

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL
GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

FULL GOVERNING BOARD - VIRTUAL		DATE:	12th December 2022
CHAired BY: John Clements (JC)		CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)	
GOVERNORS PRESENT:		Also Present:	
Steph Harvey (SH) John Clements (JC) Russ Green (RG) Liz Kane (LK) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE) Anna Wade (AW)			
APOLOGIES: Rev. Jon Holder (JH)			
Absent without apology:			

Governor questions are highlighted in grey

Agenda Items	
1.	<p><u>Opening Prayer & Welcome</u></p> <p>1. Opening Prayer taken by JC. JC welcomed all to the meeting, especially AW, who has recently been appointed a Parent Governor on the Board.</p>
2.	<p><u>Apologies and sanctions of absence.</u></p> <p>1. JH had sent apologies which were sanctioned by the GB.</p>
3.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest & Correspondence</u></p> <p>1. No declarations of interest.</p> <p>2. No correspondence.</p>
4.	<p><u>Approval of minutes from last meeting (7.11.22) and update on actions</u></p> <p><u>1. Approval of 7.11.22 meeting minutes</u> Agreed as accurate by the Full GB – to be signed by the Chair when next in school.</p> <p><u>2. Update on actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1 – this is in process. There are plans to review the meals provider as well as dinner costs. BT will feedback to the GB when this review has been completed.

- Action 2 – reviewing FISH letting costs is on hold whilst the school waits to hear whether the move of FISH to Younghayes Centre.

The GB agreed to enter Part 2 to discuss one of the action updates in further detail.

The GB then agreed to return to Part 1.

3. Update on plans to close Jackie Box Memorial Fund.

JB advised that she has now obtained the necessary forms to be able to apply to close the account.

Decisions:

- **The GB agreed to close the account**
- **The GB agreed that Russ Green (RG) would be added as an authorised signatory so that he and JB can complete the documentation to close the account.**
- **The GB agreed to pass the following resolution with respect the of the Jackie Box Memorial Fund:**

We resolve that:

- ***If we add or remove Authorised Signatures in the ‘Add or Remove individuals’ sections of the form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form’s ‘About your business’ section***
- ***If we change the signing rules in the ‘Account Signing Rules’ section of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form’s ‘About your business’ section***
- ***The Bank can phone the individuals we’ve identified as ‘Call Back Contacts’ to confirm or correct any instructions or information that we’ve given the Bank***
- ***and the current mandate will continue as amended***

5. Headteacher Report and Data

1. Headteacher Report.

This had been circulated to the GB prior to the meeting.

Attendance

JE noted that the most recent attendance figures were very low and asked for clarification of the reasons for this, and what actions had been taken to address this.

SH explained that nationally, there has been a high level of sickness amongst children and consequently a high level of absence from school. The GB noted that the national school attendance rate for the previous week had been 91% but that St. Martin’s was higher than this. The school has had children who have had illnesses such as tonsillitis and Strep A – there have been high rates of legitimate illness.

SH advised the GB that further to the high level of illness in school, attendance figures are also being impacted by there being a number of children at St. Martin’s who should be in specialist education but are not. SH has been asking for three children who have significant SEN (and significant absence) to be under different scrutiny, but DCC is not acknowledging the level of need that exists. SH gave the example of one child who the EWO had told the school needed to be in school one hour a day. However, they came in but then climbed over the school fence and left.

AW noted that at specialist schools, attendance rates are treated differently to mainstream and that over 90% attendance is seen as positive. AW asked whether the Hub could be treated as specialist provision, given that external professionals as have assessed a number of children in the Hub as needing specialist provision and the Hub is providing this.

SH advised that she has been fighting for the specialist needs and provision at St. Martin’s to be recognized as such. She has also been fighting to be awarded the increased funding that would be

allocated if some of the children in the Hub were in provision that has been categorized as specialist. The staffing cost for the Hub is approximately £100,00/year but the school is funded for very little. This means that running the Hub within the current financial system will become unfeasible without increased funding.

AW advised that from her role in a specialist school, primary specialist places are almost non-existent. Where she works there tend to be at least four consultations for each place.

The GB discussed that at primary level, schools are not allowed to say that they cannot meet the needs of children, but this raises the question of how can schools improve attendance for some children if they are not being educated in the correct setting? SH raised that the school is being expected to have 90% of pupils working at age-appropriate levels, but questioned how this was achievable when 30% of the pupils at St. Martin's have significant SEN.

SH advised the GB that to date, she is not receiving any response from DCC regarding the concerns she is raising.

Great Model of Teaching

JC referred to the Great Model of Teaching and the fact that there had been some cases of low morale amongst staff following its introduction. JC asked how staff morale was now and if it seemed more positive.

RG advised that there has been a definite change in mood amongst the staff following a staff meeting where it was clarified that the purpose of the model was to create a consistency of shared language and to share the positive things that everyone does. The intention was to enable a shared understanding of the school's aims and values to support the staff team as it grows with new staff. Newer staff from a different school are adjusting to the St. Martin's ethos and RG feels that steps forward are happening; that people are understanding the aims of the model more and seeing the positives. He gave an example of this being that the staff team at the recent Year 3 sleepover had all worked very well together.

SH commented that there has been quite a lot of change within the staff team, and she feels that some people aligned their unhappiness around change/being unsettled with the model being introduced. She said staff are now adopting and using it.

SH advised that she continues to have concerns around being able to retain the St. Martin's ethos following so much staff change. Work is ongoing to create a new team from existing and new members of staff. SH is encouraging people to use the staff room more as some staff are moving from a school with less of a staff room culture.

The GB discussed that there have also been changes in the leadership structure and that the current model has only been in place since the start of this term, so is still very new. Developing clarity around leadership roles and responsibilities (a SIP action) continues to be a process. SH is working towards being more just the strategic lead and AH to become the person people go to with queries.

Partnership working with other schools

(i) East Devon Church Schools Partnership Committee

JC raised with the GB that the EDCSP have been reviewing the structure of meetings for the Committee. Up until last term, the Committee has been meeting on a termly basis, but it has been raised that to make the best use of governor time and availability, it could be more beneficial if the Committee only meets when there is a specific reason to do so. The Headteachers from all the school continue to meet regularly and will feedback key issues to governors as needed. Governors from each school will be invited to attend the first meeting of the year when the School Improvement Plan is discussed and approved, and also to the SIP Review meeting at the end of the year so that practice and ideas can be shared.

(ii) Willowbrook

SH advised that the school is informally partnering with Willowbrook as they have a similar demographic. Staff have been visiting each other's schools to share learning and practice.

(iii) On Track (specialist ASD school)

St. Martin's has 10% of its children on the Autism pathway. SH and RG have been informally meeting with Simon Wood from On Track, and Simon has written a report endorsing that the provision that the Hub provides and has advised that the level and nature of provision is equivalent to that of a specialist Communication and Interaction Hub.

(iv) Milford School (complex special needs school)

To inform how St. Martin's can work best with a number of non-verbal and some non-relational children coming through Nursery and Reception, SH is obtaining additional input from Milford.

The GB noted that both On Track and Milford have observed that some children who are in the Hub at St. Martin's would meet the criteria for places at their specialist settings.

The GB agreed to enter Part Two to discuss aspects of the Hub in more detail.
The GB agreed to return to Part One.

GTH raised that it had been evident from the OfSTED inspection recently at her place of work that inspectors had not made any allowances for those with complex needs and had judged them in the same way as people working at mainstream level. GTH advised that inspectors did not seem to have any understanding that this was not always appropriate.

2. Data

The GB noted that the IDSR (Inspection Data Summary Report) has been published but noted that the report does not acknowledge that in one year group there are eleven EHCPs or reflect the focus and input put into supporting these children.

JC reflected that the data for Phonics and KS2 is in line with expectations but KS1 is not – he noted that this reflected the impact on the high level of need has on data but shows that where SEND is less of an issue, the school is doing well regarding data outcomes. The GB discussed that if the children with EHCPs could be disappplied, then this would create a fairer playing field when comparing data between schools.

Behaviour Principles

SH raised with the GB that the leadership team had felt that it was timely to review and revisit the behaviour principles to make them more memorable. SH shared with the GB some of the suggested mnemonics that had been suggested by staff, some of which linked to the St. Martin story and governors shared their thoughts. LK noted that some of the suggestions tied in with the ETHOS Group aims and JE commented that these plans tied in well with Governance guidance that behaviour principles should be clearly known and shared.

The GB agreed to approve the direction of this review and were supportive of the move to make the school's values more meaningful and actively used in school. It was noted that the GB is responsible for approving the final version of the Behaviour Principles.

Actions: SH to consult with children and the ETHOS Group and then to feedback to the GB.

6. Finance

1. Budget Monitor had been circulated prior to the meeting. LK advised the GB that the surplus has improved slightly and there has been some increase in nursery income. The level of pay awards is now known and has been able to be confirmed within the budget. The school is looking at holding a carryforward in 2023-24 of £58,672. The GB noted the previous year's carryforward had been over £200,000 but this has been needed this year to cover costs.

SH informed the GB that there are likely to be difficult times ahead with regards to the school's budget. Decisions have had to be made to not replace staff who have recently left to avoid having to make redundancies in the future.

JC asked if there were any indications of there being any additional funding available to schools. SH advised that there were not.

2. Virements

Lk advised that BT had requested approval from the GB for a virement to re-distribute the £15,000 set aside for a building project that is no longer needed. This was as follows: £15,000 be moved from the Premises cost centre to the ICT budget and the General Curriculum budget (£7,500 in each budget).

Decision: The GB agreed to approve this virement.

7. Governance

1. Devon Education Forum (DEF) data report

JC attended the recent DEF meeting and had shared the data report for the county with the GB. It was noted that Devon provides significantly less specialist school places than other Local Authorities. Devon also has higher rates of EHCPs in state schools.

LK observed that during the recent Devon Funding Consultation process, it appeared very intentional that DCC were keeping children in mainstream settings and planning to decrease specialist places. SH advised that children will no longer be placed in independent specialist schools now by DCC. The GB noted that the report included comparisons for Devon Key Stage data with national data and that Devon is generally lower than national averages data-wise in Key Stage 1.

2. GB Self-Evaluation Planning

The GB agreed that given the recent changes in Board membership it would be more meaningful to undertake this evaluation in the Spring term when hopefully governor numbers have increased.

3. Newsletter item planning

JE has recently provided an item for the newsletter, providing an insight into her roles as a Foundation Governor and a volunteer in school. The GB discussed that it would be good for each governor to write a newsletter item about their governor experience of their areas of responsibility.

4. Reports from governors who have attended training this term and review of impacts for the GB.

These are as follows:

- JC attended the Devon Education Forum, questioning and challenging a number of areas, including Early Years
- JE undertook the OfSTED for Early Years training. JE recommended that the GB reads and familiarized themselves with the OfSTED Q cards published by the Governance Consultancy Team to support preparing for an inspection. JE advised that it had also been highlighted during the training that governors should be able to confirm that the school has an Equality Policy in place (and how this is monitored) and be aware of the Seven Principles of Public Life. The GB noted that the school does hold an Equality policy which is reviewed in line with the policy review schedule – discussion regarding the planned Equality Audit is item 10 on this meeting's agenda. The Seven Principles of Public Life form part of the GB's agreed Code of Conduct.

Governors were advised that the school has decided to end its subscription to the National College.

Action: All governors who have completed training on the National College site to download their certificates and send to JB.

	<p><u>5. Governor impacts and engagement this half-term</u> Identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTH has been in school, working with AH and observing Maths practice. GTH reported that it was good to see teaching in action. She will be repeating her visit in the Spring term to see the development of Master of Number and which resources are being used. • JE continued her EYFS work following her October visit, triangulating evidence through seeing books, speaking to children, and talking to staff. • JC and LK attended events run by Years 5 and 6 which were opportunities for children to demonstrate and talk about their work. • JE, LK and JC were the governor panel for a permanent exclusion – this was a significant piece of work, and a difficult but important part of the governor role. • GTH attended the Sharing Assembly and felt this had been a very positive experience. • JC supported and attended the Carol Singing around Cranbrook
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p><u>1. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</u> The new model policy published by the Governance Consultancy Team has been prepared and tailored to St. Martin's by JW and reviewed by JC.</p> <p>Decision: The GB agreed to adopt the new model Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.</p> <p><u>2. 2022-23 Safeguarding Audit Outcomes and Action Plan</u> This had been circulated prior to the meeting. Action points were noted and approved by the GB. Safeguarding will now be a standing agenda item for the GB. The GB heard how safeguarding is also a focus at staff meetings and that the school is working to increase the numbers of contacts parents provide for children – it is difficult when parents only provide one contact.</p> <p>JE noted that it is important that staff are well prepared in terms of understanding how to approach raising concerns they may have with children and asked how staff do this.</p> <p>SH advised that staff used the 'tell me, explain, demonstrate' approach when asking children questions. Staff are always vigilant and their recording on CPOMS is good. SH raised that the school is looking to develop the use of family phenograms and body maps in its recording of safeguarding information and concerns.</p> <p><u>3. Termly Data Update.</u> SH shared this term's data with the GB.</p> <p>The GB agreed to enter Part 2 to discuss aspects of the data and support from social care services in more detail. The GB agreed to return to Part 1.</p> <p>The GB noted that more social care concerns are being seen and this is evidence that families are struggling. The school is working with Family Centre in the TAF (Team around the Family) process so that other agencies have a clearer picture of needs and concerns. The school is seeing difficulties with staffing within social care which has an impact for families as there is less consistency for them as to who their designated worker is.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Leadership & Teachers' Pay Review 2021-22</u></p> <p>1. JC confirmed to the GB that the L&T Pay Committee had reviewed the salaries of teachers and leadership staff – this had included receiving recommendations from SH and discussing these with AH. JC advised that the reviews had shown that the school has a highly skilled staff team. The Pay Committee approved the salary recommendations SH had made and approved the salary decision for SH following her Headteacher appraisal.</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Equality Audit 2022-23</u></p> <p>1. This is in the planning stages at present and JW and SH are aiming to undertake the full audit in the Spring term. The plan is that governors will discuss and monitor any action plan put in place because of the audit.</p> <p>JC advised that in his view he has no concerns around equality in school – inclusivity is an embedded behaviour and approach.</p> <p>JE raised that during her Early Years visit, she had been aware of some concerns as to whether Little Wandle resources were sufficiently diverse.</p> <p>SH confirmed that she had been made aware of these concerns through the parent questionnaire and she will be reviewing whether the diversity of resources could be improved. Governors were advised that more books have been purchased for the school library which represent greater diversity.</p> <p>The GB heard that Bridget Matthews, a member of the admin team, had provided SH with a recording of a choir singing Christmas carols in Ukrainian and suggested it could be played during the advent assembly, given the school has children from the Ukraine. SH had played it when lighting the second candle of Advent (Peace) and this had been very much appreciated by the Ukrainian families present.</p>
	<p><u>Discussion: 'How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the school?'</u></p> <p>1. Identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LK – the meeting has heard lots of questioning, and checking that actions are being taken. It had been a very active meeting with questions answered well. • SH – level of commitment from governors is evident, from external training to sharing learning points. This is very valuable. • RG – the depth of discussion at this meeting shows openness and honesty, which benefits all • GTH – the detailed discussion around the Hub provision and the passion around supporting all children was at the heart of the meeting. <p>JC gave thanks to SH, RG, and the staff team. This has been a difficult term, and staff have shown fortitude and commitment, and this is greatly valued by the GB.</p>

<u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u>		
<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. Consult with children and the ETHOS Group and then to feedback to the GB on reviewed Behaviour Principles.	SH	27.2.23
2. Governors who have completed training on the National College site to download their certificates and send to JB.	All governors	10.2.23
3. Complete process with RG to add him as a signatory to the Jackie Box Memorial Fund account and then to close the account.	JB and RG	27.2.23

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- The GB agreed to close the Jackie Box Memorial Fund account.
- The GB agreed that Russ Green (RG) would be added as an authorised signatory so that he and JB can complete the documentation to close the account.
- The GB agreed to pass the following resolution with respect the of the Jackie Box Memorial Fund:

We resolve that:

- *If we add or remove Authorised Signatures in the ‘Add or Remove individuals’ sections of the form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form’s ‘About your business’ section*
 - *If we change the signing rules in the ‘Account Signing Rules’ section of this form, the Bank will update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we specify in this form’s ‘About your business’ section*
 - *The Bank can phone the individuals we’ve identified as ‘Call Back Contacts’ to confirm or correct any instructions or information that we’ve given the Bank*
 - *and the current mandate will continue as amended*
- The GB agreed to approve the virement detailed at item 6.2.
 - The GB agreed to adopt the new model Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

Next meeting: Monday, 16th January 2023 at 6.00-8.00pm (GB Training Session)

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date: