



GOVERNING BOARD IMPACT STATEMENT 2019-20

The Governing Board continued to fulfil its three key responsibilities during the academic year 2019-2020 of:

- ensuring the school has a clear vision and strategic plan;
- holding Tania Beard, as Headteacher, and Steph Harvey, as Acting 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 currently consists of the following:

- The Headteacher (or Acting Headteacher) – appointed automatically
- One parent governor – elected by parents and carers
- Six Foundation governors – appointed by the Diocese of Exeter

The Governing Board currently has four vacancies – recruitment to these had been in process but had to be put on hold during the pandemic lockdown. Recruitment to the Board will be a key focus in the Autumn term 2020.

Our school also has two Associate Members, appointed by the Governing Board on the basis of the skills and experience they can bring to the role. One of the Associate Members attends Full Governing Board meetings and the Teaching and Learning committee meetings. The other 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 usually meets twice each term. This year, the Governing Board has held additional full Board meetings in order to discuss future leadership planning following the retirement of the Headteacher and to consider school provision during the Covid 19 pandemic.

All governors are members of at least one of the four Committees, which are:

- Resources (Finance, Health and Safety, Premises and Staffing)
- Teaching and Learning (Parent and Christian Community Links, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Inclusion, Safeguarding, Data and Curriculum)
- 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 staffing matters, exclusions and complaints.

St Martin's School is now in its eighth year. 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 into 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 the Governing Board continues to see a relatively high turnover the board has a core of governors who are actively involved in the school, with a high proportion of the foundation governors having children at the school. The Governing Board started the school year with a full membership but has seen a number of resignations over the course of the year. The Governing Board members are keen to fill the vacancies the board currently has, improve retention on the board and develop a pipeline of potential governors to reduce the risk of the board being below capacity in the future. The board are also considering possibility of recruiting members with experience in education.

Despite being below capacity, we believe that we are a strong Governing Board with an established and strong 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 actively 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 has a core membership who are actively engaged in the school, with governors coming from a range of professions. 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;

- Finance training
- Safeguarding
- Understanding the accountability of governors regarding SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities)

The Board also had a training session on analysing data from SIMS (Schools Information Management System) scheduled but this had to be cancelled due to the C19 lockdown.

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.

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 a review of the announcement about increased funding in future years and how best the school can use this funding.

The Chair of the Board has also actively led a review of the future direction for the school in light of the early retirement of the Headteacher. This has involved an initial extraordinary meeting of the Governing Board to discuss the options for the school (continuing in current form, moving into a partnership or joining an existing multi academy trust) and an agreement about the form of the review, as well as the plan to ensure the school continues to be supported in the period until a decision is made.

We continue to operate a hybrid committee and Lead Governor system. This is becoming more established and effective although the current vacancies on the board lead to challenges with governors picking up additional responsibilities and reducing the overall capacity of the board.

3: Strategy, support and challenge

The School Improvement Plan continues to be a key item for the Governing Board cycle of work. An extremely 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 Governing Board have provided particular support this year in light of the absence and subsequent early retirement of the Headteacher. The Headteacher suffered a bereavement during the school year and took a period of absence due to this. The Governing Board provided support to the Headteacher during the difficult time and also provided a supportive environment to the Acting Headteacher whilst developing in the role, whilst continuing to challenge the staff to ensure the best outcomes for children.

A further area of particular note this academic year has been the Covid-19 pandemic that resulted in all schools being closed other than to those children of recognised key workers. The governors worked actively with the Senior Leadership Team in advance of the decision to close schools to understand and plan for how children could continue their learning and how children, families and staff could be supported through this time. The governors, led by the Chair, were a regular presence in school in the days leading up to the closure to provide support to staff through this difficult time.

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 and a significant strain on staff.

The budget more generally has also been a significant area of focus for the Governing Board this year. Key areas of focus this year have been the funding for pupils with Special Educational Need and Disability (as detailed above), the extension of nursery provision for this academic year and the impact of managing staff absence. This has been monitored by the lead governor for finance working closely with the School Business Manager and providing regular updates to the Governing Board and resources committee.

As last year, a potential risk to the strategy is the expanded provision at the Education Campus. The Chair has again supported the Acting 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, and a risk register has been developed and is being reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Board. 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. This has prompted regular discussions at Full Governing Board meetings about the marketing of the school and the need to celebrate good news stories. Staff have been very effective in directly engaging prospective parents to manage up the numbers and it is expected that in future years the expanded nursery provision will help manage this.

A key reason for lower than expected admissions numbers in recent years is that the vast majority of new development in the town in recent years has been at the other end of the town. The Governing Board, supported by one of the foundation governors who has a role in the planning of the town, pay close attention to the future development of the town. Encouragingly further development is intended closer to St Martin's, but a further new school

is planned in the relatively near future. The impact of these issues is actively monitored and has formed part of the strategic review of the school.

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 a standing item on the agenda for Board meetings. The Governing Board has been keen to acknowledge the hard work of the staff and ensure that this is communicated through the 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 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, and subsequently the Acting Headteacher, and 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. This has allowed knowledge sharing between staff at inset days and has allowed subject leads at each school to share ideas and support each other.

The partnership has provided a great deal of support for the Acting Headteacher, with headteachers from these schools coming into school to provide initial guidance, mentoring and support with any issues.

Governors from St Martin's attended termly meetings with the head-teachers and governors from the other schools. This gave the Governing Board the opportunity to exchange ideas, gain reassurance and explore difficult issues with other settings. The meetings have been beneficial from these perspectives and have provided confidence that our Governing Board is operating strategically at a level at least on a par with other boards.

This partnership has also resulted in governors being able to join two training sessions that were ran at Feniton school.

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 initiated a strategic review of the future for the school
- Governors have provided support and challenge to the decision to bring the after-school provision for younger children in house
- Governors have contributed to the mock SIAMS inspection and reviewed the feedback and actions arising from this mock inspection.

3: Financial management and care for buildings

The Lead Governor for Finance receives regular monitoring statements from the School Business Manager which are summarised for the Governing Board on a half-termly basis. The School Business Manager, alongside the Lead Governor for Finance also undertook a financial benchmarking exercise and will follow this up with an in-depth review of similarly positioned schools.

These statements have been supported, closely scrutinised and reported on by the Lead Governor for Finance, and the Business Manager regularly attends meetings of the resources committee to answer governors' questions. The Lead Governor for Finance worked 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. This has resulted in a reasonable carry forward which has helped with the planning for the 2020/21 budget.

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" which this year was undertaken by the Business Manager and the Chair of Governors to identify particular priorities. A rolling programme is maintained.

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. support to the SENDCo, 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. One of the governors is 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.

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 Board meetings are set out below and help to demonstrate the impact of the Board with regards to Christian distinctiveness;

September 2019

- Pupil Premium Spend 2018-19 analysis discussion ensured governors had oversight and understanding of impacts and those items to take forward
- Governance structure reviewed and agreed again to ensure a strong Governing Board
- SIP discussion demonstrated the Governing Board commitment to ensuring that priorities are right for the school and are achievable by staff. Discussion also showed GB wanting to meet duty of care to staff through considering impacts of potential high workload

October 2019

- Governors have questions in detail performance and addressing the needs of all children from those with SEN to the more able.
- Exploring and supporting the Pupil Premium spend will support the most disadvantaged
- Governors are holding conversations around caring for staff and support/easing their workloads, demonstrating governors are invested in both staff and children
- The Governing Board understands the importance of investing in Early Years and growing the school from the Nursery up.

December 2019

The Full Governing Board meeting for December 2019 had to be cancelled but impacts identified at Committee meetings in November were as follows:

- Governors are engaging well with staff to complete Lead Governor work actions and create their reports
- Staff now report that they have a better sense of governors being present and knowing the school. Governors have formed much better links with staff which has resulted in staff feeling more confident and at ease with talking to governors.
- Governors have a good oversight and understanding of the budget and ensure good value for money
- Governors are being more present in school which provides better support and strengthens relationships between the Governing Board and staff.

February 2020

- Discussing and understanding enrichment and focus on SEND needs within context of having a fair approach to supporting all children reflects the GB's focus on 'what really matters'.
- Giving time to hear staff frustrations at having to ensure children learn in a certain way whilst wanting to provide a nurturing environment which still enables children to learn and progress academically ensures governors understand the difficulties teachers feel at the moment.
- Discussing the feedback and recommendations from the mock SIAMS inspection means the GB has identified what actions need to be taken forward to enable the school to be the best it can be
- Budget discussions reflected the current difficulties involved with funding the staffing needed and demonstrate that the GB is keen to see the school staffed as best as it can be to meet the needs of the children.
- Growing the nursery numbers and recognizing the challenges within this whilst still supporting the overall growth of the school.

March 2020

- Doing the meeting under current circumstance of Covid 19 demonstrates our continued commitment to the community of St Martin's
- CF and her work to support the vulnerable families, in particular the FSM food hampers which were delivered
- Stories being told online by staff
- Governors modelling the Vision - a high governor presence in school - children inquisitive about their role and engaging with them.
- SIP monitoring is still underway despite current circumstances of school closure.

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. This year in particular has required all those involved in the school to call on that foundation and we believe the actions of staff and children throughout this time truly demonstrate this to be the case.

Appendix 1 - Current GB Membership

Current Governors							
	Name	Type of Governor	Appointing Body	Office	Term	Committee(s)	Registered Interests
1.	John Clements	Parent	Directly appointed as sole nominee	Chair of Governors	11/10/17 – 10/10/21	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay Headteacher Appraisal East Devon Church Schools Partnership Admissions	Parent of child in school
2.	Steph Harvey	Staff (Acting Headteacher)	Automatic appointment as Head		1/11/2019 – for duration of post	Teaching & Learning Resources Admissions East Devon Church Schools Partnership	Parent of employee in school
3.	Lisa Malton	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Safeguarding	08/10/18 – 07/10/22	Teaching & Learning	Parent of child in school
4.	VACANCY	Staff	Appointed directly by staff as sole nominee				
5.	Hannah Wood	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Data and Curriculum	15/07/19 – 14/07/23	Teaching & Learning	Parent of child in school
6.	Andrew Wood	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Vice-Chair Lead Governor for Parent and Christian Community Links	11/12/17 – 10/11/21	Teaching & Learning East Devon Church Schools Partnership	None
7.	Lythan Nevard	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Ex-officio Lead Governor for SEND & Inclusion Deputy Lead Governor for Safeguarding	31/10/16 – 30/10/20	Teaching & Learning	None
8.	Jason Knight	Foundation	Appointed by Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Finance	15/07/19 – 14/07/23	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay	Parent of child in school
9.	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	Parent of child in school

						Headteacher Appraisal	
10.	VACANCY	Local Authority	Appointed by GB, approved by the LA				
11.	VACANCY	Parent	Elected by parents/carers				
12.	VACANCY	Foundation	Appointed by the Diocese of Exeter				
Associate Members (appointed by the Governing Board)							
	Mel Turl	Associate Member			13/07/20 – 12/07/21 08/07/19 – 07/07/20	Teaching & Learning	Staff Member
	Iain Grafton	Associate Member			23/09/19 – 22/09/20 15/10/18 – 14/10/19 17/09/17 – 16/09/18	1 st and 2 nd Committees	Associate Member at Woodlands Park Primary School, Member of DCC Schools Admissions Appeals Panel
Resignations/end of office in previous 12 months.							
	Caren Flicker	Staff	Appointed directly by staff as sole nominee	Chair of Resources Committee	<i>End of term of office</i> 22/03/2016 – 21/03/2020	Resources	None
	Tania Beard	Staff (Headteacher)	Automatic appointment as Head		<i>Retired 30.4.20</i> 01/09/11 - present	Teaching & Learning Resources Admissions East Devon Church Schools Partnership	None
	Molly Grenfell	Local Authority	Appointed by GB, approved by the LA	Lead Governor for Staffing	<i>Resigned 6/01/20</i> 08/07/19 – 07/07/23	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay	DCC Employee
	Sheena Wright	Foundation	Appointed by the Diocese of Exeter	Lead Governor for Early Years	<i>Resigned 9/12/2019</i> 10/09/15 – 15/01/17 (Co-opted) 16/01/17 – 15/01/21	Teaching & Learning Headteacher Appraisal Admissions	None
	Kirsty Crowe	Parent	Elected by parents/carers	Lead Governor for Staffing	<i>Resigned 06/10/19</i> 07/05/19 – 06/05/23	Resources Leadership & Teachers' Pay	None

Appendix 2 – Meeting Attendance 2019-20

Please note: Summer Term Committee meetings were cancelled and replaced by an additional Full Governing Board meeting due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

	Full GB		Teaching & Learning		Resources		Leadership & Teachers' Pay		Admissions	
	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended	Possible	Attended
Steph Harvey	8	8	2	2	2	2			0	0
John Clements	10	9			2	2	2	2	0	0
Lythan Nevard	10	10	2	2						
Andrew Wood	10	8	2	2						
Lisa Malton	10	8	2	1						
Hannah Wood	10	6	2	1						
Jason Knight	10	10			2	2	2	2		
Craig Jamieson	10	2			2	2	2	2		
Mel Turl (Associate)	10	9	2	2						
<i>The following governors either resigned or completed their term of office in-year.</i>										
Caren Flicker	6	5			2	1				
Sheena Wright	2	1	1	1					0	0
Molly Grenfell	2	1			1	0	1	0		
Kirsty Crowe	1	1								
Tania Beard *	5	1	2	0	2	0				

*Tania Beard was on an agreed leave of absence from the start of November up to her retirement in April 2020.