



GOVERNING BOARD IMPACT STATEMENT 2021- 22

The Governing Board at St Martin's CE Primary and Nursery School continued to fulfil its three key responsibilities during the academic year 2021 – 22 of ensuring the school has:

1. A clear vision and strategic plan,
2. Holding Steph Harvey, as Headteacher, to account for the educational performance of the school and the performance management of the staff and,
3. overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent.

The purpose of this statement is to outline the structure of and summarise the overall effectiveness of the Governing Board. To give additional context, areas of particular significance are explained in more detail through the document.

Over the year the Governing Board has met virtually for most meetings but, on occasions, it has been possible to meet face to face. The virtual meetings ensured there were less opportunities to spread infections during periods of concerns and allowed the business of the Governing Board to be conducted. Face to face meetings allowed the Governing Board to gel and undertake more creative discussions. Going forward it is anticipated that there will be a mixture of both.

This year it has been possible for governors to spend more time in school than in the previous year. This has allowed governors to complete a wider range of activities, i.e., meeting staff and children, reviewing books, observing activity and meeting external support staff, i.e., school improvement staff.

One substantial part of the work undertaken by the Governing Board was the recruitment of our Headteacher, Steph Harvey. During the Autumn Term the Governing Board, supported by staff from the school, Babcock and the Diocese developed a recruitment pack, showed prospective candidates around the school, completed shortlisted and ran a two-day assessment process. We had a number of good candidates and after a robust and rigorous process Steph Harvey was selected as our permanent headteacher. We are delighted with her appointment and anticipate the school flourishing under her care and dedication.

Composition and Attendance

The structure of the Governing Board is as follows:

- One staff governor – elected by the staff
- The Headteacher – appointed automatically

- Two parent governors – elected by parents and carers
- One Local Authority governor – approved by the Local Authority and appointed by the Governing Board
- Seven Foundation governors – appointed by the Diocese of Exeter

Details of our current governors can be found on pages 10 – 11.

Our school has one Associate Member who has been appointed by the Board as a member of the First and Second Committees (e.g., exclusions, complaints, staff matters etc.) dependent on his availability. He holds voting rights if he is part of a panel. Beyond that he does not play an active role in the Governing Board.

Foundation governors have particular responsibility to uphold the Christian ethos of the school. All our governors have, in the opinion of the Governing Board, the skills and experience required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

The Governing Board maintained the governance structure that was adopted last year with lead governors reporting directly into the Full Governing Board meetings, of which there are four each term. A range of business is managed each term with consistency and continuity across all the terms.

There are two specific and separate committees that meet in addition to the Full Governing Board:

- Leadership and Teachers' Pay (meets termly)
- Admissions (meets as required)

First and Second Committees which consider formal matters such as pupil discipline and staffing matters are convened as and when needed.

St Martin's School is now a well-established school in our town and has become a key part of our community. This was particularly evident during the last two years when the school has been a strength. We experience high levels of mobility, with children joining in years throughout the school between September and July. We have a stable core of children who spend their entire primary school education with us. Over the past twelve months we have seen a large number of children joining the school across all years with approximately 60 more children in the school in July 2022 than in October 2020.

The school is nearly at capacity, student wise, and this has created pressure in relation to having enough space and resources to support all our children. The increased funding received, simply through having more children, has given the school greater financial security, although there are concerns over what the forthcoming year will bring and how that will affect this situation.

The last twelve months has been challenging following what was an extremely difficult period for everyone. It has become clear that lockdowns, restricted access to support and reduced socialising has affected the development of a large number of children. The school has had to be inventive, supportive, encouraging and patient in meeting the needs of many children and families. Some children have been tentative of returning to school full-time and have been carefully supported to come back into St Martin's. Some children have missed significant parts of their initial education, the foundation stones of their learning, and significant effort has been made to make sure not only have those foundations been built but they have been further supported to make progress towards where they would be expected to be. This has been no small task.

The school has introduced an Inclusion Hub, a facility where children with particular needs that may not be addressed in a mainstream classroom are supported by an experienced teacher and two experienced teaching assistants. Each child has an individualised learning plan based on their relational, SEMH and academic needs and is supported to meet their individual needs and there is close working with families to maintain progress outside of school. The Governing Board has worked hard with the school to evaluate the difference the Hub is making and to make sure the school is making good use of its budget. This will continue as the Hub is evolving and the needs of our children change continually. The Governing Board is aware of the difficulties children and families face in accessing support beyond St Martin's, i.e., accessing Special Schools, so is keen to ensure all children are supported. Overall, the Hub is assessed by the Governing Board as being successful with progress being made by the children using it (measured through a decrease in dysregulation, an increase in attendance alongside carefully assessed scaffolded steps in their academic journey), positive feedback received from parents, children displaying less anxiety and other teachers reporting increased time to focus on the needs of other children in their classes.

The Governing Board has maintained its focus on all children and supported the school in developing approaches to stimulate and inspire all abilities. From tasks to enrich children's lives to tasks that push and challenge our more-able children there have been many separate pieces of work that have added to the educational experience of every child. One aspect of particular note has been the development of conscious and caring citizens. The school has considered a range of topics including the Taliban taking over Afghanistan and the effect on the education of girls. This has allowed children to better understand important subjects, learn discussion skills and develop their own standards.

The school has returned to greater oversight of the progress children are making in all subjects. Statutory testing for Phonics, Key Stage 1 SATS, numerical testing in Year Four and Key Stage 2 SATS have all taken place as well as the newly introduced Reception baseline. The school has regularly undertaken its own assessments of individual children at regular stages throughout the school year. The Governing Board has scrutinised the results, acting as a critical friend to the school. It has been difficult to understand the results as it is acknowledged that the Covid pandemic has had an effect. The Governing Board has liaised with independent school improvement officers to compare progress at St Martin's with progress elsewhere. The indications are that children at St Martin's are making good progress in most years, especially in relation to their behaviours. There are children and year groups where we know additional support is required and the Board has agreed with the measures put in place for 2022/23 to address the identified challenges.

Steph Harvey was our Acting Head-Teacher at the start of the school year, was recruited (as mentioned above) during the Autumn Term and started as permanent Head-Teacher at the start of the Spring Term. She has continued to put her heart and soul into St Martin's, working incredibly hard and setting a tremendous example to all those around her. Steph's recruitment and the way she had arranged the staffing for the year ensured we had the best possible chance of stability and continuity for all classes. Even with good planning, we have experienced teachers leaving and going on maternity leave, so there has been an unavoidable number of changes in teachers and teaching staff. We understand this can be and often is disruptive to our children's education so, where possible, we have used staff familiar with children, staff are recruited due to their approach being in keeping with the school's and additional support has been provided.

One stand-out achievement during the school year was the 'Excellent' grading awarded in June 2022 by the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican, Methodist and ecumenical Schools) Inspector, through his inspection of how the school's Christian vision was demonstrated in the school and wider community. The inspection report was positive about the culture at the school, leadership, collective worship, the curriculum and equality. The

governors supported the school in the development of the school's Vision and were supportive during the inspection itself, with individual governors taking part in interviews and discussions.

Throughout the year the governors have visited the school on numerous occasions. There is a good relationship between the staff at St Martin's and the governors which means it is easy to visit the school and undertake our work. Staff are open, flexible, engaging and supportive which gives the governors the best opportunity of conducting their work effectively.

During 2021-22 we have had a strong and effective Governing Board with good numbers meaning we were nearly full. The governors are highly motivated and have been ready and willing to volunteer for new tasks. Meetings have been well-attended and individual contributions are good. Unfortunately, people move or have other pressures in their lives, so we have lost a number, mostly towards the end of the Summer Term. Efforts are underway to recruit during 2022 – 23.

See Appendix 1 for details of the membership of the Governing Board in 2021-22.

Summary of Governor Activity

Governance Development Action Plan

In order for the Governing Board to be "the best we can be for ourselves, for each other and for God's world", we have objectives that sit within the School Improvement Plan under Leadership and Management.

1: Membership, recruitment and training

The Governing Board has had a mixed year in terms of recruitment and retention. As mentioned above we have been fortunate to have a nearly a full complement of governors at certain points of the year but towards the end of the summer term we lost a significant number. During the year we recruited three new governors but we lost four and going into 2022 – 23 our numbers are lower than we would like. Thanks go to Jason Knight, Sam Jamieson, Mel Jones and Claire Morrison all of whom have contributed significantly to the operating of the Governing Board.

One significant gap we have had during the school year is that of a Minister on the governing Board. This, in the past, has proven to be an important role and has allowed the Governing Board to have strong links to the local church. Fortunately, other work conducted at the school ensured the Christian focus and vision to flourish.

Our Board has a wide set of skills with a range of confidence in their understanding of the key issues facing the school. Our more experienced governors have good levels of confidence and our less experienced governors are developing well with growing levels of confidence. A mentoring and induction process is provided for each new governor and feedback from new governors on their induction process has been positive. The Chair would like to deliver more personal support and development to new governors further to the induction provided, but this is difficult to achieve in a voluntary role and given the amount of time needed to undertake other Chair responsibilities. The quality of work undertaken by governors is good and although we are short of numbers this is made up by the amazing amount of work completed. Governors regularly go over and above what is expected so all Governing Board business is completed. Governors have demonstrated the ability to ask searching questions at Board Meetings to determine if the right actions are happening.

