findings document because of other pressing school issues.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |              |
| <b>20.</b> | <b>Safeguarding</b><br>LJ advised a number of points regarding Safeguarding, as summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• her HT Report contains the relevant contextual data for Safeguarding</li> <li>• the school's safeguarding practice and procedures are effective, as confirmed by the LLP on the LLP visit; many of the children are monitored and the specific plans that are in place are documented in her Report</li> <li>• LR will be undertaking Safer Recruitment training</li> <li>• the policies and safeguarding training are up to date</li> <li>• regarding referral forms, the time limits of when schools are being notified are being looked at; the action arising out of a referral is also being looked at; work is being carried out at county level to improve the process, and the school is doing everything that it can do</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |
| <b>21.</b> | <b>Correspondence</b><br>None.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |              |
| <b>22.</b> | <b>Any Other Business</b><br><b>Q.</b> GD asked when the next Monitoring Day is. <b>A.</b> LJ advised that the next Monitoring Day is on 21 <sup>st</sup> May.<br><b><u>EMTAS Diamond EAL Excellence Award</u></b><br>LR advised a number of points of information, as summarised below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school has not yet been informed of the date when the EMTAS Diamond EAL Excellence Award revalidation process is to be carried out; at the revalidation meeting, the school will be asked about the various action points, and she has asked LD as the EAL Governor to join the meeting</li> <li>• GD would be more than welcome to attend the revalidation meeting, so that she can see what revalidation looks like; LJ will also be attending the meeting</li> <li>• the intention had been to hold the revalidation meeting around the end of May or the beginning of June</li> <li>• she will communicate the date of the revalidation meeting to GD when the date is known</li> </ul> <p>LR also advised that the Special Relative Day is being held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June at 2.30 pm.</p> <p>GD advised that as well as trying to attend the revalidation meeting, depending on which day of the week the meeting is held on, she will also try to attend the first Special Relative Day on 28<sup>th</sup> March, and will attend the Pupil Progress Meeting on Tuesday.</p> <p>LR advised GD that the Y1 children are holding an Easter Play Dress Rehearsal on 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 9.00 am; the Easter Play will also be held at 2.30 pm for the Y1 parents only.</p> |              |
| <b>23.</b> | <b>Date of next FGB Meeting</b> - Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 6.00 pm in person at the school.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |              |

**The meeting closed at 7.29 pm.**

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair Date \_\_\_\_\_