

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

FULL GOVERNING BOARD - VIRTUAL		DATE:	23rd 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) Sam Jamieson (SJ) – until item 9 Claire Morrison (CM) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE) - from item 4		Brigid Thompson (BT) – School Business Manager (part)	
APOLOGIES: Melanie Jones (MJ)			
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 from MJ were sent during the meeting and received by the Clerk after.
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest & Correspondence</u> 1. No declarations of interest. 2. No correspondence.
5.	<u>Approval of minutes from last meeting (4.4.22) and update on actions</u> 1. Agreed as accurate by the Full GB – to be signed by the Chair when next in school. 2. Actions update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1 – To be completed. Action: JC to hold follow up induction meeting with JE. • Action 2 – Completed by SH (see item 7). • Action 3 – Not due to be completed until 11.7.22

- Action 4 – In process. **Action: JC and SH to create SIAMS briefing for GB with structured outline of inspection expectations**
- Action 5 – Completed
- Action 6 – Completed (see item 10)
- Action 7 – all completed other than changing signatories on Jackie Box Memorial Fund account. **Action: JB to arrange signatories change by end of term.**

4. Finance

1. 2021-22 Year End Reports

These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Key point of note was that the school had ended the year on a significantly higher carryforward. BT and SH are planning how to spend this money to ensure it has the greatest impact for the pupils.

JC asked how there was such a difference between the projected and actual carryforward.

BT explained that she always budgets for the worst-case scenarios, which has not always been the end outcome. There has been income received by the school which had not been expected and a number of purchase orders have had lower costs than anticipated in the budget. All these have contributed to the difference in carryforward.

JC asked if this higher carryforward would be viewed negatively by Audit.

BT advised that there would be no issue with Audit. She will be discussing with the DCC Finance Team the school's plans to spend the money, so they have reassurance it is being used in the best way.

(JE joined the meeting)

2. Approval of 2022-23 Budget

The budget and accompanying notes had been circulated prior to the meeting. BT advised that the GB needs to approve the budget as circulated, but due to the higher carryforward, BT will be setting a revised budget to reflect this and how it will change a number of budget lines. This will need to come back to governors for approval.

SJ asked if governors would see the detail of the plans for spending the carryforward money.

BT confirmed that as well as revising the budget with JK as Lead Governor for Finance, the detail of the spending plans (along with the anticipated impacts of that spend) will be shown in the revised budget which will come to the GB.

SH raised that she is aware that any spending of this carryforward needs to be sustainable long-term and will therefore be initially exploring one-off costs (e.g., developing building extension plans).

SJ referred to the projected deficit anticipated in 2024/25 and asked what challenges that would bring/how this would be managed.

BT advised that although a three-year budget needs to be set, the school never gets to the third year as detailed in the first year the budget is set. Any financial issues that arose would be identified and addressed before they became problematic/as required. BT has been cautious with setting pupil numbers as DCC have advised that there will be a birth rate dip which will be seen from September this year. To date, St. Martin's is not seeing any decrease in numbers and is currently looking at being at PAN in Reception this September for the first time.

JC noted the increase in the school budget share because of increased pupil numbers. JC also noted that this year's SEN budget is set at £150,000 but last year costs reached £200,000. He asked if BT foresaw SEN costs being an issue this year.

BT advised that DCC are in the process of moving away from EHCPs being the only route to SEN funding and that there may be changes with Element 2 funding. There is often little advance notice from DCC about any changes, however. The school can consider impacts of these funding changes when more detail is known.

JK asked whether a further revised budget would be required if it was decided that the school would be receiving Element 2 funding.

BT did not feel that this would be necessary as she believes that it is unlikely that this funding decision will be taken during the 21-22 academic year.

Growth funding is likely to be available to the school after October given current pupil numbers, as these have grown by more than the 15 needed to be eligible for additional money (last census pupil numbers were 391 and currently are 425). The Nursery is already almost full for September.

SJ referred to recent reports that changes to childcare staffing ratios may be allowed and asked if this was being considered in Early Years.

SH advised she was aware of government plans to allow this, but that St. Martin's would not be making any changes as they know that a higher staff to children ratio has better impacts. SH feels that the plan to change these ratios is based in addressing staffing issues/costs not in delivering better outcomes for children.

Decision: The GB formally approved the 2023-24 Budget.

On behalf of the GB, JC gave thanks to BT for the work, care and rigour she puts into ensuring that the school's money is spent most effectively.

3. Approval of ICT purchase order

The purchase of 32 new iPads must be approved by the GB as it exceeds the approval limit set for the Headteacher. The GB had received the rationale and the three quotes obtained prior to the meeting (see meeting supporting documentation). BT confirmed that an evaluation had been undertaken to affirm whether iPads were still needed for the curriculum, and this confirmed that they were as Chromebooks do not yet offer such a wide availability of apps. BT recommended that the GB approve the quote from System Active as this was the best value quote and they have stock available.

JE asked what would happen to the old iPads.

BT confirmed that these would be sold as they retain a level of value. The money is then banked under ICT income for the school.

Decision: The GB approved the requisition form for 32 iPads from System Active.

(BT left the meeting)

6. Headteacher Report and Data Analysis

1. This had been circulated prior to the meeting. The GB noted that attendance rates are good, and that one previous attendance issue is being managed using a flexible timetable. This is working well to date and all the planned sessions are being attended.

JC observed that it has been a difficult time with staffing due to staff sickness, bereavement, maternity leave etc. and asked how this is being managed.

SH confirmed that it has been a challenging time, but that staff are showing care and support for each other e.g., enabling a member of staff to continue working through offering lifts following a change in their personal circumstances. For those members of staff who hold a subject lead but are due to go on maternity leave, SH has arranged for alternative members of staff to take on these lead roles. A change has been made in who will cover Oak class during maternity leave and this will enable WH to return to his role as an HLTA and be able to work flexibly when cover is required. Some additional teaching assistants have been appointed on a casual basis. SH talked the GB through the recent teaching appointments made – these new teachers will bring experience and relevant skills and once in place, the staff team will be able to have greater stability again. SH observed that

although there is currently a lot of instability amongst the staffing, the environment in school does not reflect this and it continues to feel very calm.

SH is already planning for when those staff on/due to go on maternity leave return to the school to ensure as smooth a transition as possible for both children and staff.

JC observed it was positive to see that the potential risks with the instability of the staff team were being addressed with clear plans. He will discuss with SH whether it is necessary to add these to the Risk Register given plans are already in place.

The GB agreed to enter Part Two to discuss a staffing matter.
The GB agreed to return to Part One.

The GB discussed the lack of support services available to children with regards to social, emotional and mental health issues. There are also delays within the EHCP process outside of the school. A number of children have been identified as having significant anxiety but who would not reach the threshold for support from CAMHS. A decision has been made to trial spending the money previously spent on play therapy (now not continuing) on providing private support for these children and their families. This will be provided by Sarah Lewis who will offer single-session therapy.

JC asked what the cost would be for this.

The approximate cost for the planned one day each half term will be £3600 for the year. SH advised that as well as offering times to identified children and families, there will also be times available for staff to book supervision.

2. School performance data.

SH had provided a summary of the data in their HT report and will send out the full data analysis following the meeting. JC observed that progress for disadvantaged children was positive. SH agreed that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged continues to close at St. Martin's. The results from the recent SATs will provide further information on progress.

SH raised that she feels that the children at St. Martin's struggle to demonstrate greater depth working in tests despite book scrutiny of day-to-day work showing evidence that they are working at this level. She is currently exploring the possible reasons for this e.g., is it anxiety on the day of the test or children not taking advantage of strategies as being allowed to ask teachers to read out questions aloud to them as that can help their understanding?

SH also identified concerns around Year 1 progress and is currently evaluating what may be impacting upon this. Consistency and communication between job-share staff is being better developed (e.g., job-share staff time will be increased to ensure more cross-over time) and teaching assistant time allocation is being looked at. Teaching assistant time for the whole class has been impacted by time needed for supporting non-English speaking pupils who have joined the school.

LK noted that there are specific courses for teaching children with Dyslexia and asked if staff attend these.

SH confirmed that there are courses staff can attend. Up to recently, there were staff who were well experienced in supporting those with dyslexia, but SH acknowledged that as they have now moved on from St. Martin's, it may well be timely for other staff to develop their understanding/skills in this specific area. The GB noted that there are many strategies already in place in school as part of the universal provision which support those with dyslexia, autism and other additional needs and that meet many of the challenges children with SEN may experience. It was discussed that the online courses on the National College website are also available for governors to attend, and they can book themselves onto any they feel would be beneficial for informing their understanding of the needs children may have.

Action: SH to explore arranging for a specialist teacher to deliver Dyslexia inset to the staff team.

	<p>LK asked if St. Martin's is part of the National CofE SENDCo Network or has any plans to join. SH will look into this and report back to the GB. JE suggested that this is something the ETHOS Group could potentially also explore.</p> <p><u>3. Pupil attendance data.</u> This had already been discussed at item 6.1. The GB noted that the attendance at St. Martin's is currently higher than the Devon average and there have been no exclusions this term.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>School Improvement Plan (SIP) Monitoring</u></p> <p>1. SH has re-structured the SIP and supporting documentation to create the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One strategic document "Vision and Strategic SIP Priorities" • Operational monitoring/recording documents for each area of work in the SIP where both staff and governor monitoring will be recorded. <p>LK observed that she feels the new documents are much more clearly laid out and it will be much easier to relate outcomes and actions back to the vision and the strategic priorities.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Governance</u></p> <p><u>1. Plan GB performance review – consider peer review/self-evaluation</u> JC advised he has been in contact with Withycombe GB to explore sharing practice more and developing peer working and is awaiting a response. He will make contact again.</p> <p>Action: JC will explore options for undertaking a governance performance review and present this for the GB to discuss at 11.7.22 Full GB meeting.</p> <p><u>2. Succession planning – agree structure of GB Chair and Vice-Chair election process for Autumn term.</u></p> <p>Decision: The GB agreed to re-approve the current process with no amendments.</p> <p>Action: JB to explore how to facilitate an anonymous vote in Google Meet.</p> <p><u>3. Review governor terms of office and forthcoming vacancies</u> MJ (Parent Governor) has resigned from the GB with effect from 26.5.22 as has SJ (Foundation Governor) with effect from 12.7.22, both due to increased work and home commitments. JK (Foundation Governor) will be leaving the GB once his house move is completed.</p> <p>There were two existing vacancies prior to these resignations being made, although one of these was being held for the incoming new Minister.</p> <p>The new Minister is due to start at the beginning of July and can be approached about joining the GB after this time.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JB to arrange Parent Governor elections in the Autumn term to be able to offer the opportunity of being a governor to all the new families who will be joining the school at the start of the new school year. • JB to add other vacancies to the governance recruitment websites once governors near their leaving dates. <p>JC noted that this would have been MJ's last GB meeting if she had been able to attend. The GB agreed that they were grateful for the energy, time and support MJ had given during her time on the Board.</p>

	<p><u>4. Evidence of governor impacts this half term.</u> Identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTH has been in school collating data. • CM has been encouraging partnership working between the Education officer on Cranbrook Council and the school and has been highlighting the good work the school does to the Council. • Governors attended the training delivered by SH and RG on being a trauma-informed school which has developed governors understanding of the impacts on trauma and how the staff support those with trauma and/or attachment issues. <p>(SJ left the meeting)</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p><u>1. Data Update</u> All members of SLT have attended the Level 3 Update training. Termly data will be provided to governors and discussed at the Full GB meeting on 13.6.22.</p> <p>The school is offering outreach support to carers of looked after and post-looked after children as training on supporting trauma/attachment-impacted young people is not being provided by DCC. RG advised that as well as benefiting the children and their carers, this will also benefit the school as children are likely to be happier/more settled in school if they are receiving the support they need at home as well.</p> <p>JC noted that the comments received from families/carers about how the Hub has transformed/helped their children shows the quality of work happening at St. Martin's and the impact it has.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Term Dates 2023-24</u></p> <p>1. This item will be placed on the agenda for the 13.6.22 meeting as not yet ready for the GB to approve.</p>
<p>11.</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>Identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JK – the outreach Hub work planned demonstrates the school's ethos and its Christian distinctiveness • RG – the effective management and oversight of the budget to ensure it can be best spent for the benefit of the children reflects the ethos • JC – the meeting has validated how school is being run, even though SLT is reduced in number due to staff sickness. The GB all support the way in which SH and the rest of SLT are running the school. The increasing pupil numbers demonstrate how well-regarded the school is. • JE – the meeting has provided opportunities for sharing information on training and resources available to both governors and staff which will lead to development of governor understanding of children's needs.

<u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u>		
<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. Hold follow up induction meeting with JE	JC	11.7.22
2. Create SIAMS briefing for GB with structured outline of inspection expectations	SH and JC	1.7.22

3. Arrange change of Jackie Box Memorial Fund account signatories	JB	20.7.22
4. Explore arranging for a specialist teacher to deliver Dyslexia inset to the staff team.	SH	11.7.22
5. Explore options for undertaking a governance performance review and present this for the GB to discuss at 11.7.22 Full GB meeting.	JC	11.7.22
6. Explore how to facilitate an anonymous vote in Google Meet.	JB	11.7.22
7. Arrange parent governor elections	JB	Autumn 22
8. Add governor vacancies to governance recruitment websites once governors have left	JB	As required

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- The GB agreed to approve the 2022-23 Budget
- The GB agreed to approve the purchase of 32 iPads as per the System Active quote.
- The GB agreed to re-approve the process for electing the GB Chair and Vice Chair.

Next meeting: Monday, 13th June 2022, 6.00-8.00pm – in school

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date: