

MERTON INFANT SCHOOL

Minutes of the Full Governing Body meeting held online on Monday 16th October 2023

MINUTES

Present:	Lee-ann Dirienzo		
	Larissa James	Headteacher	
	Carly Jones		
	Jan Beard		
	Louise Silverton	Co-chair	
	Janel Richards		
	Rachel Hill		
	Gaye Dove	Co-chair	
In attendance:	Paula Bennett	School Business Manager	
	Mark Livesey	Clerk	

The meeting started at 6.30 pm.

		ACTION
1.	Welcome and Apologies for Absence Apologies: were received from Sajish Tom, a prospective new governor.	
2.	Update Register of Pecuniary Interests (the Clerk will circulate the Register of Governors Interests forms for completion); Declaration of Pecuniary Interests or Conflicts of Interest The Clerk advised that he had circulated the Register of Pecuniary Interests forms for completion and that he will shortly be sending a reminder to anyone that has not returned their completed form.	
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023 Agreed as a true record, subject to a minor amendment to be carried out by the Clerk in connection with an incorrect reference to a governor having responsibility for Health and Safety, under agenda item 15 on page 6. *Please see post meeting note at the end of these minutes.	
4.	Matters Arising 140323_11 Book the WGBT for late June and approach HGS for some possible dates and share these with the GB (LS): LS had been in contact with HGS regarding possible dates and will remind them that she would like to firm up possible dates as soon as possible. ACTION C/F. 140323_12_1 Complete a Governor Visit Report for the governors' visits to the school on 24th May (ALL): Completed and closed. 130723_10_1 Write a Governor Visit Report for her initial visit to the school, when she had looked at the Single Central Register with PB and LJ (GD): GD had uploaded her report to GovernorHub. Closed. 140323_15_2 Upload the Governor Action Plan to GovernorHub so that all governors can access it (LS): LS suggested that the GB should start a new Action Plan, as most of the actions in the old plan are now out of date, and that the new Plan should be circulated in advance of each FGB meeting. This was agreed. Closed. 130723_18 Contact certain people with a view to identifying someone who is interested in becoming an LA Governor (LS): Sajish Tom, who had been unable to attend the meeting, had been identified as someone interested in becoming an LA Governor. Closed. 130723_30 Include the agenda item 'Draft School Improvement Plan' in the agenda for the Autumn 1 FGB Meeting (Clerk): this item had been included in the agenda and changed to 'Approve School Improvement Plan' as the Plan had been drafted. Completed & closed. 130723_31_1 Circulate a list of meeting dates for academic year 2023/24 (Clerk): Completed & closed. 130723_31_2 Include the following item in the agenda for the Autumn 1 FGB meeting: Notification of events during the current academic year where some governor presence is	LS

	required (Clerk): Completed & closed.	
5.	Monitor spending against Budget Plan and consider budgetary implications of NoR PB talked the GB through spending against the Budget Plan, the main points of which are summarised below: - the budget is set in April and revised in November - it is necessary to examine the budget for any areas that were overspent in March or for which additional funding will be required; this will happen after Half Term when she will meet with the school's finance consultant, consider the budget line by line and adjust any lines that require it O Budget Expenditure - there are certain areas of expenditure that she needs to monitor, including General Maintenance under which a number of repairs have been carried out recently; this line will probably be increased with a view to adequately funding this line until the end of the financial year - the Electricity line is approximately half-spent and as it is roughly half-way through the financial year, this line appears to be satisfactory - a communication has been received advising that the PE sports funding must be spent before July 2024; as money has been carried over, the school needs to attempt to spend approx. £20,000; some will be spent on CPD, some will be spent on outdoor playtime activities & equipment, and if any other money remains the school will carefully consider how to spend the remaining money 2 additional software packages have been purchased, one of these being Purple Mash; she will check the IT Software line to see if it needs adjustment - the Furniture line is overspent and will need to be adjusted; it was known that the school would have to purchase new chairs for the classrooms and new rugs for the classrooms, these costing approx. £160 - £200 each, in addition to new bookcases for some classrooms; as a result this line is slightly overspent - regarding the Educational Supplies line, there has been considerable expenditure on this line already; she needs to monitor this line to keep it on track; it is possible that a little more expenditure may be incurred on this line - the Hired and Contracted Services line will need to be increased as new water heaters were installed in the Staff Room, this having been an unbudgeted cost in March and agreed at the last meeting O Budget Income - an additional grant has been received, this being the Time Off Timetable Grant; as she had not been expecting this grant, she will check that the school is entitled to receive it - approx. £2000 has been received for Universal Infant Free School Meals - the Fundraising Line appears fairly healthy; the school has raised £5000 and she will increase this line as further income will be received - Income on the High Needs Top Up Funding line has increased; the line was originally budgeted at approx. £47,500, but because some new YR children who have joined the school already have EHCPs, and because there are also additional EHCPs that the Deputy Headteacher/SENCO has put through, the figure is now closer to £70,000 and this line will therefore be adjusted at budget revision - Pupil Premium funding has increased slightly as some funding was received for a Looked After Child - she will provide a further update on the budget, with regard to the lines that she has adjusted, at the November FGB meeting Y Budget Expenditure - there are not many expenditure items in the Y budget, expenditure mainly consisting of salaries, a few Education Supplies and food costs relating to food for the children Y Budget Income - this budget holds the income from the Breakfast and After School clubs as well as the income which is received as the rent for a room paid for by the Preschool, the rent being received on the General Lettings line - if the Infant school takes over the Preschool, a decision which is the subject of a later agenda item, the income under General Lettings will cease although hopefully other income will be forthcoming in connection with the Preschool - the income budgeted for the Breakfast Club was £15,000, although at this point half-way through the year it looks as though this figure will not be reached - she will liaise with JB regarding the Breakfast Club, as the budget for this line may need to be adjusted	

	Q. PB asked JB if she thought that there were fewer people attending Breakfast Club this year. A. JB advised that she thought that the number of children had reduced because a greater number of parents were working from home, with the result that the Club was needed less.	
6.	Monitor spending and consider forthcoming plans for Devolved Capital allocation Approve Pay Committee report Devolved Capital Allocation PB advised a couple of points regarding the Devolved Capital budget, summarised as follows: • there had been expenditure from the budget on the installation of new flooring in the classrooms earlier in the year • she had circulated a report on the Devolved Capital budget which currently holds a balance of £27, and as this balance is a relatively small amount she has no plans for any further expenditure from this budget during the current financial year It was then agreed that PB will circulate her budget reports to everyone. ACTION. Pay Committee Report LJ advised that she has sent the Pay Committee Report to GD and LS; this Report details the staff salaries and recommendations which had been determined as a result of performance management; she may not be able to share the Report with the whole GB as, although it does not name individuals, it is straight-forward to work out the identity of each person. Q. GD advised that she had a query regarding staff retention, and advised that it is obvious from the Report that there are a large number of staff at the top of their pay grade and that as they are good, experienced teachers she raised the question of whether it is likely that the school does not wish to lose them. A. LJ advised a couple of points, as follows: • although she appreciated GD's point that the school may wish to retain certain staff for their skills and experience, especially in the current recruitment climate for such staff, it is not possible to second guess what individual staff members will choose to do regarding their careers • when the school feels that there are staff who could move to senior positions in other schools, the school will support them in their career development with regard to this GD and LS then agreed that they were happy with the Pay Committee Report and for PB to start work on the staff salary statements.	PB
7.	Presentation from Curriculum Manager for Computing (Maddie Bohan) Maddie Bohan gave a presentation on the Computing curriculum. Q. RH asked if the new software products such as Purple Mash have replaced all the other products that used to be used at the school to teach Computing. A. LJ advised that the school used to have 'Project Evolve' which RH had thought was too big for Infant school children; she also advised that the training that the school had received from the Local Authority, and also the training that MB had attended, had indicated that Project Evolve was probably more KS2 than KS1, although there are some useful eSafety activities in Project Evolve which the school can access as a resource rather than use it as a Scheme of Work. LJ also advised that when the uptake of the Spelling Shed and Maths Shed were looked at, the teachers were saying that the Mathletics was better than the Maths Shed and Spelling Shed; when the school researched Purple Mash, the school decided to see if Purple Mash was a better platform for all the subjects to use. Q. GD asked how the latest products, such as Purple Mash, translate into Year 2. A. MB advised that there are 30 Chromebooks for the whole school, with 6 Chromebooks having been allocated to each class so that the pupils can do small group work. LJ advised that the slide containing the Year 1 colour-coded plan also contains a plan for Year 2. Year 2 will also have the Continuity of Learning for Computer Science, Information Technology and Digital Literacy. Q. JR asked if there was any advice available on how to persuade her child to do any extra work that he is required to do when he is at home. A. LJ advised that she believes that it would be useful if she, MB and possibly the other teachers could provide something like 'Top Tips for Parents'; this could include the school advising the parents what to access when their child is at home, e.g. particular activities or games that they have been accessing in school; she thanked JR for her question.	
8.	Receive update on the Age Down process from Headteacher LJ talked the GB through her update on the Age Down process, the main points of which are	

	summarised below: • she is the Chair of the Preschool Committee; not many people have been coming forward to join the Committee membership • an idea that has been considered for a number of years is that the Preschool should come under the Infant School GB's remit; Services for Young Children accept that this is the best way forward • the way for the Infant School and the Preschool to make the change is for them to follow the Age Down process, whereby the Infant School would take children from 2 years of age to 7 years of age, instead of age 4 to age 7 • a number of professionals have to be consulted as part of the process, such as Education Personnel, Finance, Admissions, Legal, Insurance, and the school is currently engaged in these consultations; she is currently working with a caseworker from Services for Young Children • the draft documentation has been sent to the relevant people for an initial perusal, in preparation for a meeting planned for 2nd November; GD and LS have been copied into emails from the various departments, and everyone who should have been consulted has been consulted • once the meeting has taken place on 2nd November, there is a formal consultation process with both the parents of the Preschool children and the school children, in addition to the Preschool staff and the school staff • because she is the Chair of the Preschool Committee, she potentially has a conflict of interest and therefore it has been decided that the Financial Administrator of the Preschool will lead the work with the Preschool staff, and that she and PB will lead the work with the school staff • there is a 4 week consultation period; if the school keeps to the current time scales, it is hoped that, if all goes well, the process should be in place by April 2024 • if the running of the Preschool by the Infant School GB does not go ahead, the likelihood is that the Preschool will fold which in the long run does not help the Infant School attract new pupils • everything is currently on track • she wished to thank PB for all her hard work on producing a Business Plan and sending it to the relevant people PB advised a couple of points regarding the Age Down process, as summarised below: • with regard to the Preschool staff, the school would have to follow the TUPE process to bring them into the school (for which the school is dealing with a caseworker with Personnel) and integrate its systems with those of the Preschool, in order to create a streamlined organisation • if the school GB including the Preschool in its remit went ahead there would be costs involved in making the necessary changes, although the aim would be to minimise the costs involved wherever possible Sickness Statistics The GB then discussed the sickness statistics.	
9.	Receive Headteacher Verbal Report and updates Main Report LJ talked the GB through her verbal report, the main points of which are summarised below: • the school is still waiting for the ISDR (Individual School Data Report); the national figures have not yet been confirmed, although she had shown the provisional data to the GB in the summer • she believes that the school has improved since last year, as it is doing very well with regard to the Greater Depth percentages in Reading, Writing & Maths • the school is just in line with Expected at KS1 in Reading, Writing & Maths, the problem probably being that moving the children from Below or Working Towards into Expected, when the school has a high percentage of children with SEN support and EHCPs, is quite difficult • the annual Prejudicial Language and Behaviour Survey has been completed; last year, one incident had been reported; the basis of the survey was the use of language, with staff being reminded how to talk about the protected characteristics such as ethnicity, race & religion • the logistics of lunchtimes has been changed to reduce the noise level and boredom; 3 sittings are now offered and the new arrangements are working much better • additional equipment has been purchased for outside Y2 classes, as more accidents and	

	behaviour concerns have been occurring in this area • YR have settled in quite well although there is one child that is causing concern • there have been some difficulties in Y1; she and the Deputy Headteacher have been working behind the scenes with a view to remedying the situation • the school has started the process of ending the lunchtime arrangements with Hampshire Caterers; it is working with the Junior School as most of the food is cooked in the Junior School, and there have been initial meetings with the relevant people • all teachers, LSAs and Admin staff have had their performance management completed this half term and objectives have been set • Attendance has been good and she is pleased with the attendance achieved; attendance is 94% with the national figure being in the region of 94.9% to 95%; all the school's groups have attendance of approx. 94% • usually the lowest groups are the SEND children and the FSM children; at present these groups are in line with the cohort's overall attendance of 94%, and the service children have achieved good attendance of 98% • the EAL group and Ethnic Minority group have achieved attendance of 96% • the school has introduced the Fischer Family Trust (FFT) online assessment tracker; this will significantly reduce staff workload and also make the school's assessment more reliable as it is dealing with live data • the school has started half-termly SENCO surgeries, with the teachers and the Deputy Headteacher attending; at the Pupil Progress meetings after Half Term, there should be no surprises with regard to interventions being planned • one thing the school has never tried is a therapy dog; there is a lot of research about how valuable therapy dogs are in supporting both the emotional and social difficulties of children and their Reading; the staff has talked about the possibility of obtaining a therapy dog for the school, although the dog would have to undergo a training process and consultations with parents would have to be carried out LS advised that she thought it was important to decide whether the school wants a therapy dog or a well-being dog, as they are slightly different; she also thought that either type of dog would be a positive initiative for the school, although it would be important to manage the situation as some children are terrified of dogs. Q. RH asked if it is worth carrying out visits to schools that have dogs. A. LJ advised that a number of local schools have dogs and that it is definitely worth visiting such schools to see what the situation looks like on a day to day basis. The GB then discussed the idea of having a therapy dog or well-being dog, with the GB generally being in favour of the school having a therapy dog or well-being dog. GD thought that there was lot in favour of the idea of the school having a dog. LJ thanked the governors for their input and advised that she will investigate the possibility of the school having a dog. Premises Update LJ talked the GB through her premises update, the main points being summarised below: • there have been no significant developments regarding the premises • she carried out a Health & Safety walk on Friday; one thing common to some of the classes is the need to ensure that there is a one metre access to the exit doors for fire safety, this being quick and easy to do; she will remind staff about this at the next business meeting • there are no issues regarding lighting, flooring or energy costs	
10.	Review Governor Visit Reports LJ advised that she had not received any Governor Visit Reports relating to the period from 1st September to the current date.	
11.	Approve School Improvement Plan – governors to review and identify any actions for Governor Action Plan Tracker As JR was a new governor, LJ advised several points as follows: • there is the main body of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), in addition to which there are Subject Action Plans which are essentially maintenance plans • the SIP follows the 4 main Ofsted areas, i.e. Leadership & Management, Quality of Outcomes (i.e. Teaching & Learning, Assessment and Curriculum), Personal Development and Behaviour & Attitudes • she thought that she would try and combine visits by the 2 new governors, JR and Sajish Tom, assuming that Sajish is appointed as a governor later in the meeting; this would then	