In school, governor training has returned to being face to face. Other opportunities are both online and in person. In house sessions regarding being trauma informed and safeguarding have been provided. Governors take advantage of numerous opportunities and there is good sharing across the Governing Board of lessons learned and information gathered at these sessions. Our training attendance has increased over the past twelve months.

All governors still have access to the National College, which the school has signed up to. This has enabled individual governors to access training events through the college as well as recording continual professional development they have completed elsewhere.

The Governing Board is confident that we have a developing, committed group of governors who are competent in what they do.

2: Leadership

The Chair of the Board has been in role for the past four years and over the past year has worked closely with the Head-teacher and the School Leadership Team to ensure the school has emerged from the pandemic positively.

He has been able to focus the energies of the Governing Board on key issues whilst making sure that basic governance roles, e.g., finance, staffing, premises, safeguarding and SEND have been fulfilled.

Leadership was a key feature of the Head-Teacher recruitment process where it was crucially important that the Governing Board held a challenging, fair process that focused on the needs of the school and the community. The Governing Board had a clear view of what was required from a permanent Head-Teacher taking the school forward and used that to select Steph Harvey. A large amount of time was given before, during and after the process and it allowed the Governing Board to work closely as a team. It allowed relationships to develop further, ensured governors learned more about each other's skills and abilities and provided a different insight into the school.

The style of governance has developed further with the examination of different year groups being trialled. It is not clear that this has been a success so the examination of different subjects will be considered during 2022 – 23. The Head-teacher has continued to value the work of the governors, has inspired different ways of thinking and has been instrumental in making the Governing Board a key part of the school.

3: Strategy, support and challenge

The School Improvement is a key part of the Governing Board's Cycle of Work and with a more detailed plan this year there was a greater level of oversight and scrutiny. Key leads from the school were identified for the SIP and governors linked in with those members of staff to understand what progress was being made. Good meetings were held throughout the year and progress was tracked closely. During July the Governing Board held a face-to-face SIP Review meeting where the key issues were discussed and recommendations made. This was the second time this approach had been used and it was found to be effective. The findings and recommendations were passed to the School Leadership Team who have incorporated them into the draft School Improvement Plan for 2022 – 23.

The approach to supporting children with Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) has remained an area of focus for the Governing Board. The ethos of the school remains very inclusive with both school and Governing Board striving to provide the best outcomes for our children. Progress has been made in the completion and management of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and this has ensured additional funding is received sooner, enabling the school to provide better support. The school has continued to make improvements in this area. The Governing Board understands the challenges the school has

experienced because of delays within the DCC 0-25 SEND Team in both delivering finalised EHCPs and determining funding levels for children. The Board is supportive of the school's efforts to address these challenges as they understand the impact this has on strategic planning for staffing and outcomes for children.

Curriculums have developed over the school year. The School Leadership Team has supported subject leaders in developing the curriculums, making sure they are relevant for all school years and complement each other where there are overlaps. During the year a number of subject leaders have changed due to staff leaving or going on leave. Where this has happened, the new staff have been supported to get up to speed. A good example of this was the handover of the Religious Education responsibility just prior to SIAMS inspection.

Greater depth has been a focus for this year with new 'Proof of Progress' Tasks being created to stimulate inspire and challenge a growing number of our children. The Governing Board has been particularly interested in this aspect and has shown a large amount of interest in the outcomes from this work.

Learning behaviours have been good, in the main, throughout the school year with low rates of exclusions and low numbers of part-time timetables. Attendance has been variable due to a combination of sickness and some reluctance of children to return to school after the pandemic. Attendance is closely monitored, and meaningful interventions are made with families to try and bring children back into the school.

Further links have been established between the school and local services. For instance, the local service that supports children bladder and bowel issues is a regular source of support to staff and families. There are good links with local Child social care and health services to support children and families, there are good connections with local churches that have ensured the presence of ministers in school during a period where there has been no dedicated minister within Cranbrook.

The budget has been well-managed for the school year and the financial position has greatly improved. The school is in a secure position, although as mentioned above there are concerned about the worsening financial climate. The Lead Governor for Finance has continued his relationship with the School Business Manager. The budget is closely overseen, well understood with good discussions over efficiency and effectiveness. The Lead Governor was one of our departing governors and he has been replaced straight away, this illustrating the value placed on this key role.

4: Ensuring accountability

Governing Board engagement with parents and the local community has improved over the last twelve months with the school capitalising on the relationships developed during the pandemic. Class Dojo has been used extensively with all children having at least one parent with access. Regular newsletters have been circulated which have included sections from the Governing Board. A survey was conducted that showed high rates of parental satisfaction. Parent Governor elections were held and both vacancies were successfully filled.

The Headteacher's annual appraisal was undertaken by a panel of governors and an external advisor during the Autumn Term to review previous and set new objectives. The new objectives related to the academic year ahead. The objective setting was followed up each term by meetings where progress was reviewed, personal development considered, and work-life balance discussed. The objectives focused on the development of the curriculums, the development of subject leaders, the support of children with SEND and

building links with the local community and partners. These have been monitored by the Governing Board throughout the school year.

Other Governor Impacts

1: Health and Safety

The focus this year has returned to more traditional forms of health and safety rather than concentrating on keeping the school safe in relation to Covid. The school continues to be well managed leaving it a safe environment for children, staff and visitors, even with obvious health and safety risks such as the Forest School and the pond. There are a surprisingly low number of incidents due to the vigilance of the School Business Manager. One area that continues to grow and falls within this area is information safety and security. The school has developed good measures and closely monitors all incidents and issues. The Lead Governor for Health and Safety and Premises has a good relationship with the School Business Manager, this allowing the Governing Board to have a good understanding of what is happening at the school.

2: East Devon Church Schools Partnership (EDCSP)

The East Devon Church School Partnership has continued with Withycombe Raleigh Primary School and the Otter Valley Federation as part of a collaboration agreement. As pressures grow on individual schools there is less and less time to collaborate, but the Head-Teachers have continued to work together to learn from each other, share ideas and act as sounding boards. At a Governing Board level, the interaction has been limited and is an area that needs to be reviewed moving forward.

3: Policies and budget review

The lead governors review all policies on a regular basis. This is not a tick box exercise; rather each policy is given careful scrutiny and updated as needed. In all our work, but particularly in this area, our impact has been all the greater thanks to having an excellent Clerk to the Governors, Jacqueline Brooks, whose record keeping, and reminders enable us to function as a Governing Board.

4: Financial management and care for buildings

The School Business Manager, Brigid Thompson, provides succinct financial reports that allows the Governing Board to monitor the budget at regular points during the financial year. As already reported the Lead Governor for Finance manages this specifically for the board but this is an area where this is reinforced by Full Governing Board oversight. The School Business Manager regularly attends Full Governing Board meetings to answer questions and discuss financial matters.

The buildings continue to be well looked after and set a brilliant example for our children. Repairs are completed promptly with nothing allowed to dull a brilliant learning environment. Space at the school is limited, especially with the school being full, and strategically there has been much discussion over best use of space, extensions and stand-alone additional facilities. These continue to be explored with the Governing Board fully involved through the Lead Governor and the full Board.

4: Governor visits and input to the school

Governor visits resumed during the year with many visits taking place. Governors were a regular feature of the school day and staff became increasingly familiar with all of the governors.

Several governors have maintained or resumed their volunteering at the school, e.g., class support in maths, and this enables them to gain different perspectives.

The blend of skills provided by a small group of governors is impressive, e.g., HR, Finance, Leadership, Analysis, Surveys, Safeguarding, teaching, and community work. This supports the Governing Board being open-minded, receptive to new ideas, motivated and constructive.

5: School Christian Ethos

As a Voluntary Aided (VA) school the Board, and in particular the Foundation governors, are responsible for upholding and contributing to the Christian ethos of the school. Every Governing Board meeting and committee begins with prayer and ends with the question "How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school?". Having to answer this question reminds the Governors of their particular role in improving this.

Responses recorded in recent Governing Boards are set out below and help to demonstrate the impact of the Board with regards to Christian distinctiveness.

September 2021

- Conversations about data show the focus that the GB has on SEND/disadvantaged and demonstrate that St. Martin's is inclusive to all.
- RG feels that this GB is able to make informed decisions based on good-quality discussions
- There have been improvements in how governance is working
- Governor involvement in reviewing and monitoring the SIP has been greater, and there is more involvement from governors in seeing and supporting how the school works. The current GB is small and there is a need to recruit more governors, but those governors on the Board are hardworking, reliable, and committed to their roles and the school.
- The GB aspires to be seen as supporting all teachers and not just SLT.

October 2021

- Positive to see people's roles being valued, especially when it relates to support staff who may not receive as much acknowledgement as teachers
- The oversight of finances and how spending benefits children is evidence of good governance
- In classes, teachers are leading weekly reflections on what has been done to benefit the school and contribute to its Christian distinctiveness to echo this happening at Full GB meetings.
- The GB is now nearly full – this demonstrates the huge commitment from governors to the school and the children.

December 2021

- It has demonstrated the increased number of governors on the Governing board on how the board is now able to have a greater scope supporting children

- A continued focus on the outcomes being achieved for our children, especially developing their connections with their faith.
- A strong focus on the next stages for the school and stimulating a further discussion about how the school operates going forward.
- A growing confidence among the Governing Board to offer challenge and be a critical friend to the school

February 2022

- RG – the discussion around the proposal for a new extension and the support for this shown by the Board demonstrates that governors see and understand the need that exists for further space.
- JK – feels that the discussions around the role of the new Deputy Headteacher will be good for creating capacity
- JC – the discussions around the budget position focused on how it can be used to benefit the children. Looking to recognize and reward teaching assistants for the hours they work will be positive and in turn benefit the children.

March 2022

- The reports from governors highlight good governance and the depth and quality of the reports demonstrates the knowledge of the Board
- The enthusiasm of the Board is evidenced within the discussion
- The focus is always on the children and the impacts for them
- Governors understand that it is important to move things forward, but governance should not just be about compliance – the children are at the heart of it all.

April 2022

- LK – refining the structure of strategic governance will help support the long-term vision of the school
- RG – it is very clear that the GB wants to be best prepared as possible and as knowledgeable as possible in case of an Ofsted or SIAMS inspection. This is a credit to the governors.
- JE – the sharing of governance resources and governors circulating training outcomes/information amongst themselves is very useful and makes governance more efficient.

May 2022

- The values of the school and care for the children have clearly been the focus of the training
- All children should be given the opportunity to succeed, including those who need the most support
- The training has reflected the school's ethos of being brave and living life in all its fullest. Sometimes learning has to be about how to feel and be safe, before moving onto academic learning.
- The relationships and trust the children build with the staff team reflects the Christian sense of faithfulness
- The children know that this school is there for them, even when they have moved up to secondary.

May 2022

- JK – the outreach Hub work planned demonstrates the school's ethos and its Christian distinctiveness
- RG – the effective management and oversight of the budget to ensure it can be best spent for the benefit of the children reflects the ethos
- JC – the meeting has validated how school is being run, even though SLT is reduced in number due to staff sickness. The GB all support the way in which SH and the rest of SLT are running the school. The increasing pupil numbers demonstrate how well-regarded the school is.
- JE – the meeting has provided opportunities for sharing information on training and resources available to both governors and staff which will lead to development of governor understanding of children's needs.

July 2022

- SH - everything the GB does contributes to the success of the school and is a shared endeavour with staff. This was shown in the way governors contributed to the SIAMS inspection.
- Governors are always looking to see how they and the school can continue improving
- The GB have contributed significantly to the development of next year's SIP, and this was done with impacts for children as the driving force.

Collective Worship has continued to develop over the last twelve months, even without the presence of local minister. The school has worked hard to develop its Christian vision and the success of this was evidenced by the 'Excellent' SIAMS grading mentioned earlier. The following paragraph within the SIAMS inspection report states:

'Collective worship is a living expression for the vision. Rich, imaginative worship experiences readily engage pupils. It has an impact far beyond the school, building community around it. This consistently inspires pupils, notably to become agents for change making a real difference to others.'

Conclusion

Through all of the Governing Board meetings, our activity in and around the school, our learning and our discussions we are clear that the children are the centre of everything at St Martin's.

The Governors believe that our best impact can be seen through a school that continues to have a strong vision, an ethos of care, Christian Values and strives to support and inspire children, staff and families to be the best they can be.

Appendix 1 – Governing Board Membership 2021-22

Steph Harvey	Headteacher
Russ Green	Staff Governor and Lead for Parent and Christian Community Links
John Clements	Foundation Governor, Chair of Governors and Lead for Safeguarding
Jason Knight	Foundation Governor, Vice-Chair and Lead for Finance
Sam Jamieson	Foundation Governor and Lead for Staffing
Liz Kane	Local Authority Governor and Lead for Early Years
Gemma Tozer-How	Parent Governor and Lead for Data and Curriculum
Jennifer Elliott	Foundation Governor and Lead for Health & Safety and Premises
Mel Jones	Parent Governor
Claire Morrison	Foundation Governor and Lead for SEND & Inclusion
Vacancy	Foundation Governor
Vacancy	Foundation Governor