

ST MARTIN'S CE PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES

<u>FULL GOVERNING BOARD - VIRTUAL</u>		DATE:	7 th November 2022
CHAired BY: John Clements (JC)		CLERKED BY: Jacqueline Brooks (JB)	
GOVERNORS PRESENT:		Also Present:	
Steph Harvey (SH) John Clements (JC) Russ Green (RG) Liz Kane (LK) Gemma Tozer-Howe (GTH) Jennifer Elliott (JE)		Brigid Thompson (BT) – School Business Manager	
APOLOGIES: JB for items 1 – part 5.			
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. JB had sent apologies for not being able to clerk from the start of the meeting.
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest & Correspondence</u> 1. No declarations of interest. 2. No correspondence.
4.	<u>Approval of minutes from last meeting (17.10.22) and update on actions</u> 1. Agreed as accurate by the Full GB – to be signed by the Chair when next in school. 2. <u>Update on actions.</u> None of the actions were due to be completed by this meeting – therefore they were all still in process.
5.	<u>Finance</u> The GB discussed the Budget Monitor which had been circulated prior to the meeting. SEN Income has been underestimated currently as the DCC process is taking significantly longer than it should

do – the school is waiting for many EHCPs to be finalised and funding decisions have not been confirmed.

Once pay increases have been confirmed, the Budget Monitor will become more accurate. The support staff increase which is likely to be applied in November will cost the school an additional £70,000 a year, but the school has received no increased funding to support this. The impact for the three-year forecast as a result of this is not yet known but there is likely to be an impact on future staffing decisions.

JC asked when the price of school dinners was last reviewed. The cost has never been increased. JC suggested this should be reviewed.

Action: SH and BT to review school dinner charges and feedback to governors.

The GB discussed whether the amount the school charges FISH to rent the premises should increase. It is currently £17 for the day during term time.

The GB agreed that it would be worthwhile the school reviewing these charges and considering rising these charges as the amount charged is currently low in comparison to other places which let rooms.

Action: SH and BT to review FISH letting charges and feedback to governors.

(JB joined the meeting)

JC asked if there had been any indicators yet of the likely Reception numbers for September 2023. SH advised that the application process does not open for another week, so it is too early to currently know. BT advised that within Devon there has been a natural dip in the birth rate which has impacted other school's intake numbers. However, as Cranbrook is still a growing town, St. Martin's is continuing to grow as well. BT advised that she has budgeted for 54 children being in the 2023 Reception intake.

SH raised that although St. Martin's has not been affected by the dip in birth rate, the level of SEN need in school affects futureproofing. There are currently three children in Nursery who are awaiting EHCPs and whose school year based on age should be Reception. SH is in the process of consulting with a specialist school to provide outreach work. The Ed Psych has observed the Hub and determined that the skill required and the needs of the children both are beyond Quality Teaching. SH has had to discuss with the School Improvement Advisor that although the school works to return those children who will be able to manage mainstream teaching to their assigned classes, there are some children in the Hub who require specialist provision and will not manage a return to their mainstream class.

6. Health & Safety and Premises

1. JC referred to the references to CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) in the Lead Governor report and asked if their resources are actively reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.

LK advised that the resources are all tailored for children. SH will share these resources again within the staff team.

JC noted the issues with a lack of space in school and how these might be addressed. He asked if there was anything more strategic that the GB could look at to support this process.

SH advised she will be revisiting a grants process for wooden classrooms. The Diocese has sent through the details for the SCA grant applications but the costs for the new build/extension the school was hoping to build are too prohibitive. There may need to be more of a compromise in how space is used e.g., moving the Hub to the Yurt so that the classroom can be used differently. BT is in the process of obtaining quotes for changing the school lighting to LEDs as although there would be an initial outlay for this work, doing so will significantly reduce energy costs.

	<p>JC asked if there are any identified risks specific to premises. BT advised that as planned within the Asset Register, there will be a need to consider flooring replacements as the carpets deteriorate with time. It is planned to consider replacing the carpet with lino for practicality and cost reasons.</p> <p><u>2. Policies</u> The GB noted that the following policies had been reviewed and approved by the Lead Governor as delegated: Health & Safety and Wellbeing, Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities (OEVOSA) – both DCC model and St. Martin’s version.</p>
7.	<p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>1. JC asked if there had been any further developments around best practice for undertaking online checks during the recruitment process. BT advised that DCC had issued guidance on this, but it did not expand any further from previous observations and discussions held by the GB. It will be important to be aware of the legalities involved in these checks e.g., would need to ensure that the checks are being carried out on the correct person. There would need to be very strict parameters with findings clearly recorded. The school would also need to ensure that it was upholding equality standards and that the checks were being undertaken fairly. BT said that she would only recommend undertaking checks on a candidate that a job offer has been made to. It would be made explicitly clear that any job offer had been made pending checks.</p> <p><u>2. Policies.</u> The GB noted that the following policies had been reviewed and approved (as delegated) by the Lead Governor: Appraisal, Staff Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The GB agreed to approve the new model Pay Policy and noted that the appraisal process will be carried out from here in line with a different timescale to previous years with appraisals being held in the summer term and pay decisions being made in early-mid October.</p>
8.	<p><u>Leadership and Management SIP Report</u></p> <p><u>1. Termly SIP Report</u> JC and LK are in the process of undertaking this work. The recent formal process they were both involved in has taken up a significant amount of time.</p> <p><u>2. 2021-22 Annual GB Impact Statement</u> The draft statement had been circulated prior to the meeting. The GB agreed to approve the statement and JB will publish it on the website.</p>
9.	<p><u>Data and Curriculum</u></p> <p>JC asked if the new staff have provided any feedback on the current curriculum. SH advised that Jo Stranks has worked alongside Nat Padley in English, monitoring exercises, providing feedback on marking, and undertaking vocabulary/grammar input.</p> <p>A number of the new staff had not been in a Talk for Writing school previously but are adjusting to being at St. Martin’s. Jen Cordwell has taken on shadowing Maths with AH, Lead for PE as well as some of the residential trip planning. Melissa Grogan has taken on a whole school lunchtime management role. Achieve4All are being used to provide leadership time for teachers.</p> <p>The GB acknowledged the excellent afterschool club offer for pupils. There are 225 free after school club places provided across thirteen different clubs. A quarter of these places are taken by disadvantaged pupils. SH advised the GB of further plans to hold a Saturday Movie Club once every</p>

	<p>half term to help support the community. SH hopes that Learning Ambassadors and volunteers may be able to help with this.</p> <p>JC asked if the DfE had made any changes to the curriculum recently the GB should be aware of. SH advised there had not been.</p> <p>JE asked how AH is settling into her role as Deputy Head. SH advised that AH is doing a great job of developing systems within the school and has particular responsibility for Early Career Teaching support and attendance. The EWO has recently reviewed the school's strategy for monitoring and addressing attendance issues and stated that all schools should follow the same approach as St. Martin's.</p>
10.	<p><u>Quality of Education SIP Report</u></p> <p>SH has been working with AH to develop a consistent language of teaching/beliefs within the school with the aim of bringing together previous and new members of staff. This has resulted in some staff feeling that they are being seen as not already understanding the St. Martin's ethos and approach, even though they do. SH has explained to these staff that the aim is to pull together a consistent narrative and is not meant to seem critical of any previous members of the team. SH advised the GB that the recent ETHOS Group questionnaire showed that the staff team is feeling demoralized at the moment. The impact of so many members of the team leaving or being on maternity leave has been significant, especially in the Early Years team where other than MT there are no very experienced St. Martin's staff. Up until recently, staff were covering three breaktimes and this impacted upon their ability to spend time together when on breaks.</p> <p>RG advised that the level of work can feel relentless, and that staff do not always see the successes that are happening. He was also aware that some staff felt that the Model for Great Teaching implied that they had been failing to achieve this previously, which had not been the case.</p> <p>Some people have reported that they feel that SH has been less 'visible' this term. SH is part covering the role of SENDCo whilst EK is on maternity leave which has had a significant impact on her workload. A decision has been made recently to employ a cover SENDCo two days a week – this should ease SH's current workload and allow her to be more visible again. SH advised that she had previously been trying to protect staff from problems and challenges that the school is facing but is now letting them know.</p> <p>SH also feels that OfSTED being overdue is also creating stress for staff and that it would be beneficial if the inspection could take place. Despite St. Martin's continuing to strengthen its partnership with the other East Devon Church schools, SH suspects that OfSTED may give the school a 'requires improvement' judgement because of the move to have all schools part of multi-academy trusts.</p> <p>The GB discussed that expectations of children continue to be very high, including expectations that children will use very formal terminology. Demands on subject leaders are also very high but with no additional money unless the teacher is leading on English and Maths. This also affects morale.</p> <p>The GB discussed how morale might be boosted. SH advised that she is encouraging staff to take opportunities to have breaktimes together so there is more of a feeling of being part of a team. The GB agreed to communicate to staff that the work they do is very much valued by the Board.</p>
11.	<p><u>Parent & Christian Community Links</u></p> <p>1. JC advised that he was impressed that the community toddler group has been supported by Early Years school staff. The plan is for this to continue when the group moves to the Younghayes Centre, following it growing past the numbers that the school can offer space for. JE advised that she has liaised with Jude Carter who has been running the group around grants that could be available for developing the toddler group.</p>

