Meridian Primary School
Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday 29th April 2026 at 7.00pm

Budget Focus FGB

Virtual via Teams

Present:	Richard Mulderij (RM) – Co-Chair, Ruth Noble (RN) - Co-Chair, Becky Snelling (BS) – Headteacher, Ioan Milosevic (IM), Vicki Scott (VS), Jenny Weston (JW) and Cei Whitehouse (CW)
Visitors:	Mei Gao MG - Finance Manager Samantha Chamberlain (SC) – Deputy Headteacher
Clerk:	Amie Lill

Item	Discussion	Action by
1.0	**Welcome and apologies**	
1.1	**Welcome, apologies and introductions**	
1.1.1	The Co-Chair RM welcomed everyone to the meeting. RM led the meeting as Chair.	
1.1.2	No apologies were received.	
1.2	**Quoracy**	
1.2.1	The meeting was quorate.	
2.0	**Declarations of Interest**	
2.1	**Declarations of interest for items on the agenda**	
2.1.1	There were no declarations of any pecuniary or other interest regarding items on the agenda.	
2.2.1	There were no declarations of confidential items regarding items on the agenda.	
3.0	**Approval of Minutes and any matters arising**	
3.1	**Minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2026**	
3.1.1	The minutes were distributed prior to the meeting to allow governors time to review. These were approved as an accurate record.	
3.2	**Matters arising**	
3.2.1	*Deferred to 6th May FGB.*	

Signed:
Date:

4.0	**Any other urgent business**	
4.1.1	The Clerk advised that she had spoken with Anna Caroe from the Governance Team regarding support for the new Co-Chairs. It was confirmed that the Governance Team did not feel it was necessary to attend the meeting, as they were confident with the current progress of the board; however, they noted that support remained available should the Co-Chairs require it.	
	KEY FOCUS	
5.0	**Finance Budget Review**	
5.1	**25-26 year end update**	
5.1.1	The HT shared the Year End 25-26 Summary report prior to the meeting to allow all governors to review.	
5.1.2	The HT provided an overview of the report, particularly for new governors, including contextual information on the school's historic deficit and the wider position of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) schools, many of which remain in deficit.	
5.1.3	The key financial figures were highlighted as follows: • 2023–24 in-year deficit: £86,000 • 2024–25 in-year deficit: £64,000 • 2026–27 projected in-year deficit: £3,900	
5.1.4	The HT noted that control of the escalating deficit had been achieved quickly, with support from the temporary HT, staff, governors, and previous Chair.	
5.1.5	The HT confirmed that, had no action been taken, the deficit would have continued to increase; however, the school is now moving towards a more sustainable financial position, which was very positive.	
5.1.6	It was confirmed that the school remains part of the Financial Improvement Group (FIG) process. The budget and recovery plans continue to be scrutinised, and the group has not identified any further actions for the school at this stage. CONFIDENTIAL ***Q: The Co-Chair asked why the proposed redundancy had been delayed.*** *A: The Headteacher explained that this was due solely to pension scheme cost information not being received in time for the 2025–26 financial year. The post relates to site staff, with a reduction in hours rather than a full post. The change is planned for 2026–27 and has been fully built into the budget.*	
5.1.7	Governors thanked the Headteacher for the clear and helpful budget breakdown within the report	
5.1.8	The HT explained that the budget is adjusted throughout the year by the HT and Finance Manager. Planned support staff redundancies were amended to	

	retain staff due to SEN needs and lunchtime support requirements for example. ***Q: A governor queried why Expenditure and the overspend were shown as a negative figure.*** *A: The HT confirmed this was correct and explained that income received above budget is shown as a positive figure in the accounts.*	
5.1.9	Grants: • Pupil premium Grant – spent as planned in line with the published strategy. • Sport grant – spent as planned.	
5.1.10	The HT reported that the school ended the financial year in a slightly better position than the agreed year-end figure. The HT thanked the Finance Manager for her effective control and management of the budget. ***Q: The Chair asked whether the underspend on the General Curriculum budget line (£2,500 underspend) had impacted the curriculum or pupils?*** *A: The Headteacher explained that the school does not refuse requests unless they involve significant expenditure. Some subscriptions that were no longer having sufficient impact had been discontinued, which was considered appropriate. Essential items such as stationery and consumables continue to be purchased as required, and the school is well resourced. The PTA remains very active and supports larger purchases; for example, they are currently exploring investment in new musical instruments to support the music curriculum.* ***Q: A Governor asked about benchmarking in relation to pupil numbers?*** *A: The HT explained that the school has physical capacity for 300 pupils; however, the planned and supported maximum number is 210. The Published Admission Number (PAN) is 30, meaning a one-form entry intake. As cohorts progress through the school, this will result in a total roll of approximately 210 pupils. Benchmarking is based on the actual number of pupils on roll, rather than the potential capacity of 300.* ***Q: The Chair asked whether there was a risk that pupils could be placed at the school because published information refers to capacity for 300 pupils?*** *A: The HT confirmed that additional pupils would only be admitted if the school could support them both educationally and financially. For example, it would not be viable to employ an additional teacher for a very small number of pupils. The PAN was reduced to 30 following careful consideration, and forecasting evidence supports that this figure is appropriate for the local area.* ***Q: A governor queried how the budget position would have looked at year end without the large donation received during the year?*** *A: The Headteacher confirmed that the donation had been known about and planned for well in advance and was included within the budget. Had the donation not been received, the school would have tightened expenditure elsewhere and aimed to remain close to the agreed budget position.* ***Q: The Chair asked whether the situation in Iran and rising oil prices would impact the school?*** *A: The HT confirmed that oil costs have approximately doubled; however,*	

	contingency has been built into the budget to mitigate this risk. The HT has also explored grants and other support options, including the Oil Crisis Resilience Fund.	
5.2	**26-27 budget build update (including review of budget)**	
5.2.1	The HT shared the 26-27 budget submission and budget proposal document prior to the meeting to allow all governors to review.	
5.2.2	The HT explained that pupil numbers remain the most significant factor affecting the budget. Current projections assume a worst-case scenario, with 31 pupils leaving and 23 joining, which impacts income due to a slightly reduced lump sum. It was noted that additional pupils may join during the year, as is typically the case.	
5.2.3	**Income** Income assumptions are confirmed as cautious: • Lettings income has been budgeted conservatively. • Wraparound care is recognised as a growing income stream; however, figures remain cautious due to uncertainty, and investment will be required during the year. • Delayed EHCP funding has not been included within this year's budget. The HT expressed confidence that additional funding is likely. • £11,000 of Inclusive Mainstream Fund (IMF) funding has been allocated and will be fully accounted for. The funding will be used to sustain Teaching Assistant support in classrooms, particularly for afternoon provision and intervention work.	
5.2.4	A 2% staff pay increase has been built into the budget.	
5.2.5	The HT reported positively that two new pupils are due to start within the next few weeks, which was welcomed.	
5.2.6	**Expenditure** The following expenditure assumptions were highlighted: • 10% PPA time for teaching staff has been maintained. • Pay increases in line with the teacher pay scale have been included. • An ECT appointment will replace a more experienced teacher, providing a cost efficiency. • A long-term supply teacher has been required during the summer term. This is partially covered by insurance, although not in full.	
5.2.7	The HT referred governors to DfE benchmarking for staffing, comparing this to last year's staffing model and within the context of awaited EHCP funding, which would further reduce the staffing cost percentage.	
5.2.8	Significant staffing changes made in 2025 were highlighted, noting that these have delivered substantial cost savings. The HT confirmed that no further staffing reductions are planned, as additional cuts would risk the school's ability to meet pupils' needs and maintain high-quality education.	
5.2.9	The leadership structure will remain unchanged, comprising the HT, Deputy HT, Phase Leader, and SENCo. The HT explained that leadership capacity is essential to drive school improvement. While DfE benchmarking shows leadership costs at a relatively high 26%, this reflects:	

	• SENCo time not yet funded through EHCPs • Deputy HT on the upper leadership scale • HT on the upper pay scale • Subject leadership release time ***Q: A governor asked whether staffing costs appear higher because some benchmarked schools are not located near Cambridge like Meridian, does it attract higher pay.*** *A: The HT confirmed that additional pay only applies to London fringe areas, not Cambridge. Staffing costs reflect teachers on the upper pay scale. It was also noted that benchmarking data is a year out of date, and governors were encouraged to note the positive financial direction the school is now moving in.*	
5.2.10	A governor thanked the Headteacher for the benchmarking analysis, noting that it was clear, transparent, and very helpful.	
5.2.11	**Lunchtime SLA** The HT reported that the Lunchtime Co. SLA cost for 2026–27 is £14,500, compared to £13,500 in the previous year. As this exceeds the £5,000 procurement threshold, governor approval is required.	
5.2.12	It was noted that re-tendering would be necessary to change provider; however, the school does not currently have sufficient capacity to undertake this process due to the priority focus on developing wraparound care. ***Q: A governor asked whether new DfE catering recommendations were reflected within the service.*** *A: The HT confirmed that all requirements are managed by the catering provider and are explicitly set out within the contract.*	
5.2.13	Governors agreed to continue with the current lunchtime provider and associated SLA management fee.	
5.2.14	**Photocopier Contract** The HT explained that managed buy-out of the school's photocopier contract had been explored previously and has recently been reviewed following discussions with another HT.	
5.2.15	The Finance Manager has approached three companies, investigating cost, service, and value. The HT shared a spreadsheet with governors which showed the comparison information.	
5.2.16	The proposal is to move forward with Future Digital Systems, which is not currently included in the budget but would generate an estimated £7,000 saving.	
5.2.17	The HT confirmed that while this provider is not the cheapest option, it offers the best value based on consumer feedback from another school. The lowest cost provider was not recommended due to concerns regarding assurances and support.	
5.2.18	The proposal would include new Sharp machines with more modern, higher-spec functionality.	

	Action: The Headteacher will circulate the procurement documentation to governors for review, with the decision to be made at the next Full Governing Body meeting. **Action: FGB2904-01: HT to circulate the photocopier contract procurement documentation for governors to review, with a decision to be taken at the next Full Governing Body meeting.** The HT confirmed that Year 3 of the budget shows no carry-forward, which is due to projected pupil number changes, with 34 pupils leaving and 23 expected to join. ***Q: A governor asked why loan interest was shown as £0 for the year?*** *A: The HT confirmed that loan repayments will begin once the school is able to sustain a carry-forward balance.* ***Q: A governor asked whether the assumed 2% increase in income was matched by a 2% increase in expenditure?*** *A: The HT confirmed that non-staff expenditure has been held flat in line with CCC advice.* The Chair asked all governors to vote on approving the deficit budget. **Resolution: That the Governing Board approves the School Budget Plan for the financial year 2026/2027 total spend of £1,250,204.58p (in year carry forward of £16,044.27p, total deficit -£138,599.74 deficit licence)** **Action: FGB2904-02: HT and Finance Manager to submit the approved finalised budget to CCC before 22/05/26 deadline.**	**HEADTEACHER** **HEADTEACHER / FINANCE MANAGER**
	STANDING ITEMS	
6.0	**Governor Body Matters**	
	No items – budget meeting focus	
7.0	**Strategic Development**	
	No items – budget meeting focus	
8.0	**Reports and Updates**	
	No items – budget meeting focus	
9.0	**Safeguarding**	
9.1	**Behaviour**	
9.1.1 9.1.2	The HT provided a verbal safeguarding update linked to the budget. The HT explained that the budget ensures safe staffing levels to appropriately support vulnerable pupils, including sufficient midday supervision to meet the needs of children with higher levels of need during lunchtime.	

Signed:
Date:

9.1.3	It was confirmed that Pupil Premium and SEND funding is directed towards provision for vulnerable children, including emotional literacy and mental health support.	
9.1.4	The HT highlighted several safeguarding-related costs built into the budget, including: • Capital expenditure for safeguarding improvements, such as vision panels in doors. • Ongoing statutory training, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, Domestic Abuse awareness, DSL training, and Safer Recruitment. • Payment of all support staff for attendance at KCSIE training on INSET days, which has been fully budgeted for. • DBS checks, currently costed at £18 per check. • The MyConcern safeguarding reporting system subscription. • Significant ICT safeguarding costs, including filtering and monitoring systems, cyber security measures, and online safety compliance. While these costs are substantial within the ICT budget, they are essential for keeping pupils and staff safe online.	
9.1.5	The HT confirmed that all safeguarding-related expenditure is built into the budget, noting that this investment is critical to ensure statutory compliance and to maintain a safe environment for all pupils and staff.	
10.0	**Policies for approval / ratification**	
	No items – budget meeting focus	
11.0	**Review and impact of meeting**	
11.1	Impact of meeting	
11.1.1	1. Scrutinised the budget. Carry forward this year which is positive. 2. Approval of the 2026-27 budget 3. Lunchtime Co. offer – agreed SLA	
12.0	**Any other business**	
	None	
12.1	**Items for next agenda**	
12.1.1 12.1.2	Co-opted governors - recruitment Photocopier Contract	
13.0	**Date of next meeting**	
13.1	Wednesday 29th April 2026, 7pm – online	
	The meeting closed at 8.11pm	

Signed:
Date:

Action No.	Action	Owner	Status
FGB2904-01	HT to circulate the photocopier contract procurement documentation for governors to review, with a decision to be taken at the next Full Governing Body meeting.	HT	Open
FGB2904-02	HT and Finance Manager to submit the approved finalised budget to CCC before 22/05/26 deadline.	HT / Finance Manager	Open

Signed:
Date: