

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

FULL GOVERNING BOARD		DATE:	22nd May 2023
CHAired BY: John Clements (JC)		CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)	
GOVERNORS PRESENT:		Also Present:	
John Clements (JC) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE) Rev. Jon Holder (JH) Amy Hardinge (AH) Brian Gravenor (BG) Ruth Marsh (RM)		Brigid Thompson (BT), School Business Manager – in part	
APOLOGIES: None			
Absent without apology: None			

Governor questions are highlighted in grey

Agenda Items	
1.	<u>Opening Prayer & Welcome</u> 1. Opening Prayer taken by BG.
2.	<u>Apologies and sanctions of absence.</u> 1. None
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest & Correspondence</u> 1. No declarations of interest. 2. No correspondence.
7.	<u>Finance</u> <u>1. 2023-24 Budget</u> The proposed budget and explanatory notes had been circulated prior to the meeting. Carryforward is £199,000. There is a projected overspend of £63,000 for the year, which would leave £136,000. BT and the SLT are looking carefully at this carryforward to identify spending priorities which will link with Pupil Premium and the School Improvement Plan (SIP). One line of enquiry relates to potentially replacing the yurt with a new building to provide a more practical/private space which could be used for PPA or confidential meetings. GTH advised that if the school does join a MAT, then any carryforward would go to the pooled MAT budget so it would be worth considering whether it would

be more beneficial to the school to use it now. RM asked if the same would happen if the school joined a Management Partnership – BT confirmed it did not.

JE referred to there having been plans previously to replace the yurt and asked if they had proved to be too expensive to undertake. BT advised expense had not been the issue. The purpose of the building had not been fully defined before and therefore had not been taken forward.

BG asked if building plans would need to involve DCC and if this could delay works being undertaken. BT advised this would not be necessary – it would be more likely that the Diocese would be involved if planning was required, although depending on the type of structure, this may not be necessary.

JH advised the GB that the Church are planning a potential build on the land they own by the school and there could be the potential for there to be some use of this by the school. This can be discussed when the Church's plans are more developed.

JC asked what pay award has been allowed for in the budget this year. BT has considered the risks involved in not yet knowing what the award will be and allocated 5% for teachers which she believes to be a reasonable estimate. It is possible that the government may retrospectively provide some funding towards any increased pay award.

Decision: The GB agreed to approve the 2023-24 budget.

The GB gave their thanks to BT for all her work on the budget as this has been significant.

(BT left the meeting)

4. Approval of minutes from last meetings (20.3.23 and 24.4.23) and update on actions

1. Both sets of minutes agreed as accurate by the Full GB and signed by the Chair.
2. Actions from 20.3.23 meeting: all completed except action 3 which is due in May.
3. Actions from 24.4.23 meeting: not completed as not due until end of the term.

5. School Development

1. The GB and SLT recently hosted Q&A sessions with the CEOs (and additional key Trust staff) from the following MATs:

- ACE
- First Federation
- Ventrus
- St. Christopher's

The GB used the same question template to ask about a number of aspects about the Trust with each MAT for consistency. Governors considered how well each Trust aligned with the values and ethos of St. Martin's and which Trusts promoted a collaborative approach which would honour and retain the St. Martin's approach. Governors asked AH for additional feedback from other members of SLT to inform their reflections. The GB are keen to ensure that staff feel that this process is being undertaken with them, and not to them. It was noted that BT has been asked to make additional enquiries around financial aspects to being part of a MAT, as well as to confirm the exit fees that a MAT may impose if the school joins a management partnership with them but then elects not to join the Trust.

The GB agreed to enter Part 2 to discuss their reflections of the Q&A sessions.
The GB agreed to return to Part 1.

The GB agreed to now plan and undertake more visits to schools within the MATs to gain further information and to assess whether presentations/answers from the MAT CEOs match what is seen on a day-to-day basis in the schools.

6. Headteacher Report – Questions from Governors

1. This had been circulated prior to the meeting. JE noted that there was a -9.4% difference in attendance rates between Year 5 boys with EHCPs in St. Martin's and the same group nationally and asked whether AH had identified reasons for this. AH advised that it is a very narrow demographic. Within this group there is one child who has extremely low attendance which is impacting upon the data, as opposed to there being a trend of low attendance within a large number of pupils. The overall level of persistent absenteeism in Year 5 is better at St. Martin's than nationally.

JE asked what strategies are being used to support the child with very this low attendance. AH advised that the school is working in line with external services as appropriate and is also liaising with the Education Welfare Office and the 0-25 SEND team. The child is being seen in school once a week.

JC noted that the school has recently admitted a number of asylum-seeking children and asked what the impacts of this had been – both positive and negative. AH advised that it has been really positive to see that the children have fully integrated into school life. They are all being educated within their classes, and one has already attended their first school trip. One child who found joining the school very difficult has now started to settle better which is also positive. The main challenge has been resourcing the additional support the children need. Additional TAs who had been allocated to Year 3 classes to help progress attainment are now solely with one child due to their language needs and to help them settle. BT and AH are exploring potential additional support from a local interpreter to support the children. GTH observed that the children having the opportunity to attend school is very positive as the women and children have been housed in a very isolated location with no other services or facilities nearby.

JC referred to the percentage of children with SEND having decreased to 21% and asked if this had impacted upon attendance data in any way e.g., do children with more complex SEND have lower attendance and if so, does this mean the SEND attendance data now looks worse. AH advised that there has not been any impact on attendance seen from this. The majority of the children who have been removed from the SEND register had only had some additional speech and language input when younger and did not meet the criteria for having SEND.

JC asked for an update on the teacher/HLTA recruitment. It was possible to appoint to the full time Year 1 post, but the 0.5 Reception post remains unfilled. AH is considering re-advertising, but potentially as an 0.8 post. This would be the 0.5 teaching hours, plus 0.3 to cover for ECTs (Early Career Teachers) and to release teachers time for pupil conferencing. The closing date for applications to the HLTA post is coming up shortly so AH will be able to advise further on this after half term.

JC asked what impacts had been seen as a result of the Mastering Number project. AH advised that at the recent teacher interviews, it was evident how good Reception and Year 1 children's knowledge is of Maths language and how well the children are able to articulate their understanding of number.

JE asked AH to explain more about the proposed changes for staff to use the Evolve system more. AH explained that Evolve is an online platform which the school currently uses for planning and approving residential trips. It is proposed that staff use the platform to plan all trips to ensure a more efficient use of their time.

GTH referred to the ongoing development of governor visibility around school and suggested there could be a GB table at the upcoming Summer Fayre.

	<p>Action: GTH to liaise with NP to arrange a GB table at the Summer Fayre.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>1. JC is meeting with AH to discuss objectives and reflect on work/life balance (the latter being currently extremely challenging) – this is part of the appraisal process.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><u>1. Headteacher Appraisal Committee 2023-24</u> Decision: It was agreed that BG, JE and GTH would form this Committee. Actions: JB to discuss HT appraisal training with Committee members and liaise with members and external adviser regarding setting dates.</p> <p><u>2. GB Self-Evaluation exercise</u> The summary report and action plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. Key items are around exploring how to create a more diverse membership of the GB and considering approaching local businesses to recruit new governors.</p> <p>GTH raised that it would be beneficial to review the Cycle of Work to remove any duplication across different Lead Governor areas. GTH also proposed governors communicate more amongst themselves and notify each other when they are visiting school. This could then mean governors can obtain/discuss information from/with each other and use this in their reports. The GB agreed that they will email the GB to notify each other when they are planning a visit.</p> <p><u>3. Review of governor terms of office and forthcoming vacancies</u> There are no governors whose term of office is ending shortly, although JC will be resigning at the end of this term. Staff Governor elections were held recently, but there were no nominations. This will be re-run in the Autumn term, along with the Parent Governor election. There is one application for a Foundation Governor currently being processed. JB advised that the appointing bodies for Foundation Governors are currently being reviewed and there may be amendments needed to the Instrument of Government depending on the outcomes.</p> <p><u>4. Affirm timings of SIP Review session 3.7.23</u> It was agreed that the time of this session will be changed from 12-3pm as currently planned to 6-8pm on the same date.</p> <p><u>5. Reports from governors who have attended training and impacts for GB</u> RM has received her finance training from BT. JH has completed his New Governors course at the Diocese.</p> <p>Upcoming training: RM has her induction planned. BG has three courses to attend: Induction, SEND, understanding curriculum.</p> <p>GTH has continued to develop her understanding of the relational approach – this is through training in her workplace but is beneficial to her role as a governor.</p> <p><u>6. Governor impacts from previous half term.</u> Nearly all governors have attended the MAT Q&A sessions and been involved in undertaking research. Lead Governors have been in school meeting with their lead staff members or been in contact with them if unable to come into school. GTH is continuing her work to improve road safety in Cranbrook, meeting with parents and planning a meeting with local councillors. Governors were invited to attend the half termly Celebrating Assemblies to see the presentation of Golden Certificates.</p>

10.	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p><u>1. Nursery Admissions and Nursery Terms and Conditions</u> The admissions policy is now based on the DCC model version. Decision: The GB agreed to adopt the new Nursery Admissions policy and to approve the reviewed Terms and Conditions. Action: JB to add new versions to the school website and to update policy review schedule.</p>
11.	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>1. Safeguarding Scenario Exercise. This was led by AH. Governors discussed what they would expect a staff member's initial response would be to a child who made a disclosure and the actions they would expect the staff member to take in response. AH explained the different options available to the school to seek advice if needed (NSPCC Education Professionals service, MASH consultation) and that service responses are very dependent on the assessment as to whether there is a risk of significant harm.</p> <p>This scenario exercise was also undertaken with staff recently, and AH advised the GB that staff had considered what examples staff would log/monitor, which AH needed to know about, and when immediate attention is needed.</p> <p>JC asked what the Early Help service is in Devon currently. AH advised in Cranbrook it is Jo Westney.</p>
12.	<p><u>School Term Dates 2024-25</u></p> <p>1. The draft dates have not yet been published by DCC. This item will be carried across to the next GB meeting.</p>
13.	<p><u>Discussion: 'How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the school?'</u></p> <p>These were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of the meeting has been on what benefits the children (as also noted in the OfSTED report recently) • Governors are ensuring in their research into MAT options that the school's Christian ethos will be upheld if they do join a MAT. • Discussing impacts from the asylum-seeking children joining reinforces the school's positive approach to welcoming and supporting the children.

<u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u>		
<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. Discuss HT appraisal training with Committee members and liaise with members and external adviser regarding setting dates.	JB	10.7.23
2. Liaise with NP to arrange a GB table at the Summer Fayre.	GTH	5.6.23
3. Add new versions of Nursery Admissions policy and Terms and Conditions to the school website and to update policy review schedule	JB	12.6.23

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- The GB agreed to approve the 2023-24 budget.
- The GB agreed that BG, RM and GTH would form the Headteacher Appraisal Committee 2023-24
- The GB agreed to adopt the new Nursery Admissions policy and to approve the reviewed Terms and Conditions.

Next meeting: Monday, 12th June 2023 at 6.00-8.00pm – in school

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date: