

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

<b>FULL GOVERNING BOARD</b>		<b>DATE:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>
<b>CHAired BY: John Clements (JC)</b>		<b>CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)</b>	
<b>GOVERNORS PRESENT:</b>		<b>Also Present:</b>	
John Clements (JC) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE) Rev. Jon Holder (JH) Amy Hardinge (AH) Brian Gravenor (BG) Ruth Marsh (RM)			
<b>APOLOGIES: None</b>			
<b>Absent without apology: None</b>			

**Governor questions are highlighted in grey.**

<b>Agenda Items</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Opening Prayer &amp; Welcome</u></b> 1. Opening Prayer taken by JH.
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Apologies and sanctions of absence.</u></b> 1. None
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>Declarations of Interest &amp; Correspondence</u></b> 1. No declarations of interest. 2. No correspondence.
<b>4.</b>	<b><u>Approval of minutes from last meeting (22.5.23) and update on actions</u></b> 1. Parts 1 and 2 both agreed as accurate by the Full GB and signed by the Chair. 2. Actions from Part 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action 1 – in process. Not due for completion until 10.7.23</li> <li>• Action 2 – completed.</li> <li>• Action 3 – completed.</li> </ul> 3. Action from Part 2 – a programme of MAT school visits has been established and there is a governor attending all but one.

**Lead Governor & SIP Monitoring Reports – reports circulated prior to the meeting**

**5. Finance**

**1. SFVS action plan update: Benchmarking**

BT and JC have now completed the benchmarking exercise, although the website schools use for this only provides 2021-22 data, so is not fully reflective of the current position. Key findings when comparing the school to comparable schools were as follows – St. Martin's was:

- Lowest 10% for teaching costs
- Highest 10% for TA costs
- Lowest 20% for educational supplies costs
- Highest 20% for teacher-pupil ratios (i.e., less pupils to a teacher)

For all other areas, St. Martin's was broadly average and in line with other similar schools.

Since this 2021-22 position, the following has occurred:

- Teaching costs have risen due to more UPS teachers now being on the staff, there being additional crossover days for job shares and the cost of having a non-teaching Deputy. In addition to this, the school has employed two academic mentors for the last school year.
- Teacher-pupil ratios have risen (Holly class teacher left)

AH observed that although costs have risen, it now feels that there is a better balance between Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and more experienced teachers, whereas before there were more ECTs. She feels the staff team is building good capacity for developing middle leadership.

JC asked if AH had any areas for concern in response to the findings of the benchmarking. AH advised not given how much has changed since this data was collated.

**2. Budget Monitor**

The latest monitor has just been published. The predicted overspend has increased by £1000, leaving a predicted carryforward of approximately £135,000.

The school has received an additional £6500 for the children from asylum-seeking families.

As the "St Martin's Fundraising" cost centre was not set up in the school's Finance system in time to be included in the approved budget, BT included £5,600 in the general Curriculum budget, intending to vire it to the Fundraising budget after approval. This was the amount that was raised last year and carried forward into this year. BT asked for the GB to approve this virement.

**Decision: The GB agreed to approve the virement of £5600 from the general Curriculum budget to the Fundraising budget.**

The GB noted that due to the success of recent fundraising events, the following had been funded by monies raised:

- Music Day for Nursery – to Year 2 children
- Purchase of camping stoves for residential trips
- Cost of London Residential trip part-subsidised

JE asked if the Schools Lottery was continuing to bring monies into the school. BT confirmed that the school received approximately £1000 a year from this.

The GB noted that for the first time, the school is now full (428 pupils plus 50 children in nursery), with a full Reception intake in September (plus waiting list). This, along with finances looking secure, is very positive.

**3. Policies**

The Lead Governor had approved the reviewed Charging & Remissions policy.

	<p><b>Decision: The GB approved the reviewed Governors' Allowances and Expenses policy.</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Premises and Health &amp; Safety</u></b></p> <p>1. GTH is continuing to work on campaigning for improvements to road safety, and the establishment of a lower speed zone by the school and has gained support from Devon Councillors. The school has reviewed its Travel Plan and provided this for Cranbrook Council to consider.</p> <p><b><u>2. Policies</u></b> The Lead Governor approved the reviewed Emergency Management Plan and Lockdown Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>The GB noted that a Lockdown drill is planned very shortly. Previous drills have been very calm and smooth.</p>
	<p><b><u>Staffing</u></b></p> <p>1. It was noted that there was a substantial decrease in staff absence from the Autumn term to now. JC asked if this was usual during these periods of the year. BT confirmed that it was, given the prevalence of flus and colds in the autumn and winter months.</p> <p>The GB discussed that TA absence is higher than for other staffing groups, and this particularly relates to Early Years and KS1 TAs. Five out of six staff members currently being managed under the sickness procedures are TAs. Quite a lot of the absence is due to TAs needing to respond to family illness or issues – these absences fall outside of the managing sickness policies. These absences still have an impact in school and especially in Nursery where staffing ratios are legally required to be maintained. The GB felt it was not surprising that staff in the younger classes had more sickness due to their increased exposure to germs/illness and working with children who are too young to ensure good hygiene. It was queried whether these TAs might also be in families where their salary is the lowest and they will therefore be the one to potentially take unpaid leave to deal with family emergencies/sickness rather than a partner who might be higher paid.</p> <p>JE asked if the school could establish a cover bank of TAs or volunteers. BT explained that this is already in place and that it was more key to address the actual reasons behind the higher absence. JC asked if anything additional could be done to address the root cause of the absence. AH advised that BT is already following all the relevant procedures. The GB acknowledged that being a TA is a demanding job which is difficult to do if poorly.</p> <p>AH provided an update on current recruitment and advised that difficulties in recruiting were causing difficulties in being able to finalise planning for other areas of staffing. It was noted that difficulties in recruitment is a national issue currently.</p> <p><b><u>2. Policies</u></b> The Lead Governor had approved the reviewed Capability policy.</p> <p><i>(BT left the meeting)</i></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Leadership &amp; Management SIP Report</u></b></p> <p>1. Key points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GB visibility growing due to all governors having been in school recently.</li> <li>• Governor newsletter items have been published.</li> <li>• Governors are attending the Summer Fayre</li> <li>• Development of subject leads will continue next year's SIP.</li> <li>• Development of senior leadership skills continues as the structure changes. A key action will be to clearly identify which SLT member holds which role/responsibilities. More will be</li> </ul>

	<p>passed to MT as she takes up the Acting Deputy Headteacher role in the Autumn to enable to AH to focus on more strategic work.</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Data and Curriculum</u></b></p> <p>1. JC asked if recent Pupil Premium (PP) workshop sessions attended will inform the PP spend plan for the next school year. AH advised that staff meetings have had a focus on PP. The latest information and guidance have been shared to develop the understanding of the staff team regarding what PP is, who is eligible and how the money can be spent. SLT are considering how PP can be used best – AH has found that there is a lot of flexibility in how it can be used, and that most should be spent to benefit a much wider range of pupils.</p> <p>JC asked whether any improvements had been identified in non-Foundation subjects as a result of the implementation of the Model of Great Teaching. AH advised that more monitoring was needed to evaluate the long-term outcomes. AH has noticed staff applying various aspects of the model e.g., revisiting learning to ensure it is retained in the longer term.</p> <p><b><u>2. Policies</u></b></p> <p>The SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) policy is in the process of being reviewed. This will be approved by GTH as Lead Governor once the review is completed. JH is now taking at least one school assembly a month. AH will be working with JH to expand his role in school outside of taking assemblies.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Quality of Education SIP Report</u></b></p> <p>1. The GB noted that all action items are in process and have been part of ongoing discussions at GB meetings. Development of oracy skills is happening within Talk for Reading and class discussions.</p> <p>Governors discussed Year 2 results and the moderation that happened today. Results are not as good as previously anticipated. Reading and Maths have improved but Writing attainment has decreased, with only 30% working at ARE (age related expectations). However, moderators agreed with the judgements made by the school, which demonstrates that teachers are making accurate assessments of progress and attainment. The moderation process was very stringent, and teachers involved had prepared a huge amount of evidence in advance.</p> <p>AH advised that the following were being put in place to improve results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems will be created to ensure more careful moderating of writing – these have not previously been in place. AH and MT have acknowledged that they feel they should have been monitoring this more closely.</li> <li>• The writing curriculum in KS1 will be developed and improved to give teachers the right structure to work within. MT and AH are exploring writing practices in place at other schools to inform the improvement of the curriculum at St. Martin's. AH feels that other models can offer more. 'Talk for Writing' which is used here at present is an older system.</li> <li>• Work will be undertaken to ensure that writing skills are secured prior to Year 2.</li> <li>• Teachers will be asked to note and address any bad habits in writing more consistently. Some teachers do this more than others at present.</li> <li>• Discrete skills need further development.</li> </ul> <p>AH confirmed that content and language in writing can be excellent.</p>
11.	<p><b><u>Parent &amp; Christian Community Links</u></b></p> <p><b><u>1. SIAMS action plans</u></b></p> <p>AH has booked three sessions with the Diocese to look at creating action plans.</p>

	<p><u>2. ETHOS Group.</u> Parent feedback has been generally positive, especially around the trips the school is offering. It was noted that the Parents Meetings regarding trips was well supported/attended.</p> <p><u>3. Parent Voice.</u> <b>Action: AH will arrange a meeting, as Parent Voice have not met recently.</b> GTH will attend in her Parent Governor capacity.</p> <p>BG advised that he has attended an assembly and found it to be a joyful occasion, with a strong Christian ethos.</p>
12.	<p><b><u>Personal Development SIP Report</u></b></p> <p>1. Actions around integrating JH into the school community have been embedded. JH offered to undertake moors-specific training to be involved in any future trips if needed.</p> <p>A breadth of residential and trip opportunities has been put in place. The school is also working to create interest and momentum around trips e.g., Year 4 children will be taken to visit the year 5 camp set up next week. All year groups have had a day trip this school year.</p>
13.	<p><b><u>SEND &amp; Inclusion</u></b></p> <p>1. BG advised that from his observation visit to Holly Room he had been impressed by the skill and patience shown by staff. The caretaker, KT, is supporting some Holly class children well – they assist him with various jobs in school. One child who was previously at threat of exclusion is now attending every day and is successfully working in a 1:1 area on the corridor. This is very positive progress.</p> <p>There have not yet been any applications received for the HLTA vacancy in Holly Room.</p> <p>JC asked whether there had been any suspensions and exclusions this term. AH advised that staff have been working to reduce suspensions by using creative strategies to support children in school instead e.g., using internal seclusion, separating two children who did not manage being in the same class together. There have been two suspensions - these were for violence towards staff and persistent disruptions. These were both for children with SEND. AH feels that suspensions do not always change behaviours or improve how children are managing – the school is keen to use strategies that create change or improvements.</p>
14.	<p><b><u>Behaviour and Attitudes SIP Report</u></b></p> <p>1. Attendance is reported and discussed with each Headteacher report. The GB discussed how Learning Flowers are being used in school. They are used as a focus in celebration assemblies, and Learning Ambassadors choose one petal as a particular focus and then choose one child who is doing well in that area.</p> <p>Sue Bray has focused question sessions with the Learning Ambassadors. The meetings work well with this structure. Questions that arise from these sessions are submitted to the SLT and then SLT write back to them to provide responses and say if they have taken any actions as a result. One example was when the Ambassadors discussed safety and when/where they feel safe (or not safe) in and around school. In response, staff on the playground now wear hi-vis jackets so they are more visible, and shelters have been re-positioned so that they are more open to the playground.</p>
15.	<p><b><u>Safeguarding</u></b></p> <p>1. The GB noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JH has reviewed CPOMS processes with JW.</li> </ul>

- DCC is in the process of establishing a new platform for reporting suspensions.
- CP training arrangements have been evaluated – it was confirmed that the school has sufficient Level 3 trained staff.
- Where there are significant attendance and/or safeguarding concerns, the school is working with the relevant external support agencies.
- Online safety is appropriately covered within the existing curriculum.
- Audit action plan items are in the process of being completed.

## 2. Equality Objectives

JH and JW are in the process of reviewing these. JH is delegated to approve as Lead Governor.

### 16. Early Years

1. JC asked if there were any emerging themes with regard to needs identified in Early Years. AH advised that the main need identified related to Communication and Interaction. Impacts from the pandemic are still being seen. Signalling, pictures, and social stories are being used with children who have communication difficulties. Transition between Early Years and Key Stage 1 is being planned carefully. At St. Martin's, there is still an emphasis on learning through play, although there will still be a focus on skills such as writing.

JC asked whether impacts/improvements are seen in behaviour as children move up through the school. AH advised that one child who was initially only attending for thirty minutes a day is now attending full time as well as an after-school club and is doing so well they also received a celebration award. Consistency provided from very skilled TAs has had a very positive impact.

The GB noted that some TAs in Early Years have expressed a wish to change to a different area of the school next year – it was acknowledged that being a 1:1 TA can be a very demanding role.

### 17. Discussion: 'How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the school?'

1. Prior to identifying benefits from this meeting, the GB reviewed its meeting structure for 2023-24 and agreed the following:

- Two business Full GB meetings a term – Lead Governor and SIP report questions to be included in the second meeting.
- One Full GB meeting in September to discuss/approve the SIP and to cover GB annual housekeeping items.
- One training session at the start of the Spring term – to include the annual L2 Safeguarding refresher.
- One annual SIP Review session in July

Meetings will remain on a Monday, 6-8pm.

2. Meeting benefits identified as follows:

- Governor attendance and visibility in school has been high – this allows governors to see how the Christian ethos is reflected throughout the school.
- Children have been the key focus of all discussions e.g., when there have been staffing decisions/discussions these have been made with the priority being ensuring that there is a positive impact for the children.
- The discussion on suspensions showed a focus on keeping children safe and it being a learning experience.
- Pupil Premium discussions were also focused on how it can be used to impact the most children.
- The focus of the GB echoes the focus of the SLT, showing consistency in priorities.

<b><u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u></b>		
<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Person responsible</u></b>	<b><u>Date to be completed by</u></b>
1. Arrange a Parent Voice meeting	AH	20.7.23

**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS**

- The GB agreed to approve the virement of £5600 from the general Curriculum budget to the Fundraising budget.
- The GB approved the reviewed Governors’ Allowances and Expenses policy.

**Next meetings:**

Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 at 6.00-8.00pm – SIP Review session  
 Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 6.00-8.00pm – Full GB ‘business’ meeting

Signed as accurate by the Chair: .....

Name of Chair: .....

Date: .....