

**ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL**  
**GOVERNING BODY MINUTES – ANNUAL SELF-REVIEW SESSION**

<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>		<b>DATE:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> July 2015</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) -Part Jane Fitt (JF) Mark Gilborson (MG) Jane Lucas (JL) Meg Privett (MP) Jade Kent (JK) Sally Knowles (SK) Glenn Greed (GG) Owen Golightly (OG)			
<b>APOLOGIES: Nick Partridge (NJP), Nick Pring (NP). It had been agreed that Tania Beard (TB) would not attend as part of the focus on GB leading its own development. JS had advised she would be unable to attend the first part of the meeting.</b>			
<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. NJP and NP had sent apologies which were sanctioned by the GB. JS had advised that she would be unable to attend from the beginning of the meeting.
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Declarations of Interest &amp; Correspondence</u></b>  1. No declarations of interest.

<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b><u>Review Governing Body Code of Practice and Meeting Protocol</u></b></p> <p>1. A new model Code of Conduct has been published, which the GB discussed in comparison with its own. The GB agreed to retain the title 'Code of Practice' for this document. It was noted that the document is used to set expectations for new governors and it also meets OfSTED expectations with regards to training and development. MG proposed that the line “A commitment to learning” be added to the training and development section. The GB also agreed to include a statement to read “ As governors, we agree to be mutually accountable to one another at all times”. <b>Action: JB to make these additions.</b></p> <p>2. The GB agreed to make two minor amendments to the GB Meeting Protocol:          - “ Agenda items will (replacing 'can') be brought at the discretion of the Chair”.          - “Meetings...should (replacing 'will') run for no longer than two hours”.  <b>Action: JB to make these amendments.</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b><u>Review Cycle of School Improvement Monitoring and Monitoring Visit Form – consider adopting new draft format</u></b></p> <p><i>(JS joined the meeting)</i></p> <p>1. JB has merged these two documents and produced one combined form for each term during the school year. These had been circulated to governors to consider prior to the meeting. SW proposed approving the forms and trialling them for a year. This was agreed by the GB. It was noted that there will need to be further discussion regarding the role of the Lead Governor for School Improvement Planning within the SIP Monitoring process at the start of the new school year.</p> <p>2. The GB discussed whether it can be difficult to challenge when there is a strong Headteacher in role. It was agreed it is useful for governors to speak to teachers and not only obtain information from the Headteacher. The GB noted that the role of governors within the SIP monitoring process is to develop their understanding of their area on the SIP, to understand the issues to be addressed and how these are being progressed and to identify any questions that they feel need to be put to staff. The SIP monitoring visits are all about learning, and providing opportunities for teachers to demonstrate what is working and why.</p> <p>3. JS, SW and TB attended an Exeter Consortium training event involving experienced governors explaining how Governing Bodies can develop their practice. The GB agreed that it needs to develop a longer term strategic view, and to gain a deeper understanding of not only how governance is working at St. Martin's at the moment but also how to identify how it should be working ideally and what the GB can do to achieve this.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b><u>Self-review assessment form (1) Discuss collated evidence and judgements made (2) Identify action points</u></b></p> <p><u>1. Section 1: The Governing Body</u></p> <p>1.1. Assessed as Good. It was agreed that as a number of governors are resigning or coming to the end of their term of office, it is key that new governors who have the skills required by the GB are recruited. The continuing strength of the GB will depend on the successful recruitment and training of new governors.</p> <p>1.2. Assessed as Good. It was agreed that there is a wealth of resources for the GB available e.g. the Governor Support helpline, training courses, on-line information and guidance. JF has attended the Governors Update on an annual basis and recommended that at least one governor should attend this, as it was an extremely useful session.</p>

2. The Leadership of the Governing Body.

2.1. Assessed as Good – Outstanding.

2.2. Assessed as Outstanding.

2.3. Assessed as Good. Succession planning is an ongoing item of work for the GB and will require continued commitment from governors to ensure leadership is strong. This needs to be underpinned by a clear plan for who might take on key roles in the future. The GB discussed that all governors should consider their role in leadership – the GB needs aspiring leaders to lead both the GB and Committees. Currently there is not a strong enough culture of leadership aspiration. It was agreed that an ability to lead/experience of leading should be included when considering skill sets for new governors.

**Action: Continuation of succession planning group, with the aim of working towards building a strong leadership culture.**

Section 3: Strategic Role

3.1. Assessed as Good but not securely so. There is clear evidence that the GB is committed to working strategically and not operationally, but a stronger, clearer long term strategic view needs development.

3.2. Assessed as Requires Improvement. The GB discussed that now the school is starting to stabilise, the GB needs to define its long term aims more clearly and plan beyond just achieving outstanding judgements from OfSTED and SIAMS. The 'Being the Best' ethos is a statement, not a measurable vision. The school needs to also articulate how Christian distinctiveness impacts upon strategic planning.

**Actions: Governors to consider attending other school's GB meetings to gain an insight into how other Governing Bodies function. GB to seek definition and clarification in its strategic planning. GB needs to identify who will lead this work – it could be undertaken by the Succession Planning group.**

3.3. Assessed as Good. This year's SIP was not fully monitored due to resignations within the GB, which caused gaps in SIP monitoring teams. The newly agreed forms should improve the monitoring process and provide greater clarity on what is required from governors. It was agreed that the Learning Walks would be held separately from Governor Visits week, to allow governors a clearer focus on just their SIP areas.

Section 4: The Governing Body supports and challenges (critical friend).

4.1 Assessed as Good. Evidence shows that the partnership between the GB and the Headteacher is strong and works well.

4.2. Assessed as Requires Improvement. It was noted that support is in place and questions are asked. However, it was also identified that there is insufficient challenge from the GB. The GB does not currently set targets. At the last annual self-review session, it was agreed that governors needed to work on asking more 'why' questions to increase understanding but this has not been developed as much as it could have been.

**Action: Governors to focus on asking impact questions e.g. 'why?', 'what difference does this make for the children?'**

A performance management system for staff is in place and the Pay Committee rigorously measures performance management in school.

4.3. Assessed as Requires improvement. The GB need to agree what the GB's strategy needs to be and what it wants to achieve. The GB considered whether more staff engagement would assist, and perhaps part of staff development could include attending a GB or Committee meeting. It is essential for governors to focus on the purpose and structure of their visits more than the frequency with which they can be in school. There are opportunities for further involvement with the day to day work of the school separately on a volunteer basis if governors would like to engage with the school in this way as well.

**Action: GB to explore a joint strategy between governors and staff to build on relationships e.g. a joint staff/governor event? GB needs to identify which governors might lead on this area. TB to share the GB's SIP forms for each term at a staff meeting so that staff have an understanding of the work governors will be undertaking.**

#### 5. The Governing Body ensures accountability.

5.1 Assessed as Good-Outstanding. Headteacher performance is assessed via the appraisal process. It was agreed as per previous discussions that questions from governors to the Headteacher could be more challenging.

5.2 Assessed as Good.

5.3. Assessed as Good. GG asked how parent governors interact with parents e.g. do they attend Parents' Forum. Parent governors have interacted informally to date with parents. The Parents' Forum deals with more operational matters but it was agreed that parent governors would regularly review the minutes from the Forum meetings and advise the GB if there were any matters which were relevant to the business of the GB. It was agreed that this would be an effective way of being aware of any parent issues whilst ensuring that governors do not become involved in operational matters.

#### Section 6: Clerking Arrangements.

6.1 Assessed as Outstanding. The GB considers providing the Clerk with sufficient hours to undertake her role part of its strategic plan. The past year has involved the Clerk being required to work more hours than contracted to do so – this will be monitored via the appraisal process.

#### Section 7: Meetings

7.1. Assessed as Good. The GB felt that the arrangements put in place for meetings were outstanding but that attendance was only good. The latter has been in part due to work commitments, and in part to a recent high number of resignations.

7.2 Assessed as Outstanding. There have been a number of actions already identified within the discussion of this document as to how governors should look to develop their questioning/challenge and also increase their focus on longer term strategic planning.

7.3. Assessed as Outstanding.

#### Section 8: Workload Management & Delegation

8.1. Assessed as Outstanding.

8.2. Assessed as Outstanding.

8.3. Assessed as Outstanding. It was agreed that the GB should ensure participation in all areas of work. It was suggested that Lead Governors could provide updates from their areas of work at Full GB meetings to keep all informed.

	<p><u>Section 9: Information &amp; Paperwork</u></p> <p>9.1. Assessed as Good. Standardising the approach of governor report writing could improve the quality of reports produced. JL raised that the Governor Handbook now states that the GB should produce and publish an annual report of its work. <b>Action: Add this to the GB Cycle of Work. Place planning preparation of the report on the October Full GB agenda.</b></p> <p>The GB agreed that the overall judgement for governance at St. Martin's would be Good.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Agree in-house training session for governors 2015-16</u></b></p> <p>1. The following were identified as areas the GB would like to receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RAISEonline (organise for December 2015)</li> <li>- SIP Monitoring – to be delivered by the school's Primary Phase Adviser</li> <li>- Developing the the GB's long term strategic plan – to be commissioned from Brenda Steel.</li> <li>- OfSTED preparation/updates on OfSTED expectations (to include how to avoid being a coasting school, and practice questioning sessions)</li> <li>- New Budget reporting formats - to be delivered by School Business Manager and/or School Finance Officer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: JB to liaise with TB to arrange these and set timetable for sessions.</b></p> <p>2. Governors were reminded about the (external) training courses available from Babcock, and in particular the Governor Updates session which take place this term.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Discussion – how has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school?</u></b></p> <p>1. The GB identified the following ways in which this has been achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengths and weaknesses, plus plans to address the latter, have been identified</li> <li>- The GB developing its strategic planing will benefit the school and the children.</li> <li>- Working on moving forward in partnership with the staff is very positive</li> <li>- Identifying ways to ask challenging/impact questions will ensure the Headteacher is held to account</li> <li>- Having a clearer focus on SIP monitoring work will ensure the work is carried out more effectively and support the progress made by the school</li> <li>- Developing a more informed, confident and pro-active GB through carrying out all the actions identified within this meeting will lead to more effective governance and strengthen leadership within the school.</li> </ul>

<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>
<b>1. Make amendments described to Code of Practice and GB Meeting Protocol</b>	<b>JB</b>	<b>23.7.15</b>
<b>2. Succession planning group to plan meetings and next steps – place this on next Full GB agenda</b>	<b>JB</b>	<b>10.10.15</b>
<b>3. Attend GB meetings in other schools and provide feedback/observations on practice.</b>	<b>Governors</b>	<b>During 2015-16</b>

4. Focus on asking impact/'what difference does this make for the children' questions.	All governors	On-going
5. Share termly SIP monitoring forms with staff.	TB	Each term
6. Identify governors to lead on developing stronger partnerships with staff.	Agree at next Full GB.	19.10.15
7. Add 'Produce Annual Report of Business' to Cycle of Work. Place 'Plan production of GB Annual Report' on October Full GB agenda.	JB	10.10.15
8. Liaise with TB to arrange in-house training sessions	JB	19.10.15

**Questions raised by Governors.**

- GG asked how parent governors interact with parents e.g. do they attend Parents' Forum.

**SUMMARY OF DECISIONS**

- The GB agreed to adopt the new termly SIP monitoring forms

**Next meeting: Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 6.15pm-8.00pm**

**Please note: this meeting will be preceded by staff presentations on their SIP areas 5.00pm-6.00pm, with governor photographs being taken 6.00pm-6.15pm.**

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

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

**Date: .....**