

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

<u>FULL GOVERNING BOARD</u>		DATE:	18th September 2023
CHAired BY: Brian Gravenor (BG)		CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)	
GOVERNORS PRESENT:		Also Present:	
Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE) Amy Hardinge (AH) Brian Gravenor (BG) Ruth Marsh (RM) Phil Wales (PW) Lynette Bickers (LB)		Mel Turl, Acting Deputy Headteacher	
APOLOGIES: Rev. Jon Holder (JH)			
Absent without apology: None			

Governor questions are highlighted in grey.

Agenda Items	
1.	<p><u>Opening Prayer & Welcome</u></p> <p>1. Opening Prayer taken by BG. LB was officially welcomed onto the Board, having just been appointed as a Foundation Governor.</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 (10.7.23) and update on actions</u></p> <p>1. Parts 1 and 2 both agreed as accurate by the Full GB and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>2. Update on actions from Part 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1 – Completed • Action 2 – To be completed by October half term. • Action 3 – Postponed until Full GB meeting on 16.10.23. • Action 4 – Completed and due to be approved at this meeting.

- Action 5 – On this agenda
- Action 6 - Completed

3. There were no actions in Part 2.

5. Management Partnership and School Development

1. The Draft Management Partnership Agreement between St. Martin's and Ventrus had been circulated to the GB prior to the meeting. The GB discussed the half-termly Joint Committee meetings proposed within the Agreement, and whether there could be different, more time-efficient ways of sharing feedback and any other relevant information. The Management Partnership and School Development will be a standing item at all Full GB meetings this year so there will be regular opportunities for discussion and feedback which AH can share with Ventrus at their meetings.

Action: BG and AH to discuss with Ventrus alternatives to Joint Committee meetings

Decision: The GB agreed to approve the Partnership Agreement on the proviso of alternatives being sought to the Joint Committee arrangements as detailed.

AH provided feedback on how the management partnership has been progressing to date:

- The CEO (Gary Chown – GC) and Directors of School Improvement from Ventrus met with staff last term, including SLT, teachers and a variety of support staff. Most questions submitted in advance related to what would happen if the school joined the MAT as opposed to entering a Management Partnership (and mostly regarding pay and conditions). A number of these questions had been answered from the SLT/GB research into the Trust prior to the meeting. Most staff are in a position of 'wait and see' as to how this year in the Partnership develops.
- GC has advised that the Trust is not looking to make any changes if the school joins the Trust unless there are budgetary issues that would make that necessary.
- The GB noted that leadership structures are different in Ventrus schools, as they do not have Deputy Headteachers although there are opportunities for time-limited positions as Associate Headteachers for those who are specifically seeking to progress to being Headteachers.
- Ventrus have supported SLT in drafting the SIP and recommended that it be pared to the key priorities – not all work during the year needs to be formally on the SIP.
- One of the Ventrus Directors of School Improvement has spent time in school and meeting with SLT and a variety of staff, and reported back to AH that she had found staff were very open with her. She was also very complimentary to AH about the quality of the draft SIP.
- AH and MT have discussed how future joint sessions with the Director of School Improvement could be planned to be most effective and to ensure that best value is achieved from the money that is being spent. They have identified that creating opportunities for seeking challenge and exploring Headship support would be particularly beneficial.

LB asked whether St. Martin's is clear on what it is seeking from the Partnership and what it expects. The GB advised that the following is being sought: security, support, opportunities to be outward looking (and to avoid being too standalone), collaboration, sharing of ideas, networking links and challenge. LB observed that it is clear that the school knows what it is seeking and therefore, the need now is to identify the ways to obtain/achieve this.

The GB discussed that it could be useful to have opportunities to discuss the experience of being in the Partnership without Ventrus/Diocese being present.

All governors agreed that it will be essential to be sure that continuing in a Partnership/joining a MAT is the right thing to do, and ongoing monitoring, reflection and sharing of feedback will help inform future decisions.

6. School Vision and Strategic Priorities

1. Discussion and approval of draft School Improvement Plan 23-24

AH shared the draft SIP with the GB and governors discussed each of the objectives. RM offered to share experiences of the coaching work that is undertaken at the school where she works with AH, in case this could be informative for the planned coaching at St. Martin's. It was noted that some priorities have been identified from discussions at OfSTED (improving the impacts of subject leadership) and SIAMS (developing children's spirituality). Part of the work for the latter has involved agreeing on a definition of spirituality and this will include children reflecting on impacts on themselves, families, and communities around them.

AH advised the GB that when considering outcomes for Disadvantaged pupils, the groups defined as disadvantaged have been expanded by the DfE – Disadvantaged pupils now include children with SEND and children in need of care and protection, not just those in receipt of free school meals, in military families or looked after. Therapeutic interventions and mentoring will be developed to improve attitudes and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This will build on interventions that are already embedded for specific subjects. AH explained how mentoring (with a focus of linking to learning) will be used to allocate members of staff to children who have been identified as likely to really benefit from more direct, regular support. This will link with the Model of Great Teaching and the approach of using small, sequential steps to help improve outcomes. These outcomes may not be visible within data, but it is an opportunity for the school to be innovative.

BG felt that mentoring and coaching as a SIP priority reflects the Christian values of the school.

Action: Approval of the SIP will be added to the 16.10.23 Full GB Meeting agenda to allow time for governors to fully read it through and plan questions to ask AH.

2. Agreement of SIP Governor Monitoring Leads/Teams

Action: To be added to Full GB Meeting agenda 16.10.23

3. Discuss and agree recording method for Governor SIP Monitoring

Action: To be added to Full GB Meeting agenda 16.10.23

3. Review School Vision

Governors discussed the school vision as it reads on the SIP and agreed that it did not need amending at this time.

Decision: The GB reviewed and reapproved the School Vision, with no changes.

7. Governing Board Annual 'Housekeeping' 2023-24

All documents had been circulated prior to the meeting.

1. 'Key Information for Governors September 2023'

Formally noted by the GB, no questions.

2. Review and approve Terms of Reference.

Decision: The GB reviewed and approved all Lead Governor and Committee Terms of Reference.

3. Review and approve Annual Cycle of Work (includes Lead Governors and membership of Committees).

	<p>Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GB reviewed and approved the Cycle of Work. • The GB agreed that LB would be a member of the L&T Pay Committee <p><u>4. Review and approve Code of Practice and Meeting Protocols</u></p> <p>Decision: The GB reviewed and reapproved both, with no amendments.</p> <p><u>5. Confirm all governors have signed Declaration of Business Interests form and (Chair and EY Lead Governor only) Safeguarding Declaration.</u></p> <p>All governors present reviewed and re-signed their Declarations of Business forms. BG and JE, as Chair and Lead Governor for Early Years respectively, signed the Safeguarding Declaration form.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to ensure JH reviews and re-signs his Declaration of Business Interests form at the Full GB meeting 16.10.23. <p><u>6. Confirm all governors have received and read a copy of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and confirmed this on GovernorHub.</u> KSCiE 2023 is on GovernorHub so all governors can access and read it.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to amend declarations on GovernorHub so that governors can confirm they have read the 2023 version. • All governors to confirm on GovernorHub they have read KCSiE 2023.
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>GB Impact Statement 2022-23</u></p> <p>1. This was produced by the previous Chair, JC, at the end of last term and had been circulated prior to the meeting. Governors suggested an amendment be added to explain that the Hub was a resource in place last year but not this year. Governors also discussed whether creating a standalone statement was necessary given all the information is also contained within the GB minutes which are published on the website. This will be decided upon later in the year.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to add explanatory note to explain Hub no longer in use. • JB to add in attendance table for 2022-23 • JB to publish statement on the website.
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Data Headlines</u></p> <p>1. These had been circulated prior to the meeting. JE noted that GLD (good level of development) has dropped significantly in EYFS and asked how this was being addressed. MT advised that it is a very challenging cohort, due to the number of children with EHCPs and the level of need those children have. Some children are on the waiting list of ASD assessments, and there are also some children who should really be in specialist schools. The level of need is demonstrated by the school having had support from specialist provision for the first time over the 1st year. The level of GLD had been accurately predicted by staff which demonstrates that although the cohort is challenging, staff know and understand the level of need.</p> <p>The GB were advised that the cohort in Reception is also challenging but this is being addressed through the following:</p>

- SENDCo support is enabling children who have struggled to attend in previous settings to be in school full time.
- Experienced/caring staff using a variety of effective strategies to support children.
- Directing funds to Reception and Year 1 for additional adult support
- Ongoing communication and conversations around needs

It was noted that there have been no suspensions.

AH highlighted to governors that there had been good transitions across the school as children all moved up a year group, giving the example that interventions had been up and running in the first week of term.

JE asked how these good transitions had been achieved.

MT explained that this had been achievable as so much tracking had been undertaken in the previous school year. Some intervention groups had already been established by the end of the last term, so were able to be started in the first week.

AH advised that learning behaviours were now at a good standard in Year 3 and that attention and focus have improved. Those teachers who had these classes in Year 2 have contributed greatly to these positive outcomes. Teachers understand this it is essential to understand where gaps are, as it is important to focus on children achieving GLD in Prime areas first.

Staff are also focused on ensuring that more children are securely achieving, as some children have only been borderline ARE (age related expectations). Where achievement was not as high as hoped in Phonics, this was investigated, and it was identified that the reasons for some not achieving ARE was linked to SEND and/or attendance issues.

AH believes that there have been positive outcomes from the change in ethos which has been embedded by the SENDCo. The approach now is to acknowledge that some things may be challenging for a child, but to look at how the school can support them to still do those things rather than allow the child to opt out because it is difficult.

The GB discussed that there have been differences in parenting since the pandemic. MT has seen that some parents are less resilient and are more anxious/risk averse.

BG asked if there is any link between that type of parenting and attendance issues. MT advised that there was – it is noticeable that more parents are not enforcing attendance if their children do not wish to come to school. It was noted that attendance tracking is very detailed and is used to inform any meetings with families to discuss attendance issues. Data for the last year shows an improvement in the numbers of persistent absentees, and the level of persistent absenteeism at St. Martin's is now lower than the national average. This reflects that the focus on attendance and strategies being put in place to address attendance issues are working.

BG advised he would write to staff to thank them on behalf of the GB for all the work they are putting in to improve outcomes for all children.

10. Admissions: approve draft 2025-26 policy to submission in public consultation

1. Decisions:

- **The GB agreed to amend the catchment area as suggested by DCC to allow for a new school at Monkerton.** This reduces the catchment area for St. Martin's but is unlikely to affect applications as most families in the area changing tend to choose schools closer to Exeter. Families will still be able to apply to St. Martin's but would just not have priority.
- **The GB agreed to adopt the new definition of church attendance as provided by the Diocese.**
- **The GB agreed to approve the draft policy for inclusion in the public consultation.**

Actions:

- **JB to notify DCC/Diocese of GB decisions and amendments needed to this policy.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to submit draft policy to Diocese by 1st October.
11.	<p><u>Re-appointment of IG as Associate Member</u></p> <p>1. Decision: The GB agreed to appoint IG as an Associate Member to sit on the 1st and 2nd Committees, dependent on need/availability for the term of one year (to the end of the first GB meeting in September 2024).</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to notify IG of his re-appointment. • JB to ensure IG completes a new Declaration of Eligibility and reviews/re-signs his Declaration of Business Interests.
12.	<p><u>Jackie Box Memorial Tree and Coby Simons Memorial Bench</u></p> <p>1. The GB re-affirmed that should either family wish to visit these memorials, they are welcome to do so. They are just required to contact the school in advance to agree a time.</p> <p>2. The GB agreed that arrangements for Jade Carter's family to visit her memorial tree and flower area should also be added to the cycle of work to be re-affirmed each year.</p> <p>Action: JB to update the Cycle of Work to add in Jade Carter's tree and flower area.</p>
13.	<p><u>Election of Vice-Chair of Governors and Committee Chairs</u></p> <p>1. Decision: The GB agreed to appoint LB as Vice-Chair, for the term of one year, until the end of the September 2024 Full GB meeting.</p> <p>2. Decision: The GB agreed to appoint BG as Chair of the Leadership & Teachers' Pay Committee for the term of one year, until the end of the September 2024 Full GB meeting.</p>
14.	<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. These were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus in the SIP on developing spirituality, and nurturing/mentoring approach is very Christian - BG • Analysis of data and reflections on improvements/how to improve further will benefit the children - GTH. • Pairing children with staff as part of the mentoring work is very caring and Christian - JE • The approach to supporting attendance is right i.e., caring and supportive but being clear that the child needs to be in school - RM. • There is a clear 'quest for excellence' and the wish to seek challenge will bring benefits – PW. • The meeting has demonstrated all on the GB are coming from the same place, and that everyone in school wants the best for the children.

<u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u>		
<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. Discuss with Ventrus alternatives to Joint Committee meetings	BG and AH	October half term

2. KCSiE 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend declarations on GovernorHub so that governors can confirm they have read the 2023 version. Confirm on GovernorHub they have read KCSiE 2023. 	JB	29.9.23
	All governors	16.10.23
3. GB Impact Statement 2022-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add explanatory note to explain Hub no longer in use. Add in attendance table for 2022-23 Publish statement on the website. 	JB	16.10.23
4. Draft 2025-26 Admissions Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify DCC/Diocese of GB decisions and amendments needed to this policy. Submit draft policy to Diocese 	JB	22.9.23
		1.10.23
5. Re-appointment of IG as an Associate Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify IG of his re-appointment Ensure IG completes a new Declaration of Eligibility and reviews/re-signs his Declaration of Business Interests. 	JB	16.10.23
	JB	16.10.23
6. Amend the GB Cycle of Work to add in arrangements for family to visit Jade Carter's tree and flower area (annually at September Full GB meeting)	JB	16.10.23

Items for Full GB Meeting 16.10.23 Agenda

- Approval of School Improvement Plan
- Appointment of SIP Monitoring Lead Governors/Teams
- Agreement of recording processes for governor SIP monitoring
- Ensure JH reviews and re-signs his Declaration of Business Interests form.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- The GB agreed to approve the Partnership Agreement on the proviso of alternatives being sought to the Joint Committee arrangements as detailed.
- The GB reviewed and reapproved the School Vision, with no changes.
- The GB reviewed and approved all Lead Governor and Committee Terms of Reference.
- The GB reviewed and approved the Cycle of Work.
- The GB agreed that LB would be a member of the L&T Pay Committee
- The GB reviewed and re-approved the GB Code of Practice and the Meeting Protocols, with no changes.
- The GB agreed to amend the school catchment area as suggested by DCC to allow for a new school at Monkerton.
- The GB agreed to adopt the new definition of church attendance as provided by the Diocese.
- The GB agreed to approve the draft 2025-26 Admissions policy for inclusion in the public consultation.
- The GB agreed to appoint IG as an Associate Member to sit on the 1st and 2nd Committees, dependent on need/availability for the term of one year (to the end of the first GB meeting in September 2024).

- The GB agreed to appoint LB as Vice-Chair, for the term of one year, until the end of the September 2024 Full GB meeting.
- The GB agreed to appoint BG as Chair of the Leadership & Teachers' Pay Committee for the term of one year, until the end of the September 2024 Full GB meeting.

Next meeting: Monday, 16th October 2023 at 6.00-8.00pm

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date:

Draft