

MERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held online on Monday 25th November 2024

MINUTES

Present Board Members:			Attended:
	Larissa James	Headteacher	Y
	Lee-Ann Dirienzo		Y
	Carly Jones		Y
	Jan Beard		Y
	Gaye Dove	Chair	Y
	Rachel Hill	Vice Chair	Y
	Janel Richards		Y
	Sajish Tom		N
Also in attendance as non-governors:	Laura Relf	Acting Deputy Headteacher	Y
	Paula Bennett	School Business Manager	Y
	Kerry Raynsford	GB Member applicant	Y
	Mark Livesey	Clerk	Y

The meeting started at 6.00 pm.

		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence Apologies: ST. GD advised that she hoped that JR will be able to join the meeting later.	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interest Declarations: None	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2024 Agreed as a true record.	
4.	Matters Arising 141024_4_1 Include an item in the agenda for the November FGB meeting to discuss amending the Instrument of Government (Clerk): the item was included in this agenda. Completed & closed. 141024_12_1 Circulate a new version of the Managing Staff Sickness policy (LJ): carried forward to allow LJ time to circulate the new version of the policy. ACTION C/F. 141024_12_2 Amend sub-section 4.3 of the Staff Acceptable Use of IT policy (LJ): carried forward to allow LJ time to complete the amendment to the policy. ACTION C/F. 141024_13 Include election of Vice Chair in the agenda for the November FGB meeting (Clerk): Completed & closed. 141024_21 Produce a Calendar of Events, that governors would be welcome to attend, and circulate it to GB members (JB): Completed & closed. 141024_23 Add a statement to the FGB Terms of Reference, at the top of the document, to document that the GB has no committees and that by default the GB brings back to itself all powers, and all responsibility for those powers, previously delegated to the Resources and Curriculum committees which no longer exist (LJ): Completed & closed.	LJ LJ
5.	Propose amended Budget Plan (input on SAP by 30th November) PB talked the GB through the amended Budget Plan, the main points of which are summarised below: Expenditure - O Budget (Main Budget) - regarding Staffing Costs, the teachers' and support staff salary increases have already been built into the planning tool; there has been a saving on teacher costs since the budget was originally set, as some teachers have left the school and not been replaced - regarding electricity costs, she does not currently believe that the school will spend £11,000 on electricity; although she does not believe that the actual figure will be very different from	

	the budget figure, she has not amended the budget figure as the billing procedure operated by Hampshire is slightly unusual - regarding GL code 4477, on the Catering Equipment line, although there was no figure in the original budget, the budget figure is now £4,000 which she has entered into the budget in case the school needs to purchase or replace any catering equipment; any of this amount that is unspent at the end of the financial year will be reflected in the bottom line figure at that point and will then be carried over into the next financial year so that there is a 'pot' of money that can be drawn on if some catering equipment needs replacing - there has been a change in coding and in costings for the catering company, as advised during the last meeting; the greatest savings have been made, regarding the revised budget, on lines 4663 and 4665 (being Cost of Meals Provided, and Catering, respectively) - regarding the Clothing and Uniforms line, expenditure was increased by £700 for school PE t-shirts and staff hoodies; the income for the t-shirts has been received as the t-shirts were sold to the parents at a profit - under GL code 4879 (ICT Services), £2,900 was predicted in the original budget, although this figure is now zero as the £2,900 has been moved to GL code 5039 - regarding Telephone Equipment under GL code 5072, this relates to installation at the Pre-School and taking over their 'phone system; the school also purchased a new cordless phone, located in the Nurture Room, the phone being used to take some conference calls for Sarah Bird, ELSA, that works in the room on her own - expenditure on the Day Activities line has been increased slightly, due to a) an unplanned Travelling Crib experience at St. Bedes' Church last week, and b) within the same coding, the school having been given a Discretionary Grant by the government; regarding b), the school has to use the grant to help families that are struggling with the cost of food, gas, or electricity, and if the Grant is unused it has to be repaid; the plan for the Grant is to look at the PP (Pupil Premium) children, divide the Grant between them and issue them with vouchers just before the Christmas break Income – O Budget (Main Budget) - regarding the Meals, Refreshments and Catering A7 line, she has reduced this to £250 as, since the school has moved to the new catering company, staff have not been taking as many lunches, although this figure may well increase in the future - she has left the figure for Fundraising as £9,500 and believes that the amount received will be as much as this - regarding the 'HCC Schools – High Needs Top Up Funding' line, she had revised the budget figure to reflect the current situation, although she has now received another approved EHCP from LJ which will probably add approx. £2,000 to the income on this line and therefore this line could potentially increase - the Additional Allocations line represents all the grants received from the government to cover the increase in expenditure resulting from the teachers' pay rises Summary - when the budget was originally set there was going to be a deficit of £224,512; the deficit figure in the revised budget is £141,362, and from this the following can be deducted: a) £11,979 that the Pre-School will be carrying over, and b) £76,469 that the Y budget will be carrying over, with the result that the total deficit for the end of this year will be approx. £53,000 - the total deficit at the end of this financial year could be less than £53,000 if the school receives more EHCPs, if the Pre-School receives more children - there is likely to be some savings on staff costs - it is not completely beyond the bounds of possibility that the end of year deficit could be slightly below £50,000; if this happens there is a chance that the school will not be criticised for its management of the budget by the LA Y Budget - the Y budget does not change very much and essentially consists of the Breakfast and After School clubs; the revised budget is not very different from the original budget - originally £76,635 was going to be carried over; £76,469 will be carried over in the revised budget - she has not amended any of the income figures for the Breakfast or After School clubs, although she is hoping that the incomes from those 2 clubs will reach the income figures shown - expenditure on Educational Supplies, Stationery and Materials has been reduced by £200; there is not usually very much expenditure on this line, although some money has been spent on the Breakfast Club with a view to increasing the activity options for the children who attend the club	
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D Budget (the Pre-School Budget)

Introduction

- she has worked with Kelly on the Pre-School budget
- there have been changes; when the budget was originally set in April, the Pre-School thought that it would be carrying forward £3,910

Expenditure – D Budget

- the biggest savings that can be made are always staffing costs; the Pre-School Manager left in July and Charmaine has been recruited as the new Pre-School Manager
- the Pre-School was without a Deputy Manager for approx. 2 months; although a Deputy Manager has now been recruited, she works slightly fewer hours than the previous Deputy, giving rise to a saving on staff costs
- the Pre-School is effectively one member of staff down, with the school having been unsuccessful in recruiting a replacement so far although a start date of 1st January 2025 for a replacement has been included in the costings
- Kelly has adjusted some of the costings, although these changes have not been very large
- the £290 under GL Code 3300 was for DBS charges
- Kelly has increased the Catering Provisions by approx. £50
- software costing £215 has been added as an expenditure on the Schools Curriculum Software line for the teaching of Phonics

Income – D Budget

- the grants received from Hampshire under GL code 7697 (HCC Schools – Additional Allocations line) have been reduced
- the income received on the General Fees and Charges line has increased because there are more paying parents; Kelly has advised that the actual income received on this line could also increase as she has not counted in a lot of the increased income likely to be received in January
- this budget is now carrying forward £11,979, which helps the budget deficit for the O budget outcome

PB invited questions on the budget; there were no questions.

LJ, on behalf of the GB, thanked PB for her major achievement of reducing the budget deficit by a large amount.

The figures for the revised O Budget (Main Budget) were as follows:

Total Expenditure: £1,439,228 (One Million, Four Hundred and Thirty Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty Eight Pounds)

Total Income: £1,291,357 (One Million, Two Hundred and Ninety One Thousand, Three Hundred and Fifty Seven Pounds)

In Year Surplus/(Deficit): (£147,871 deficit) (One Hundred and Forty Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy One Pounds deficit)

Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: £6,509 (Six Thousand, Five Hundred and Nine Pounds)

Cumulative Surplus/Deficit C/Fwd: (£141,362 deficit) (One Hundred and Forty One Thousand, Three Hundred and Sixty Two Pounds deficit)

The figures for the revised Y Budget were as follows:

Total Expenditure: £33,843 (Thirty Three Thousand, Eight Hundred and Forty Three Pounds)

Total Income: £43,053 (Forty Three Thousand and Fifty Three Pounds)

In Year Surplus/(Deficit): £9,210 (Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Ten Pounds)

Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: £67,259 (Sixty Seven Thousand, Two Hundred and Fifty Nine Pounds)

Cumulative Surplus/Deficit C/Fwd: £76,469 (Seventy Six Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixty Nine Pounds)

The figures for the revised D Budget (Pre-School Budget) were as follows:

Total Expenditure: £133,251 (One Hundred and Thirty Three Thousand, Two Hundred and Fifty One Pounds)

Total Income: £145,230 (One Hundred and Forty Five Thousand, Two Hundred and Thirty Pounds)

In Year Surplus/(Deficit): £11,979 (Eleven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy Nine Pounds)

	Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward: £0 (Nil Pounds) Cumulative Surplus/Deficit C/Fwd: £11,979 (Eleven Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy Nine Pounds) It was then agreed to approve the O, Y and D budgets, based on the figures documented above; it was also arranged that GD will come into school within the next week or so to sign the budget documents. <i>PB left the meeting at 6.37 pm.</i>	
6.	Monitor spending of Devolved Capital allocation PB talked the GB through spending of Devolved Capital, the main points being summarised below: • during the last meeting it had been advised that there had been some capital expenditure; this related to replacement of the flooring in the room at the back of the hall • the capital expenditure also related to the fencing, outside the Pre-School, which fences off the Pre-School entrance from the car park to make the Pre-School more secure; the school can reclaim the capital expenditure from the Pre-School at the end of this financial year if the Pre-School makes a profit, although this will not affect the 'across the board' bottom line for the school as a whole • there is currently a zero balance in the Capital Budget	
7.	Review Staff Absence The GB discussed staff absence.	
8.	Presentation from English Curriculum Manager Carly Jones gave a presentation on the teaching of English. Q. LD asked what the school is doing with regard to the 4 children who are unable to access the curriculum. A. CJ advised that the 4 children are in the Discovery Room for 3 days per week and are making good progress; Sumita is looking at their sentences, and her resources are following the resources that are now being used across the school. LJ advised that the strategy has been more about slowing down the learning process rather than focusing on the genres; the children will learn to write leaflets and recounts over time, but if the school has not invested in the basic skills, the children will not get to where they need to be. GD thanked CJ for her presentation.	
9.	Discuss reports from Governor Visits and Governor Monitoring Day GD advised that she had produced a report for the Remembrance Assembly which went very well, with all the staff having attended; she advised that not only were the children well behaved but also they appeared to be genuinely involved and understood its importance. Q. LR advised that she had heard that the Pre-School children disturbed quite a lot of KS1 and YR children, and asked if this is correct. A. LJ advised that although she had not thought that the Pre-School children were badly behaved, it may be worth considering, in future, if the Pre-School children should not attend the Remembrance Assembly, which is quite poignant, and attend other events at the infant school instead.	
10.	Safeguarding LJ advised several points, as follows: • in her written HT Report the children are grouped by category according to where they are across the school • although there are not many children that have been identified as Safeguarding concerns, the school is seeking additional support, for those families that need it, with various levels within Children's Services • the safeguarding from the Pre-School will hopefully reassure some parents, and also some governors, about the entrance of the Pre-School opening on to the car park • there are no further safeguarding concerns other than those documented in her HT Report	
11.	Receive Headteacher Written Report LJ talked the GB through her written report, the main points of which are summarised below: • she believes that it is important to signify the high numbers of EAL children (41%) that the school currently has, as compared with the national figure of 20% • when the children's progress in their books is examined, it can be seen that their progress is strong evidence for the school being outstanding in Quality of Education for that group of children • overall attendance is 95% • in the past, FSM children have been more of a concern attendance-wise, although this situation is improving if PA (Persistent Absence) children are taken out of the figures; the PA children are 15.6%, with the national figures for the last academic year being 18%, so the school is doing well in reducing this figure • she has attendance meetings with parents starting this week	

	• LR has started working with another group of teachers for teaching Mastery in Maths; the link tutor visited the school last week, and LR went to their school this week and sent a report out (the report was shared from LJ's computer via 'Teams'); she will arrange for the report to be circulated to the governors • the Mastery for Maths group report what they have seen on a particular day and set targets; the report is very complimentary with the group having been pleased to see all the concrete resources being used and the children enjoying their Maths, and she believes that it was a very good start for the group • although the school is successful at producing good outcomes for Expected and GDS children, it is currently unable to move Working Towards children into the Expected window and therefore hopefully the Mastery in Maths project will focus on those children and develop their skills • the Pre-School is developing their progression of knowledge and skills per learning area and linking to the school's version per subject • the Pre-School have made some simple adaptations such as creating a Learning Library of books and some specific bags that will help the children when they are at home • more speech and language referrals have been carried out with the two year old children entering the Pre-School during the last half of term • the infant school is doing its best to recruit staff for the Pre-School, without any success so far; it will re-advertise, just for the morning rather than for the whole day, to see if this attracts applicants • if there is a situation where the Pre-School does not have sufficient members of staff, the Pre-School will have to close for specific groups of children, commencing with the two year olds as they are the group that require the higher ratio of staff to children, and there are not so many of these children, leaving the staff to concentrate on the three to four year olds • finances appear to be good with a surplus of £11,979 and with an EHCP pending for one child • she believes that the Pre-School team feel more supported, considering that there have been staff changes with a new manager and a new deputy manager; the team appear to work well and appear to be engaging with the infant school, attending assemblies, library visits and working on the curriculum with the key MIS curriculum managers; LR advised a couple of points as follows: • Jenny Rogers, the author of the Mastery in Maths report, had advised that the group has had a very good starting point for the year and that the object is for the children to have a really deep understanding of Maths; the group carried out a learning walk together, and Jenny had said that the school is in a really good position and that Mastery in Maths has been shown to improve outcomes; she believes that the school will start to show a bit of an improvement in outcomes next year and ideally a real improvement in outcomes in 2 years • she also works with the Pre-School and any recommendations that she has made to Charmaine (Pre-School Manager) have been put into practice LJ advised that LR has been working with other pre-schools to see what other settings do, as that opportunity has not presented itself before; she then consults with Merton Pre-School as to whether they believe that the ideas that she has brought back are likely to work or not.	
12.	Approve policies according to review schedule: Staff Pay, Performance Management, Capability, Home School Agreement, Whistleblowing, Managing Sickness Absence, Attendance, GDPR, Internet General LJ advised that GD had alerted her to a couple of typos involving dates and a footer that had not been updated; she will correct these. ACTION Staff Pay LJ advised that she had retained the areas of the policy where the school could have localised the policy; these areas were highlighted in yellow. She invited questions on the policy; there were no questions. Home School Agreement LR advised that on the ninth bullet point, "parents' evenings" should be changed to "parent consultations". LJ advised that she will amend the policy. ACTION Attendance LJ advised that she has a few updates to make to the Attendance policy since sending this version, these updates having been mainly contributed by Juliet and relate to register closure times and incentives; she will add these updates to the policy. LR advised that she had noticed that on page 3 the 'phone number was incorrect, i.e. '02156'	LJ LJ

	appears instead of '01256' opposite LJ's and GD's names and also opposite Juliet's name. LJ advised that she will include these changes when she adds the updates just discussed. ACTION It was then agreed to approve the Staff Pay, Performance Management, Capability, Home School Agreement, Whistleblowing, Managing Sickness Absence, Attendance, GDPR and Internet policies subject to LJ correcting typos and out of date footer, and amending the Attendance and Home School Agreement policies as just discussed. It was also agreed that when LJ has amended the Attendance and Home School Agreement policies, she will send them to LR and JB, so that JB can upload them to the school website. ACTION	LJ LJ
13.	Elect Vice Chair There were no nominations for the office of Vice Chair and it was therefore agreed to postpone this item until the next meeting. GD expressed her thanks to RH for her input, help and support as Vice Chair.	
14.	Discuss GB Membership LJ advised that she has received a governor application from the parent of a child at the school; she will forward the application to GD and the Clerk. It was agreed that GD will contact the potential new governor regarding the possibility of her being appointed as a Co-opted Governor. ACTION Q. LJ asked KR if she would be able to put up a governor vacancy flyer on the noticeboard at her employer's offices. A. KR advised that she did not know whether she would be permitted to put up a flyer, although she will ask her employer if this would be possible; when she has received a response from her employer she will report back to the GB. ACTION	GD KR
15.	Appoint Mrs Kerry Raynsford as a Co-opted Governor, her term of office to commence from today It was agreed to appoint Kerry Raynsford as a Co-opted Governor, her term of office to commence from today.	
16.	Discuss the possibility of reconstituting the GB; specifically, the possibility of changing the Instrument of Government to reduce the number of Parent Governors from 3 to 2, and to increase the number of Co-opted Governors from 6 to 7, with the total number of governors remaining at 12 The Clerk advised that because it is sometimes difficult to recruit Parent Governors, the GB had previously discussed the possibility of reducing the number of Parent Governor posts on the GB from 3 to 2; if the number of Parent Governor posts were reduced by one, the number of Co-opted Governor posts could be increased by one, from 6 to 7, which might make it easier to recruit new governors as it appears to be slightly easier to recruit a Co-opted Governor than to recruit a Parent Governor. This change would be a change to the constitution of the GB, that would leave the total number of governor posts at 12; the Instrument of Government would have to be altered by Governor Services. He then advised that if the GB wished to change its constitution as just described, he will need to send Governor Services a copy of the agenda for this meeting, together with a copy of the minutes of this meeting as agreed by email, and ask Governor Services to make this change to the constitution and alter the Instrument of Government to reflect the change. It was then agreed that the GB would like to change its constitution. It was also agreed that the Clerk will send the required agenda and minutes to Governor Services and ask them to make this change and alter the Instrument of Government. ACTION	Clerk
17.	Monitor any parental complaints <i>JR joined the meeting at 7.27 pm.</i> The GB discussed the matter of having this standing agenda item, following which it was agreed that there will not be a standing agenda item for complaints in future agendas.	
18.	Discuss Governor Training, including WGBT if necessary The GB discussed ideas for WGBT. Agreed: that the Clerk will 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 ACTION	Clerk
19.	Correspondence LJ advised that the IDSR (Inspection Data School Report) has been published; she talked the GB	

	through the document, the main points being summarised below: - the first page covers school characteristics, with the first page containing trend analysis for 2022, 2023 and 2024; the school SEND support is above average and has been for 2 years; EHCPs are well above average, and FSMs are just above average - the School Location Deprivation is above average - the Report shows the characteristics of year groups, i.e. number of pupils on roll, number of pupils taking FSMs and the number of EAL pupils - the Report also shows ethnicity, the largest ethnic groups being Indian, African, Any Other White Background, and White - the Report breaks down SEND characteristics into the Primary Need for both SEND Support and EHCPs; for SEND Support, the highest category of Speech and Language Communication Needs was 15 out of the 36 children that receive this support; for EHCPs, Speech and Language Communication Needs is the highest category, closely followed by Social and Emotional Mental Health - the Report discusses staffing and covers how benchmarking is carried out against other schools with a similar context; Per Pupil Spending was in the lowest 20% of similar schools for teaching staff - in 2022/23 the Absence Rate was 6.6%; in 2023/24 the Absence Rate was 5.9% - in 2022/23 the Persistent Absence figure was 18.7%, and dropped to 17.2% in 2023/24, indicating the efforts made by the school in reducing the PA rate - under Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions, there is no data for 2023/24, i.e. nothing to report - under Outcomes, the Report advises that none of the attainment and progress measures were statistically significant, i.e. the school is in line with the other schools - she may show the Report on the projection screen at the next MC meeting	
20.	Any Other Business LD advised that on every morning at 8.00 am from the 9th Dec to 13th Dec the school is holding its first 'Breakfast with Santa' and advised that it would be nice if a few governors could attend. LJ asked JR how her talk to the children had gone. JR advised that her talk had gone quite well, with quite a few questions being asked. She also advised that if in future years she was no longer serving as a governor, if the school would be interested in the children receiving a talk from someone in a military unit, she would be happy to reach out to her unit to find out if anyone would be prepared to give such a talk. LJ thanked JR for giving the talk and advised that the GB would be grateful if she could look into the possibility of someone from her unit giving a talk to the children in future.	
21.	Date of next FGB Meeting – Monday 10th February 2025 at 6.00 pm in person at the school.	

The meeting closed at 7.48 pm.

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

Signed _____ Chair Date _____

Post Meeting Note:

This Post Meeting Note has been added to the minutes of the 25th November 2024 FGB meeting to record the date for the change to the GB Constitution, as discussed under item 16 during the meeting. The date for the reconstitution to take effect will be 14th April 2025