

MERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held online on Monday 29th January 2024 MINUTES

Present:	Lee-ann Dirienzo		
	Larissa James	Headteacher	
	Carly Jones		
	Jan Beard		
	Gaye Dove	Chair	
	Rachel Hill	Vice Chair	
	Janel Richards		
In attendance:	Sophie Durbajlo	Deputy Headteacher	
	Paula Bennett	School Business Manager	
	Mark Livesey	Clerk	

The meeting started at 6.30 pm.

		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence Apologies: ST	
2.	Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interest Declarations: None	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2023 (attached) and of the 20th November 2023 Extraordinary FGB meeting (attached) Agreed as true records of these meetings.	
4.	Matters Arising 20th November 2023 Extraordinary FGB Meeting There were no matters arising. 4th December 2023 FGB Meeting 041223_4_1 Produce a skeleton School Improvement Plan for review/approval in principle at the July 2024 FGB meeting, with a view to approving the final SIP at the October 2024 FGB meeting (LJ): completed & closed. 161023_20 Circulate the calendar of events by the end of the week (LJ): completed & closed. 041223_4_2 Remind JR to produce a concise pen portrait (self-portrait) (LS/GD): completed & closed. 161023_24 Submit a concise pen portrait (self-portrait) for inclusion in the Governor Information section of the school website (JR): JB advised that she had not received a pen portrait from JR, or from ST. JR advised that she had produced a pen portrait and photo for GovernorHub last year, and if necessary will do the same for the website. It was agreed that JB will try to copy over JR's pen portrait from GovernorHub and place it on the website and will also let JR know if this doesn't work. ACTION. 041223_8 Send JB a photo and a concise couple of lines of text for the Newsletter (GD): completed & closed. 041223_9 Change the National Deprivation Factor in the Equalities and Inclusion policy figure to 0.2 (LJ): completed & closed. 041223_11_1 Give some thought to this question after the meeting, with a view to returning to this issue at a later date and eventually making a final decision in the future as to whether or not to have a separate Governor Action Plan Tracker, of some kind, or not (ALL): it had been decided to have a separate Governor Action Plan tracker. Closed. 041223_11_2 Experiment with some documentation, with regard to a Governor Action Plan Tracker of some kind, and see what she comes up with and then circulate the document for	JB

	comment (RH): RH had updated and circulated the Governor Action Plan Tracker, Completed & closed. 041223_12_1 Remind JR of the need to register for New Governor Induction training (GD): GD advised that she had circulated the most recent dates for New Governor Induction Training, and asked JR if she had received the dates. JR advised that she will check her email and then respond, via email, to GD. Original action closed. ACTION for JR to confirm to GD that she has received GD's email containing New Governor Induction Training course dates. 041223_12_2 Update the Matrix of Training and send it to GD (LS): although no Matrix had been received, LS had resigned. Closed. 041223_12_3 Check to see what Safer Recruitment courses are currently available (GD): GD advised that some course dates had become available this week and that hopefully further course dates will become available online, although she has not managed to obtain a place on a course as all the courses are fully booked. She will continue trying to book a place on a course. ACTION C/F. LD advised that she is booked on a Safer Recruitment workshop on 22nd March at 9.30 am. 041223_12_4 Book 'Early Years' as the topic for WGBT for the Spring Term (LS): GD advised that the WGBT is booked for 1st May 2024. Completed & closed. 041223_15_1 Circulate a separate dedicated email attaching the updated complete list of meeting dates for the current academic year (Clerk): the Clerk advised that he had circulated a dedicated email attaching the updated list of meeting dates. As there was some uncertainty as to whether everyone had received his email, he advised that he would repeat this action and also make the meeting dates available via Noticeboard. ACTION C/F.	JR GD Clerk
5.	Monitor spending against Budget Plan PB talked the GB through spending against the Budget Plan, the main points being summarised below: O and Y Budgets - Introduction - at this time of year, the Budgets are constantly monitored to form a picture of how it is likely to look at the end of the financial year Y Budget - it appears that the income from the Breakfast Club is unlikely to reach the figure anticipated in the revised budget; there is a difficulty in that now the school is processing the online payments and the childcare vouchers, many parents pay a relatively large sum of money for a number of childcare vouchers and then take the relevant number of vouchers from this when they send their children to the After School Club; this makes it harder to predict what the End of Year figure is likely to be, although she will continue to work with JB with a view to making a best guess as to the average number of children that are attending the clubs at present - although she believes that the number attending the Breakfast Club has increased since Covid, she also believes that there are fewer attending than there were before Covid O Budget - Expenditure - she has increased the Supply Teacher Agency line to £39,500, being an increase of £500, as sometimes supply teachers attend INSET days on days when they were not due to be working - it is difficult to predict end of year figures for 'Non System – Gas' and 'Non System – Electricity', e.g. for the latter, £13,500 was originally budgeted for although only £7,719 has been spent so far; she has not adjusted the figure yet although she believes that the total expenditure for the year will be less, the difficulty being that the billing goes through HCC (Hampshire County Council) which can involve some delay - the 'Other premises related costs' line has been increased as the cost of play equipment inspections has increased significantly from last year - expenditure on the 'Transport to School Activities' line had not originally been budgeted for as it was unexpected, being the cost of providing a taxi for a child to travel to an alternative provision O Budget – Income - she has increased the Top Up Funding because of EHCPs and additional funding received O Budget – General - when the budget was originally set, it appeared that the school would finish the year approximately £67,000 in deficit; at budget revision it was possible to reduce the projected end of year deficit by £24,886 to a deficit of £42,000, and with some of the adjustments she has the end of financial year deficit may be approximately £37,000 O and Y Budgets – General - Hampshire look at both the O and Y budgets together and as the Y budget is not in deficit it will cancel out the deficit in the O budget resulting in the school budget ending the year with a small but positive surplus overall	

	for the next financial year, if it looks as though the school will end the financial year with a deficit; Hampshire is therefore likely to track the school's finances fairly closely; she will focus on keeping the O budget deficit as low as possible between now and the end of March Q. LJ asked whether the GB feels that it would be worth increasing the prices of both the Breakfast Club and the After School Club, as she believes that the parents are receiving very good value for money with the current prices. A. Following discussion of the benefits; it was then agreed to increase the price of the Breakfast Club from £3 to £4, and the price of the After School Club to £9 (the previous After School Club prices having been £8 for a booked session and £10 for an ad hoc session), from April 2024. ACTION: JB to inform current parents of price increases	JB
6.	Monitor spending and consider forthcoming plans for Devolved Capital allocation PB updated the GB on spending and forthcoming plans for the Devolved Capital allocation, the main points being summarised below: - there is £27 remaining in Devolved Capital - this year the Devolved Capital has been spent on replacing the flooring in the remaining classrooms and upgrading the lights to LEDs - the school will receive another allocation of Devolved Capital in April; the allocation will be based on pupil numbers and will therefore probably be a little less than the allocations received in recent years and is likely to be in the region of £5,000 Q. A governor asked whether, should there prove to be a problem with the concrete outside SD's room, the cost of any repair work would have to come out of Devolved Capital. A. PB advised that the cost would have to come out of Devolved Capital although she is very keen to resist spending any of the Devolved Capital on concrete repairs to the area concerned as the sinking concrete was caused by faulty building work.	
7.	Agree decision regarding subscription to Governor Services AST (Advice, Support & Training) package, for Financial Year 2024/25 (as per HGS email dated 5th January 2024); if not continuing, Clerk to inform HGS by 9th February Agreed: to continue with the Governor Services AST package	
8.	Agree decision regarding subscription to LA Clerking Service (i.e. whether to continue or not), as per HGS email dated 5th January 2024, and also (if continuing) agree contracted hours as documented in the Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return 2024/25 Regarding the Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return, which had been completed by the Clerk on the basis of 7 FGB meetings per year, being 6 half-termly FGB meetings plus a potentially much shorter FGB meeting in November to discuss and approve the Budget Revision, LJ advised that she recommends 6 FGB meetings per year as she believes that this would make the role of governor more attractive to a potential new governor than 7 FGB meetings per year. LJ advised that the Annual Task Planner could be revised, including the foci on each Governing Monitoring Days per term. Q. To enable the GB to discuss the Budget Revision in November, in good time for the budget figures to be approved and uploaded by the end of November deadline, the Clerk asked if it would be possible for the Autumn 2 FGB meeting, which in the recent past has always been held in December, to be brought forward to November, which would support holding 6 FGB meetings instead of 7 meetings for which the total Clerking Hours would be 66. A. LJ confirmed that this would be possible. LJ advised that there is a question of whether the presentations from curriculum managers can be given on a 2-year cycle; she also proposed that the subjects for which the GB does not receive a presentation should be the focus for Monitoring Day visits. Q. GD asked CJ and SD how they felt about having a 2-year cycle for curriculum manager presentations. A. Both advised that they thought that this was a good idea which would work well. Agreed that: - the GB will adjust its meetings to accommodate a 2-year cycle for curriculum manager presentations, an FGB meeting in November to review & agree the Budget Revision, and Governor Monitoring Day visits with a focus on subjects on which the GB does not receive presentations - the GB will continue with the subscription to the Clerking Service - there will be 6 FGB meetings per year - the Contracted Hours were agreed to be those necessary to support 6 FGB meetings per year, i.e. 66 hours - the Clerk will update the Clerking Service Contracted Hours Return 2024/25 to include 6	

	FGB meetings (instead of 7 meetings) and circulate it to everyone ACTION f) LJ will draft a replacement FGB Annual Task Planner, working with PB on the Resources aspects JR left the meeting at 7.14 pm.	Clerk LJ
9.	Agree date and time for School Business Manager (SBM) and a Governor to quality assure financial checks <i>Agreed that:</i> PB will check her diary and confirm by email to RH & GD that she is available for them to come into school on the afternoon of Monday 5th February to meet with her and quality assure the financial checks.	PB
10.	Approve SFVS Questionnaire for return by 31st March RH advised that she needs to book herself on a financial training course. GD advised a couple of points as follows: - she has concerns regarding questions 1 and 2 as she does not feel that she and RH have the necessary financial skills, although she is trying to book herself on to the finance course that HGS are currently running in order to increase her knowledge of the subject - unless there is a governor that believes that they have a good knowledge of, or useful experience of, finance, she believes that the best option would be to recruit a new governor who has a strong background in finance <i>Agreed that:</i> - the GB approves the SFVS Return, subject to RH and GD quality assuring the financial checks as already discussed under the previous agenda item - PB will give a presentation on school finance to the GB, on a date to be arranged, with a view to increasing the GB's financial knowledge while some governors are waiting for places on finance courses to become available ACTION - once RH and GD have met with PB to quality assure the financial checks, PB will scan in the signed SFVS Return and email it to the Clerk ACTION - the Clerk will submit the SFVS Return by 31st March ACTION PB left the meeting at 7.30 pm.	PB PB Clerk
11.	Presentation by Science Curriculum Manager, Carole Epstein Carole Epstein gave a presentation on Science. Q. LJ asked if the knowledge taught is the substantive knowledge. A. Carole answered in the affirmative.	
12.	Receive Headteacher Verbal Report LJ presented her verbal HT Report, the main points being summarised below: - the school has received some FFT training, FFT being the new assessment tool that the school has purchased - the Staff Survey has been completed with the majority of responses being Agree or Strongly Agree, with a few 'Disagrees' probably due to staff feeling unsafe at times because of the specific needs of a couple of children that attend the school at present - CJ and Laura Relf (LR) have commenced their leadership courses, with CJ undertaking the 'National Professional Qualification in Senior Leadership' and LR undertaking 'Making Headway' - the school has just purchased some leadership books; hopefully the middle managers and SLT will swap and review the books with a view to enhancing the school's SLT practice - the EFS (Education Financial Services) SLA charges have increased by 6.5% with effect from 1st April; therefore, for the next academic year the cost will be £2,555 and she recommends continuing with this SLA - the latest Special Relative Day was held last Friday which was attended well in each class. The School Librarian, Maria Hankova, has captured many positive comments from the visitors - the learning walks are showing consistently good teaching and learning across all the classes, with all children making the relevant progress - regarding Attendance, this is currently 94.2%, being slightly below the desired level of at least 95% due to the PA (Persistence Absence) children - the groups contributing the most to the lower than desired attendance are the SEND and FSM children, although attendance of all the various groups has increased since the same time last year, showing that the strategies employed to increase attendance are working - regarding attendance, the school held a half-termly meeting for 2 parents that the school had been very concerned about; there are also 2 cases where the school is working with	

	the legal intervention team - the plans for the new catering service are underway; there is a meeting on 7th February for all the companies interested in providing a service who can come into school to check that the kitchens have all the necessary equipment; there is a food tasting session on 17th April - all the necessary procedures regarding TUPE and pensions for staff have been completed - the DfE have produced a workload reduction task force and their initial recommendations have been printed for January 2024 and their final recommendations will be completed for March; there is an updated list of the types of jobs that teachers and leaders will not be expected to do - a year ago the school had considered awarding a Mental Health Welfare Day for staff, regarding the mental health agenda, and she is wondering whether this should be reconsidered; the Welfare would constitute a day's paid release from school; as she and SD would need to cover the relevant classes, the fairest way to do this would be to suggest that the Day will be their birthdays, and where a person's birthday falls during the holidays or on a weekend, they would take the Welfare Day on the Friday closest to their birthday LD advised that the Special Relative Day went very well, having been enjoyed by both parents and children. Q. RH asked if LJ's ideas regarding a Mental Health Welfare Day had been communicated to the staff for feedback. A. LJ advised that the idea had been raised with staff, although this was some time ago and may even have been before Covid, although all staff should be aware of it as it is on the Ofsted Spotlight evidence. Q. LD asked if the Welfare Day would apply to all staff. A. LJ advised that it would have to apply to all staff in order to make it fair for everyone. LJ then advised that the other option for a Welfare Day would be for members of staff to take their Day on an INSET day. There followed a discussion regarding the Welfare Day. LJ then encouraged the governors to think about the logistics of providing a Mental Health Welfare Day on staff members' birthdays, such as providing cover for the LSAs and any areas of uncertainty that occur to them; the logistics and any associated issues can then be discussed and fed back to the staff. ACTION	All
13.	Receive update on the Age Down process from the Headteacher LJ provided an update on the Age Down process, the main points being summarised below: - the Age Down process is going well; the letters for the Pre-School regarding TUPE and pensions are just about to be sent - as there have been no queries during the consultation phase, the process is going ahead as far as the school is aware	
14.	Discuss reports from / review Governor Visits RH advised that she believed that GD and LD had submitted reports on the Christmas performances and the Special Relatives Day. LJ advised that it is important that as soon as a governor has carried out a visit and submitted a visit report, the visit report is uploaded to GovernorHub; any queries on the visit or the visit report can then be discussed under this agenda item.	
15.	Review policies according to schedule LJ talked the GB through the policies to be reviewed, as follows: GDPR – although this policy was reviewed in Autumn 2, the version reviewed had been an LA / school version; since then the school's GDPR company, Judicium, has updated their version, and there is very little that the school can localise in this new version. Low Level Concern – although there is a MOPP version of this policy (which was reviewed in Autumn 2), she believes that the school's version is more detailed and that it came from The Key; she advised that the school's version includes everything it should do as documented in the MOPP. The version that was circulated mentioned KCSiE 2021 instead of KCSiE 2023, however all the bullet points have been updated according to the current KCSiE and are completely accurate. SD suggested adding a page, so that if a low level concern arises, the procedure is that she should be contacted in the absence of the Headteacher, if it is appropriate, or if not then it should be referred to the LADO; LJ advised that she can add a line to this effect. LJ also advised that regarding the forms that can be written on, as documented at the bottom of page 6, in the MOPP version of the policy the member of staff does not necessarily have to add their name as the procedure should be anonymous; she also advised that she will add a box for the outcome of the investigation, this box being missing ACTION	LJ

	• Parent Communication – SD had been concerned about social media on page 3; on page 18 there is an explanation by the legal department as to why schools should not respond to concerns raised by social media. From the point of view of work/life balance, parents should not have an automatic understanding that if they post something on Facebook, the school will deal with it straight away. She advised that if there is a posting about the school on social media, usually a member of staff will have alerted her to the existence of the posting and asked her if the post should be taken down. • Accessibility Plan – no one had any issues with this Plan • Emergency Evacuation Plan – no one had any issues with this Plan • Fire Safety Management Plan - SD had recommended that the Plan should explain that the school has fire marshals; she (LJ) has added this to Part 2 of the Plan • Health and Safety policy - she advised that some clarification had been added to the COSHH Assessor section on page 3 and that, although the format of the document had changed, all the other information from the previous version of the document is the same It was then agreed to approve all the above policies, subject to amendment of the Low Level Concern policy as just described.	
16.	Items for Governor Newsletter Although it was agreed that this item will no longer be a standing agenda item, it was also agreed that: • if a Governor undertakes a governor visit, for example to the school on the Special Relatives Day, they will write a short account of their visit for inclusion in the School Newsletter under “Governors’ Corner” • “Governors’ Corner” will be included in all issues of the School Newsletter	
17.	Safeguarding LJ talked the GB through Safeguarding, as summarised below: • there were zero racial incidents and zero suspensions • there are no off-rolled children • there are 2 children on reduced hours provision; one child will be moving to a special school after Half Term and the other will continue until the end of the academic year • there were zero incidents of bullying and prejudicial behaviour • there was one sexual harassment / violence incident although following analysis it was rated as a Green using Brook’s Sexual Behaviours Tool which are typical and developmentally appropriate and this rating was corroborated by the MASH team. Parents were notified and control measures have been implemented to avoid a recurrence. • there have been 4 TEAM TEACH physical interventions recorded on one child. Parents were informed and staff were offered de-briefing evaluations.	
18.	Discuss GB Membership There was a discussion regarding GB membership, with the following points being made: • more governors need to be recruited and those that have been recruited need to attend FGB meetings • many governors’ end dates occur in 2027 and therefore some forward planning would be beneficial as it cannot be assumed that all the governors affected will wish to put themselves forward for re-appointment	
19.	Review and agree any changes to the governor roles originally agreed at the July and October FGB meetings GD advised that according to her list, governor roles were currently allocated as follows: Safeguarding (including Prevent): RH Attendance: No-one at present (formerly LS) Safer Recruitment: RH Inclusion (EAL, SEN and Pupil Premium): LD Health and Safety: JB Achievement and Outcomes Governor: on a rota basis (GD if no one else is available) Training Link Governor / DTG: No-one at present (formerly LS) Forum Representative: GD Nominated Governor to liaise with the LADO regarding allegations against the HT: RH Mental Health: CJ GD also advised that committee memberships were currently as follows: HTPM Panel: GD, ST Pay Committee: RH, JR Agreed that going forward, the governor roles will be as follows, the key roles being denoted by an	

	asterisk: Safeguarding (including Prevent)*: RH Safer Recruitment*: LD Health and Safety: JB Training Link Governor / DTG: The Clerk Forum Representative: GD Nominated Governor to liaise with the LADO regarding allegations against the HT*: RH Mental Health: CJ <i>Also agreed that:</i> for any webinars attended by a governor, the governor concerned will create a folder in the school's document storage system (currently GovernorHub, soon to be the new Hampshire system) to store the course materials, including any Powerpoint presentations	
20.	Discuss Governor Training, including WGBT if necessary This had already been discussed.	
21.	Monitor any parental complaints None.	
22.	Review Governor Action Plan RH advised that she would like to check progress on a number of actions, one of these being Pupil Progress Meetings, the last one of which she had attended. The actions she was interested in were as follows: Friday 22/03/23 Thursday 04/07/23 <i>Agreed that:</i> - GD and RH will be recorded against the 22/03/23 and 04/07/23 actions respectively - CJ will produce a concise biography for publication on the school website Q. RH asked if anything needs to happen to ensure that the Annual Parent Survey is sent to parents in February, when it is due to be sent. A. LJ advised that she had considered using Google forms for the Survey, although she had decided to use the existing format for the February survey which she intends to be distributed at Parents Evening next week. She also advised that she may make a few minor alterations to the questions; the completed survey forms will then need to be analysed once they have been returned. Regarding the task 'Review Recruitment Strategy', RH made a couple of suggestions as summarised below: - rather than discussing recruitment at each FGB meeting, it might be better if this was continually worked on behind the scenes, e.g. possibly she and GD could meet up and produce a plan for recruitment, delegating as necessary - the existing governors could make themselves more visible to parents, and that parent governors and possibly also the School Council could also be involved in this RH advised a couple of points as follows: - LD has placed the New Governor Induction documentation in GovernorHub, so that this will be available to new governors as soon as they can be set up on GovernorHub - it would be useful to have an experienced governor who can advise new governors as to what they need to do and where they need to look for information GD advised that she and LJ have agreed to meet fortnightly with a view to updating each other on, or discussing, relevant matters.	
23.	Correspondence None.	
24.	Any Other Business SD advised that each governor should have received an invitation to join the school diary, via their school email address; she then shared her screen to show everyone the school diary, which displays the various events throughout the school year, such as Parents' Evening. LJ advised that it has been confirmed that the new system for storing and displaying membership and training records, and GB documents, is Hampshire Services for Schools which offers a single point of access for the 18 local authority services; each GB member is being sent an email containing a 5-step procedure for logging in to the new system.	

	Q. A governor asked if the information stored in GovernorHub will have to be transferred to the new system. A. The Clerk advised that he understands that membership and training records, currently stored in GovernorHub, will have been transferred to the new system and will be available to view as soon as the new system is live. He also understands that GB documents, including the minutes of GB meetings and documents discussed at those meetings will have to be transferred by downloading the existing GovernorHub files and uploading those files into the new system. He also advised that he will check with Governor Services that this information is correct. ACTION.	Clerk
25.	Date of next FGB meeting - Monday 18 th March 2024 at 9.00 am in person (as part of Governor Monitoring Day)	

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

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

Signed _____ Chair Date _____