

**ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL**

**GOVERNING BODY MINUTES**

<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>		<b>DATE:</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> September 2014</b>
<b>CHAired BY: Jane Lucas (JL)</b>		<b>CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)</b>	
<b>GOVERNORS PRESENT:</b>		<b>Also Present</b>	
Shelia Watson (SW) Jo Smith (JS) Jane Fitt (JF) Mark Gilborson (MG) Jane Lucas (JL) Meg Privett (MP) Nick Partridge (NJP) Lynne Askew (LA) Sally Knowles (SK) Owen Golightly (OG)			
<b>APOLOGIES:</b> Nick Pring (NP), Jade Kent (JK), Glenn Greed (GG), Craig Jamieson (CJ). Tania Beard (TB) was not present as it was agreed the GB would meet without her.			
<b>Absent without apology:</b>			

<b>Agenda Items</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b><u>Opening Prayer &amp; Welcome</u></b>  1. Opening Prayer taken by MG.  2. JL welcomed all to the meeting.
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Apologies and sanctions of absence.</u></b>  1. NP, JK, GG and CJ had sent apologies.  2. TB was not present, as it had been agreed that this meeting would be held without TB present.
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Declarations of Interest &amp; Correspondence</u></b>  1. No declarations of interest.

2. The Governing Body (GB) agreed to enter Part 2 so that JL could update them on two complaints.

The GB then returned to Part 1.

**4 Analysis of Governing Body Self-Assessment document**

1. In the summer term, the GB had agreed to commit time to discussing the completed self-assessment document, and identifying evidence for judgements for each section. JL reminded the GB that this self-assessment informs the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which in turn informs the information the school provides to OfSTED.

2. Section 1 – The Governing Body. Judgement for 1.1. and 1.2: Good, with outstanding features. It was noted that the GB has one vacancy but there is no rush to fill this, as the GB would like for there to be opportunities to be a governor still available as the community continues to grow. The GB discussed that governors have many skills, but need to continue to develop how best to apply these to governance.

It was noted that there was clear evidence which shows the GB to be motivated and pro-active e.g. willingness to be involved in work outside of meetings, taking on responsibility to hear complaints appropriately, being prepared to attend additional meetings to assess own practice/development, attending both internal and external training to develop skills/understanding. Governors are also engaged with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and have built links with staff as part of this work.

**Identified actions:**

- **Review training needs**
- **Improve application of skills to governance**

3. Section 2 – The Leadership of the Governing Body. Judgement for 2.1 and 2.2: Outstanding. Clear evidence for this is described in the document. Judgement for 2.3 'There is clear succession planning for the future leadership of the governing body' was agreed to be 'Requires Improvement'. Whilst JL has clarified the length of time she is happy to stand for election as Chair, and work has begun on succession planning, this is all still in process. This needs to be a key piece of work for the GB.

**Identified actions:**

- **Create clear succession plan including a skills/ability audit, to identify governors who are both willing and have the appropriate skills to be effective leaders (to be discussed further in item 5 of this meeting)**

4. Section 3 – Strategic Role. Judgement for 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3: Good. The GB discussed in depth whether the GB was truly looking sufficiently far ahead, and acting as strategically as it should be. It was acknowledged that TB is an excellent and very strong leader and this can create a supportive, rather than assertive, culture. Some governors expressed that they found it difficult to 'challenge' TB as they were often in agreement with her, even though TB has made it clear that she welcomes questions and challenge from the GB. The GB considered whether it would be possible for them to be more involved in setting targets for achievement in conjunction with TB, and to explore setting ambitious targets.

It was noted that governors have been involved in complex decisions outside of GB meetings e.g. regarding the leadership structure. These were worked through jointly with TB.

Whilst data is frequently discussed at meetings, it was raised that perhaps it would be useful to apply the close monitoring used for the TISP (Targeted intervention and Support Programme) plan last year to the SIP to ensure that the SIP does fully meet all targets.

**Identified actions:**

- **Find a way of identifying what 'outstanding' would look like and develop applying this to governance at St. Martin's**
- **Create a strategy for where the GB wants the school to be, to make it easier to assess whether this has been achieved.**
- **Discuss all above points with TB and identify whether there are others who can assist in putting this into place**
- **Consider establishing a working party to look further at strategic planning**
- **Enquire whether the Primary Phase Adviser would be able to undertake some training with the Teaching & Learning Committee on monitoring the SIP.**

5. Section 4 – The Governing Body supports and challenges (critical friend). Judgements for 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3: Outstanding. It was agreed that the increased focus on governors preparing questions prior to meetings and discussing these in small groups prior to sharing with the rest of the GB has improved meetings. The GB is now clearly less reliant on the Headteacher, however, it was identified that the questions governors ask can often be for the understanding of the governor and not necessarily to challenge TB or ask for explanations behind decisions/actions. Governors need to be confident in their knowledge (from having a clear understanding of and being experienced in governance) to be able to challenge constructively and make a difference.

Other evidence is already described in the document.

**Identified actions:**

- **Governors to ask more 'why' questions, but to ensure these are not undermining to TB.**

6. Section 5 – The Governing Body ensures accountability. Judgement for 5.1: Outstanding. Judgement for 5.2 and 5.3: Good. The main area for discussion concerned the GB needing to improve its profile amongst the school community and to ensure it publishes clear information about itself to parents and staff.

**Identified actions:**

- **SW to co-ordinate governors being present at Parents' Evenings and other events. Regular item to be added to the Full GB agendas to provide feedback on this.**
- **JL to co-ordinate information about the GB being added to the school website on a regular basis.**
- **JB to ensure that all governors have their photo on the board in the school lobby. 'Take photo' to be added to New Governor Induction Process.**
- **Liase with Parents Forum, which is in the process of being set up. Ask the Forum for feedback on how they want to interact with the GB.**

7. Section 6 – Clerking Arrangements. Judgements for 6.1: Outstanding. Evidence for this judgement is detailed in the document. It was noted that the school made the pro-active decision to employ the Clerk for more hours/week than is often the case as it recognised the benefits this brings.

8. Section 7 – Meetings. Judgements for 7.1 and 7.3: Outstanding. Judgement for 7.2: Good, with outstanding features.

**Identified actions:**

- **Develop level of engagement and strategic content (see item 4.4).**

9. Section 8 – Workload Management & Delegation. Judgement for 8.1: Outstanding. Judgement for 8.2 and 8.3: Good. It was discussed that whilst Committee have a good

	<p>understanding of their own work, governors may benefit from improving their understanding of what other Committees do.</p> <p>Core business is shared out evenly, but extra work is often dependent on time individual governors can offer and relevance of skills to work needed.</p> <p><b>Identified actions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governors to attend meetings of Committees other than their own to gain an insight of their work.</b></li> </ul> <p>10. <u>Section 9 - Information &amp; Paperwork.</u> Judgements for 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3: Outstanding. Evidence for these judgements clear from paperwork produced by the Clerk.</p> <p>11. It was noted that the overall judgement for governance at St. Martin's was: Good, with some outstanding features.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b><u>Planning for Leadership Change</u></b></p> <p>1. OG had drafted a framework for discussion. This aimed to find an approach to identify/assess aspirations and ability for filling leadership roles in the GB (Chair and Vice-Chair, and the three Chairs of Committees). The GB discussed that it is key to understand that it is not just about having skills//knowledge but being able to apply them effectively. The GB needs to create a development plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess aspirations of governors to take on additional responsibility</li> <li>• assess governors ability to take on additional responsibility</li> </ul> <p>This is in-line with the Government guidance that states that governors should not just be “willing to serve”. However, it was noted that it can be difficult to balance the huge appreciation for the time governors give voluntarily with whether they have the appropriate skills/ability.</p> <p>The GB discussed whether the role of Vice-Chair would be as a 'Chair-in-training' or have a separate remit from that of the Chair. JL advised that this is for the GB to decide, but that it could make the leadership stronger if the two roles were intended as separate. LA suggested that there could be two Vice-Chairs – one with a separate remit and one to 'shadow' the Chair.</p> <p>The GB agreed that OG, JL and JS would form a working party to meet to produce brief 'job specifications' for each of the leadership roles, with a self-assessment questionnaire regarding aspiration and ability. This would require governors to be very open and willing to complete these.</p> <p>JB advised that she would send out the forms for governors to complete if they wished to stand for Chair or Vice-Chair at the elections on 13.10.14. These need to be returned to JB prior to that meeting.</p> <p>MG felt that OG's framework was very helpful and an excellent start to the discussions. The GB thanked OG for his work on this.</p> <p><b>Actions: Working party to meet and identify skills/attributes for each leadership role. Governors to share at the next Full GB meeting which roles they aspire to hold. JB to place this on the agenda.</b></p>
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Discussion: 'How has this meeting benefited our children?'</u></b></p> <p>The GB felt that this meeting had benefited the children at the school in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focussing on areas for development</li> <li>• Being self-reflective and ensuring governors are on task</li> <li>• All improvements in governance will have a positive impact upon the children</li> </ul>

<b>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Person responsible</b>	<b>Date to be completed by</b>
1. Discuss points raised regarding strategic planning with TB	JL	1.12.14
2. Liaise with Primary Phase Adviser to set up training on SIP Monitoring for T&L Committee.	JL	1.12.14
3. Governors to consider use of 'Why...' questions in GB discussions	All	On-going
4. Co-ordinate governors being present at Parents' Evenings and other events.	SW	On-going
5. Regular item to be added to the Full GB agendas to provide feedback on this.	JB	All Full GB Meeting agendas
6. Co-ordinate information about the GB being added to the school website on a regular basis.	JL	On-going
7. Ensure that all governors have their photo on the board in the school lobby and add 'Take photo' to New Governor Induction Process.	JB	1.12.14
8. Attend meetings of Committees other than their own to gain an insight of their work.	All	30.6.14
9. Meet and identify skills/attributes for each leadership role.	JL, OG and JS	1.12.14
10. Complete succession planning table with own aspirations for taking on greater responsibility	All	7.12.14
11. Add 'Discuss succession planning' to Full GB Agenda	JB	25.11.14

**Next meeting: Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014 , 5.30pm-7.30pm**

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

**Name of Chair: .....**

**Date: .....**