MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF MONKSDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD AT 9.30 AM ON THURSDAY 27th November 2025

Point	Content	Actions/ comments/ Governor Challenge
24/94	The chair welcomed the Governors to the meeting	
25/94	**Present:** Martin - Chair Jacqui - HT Gill - DHT Joanne - Business Manager Joshua - Vice Chair Claire - EYFS Governor/Co-Opted Governor Fabienne - Teacher Governor Sequoria - Parent Governor ALSO PRESENT- Chris - Clerk	
25/96	• Chair proposed that Claire be added to the governing body- this was agreed unanimously.	
25/97	• Minutes agreed and signed from previous meeting.	
25/98	• 2026/27 school calendar was shared and approved proposing that CPD sessions would be taken as twilight sessions to facilitate a two-week break in May/June.	
25/99	**Curriculum- Sarah** • Sarah shared that there had been changes to the writing curriculum. Sarah and Chloe have attended the new Writing Framework training and shared with staff. They have looked at their current scheme Pathways to Write and will look at the handwriting and oracy schemes. Sarah commented that it will take 2-3 years to implement and see the benefits. • In handwriting lessons, they are using Letter Join an online scheme which provides lots of resources. This is an interactive resource which has both right and left handed features. At the end of Y2 the children will start to join letters. The style of writing chosen is letter join break- this style is a non-negotiable throughout school. • There is a huge focus on oracy in EYFS with structured, planned conversations and opportunities which are modelled by staff using standard English- snack time conversations/greetings etc. Thorough planning is required in order to introduce new vocabulary to the children. Specific language lessons are	***Fabienne commented*** *that she has already seen improvements.* *Sarah Chapman joined the meeting.*

	delivered such as discussions, arguments, debates and drama. Staff have noted that aspects from Debate Society has started impacting children's written English. The school will work with their local school network to share planning, best practice etc. • Pathways to Spell is being used currently in school, but staff are researching Spelling Shed and considering if this would be more suitable. • Air Education (AI tool) is being used as a moderation tool for writing which is reducing teacher's workload. This was demonstrated uploading a child's writing, input, learning objectives etc AI then reads the work and comments what went well (WWW) and even better if (EBI). This tool will help enormously with moderation and end of KS1 outcomes. • Staff are finding the AI system really helpful, it costs £6700, but as writing is a priority on the SDP it is a necessary expense.	***Martin asked*** *how long has this been implemented and was very encouraged regarding the impact.* ***Jacqui commented*** *that due to school results it was vital that they adopted a consistent approach across school.* ***Gov challenge Sequoria*** *commented that from a data protection aspect she had concerns using AI.* ***Jacqui assured*** *her that all safeguarding issues had been considered and no personal data is submitted.* ***Martin asked*** *how other schools in the network are finding it.* ***Josh asked*** *if there were financial implications*
25/100	**<u>Chair's Action</u>** • A teacher currently on maternity leave will not be returning as she is moving to another school. If this was just a transfer there would be no financial impact, However, the new school is an academy, but governors have waved any financial implications.	
26/01	• **<u>Finance</u>** • The budget and spending were shared by Joanne. The DFE have made some changes so there have been some over/under spends as money has been used from different pots to cover costs.	

	• SLT are trying to cover as much supply teaching as possible to reduce costs. • The staffing budget is on track; it is costing an additional £6400 per month due to the rise in NI contributions and pay rises. • New lunch welfare staff are settling in well and are very keen and having an effective impact. Nursery now require lunch supervision. • There has been a slight overspend on the full staffing budget which LCC will not cover. However, in May LCC will look at the staffing budget and renew it. • **Jacqui stated** that there had been a variety of situations leading to the over spend. There has been an overspend in supply so now SLT are trying to do the cover as much as possible, additionally a TA, who is an excellent practitioner, is paid as a level 2, but is covering classes so needs to paid at level 3, school trips are subsidised etc. SLT are doing everything they can to meet the needs of the children and avoid a deficit budget. There will be decisions made in the new year. • Significant savings have been made for housekeeping as the school caretaker has done many of the inhouse jobs himself. • DFE have advised to manage the budget as best as possible. Each year the budget is getting less. Cuts have been made so SLT are trying to creative with the budget and doing the best they can. • Some pupils will not be included in data as they have recently moved to SEND schools. • At a recent finance officer's meeting it was communicated that SIL (School Improvement Liverpool) had gone through a major restructure with staffing and that the financial structure had changed. • School is no longer getting monthly finance reviews. • Budget forecasting format began in October. Forecast indicated there should not be a deficit. • **Jacqui said** that the DFE will not process clawbacks, but LCC are trying to retrieve the money. • White Paper funding for SEND children will come in to place next year. • **Jacqui explained** that there are some small print implications for example pre-existing conditions are not covered. School is claiming back what they	***Josh asked*** *how will we cover the overspend?* ***Jacqui explained*** *that they will reallocate staff/utilise staff differently in order to save money etc* **Martin proposed** that money be moved and allocated to different 'pots.' There was a unanimous agreement. ***Josh asked*** *for example if school were saving for a boiler and LCC see that money could they take it back?* ***Sequoria asked*** *if we*

	can and in the past the insurance has always been cost effective as they offer a full package of OH appointments, reports etc. • **Martin thanked** Jo and asked if there were any challenges, questions or queries. None raised.	*are paying £10.500 for supply teaching insurance how much are they paying back?*
26/02	**Health and Safety** • Jacqui updated up dated the risk assessments and policies and asked the governors to read and approve them. Policies approved. • Buildings/Capital work-there has been a successful bid for Y1/2 and staff toilets to be renovated and improved at a cost of £80,000-£90,000 at no cost to the school. Work will start next Summer.	
26/03	**Headteacher's Report** • Jacqui shared her report and explained that much of the content had already been discussed. • Jacqui is very proud of the work that the staff have done with children and parents/carers. • Data is disappointing, but it is in context for the school. It is a very inclusive school with many children who have SEND, English as an additional language (EAL) and Child in Need issues which explains the data. Jacqui expressed her intention of being honest and clear over the data and that SLT have a plan moving forward. • Jacqui responded to Josh's question explaining that it's important to have UPS teachers as experienced teachers are essential for the children in this type of school. • Martin and Jacqui praised the teaching staff for their dedication and hard work.	***Sequoria commented** about the language deficit (how some pupils have 2000 words less in their vocabulary) and how difficult the baseline must be.* ***Josh asked** how other schools in the network are managing results etc?*
26/04	**Pupil voice** • The Pupil Voice Team spoke to Governors regarding interviews about No Knife Crime and announced they had received a donation from Arriva of £1000. • Year 5 hosted a money train event and had some first aid training. They appealed to 4 local councillors to provide bleed kits. • A history hub event will take place to try and involve people in local history. Monksdown will be involved in a history hub pilot scheme	

	across England in a bid to keep local history alive. • Out of the seven schools involved Monksdown are the only school to have used child history leads only. The first project will be an Antiques Road Show Day. • Jacqui explained that there will be a portal so all schools across the region can access and share ideas. • 22/04/2026 is World History Day. • Pupil Voice talked about all children being entitled to free school meals at the Citizens UK Conference, the school choir also performed. • There are 4 Schools Debate events scheduled covering such topics as, 'Does AI make people less creative?' 'Should children have a say in the school budget/finances?' • Other events they have been involved in are the Now Festival in October discussing issues such as calling twins 'twins' and not by their names and also the MIND Conference where the children spoke to 600 adults. They received positive praise and feedback from other professionals. In February the children will attend the Epstein Theatre to discuss the impact school has on society. • These experiences are improving oracy skills which is having an impact in lessons.	***Josh expressed** his admiration for the children being confident to challenge and communicate with adults in such an articulate manner.* ***Martin agreed** and praised the children.*
25/05	**<u>Attendance</u>** • Attendance is ranging between 93% - 95.4%Meetings are scheduled with EYFS families to encourage and forge good habits to ensure that children are in school. • Whole school up to wb 21/11 is 93.8%. Persistent absenteeism (below 90%) is 19.7%. 17 days have been taken as holidays • Fines are issued for holiday in term time and requests for holidays are never authorised. • There are 6 pupils who are absent with an attendance record of 50% or less- this is due to various reasons such as child protection issues, school refusers etc. • A new school pupil with complex needs in Y4/5 is not attending school consistently and is coming for 1 session per week for 10 minutes. • The national average for attendance is 94.1% making our school 1.4% the national average.	

	• The data is very similar to other local schools. • School has a first day response approach, challenge parents and will unauthorise absences if there are concerns about a pupil's attendance. • Sometimes families are referred to the EWO which can lead to caution meetings and court action. • Jacqui shared all the different groups of child absences. Target groups are children with EHCPs (some data is affected due to some children being on reduced timetables) and on child protection lists. • 20 absence fines have been issued. • 417 missed sessions so far this term. • SLT have introduced incentives for good class attendance and two classes have been rewarded with trips to the cinema. • There is ongoing communication with parents regarding attendance. • Education Welfare Service are very supportive and work well with school, however, this does result in a lot of administration tasks. Caroline, the EWO, is working with ten families from school currently.	
25/06	**<u>Staff Absence</u>** • Four staff members are on long term sick leave. One of which is administration staff who have been absent since September 2024.Every effort is made to support staff with phased returns, supportive meetings, adjustments to the role, counselling services etc. • Nine staff are on monitoring as their absence has hit a trigger. • Two staff are on extended maternity leave. • 366 staff working days have been missed this term up to 27/11/2025. • Most days there can be up to 10 staff absent. Jacqui explained that staff do get referred to OH. • School pay for the SMART Clinic service which provides OH, Listening Ear, counselling, staff well-being etc. • Some staff are trained for mental health first aid. • Jacqui shared that staff absence has an impact on the curriculum as the inconsistency disrupts the timetable and SLT are having to reallocate staff etc.	***Martin asked*** *if the staff are fit to work/return to work?* ***Martin commented*** *that employing staff on temporary contracts is happening due to the fear of potential absence.*
26/06	**<u>Policies</u>** • New attendance policy was approved and will be sent to staff members. It is very similar to the previous one, but the monitoring stages are now listed.	

	Martin closed the meeting. Next FGM is on 5/2/2026 @9:15am	