

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

FULL GOVERNING BOARD – TRAINING SESSION		DATE:	9th May 2022
CHAired BY: John Clements (JC)		CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)	
GOVERNORS PRESENT:		Also Present:	
Steph Harvey (SH) John Clements (JC) Jason Knight (JK) Russ Green (RG) Liz Kane (LK) Claire Morrison (CM) Melanie Jones (MJ) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE)			
APOLOGIES: Sam Jamieson (SJ)			
Absent without apology:			

Governor questions are highlighted in grey

Agenda Items	
1.	<u>Opening Prayer & Welcome</u> 1. Opening Prayer taken by JC.
2.	<u>Apologies and sanctions of absence.</u> 1. Apologies had been received from SJ and were sanctioned by the GB.
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest & Correspondence</u> 1. No declarations of interest. 2. No correspondence.
4.	<u>Becoming a Being Trauma-Informed and Recovery-Focused Organisation</u> 1. SH and RG delivered the training on this subject. Associated resource: 'What Happened To You?' – Bruce D Perry & Oprah Winfrey LK asked whether the evidence about trauma experienced by children was self-reported or identified by others.

SH advised that in children, it was unlikely to be self-reported. This tended to also be the case with teenagers who were not yet self-aware or able to identify trauma.

RG advised that the whole focus of the Hub (as in the wider school) is building relationships. Many children test boundaries hugely. But once they learn that they can trust the staff, they test the boundaries less and are better able to manage in the mainstream classroom. It is possible to repair trauma and create significant impact. Children are able to regulate more quickly as they learn that they will be heard, treated fairly, and supported consistently and calmly. The primary focus of the Hub is regulating emotions to ensure the children are then able to learn. This also involves consistent and firm boundaries being in place.

JC asked whether the element of safety/containment transfers from school to home.

SH said that the children learn that they do not need to behave as they were. Once neural pathways repair and new connections have been made, the children need less assurance/input and they are able to carry through their changed behaviours throughout the day.

RG advised that in a lot of schools, those children who struggle the most are isolated from the rest of the school. At St. Martin's, the Hub is located centrally within the school and is very visible. The staff team talk a lot with the children about being together and being part of the school family. The children learn the value of themselves and others in the room. St. Martin's acknowledges that both locally and nationally, there is a move to a more rigid, educational approach but that not all children are able to manage this. St. Martin's takes a different approach which in turn helps them to become successful in a mainstream class, with everyone living and breathing 'a sense of belonging'. Part of this is ensuring that the children in the Hub retain a consistent connection with their class, and that they know that their class is there for them when they are ready.

MJ noted that physically centering the Hub in the middle of the school is like the experience of hugging them to help them feel safe and contained.

MJ said that she had read that boys were especially at risk of attachment issues and that maternal attachment was particularly important for them. MJ asked if this was also the case at St. Martin's.

SH advised that there was not evidence that maternal attachment was the priority and that the concern that staff are seeing at St. Martin's, along with locally/nationally, is the impact of attachment for those children where both parents work.

JC observed that it seemed that with this approach, it can create more of a permanent change than he had thought would be possible.

SH said that they are seeing exclusions reduce because of how the Hub is working. A number of the children in the Hub would likely have been excluded from school in other settings. The approach in the Hub is regulate, relate, reflect, and reassure, with use of "I wonder if..." questions to help identify needs and explore what is behind behaviours/incidents where children struggle. RG explained that this approach works across the school in creating a safe, calm environment. It is not just for those who find things the most challenging. Staff are encouraged to use the approach across the school.

JC asked if challenges are all trauma-related or can stem from non-traumatic experiences.

SH said that it depends on how trauma is defined. It could be said that a neurodiverse child experiencing being placed in a class of 30 children where they find it difficult to relate or need a different approach to learning is a traumatic for them.

Governors discussed that it would be interesting to compare approaches in different schools. SH advised that Haywards in Crediton and Willowbrook in Exeter have similar demographics so it could be interesting to look at these schools.

JK asked if there was anything that the school could do to better support transitions to secondary school for those children who may find it more challenging when they move on from St. Martin's.

SH explained that the difficult is that this would require culture changes in secondary schools, and this is unlikely to happen in those schools who state that 'no child's education should be impacted by another child's behaviour' and are 'unapologetically academic'. This creates an expectation of perfection which is not necessarily realistic/reasonable.

JC asked if there was anything that the Governing Board could do to support the school's approach more.

RG said that as a school generally, he felt that the children are always the focus and receive the most support and it could be beneficial to look at how the staff could support each other more.

SH advised that staff meetings have been changed to better support staff well-being and to create a greater sense of being a team together. This has been particularly important following the impact of staff having to work more separately during Covid. A Mental Health mapping exercise is going to be undertaken and supervision will be offered to staff on a termly basis.

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

1. Identified as follows:

- 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 the school is there for them, even when they have moved up to secondary.

ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING

<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. None.		

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- None

Next meeting: Monday, 23rd May 2022, 6-8pm, to be held virtually

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date: