



## **GOVERNING BOARD IMPACT STATEMENT 2018-19**

The Governing Board continued to fulfil its three key responsibilities during the academic year 2018-2019 of ensuring the school has a clear vision and strategic plan, holding Tania Beard, as Headteacher, to account for the educational performance of the school and the performance management of the staff and overseeing the financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent. The purpose of this statement is to outline the structure of and summarise the overall effectiveness of the Governing Board. To give additional context, areas of particular significance are explained in more detail through the document.

### **Composition and Attendance**

The Governing Board consists of the following:

- One staff governor – elected by the staff
- The Headteacher – appointed automatically
- Two parent governors – elected by parents and carers
- One Local Authority governor – approved by the Local Authority and appointed by the Governing Board
- Seven Foundation governors – appointed by the Diocese of Exeter

Our school also has one Associate Member, appointed by the Governing Board on the basis of the skills and experience they can bring to the role. Our current Associate Member supports the Board through being a panel member if required for formal hearings (e.g. exclusions, complaints, staff matters etc.)

Foundation governors have particular responsibility to uphold the Christian ethos of the school. All our governors have, in the opinion of the Governing Board, the skills and experience required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

The full Governing Board meets twice each term. All governors are members of at least one of the four Committees, which are:

- Resources (Finance, Health & Safety, Premises and Staffing)
- Teaching and Learning (Parent and Christian Community Links, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Inclusion, Safeguarding, Data and Curriculum, Early Years)
- Leadership and Teachers' Pay

- Admissions

Our committees effectively and efficiently consider different aspects of the school in detail. All our Committees apart from Admissions meet termly. The Admissions Committee meets as required, and we also have committees that meet if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

St Martin's School is now in its seventh year and is still the only school in Cranbrook which is open to children in year 6. As Cranbrook is a growing town all through the school year children are arriving at school and the staff have worked very hard to integrate new children in to the St Martin's ethos and ways of learning. Whilst there have been high levels of mobility to date, the school is beginning to enter a more stable phase with an increasing proportion of children progressing through the school from Reception to Year 6.

Although our measurable results still are not at the standard we hope to achieve, when OFSTED visited the school in 2016 we were awarded "Good" – a result that the Governors remain immensely proud of. It demonstrates that school staff and governors are able to tell the story behind the results whilst being aware of the where the focus needs to be in order to see every child making significant progress.

Whilst we have seen some turnover in terms of governors the policy of actively recruiting from the community and local business is now paying dividends. In the Summer term, a new parent governor was recruited following an election from a strong field of candidates. This has created an opportunity to offer a number of the unsuccessful candidates a role either as a full governor or an associate member. We are currently filling a number of vacancies on the Board.

We believe that we are now a strong Governing Board with an established Chair. The Board is full of people who are willing to volunteer to take on roles. Morale is high, meetings are well attended and everyone contributes to them.

**See Appendix 1** for details of all of our current Governors

**See Appendix 2** for details of individual governors' attendance at meetings.

## **Summary of Governor Activity**

### **Governance Development Action Plan**

In order for the Governing Board to be "the best we can be for ourselves, for each other and for God's world", we have an action plan that is reshaped and worked through regularly to give support and clarity to both Governors and the School. This is incorporated into the School Improvement Plan under Effectiveness of Leadership and Management of the School.

#### **1: Membership, recruitment and training**

The Board has continued to see turnover in terms of membership but recruitment has been positive and existing vacancies are currently being filled. A recently completed skills audit has demonstrated that the Board has a wide skill set and Governors are increasingly confident in their understanding of the key issues facing the school. The mentoring and induction process is used for each new governor and is working well. Governors are increasingly able to ask searching questions at Board Meetings to discern if the right actions are happening. Succession planning is also being developed.

Governors have benefited from a number of training sessions including;

- Online safety
- SIAMs framework
- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Need and Disability

These sessions have helped to ensure that knowledge of key issues is up to date which provides a good foundation for the wider work of the Governing Board. The Board has also discussed the new Ofsted framework and the emphasis placed on intent, implementation and impact. This helped to identify that the school's curriculum already meets most of the new Ofsted framework.

## **2: Leadership**

The Chair of the Board is now well established and he has helped to ensure that the Board focuses on key strategic issues. In particular this has included ensuring that there is a dedicated strategic focus item and accompanying paper on each full Governing Board agenda. This has included the potential for introducing a school aspiration scheme to help improve the life chances of pupils and also an item on the Christian vision for the school, a vital component of the SIAMS assessment.