	be an opportunity for her to introduce JR and Sajish to the SIP JR advised that Friday is the best day for her to visit the school. Agreed that: - this agenda item will be included in the agenda for the next FGB meeting, giving all governors a chance to read the SIP. ACTION. Review and agree Self Evaluation Monitoring Schedule Agreed that: - this agenda item will be included in the agenda for the next FGB meeting. ACTION.	Clerk Clerk
12.	Safeguarding, including confirmation that the Safeguarding Report has been submitted and reminding governors of the need to read the KCSiE 2023 document LJ advised that the Safeguarding Audit Tool was reviewed during the July FGB meeting and that in September each year she has to submit an online report form; this year's Safeguarding Report has been submitted and has been filed in the school's Safeguarding folder. Q. GD asked if there is anything in the KCSiE 2023 document that the GB needs to look at again. A. LJ advised that it is important for governors to be aware of Part 1 of the document as this documents what the school has to adhere to. LJ then advised several more points, as summarised below: - one of the main changes in the 2023 KCSiE document is 'Filtering and Monitoring' which relates to what is online for children to access; the school has a company, 'Harrap ICT', that carries out all the filtering & monitoring checks for the school and produces a weekly report for SLT - she has displayed a couple of posters about filtering & monitoring above the photocopiers so that staff are aware of what the school should be doing from a GDPR point of view	
13.	Review Policies according to Policy Review Schedule: Pay Performance Management Capability Allegations of Abuse against Staff (adopting MOPP) Disciplinary Procedure for Employees (adopting MOPP) Child Protection Safeguarding HTPM Committee Terms of Reference Managing Sickness Absence Recruitment LJ advised that the majority of policies are produced from a template that is maintained by the Local Authority; there are only certain areas in each policy that the school can localise for Merton Infant. Agreed to: - adopt the Pay Policy, subject to recognition by the GB that the policy is still under consultation with the unions and might therefore need to be updated once the consultation period has ended - approve the other policies and the HTPM Committee Terms of Reference	
14.	Agree Policy Review Schedule Agreed.	
15.	Confirmation of change to Governor Constitution The Clerk advised several points regarding the Governor Constitution, as summarised below: - the GB has recently reconstituted, the effect being that the maximum number of governors is now 12 (instead of 11) and the number of Co-opted Governor posts is now 6 (instead of 5) - this reconstitution provides the GB with the ability to have 4 school-based governors and have a certain amount of flexibility with regard to recruitment of new governors - the new Instrument of Government is available in GovernorHub, having recently been circulated by email to the governors - he will email a copy of the Instrument of Government to any governor requiring a copy on request	
16.	Appoint Mrs Lee-ann Dirienzo as a Co-opted Governor for a term of 4 years Agreed.	
17.	Consider nomination received for Councillor Sajish Tom for the post of Local Authority Governor; appoint Councillor Sajish Tom as a Local Authority Governor After considering the nomination, from the local councillor, of Sajish as an LA Governor it was	

	agreed to appoint Sajish as an LA Governor for a term of 4 years.	
18.	Request volunteers for, and Appoint Vice Chair RH was elected as Vice Chair.	
19.	Discuss GB Membership and upcoming End Dates. GD advised that apart from LS, whose term of office ends on 17 th December 2023, there are no governors with an impending End Date.	
20.	Notification to the GB & Clerk of any events (i.e. the name of the event and start time) during the current academic year for which some governor presence is required GD advised that she is hoping that the GB can draw up a calendar of all events where some governor presence is desired, so that the governors have advance knowledge of dates of events that they might like to attend, or that the school would like them to attend; this would enable the governors to decide between themselves whether they can attend the events. LJ advised that she can work with JB on producing a calendar of such events and circulating the calendar to all governors. ACTION.	LJ/JB
21.	Review Governor Roles (i) Consider the allocation of governors to Safeguarding Governor and Forum Representative roles Governors were allocated to these roles as follows: Safeguarding Governor: RH Forum Representative: GD (ii) Review the remaining specialist & link governor roles Governors were allocated to the remaining specialist & link governor roles as follows: Attendance: LS Safer Recruitment: LS Inclusion Governor: LD Health and Safety: JB Achievement Outcomes Governor (on rota; includes attendance at PPMs): if a Governor cannot take their turn on the rota, GD will take their place Training Link Governor / DTG: LS Nominated Governor to liaise with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) for allegations against the HT: RH Mental Health Governor: CJ	
22.	Review the membership of the Pay Committee Agreed that: the members of the Pay Committee will be RH and JR	
23.	Agree date for the next HTPM Panel meeting Agreed that: - the date of the next HTPM Panel Meeting will be 16th November Agree the membership of the HT Performance Management Panel including approving the appointment of the external adviser to the HTPM Panel Agreed that: - the members of the HT PM Panel will be GD and ST (Sajish Tom)	
24.	Items for Governor Newsletter There was a brief discussion regarding the need for articles to be included in the Governor Newsletter and the need to know when the Governor Newsletter will be published. A governor suggested having a governor section in the school newsletter, rather than having separate school and governor newsletters, to avoid both repetition and too much time being spent on the production of 2 newsletters. It was generally felt that following this suggestion would probably be beneficial. Agreed that: as relatively new governors, RH and JR will submit a concise pen portrait of themselves for inclusion in the Governor Information section of the school website. ACTION.	RH / JR
25.	Discuss Governor Training, including WGBT and review of Matrix of Training LJ advised several points, as summarised below: - she had spoken to the school LLP about training for governors on behaviour; the LLP had advised her that he was not clear what sort of training on behaviour would be appropriate for the governors, as when he visits the school it is apparent that the school's behaviour policy works for most of the children - the LLP had been unsure whether training on behaviour for the governors was the best use of the WGBT, or whether WGBT on another subject, such as Ofsted, would be the best use of the training available - as there are now 3 relatively new governors it may be worth reconsidering Ofsted training,	

	although this training would have to be booked asap after the Half Term break if this is the training that the GB would prefer as the school in in the OFSTED window Agreed that: - the best weekday for the WGBT would be a Monday, with the usual start time of 6.30 pm or 7.00 pm being acceptable to the governors - LS will book the WGBT on Ofsted ACTION	LS
26.	Monitor any parental complaints LJ advised that there had been no formal parental complaints.	
27.	Correspondence LJ advised that she had 2 recommendations for the governors, as follows: - to read the 'Hampshire Governor' magazine as it contains a useful article on transforming SEND and information on how the Local Authority would like to support schools with SEN children - to access the online briefing in November	
28.	Any Other Business A governor advised that she had a potential timing clash between the date of the next FGB meeting on 4th December and mental health training that she had booked, and asked whether the GB thought it was more important for her to attend the 4th December FGB meeting or to attend the training. LJ advised, on behalf of the GB, that the GB believes that it is more important for her to attend the 4th December FGB meeting. LS reminded the governors that the next Governor Monitoring Day is Monday 20th November. CJ advised that 20th November is also the day on which the Winter Warmer is held and that any governors wishing to attend the Winter Warmer from 3.30 pm to 4.30 pm are welcome to do so.	
	Date of next FGB Meeting – Monday 4th December 2023 at 6.30 pm via TEAMS	

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm.

***Post Meeting Note 16th October 2023**

Following the 16th October meeting, the Clerk checked the minutes of the 13th July FGB meeting and could not find any incorrect reference to a particular governor being the Health & Safety Governor rather than the Inclusion Governor. He therefore sent the governor concerned a copy of the 13th July FGB minutes and asked her to highlight, ideally in red text, the incorrect reference that she had found and return it to him. When the Clerk receives the 13th July FGB minutes with the incorrect reference highlighted, he will amend the minutes if they are clearly incorrect with regard to the Health & Safety Governor.

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

Signed _____ Chair Date _____