We continue to operate a hybrid committee and Lead Governor system. This is becoming more established and effective. In order to ensure that Governing Board continues to add value the Chair has instigated a process of self-review. Meetings have also been organised with Phase Leaders in order to gain insight into staff understanding of governance at St. Martin's. Key questions to Phase Leaders have included;

1. What is your understanding of the role of the Governing Board?
2. Would it be helpful/interesting for staff to receive information on governors' backgrounds and why they chose to be governors?
3. What value do the governors add to the school?
4. What value do the governors add to your role?
5. How could the governors add more value to the school?
6. What are your views on the contact you have with governors, is it too much, not enough, just about right?
7. What other thoughts/ideas do you have?

This is an important exercise which is also helping to improve links between staff and governors.

## **3: Strategy, support and challenge**

The School Improvement Plan continues to be a key item for the Governing Board cycle of work. A successful evening was spent with staff and governors in the Autumn term discussing their various areas together, which has informed the subsequent monitoring and follow up questions. There have been learning walks and opportunities to visit the school to look at key areas of work such as learning books. Governors are more confident in their interrogation of the School Improvement Plan.

The approach to supporting children with Special Educational Need and Disability has been a recurring area of focus for the Governing Board. St Martin's has nearly three times the national average of SEND pupils. The ethos of the school is very inclusive and a variety of measures are in place to ensure that children are supported in the best possible way and that their needs met. This is however set against a difficult financial backdrop. The process for securing additional resources through Education Health and Care Plans remains slow and time consuming.

There has been ongoing engagement with Devon County Council, led by the Headteacher and the Chair, to try and address this issue. The matter was also raised with the Secretary of State for Education when he visited the school with the local MP in the Autumn. Opportunities to secure external funding, for example to support health visitor provision to ensure that future pupils have the best start in life, have also been pursued.

The budget more generally has also been a significant area of focus for the Governing Board this year. The impact of continued austerity is now being felt keenly. The Board has discussed the need to have a clear and sustainable financial strategy in the light of this challenging environment. The proposal to extend nursery provision for the 19/20 academic year and to have wrap-around support in conjunction with FISH has been actively discussed at Board meetings. Potential risks to this strategy including expanded provision at the Education Campus have been identified. The Chair has again supported the Headteacher in engaging with both the County Council and the Ted Wragg Trust in this respect.

More generally key risks and their associated management and mitigation are now a standing item on each FGB agenda. The need to ensure that the Published Admission Number of 60 is as far as possible fulfilled has been identified as critical to the future financial health of the school. Subsequently this has prompted discussion at Board about the marketing of the school and the need to celebrate good news stories. A school twitter account has been set up alongside other areas of ongoing activity such as leaflet drops to homes in the school's catchment area. Staff have been very effective in directly engaging prospective parents to manage up the numbers.

#### **4: Ensuring accountability**

This year work has been done to raise the profile of the Governing Board within school and amongst parents and carers. Governors have made a conscious effort to be present at key school events such as parents' evenings and workshops. Parental engagement is also a now standing item on the agenda for Board meetings. A new parental engagement charter has seen staff commit to a series of pledges to improve engagement and there is now tangible evidence, such as very positive feedback from a recent parent workshop, that this approach is yielding results. The Governing Board has been keen to acknowledge the hard work of the staff and ensure that this is communicated through a school. A governor has regularly attended the Parent Voice group throughout the year to gain insight into their discussion items and to feed back where appropriate. Governance updates and items written by governors have also been published in the school newsletter.

The Headteacher's annual appraisal was undertaken by a panel of governors and an external advisor during the Autumn Term to review previous and set new objectives. The new objectives relate to the academic year ahead. The objective setting is followed up each term by meetings where progress is reviewed, personal development considered and work-life balance discussed. This sequence of meetings has provided an opportunity to value the work of the Headteacher, provides an opportunity for structured mentoring whilst providing another opportunity to consider the school's overall performance. This process has distinctly improved during the period reported upon.

## **Other Governor Impacts**

### **1: East Devon Church Schools Partnership (EDCSP)**

The East Devon Church School Partnership continues in conjunction with Withycombe Raleigh, Tipton St. John and Feniton schools as part of a collaboration agreement. A jointly run maths conferencing event was very successful with staff feeding back that the training had been of a good quality and that they had benefited from being able to share ideas and practice with staff from the other schools. Peer to peer support was a strong theme within the feedback, which governors considered to be very positive. Working together and sharing resources can result in economies of scale being able to be applied and funding applications are often more successful if it can be demonstrated that the applying school has provided assistance to other schools. Joint moderation has also proved to be successful and has the benefit of no supply cover being required as the schools can carry out moderation during twilight sessions.

### **2: Policies and budget review**

The Governors, through work in the various committees review all policies on a regular basis. This is not a tick box exercise; rather each policy is given careful scrutiny and updated as needed. In all our work, but particularly in this area, our impact has been all the greater thanks to having an excellent Clerk to the Governors, Jacqueline Brooks, whose record keeping and reminders enable us to function as a Governing Board.

Examples this year of the impact of the scrutiny:

- Governors have explored the future financial strategy for the school including extended nursery provision
- Governors have reviewed future IT provision in the school and the need to replace essential equipment
- Governors have considered the introduction of the new Ofsted framework

### **3: Financial management and care for buildings**

Governors receive half-termly budget monitoring statements from the School Business Manager, as well as information on financial benchmarking. These statements are closely scrutinised and reported on by the Lead Governor for Finance, and the Business Manager regularly attends meetings to answer governors' questions. The Lead Governor for Finance works with the Business Manager to produce the annual Schools Financial Value Statement. The impact of the governors' role in the school ensures that the budget is managed effectively and improvements are effective and continuous. A healthy financial position has been maintained throughout the year.

The Lead Governor for Premises and Health & Safety works with the School Business Manager to monitor issues concerning buildings and maintenance and to feedback to the Resources Committee through their termly report. This includes an annual site "walkabout" by the Business Manager and the Lead Governor for Premises and Health & Safety to identify particular priorities. A rolling programme is maintained. This year Governors have led on discussions around actions to rectify the faulty pipe system and have provided expertise that would not otherwise be held by the Headteacher.

#### **4: Governor visits and input to the school**

As well as the planned visits linked to the Governing Board's monitoring of the School Improvement Plan, governors have been encouraged to come in at other times to see what is happening in school. Take up varies, simply because many governors are in full time work, but it is effective.

Several governors volunteer at the school in various ways every week (e.g. class support in maths, leading Collective Worship) which helps to keep us all grounded in the everyday life of the school and help to see what changes are needed. Three of the governors are involved in the Mentoring Scheme and others plan to join in. This is a wonderful way of supporting individual children and gaining insights into the needs of the pupils in general.

Increasingly, governors are bringing their work skills and attributes to the fore in enhancing St. Martin's School. For example, links with the Healthy New Towns NHS initiative leading to the local Church working with the school and community on a mental health project; another Governor is an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) specialist and her advice and support, particularly in thinking about pen holding this year has proved invaluable.

#### **5: School Christian Ethos**

As a Voluntary Aided (VA) school the Board, and in particular the Foundation governors, are responsible for upholding and contributing to the Christian ethos of the school. Every Governing Board meeting and committee begins with prayer and ends with the question "How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school?". Having to answer this question reminds the Governors of their particular role in improving this.

Responses recorded in recent Governing Boards are set out below and help to demonstrate the impact of the Board with regards to Christian distinctiveness;

September 2018

- Governors have discussed the importance of developing parental engagement and will continue to contribute to work on this.
- Governors have read Keeping Children Safe in Education and understand their duty of care.
- Governors have approved the School Improvement Plan for this year. SIAMS and Christian distinctiveness now sit within the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
- The new governance cycle of work was discussed and implemented and governors discussed how to make governance as effective as possible.

October 2018

- Governors attended the SIP Q&A session, asking questions related to their action plan and exploring future developments
- Governors are supporting the school to effectively develop mental health support provision
- Strategic focus is the centre of discussions, with the focus on enriching children's lives and developing their life skills, not just on the academic side.
- Governors support for promoting parental and community engagement will positively contribute to its development.

#### December 2018

- Taking time to review the Year 6 work books shows governors value the work of pupils and teachers.
- Governors are supporting the school by escalating their concerns over the delay of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) progression.
- The meeting's strategic focus was on celebrating the good news stories from the school and sharing them with the community.
- Level of governor knowledge and understanding shows the value they place on the staff

#### February 2019

- Linking in the development of the Governing Board's Aspiration Scheme with a local company has the potential to create inspirational opportunities for the children and community.
- St. Martin's has identified that its curriculum already meets most of the new Ofsted framework.
- Approving residential trips will broaden experiences of the children
- Performance monitoring is always aspirational across the school
- Christian distinctiveness evident in reflections of wholeness

#### April 2019

- The GB has agreed a way forward financially and this decision has been made on the basis of making sure that the level of care provided has enough grown ups
- Governors are listening to and hearing the potential strains upon staff and are prepared to be responsive to ensure staff can flourish and feel able to teach.

#### **Conclusion**

Through all of the Governing Board meetings, our actions and questions, reviewing of policy and creating new School Improvement Plans we are clear that the children are the centre of everything at St Martin's.

The Governors believe that our best impact can be seen through a school that has an ethos of care, a foundation of faith and that strives to support and encourage children – and staff and families – to be the best they can be.

**Appendix 1 - Current GB Membership at July 2019**

<b>Current Governors</b>							
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of Governor</b>	<b>Appointing Body</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Registered Interests</b>
1.	John Clements	Parent	Directly appointed as sole nominee	Chair of Governors  Interim Lead Governor for Data and Curriculum	11/10/17 – 10/10/21	Resources  Leadership & Teachers' Pay  Headteacher Appraisal  East Devon Church Schools Partnership  Teaching & Learning (temporary)	None
2.	Lisa Malton	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Safeguarding	08/10/18 – 07/10/22	Teaching & Learning	Has child in school
3.	Tania Beard	Staff (Headteacher)	Automatic appointment as Head		01/09/11 - present	Teaching & Learning  Resources  Admissions  East Devon Church Schools Partnership	
4.	Caren Flicker	Staff	Appointed directly by staff as sole nominee	Chair of Resources Committee	22/03/2016 – 21/03/2020	Resources	None
5.	Hannah Wood	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	TBC	15/07/19 – 14/07/23	TBC	None
6.	Andrew Wood	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Parent and Christian Community Links	11/12/17 – 10/11/21	Teaching & Learning  East Devon Church Schools Partnership	None.
7.	Kirsty Crowe	Parent	Elected by parents/carers	Lead Governor for Staffing	07/05/19 – 06/05/23	Resources  Leadership & Teachers' Pay	None
8.	Sheena Wright	Foundation	Appointed by the Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Early Years	10/09/15 – 15/01/17 (Co-opted)  16/01/17 – 15/01/21	Teaching & Learning  Headteacher Appraisal  Admissions	None
9.	Molly Grenfell	Local Authority	Appointed by GB, approved by the LA	TBC	08/07/19 – 07/07/23	TBC	DCC Employee
10.	Lythan Nevard	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Ex-officio  Deputy Lead Governor for Safeguarding	31/10/16 – 30/10/20	Teaching & Learning	None

11.	Craig Jamieson	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for H&S and Premises	18/09/18 – 17/09/22	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay	Has child in school
12.	VACANCY <i>Application in process</i>	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter				
	Mel Turl	Associate Member	Appointed by the GB		To be appointed 08/07/19	Teaching & Learning	Staff Member
	Iain Grafton	Associate Member	Appointed by the GB		15/10/18 – 14/10/19 17/09/17 – 16/09/18	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Committees	Associate Member at Woodlands Park Primary School, Member of DCC Schools Admissions Appeals Panel
<b>Resignations during 2018-19</b>							
	Mel Turl	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter		30/07/15 – 29/07/19 Resigned to be Associate Member 23/5/19	Teaching & Learning	None
	Vicky Keating	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Finance	24/04/18 – 23/04/22 Resigned 29/03/19	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay Headteacher Appraisal	None
	Danielle Hamilton	Parent	Directly appointed as sole nominee	Chair of Leadership & Teachers' Pay Chair of Admissions Lead Governor for Staffing	11/10/17 – 10/10/21 Resigned 01/04/19	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay Admissions	DCC Employee, Healthy Towns Initiative
	Rick Walker	Local Authority	Appointed by GB, approved by the LA	Lead Governor for Data and Curriculum	26/03/18 – 25/03/22 Resigned 12/11/18	Teaching & Learning	None

**Appendix 2 – Meeting Attendance 2018-19**

	Full GB		Teaching & Learning		Resources		Leadership & Teachers' Pay		Admissions	
	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended
Tania Beard	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0
Lythan Nevard	7	6	3	3						
Mel Turl	7	5	3	1						
Andrew Wood	7	7	3	3						
Sheena Wright	7	4	3	2					0	0
Rick Walker	2	2								
Lisa Malton	6	1	3	2						
Molly Grenfell	1	0								
John Clements	7	5	2	2						
Caren Flicker	7	6			3	3				
Vicky Keating	4	2			2	0	2	0		
Craig Jamieson	6	5			3	1	3	2		
Danielle Hamilton	5	3			2	2	2	2	0	0
Kirsty Crowe	2	1			1	0	1	0		
Hannah Wood	1	0								