	<p>JC asked how the community support group for parents of children with SEND that meets on the school bus has been going.</p> <p>RG advised the group is going from strength to strength, although it is now based in the Yurt to allow the Hub to use the bus. Specialist staff attend the group, and the group is also alternating between being held at St. Martins and CEC.</p> <p>The GB discussed that they feel there is a lot of communication evident between the school and parents/carers. RG raised that there is a fine balance to be reached between sharing information but not giving more than parents might want/be able to process.</p> <p>Parent Governor elections are currently being re-run and JB has sent out several application packs to interested people.</p> <p>LK noted that it was helpful to see the SIAMS action plan and read the updates on how actions are being progressed. LK asked how the new Minister – Rev Jon – has been settling into his role. SH advised that he has been going from strength to strength. He contributed well to the recent Church Management meeting and will be involved with school events like Harvest and the Lantern Walk. Rev Jon is currently in the process of joining the GB.</p>
12.	<p><u>Personal Development SIP Report</u></p> <p>1. The GB noted that residential trips have now been embedded in the curriculum map and that support for military families is being developed. AH has been liaising with Lymstone and exploring the establishing of an afterschool club for children of military families. SH has met with the parents of children who have EHCPs to gain their views and input. Parents requested improved communication regarding SEN which SH has been working on.</p>
13.	<p><u>SEND & Inclusion</u></p> <p>1. The GB discussed the provision provided by the Hub. Currently there are four groups of children within the Hub:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children who need specialist provision/are already waiting for a specialist place • Children who will be able to reintegrate into their mainstream class • Children with autism who have a bespoke set of needs to be met • Children with SEMH needs (social, emotional and mental health) which can vary widely <p>The School Improvement Advisor felt that there needed to be a focus on broad and balanced curriculum access. The Educational Psychologist (EP) stated that the school's focus should be on ensuring that the children feel safe and nurtured to enable them to then be able to access the curriculum. The EP felt that the school has created a Communication and Interaction Hub.</p> <p>SH raised that although she and RG have tried to create a clearly articulated explanation of what the Hub does, the provision is not widely supported within the staff team. There have been some criticisms from members of staff who feel that the children in the Hub are 'just playing'. RG explained to the GB that when people see 'playing' they are actually seeing skills and values being taught and practiced. As a result of the provision within the Hub, dysregulated children are regulating more quickly and accessing learning more quickly. The Boxall Profile is being used to help with benchmarking and tracking progress. Tiny steps are carefully recorded. SH is line-managing the Hub so that staff know that their manager fully believes in them and what they do.</p> <p>JE commented that she felt that having the Hub is one of the things which makes St. Martin's special and shows that it is prepared to do things differently to improve outcomes for children.</p> <p>SH advised that unfortunately the positives that the Hub offers will not necessarily be seen by OfSTED – OfSTED often sees this sort of provision as being a space for children who cannot be</p>

	<p>managed in class. SH raised that this is not how the Hub is being used and the GB noted that there are currently 22 children with EHCPs who are being taught in mainstream classes. Where children are assessed as being able to reintegrate with their class, teachers work with them to achieve this. SH is keeping records of those children who have reintegrated into their classrooms.</p> <p>RG explained to governors that the curriculum and progress in the Hub is evidenced and recorded. Individualised learning spaces have been established and the structure of downtime activities allows for 1:1 staff time and 1:1 Phonics work to be undertaken. Mornings usually have a focus on learning, and afternoons have a SEMH focus often involving collaborative group activities.</p> <p>JC observed that some children would be at risk of exclusion if the Hub provision was not in place, which SH confirmed would be the case. SH advised that four of the children are waiting for specialist provision. The GB noted that for one child, there is currently no specialist place for their age.</p> <p><u>2. Policies</u> The GB reviewed and re-approved the following policies: SEND, Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs.</p>
14.	<p><u>Behaviour and Attitudes SIP Report</u></p> <p>1. The GB discussed that the sustainability of the Hub is an issue, as due to the delays at DCC, funding is not all being received for the children. It was noted that the cost to DCC would be significantly more if they had to fund the children in a specialist provision. SH has continued to raise with DCC the difficulties and delays the school is experiencing but has not received any responses. SH advised the GB that EHCP Annual Reviews are not being finalised in accordance with timescales by DCC – she is currently reviewing EHCPs that have not been finalised in two years.</p> <p>JE asked if there was any additional support regarding this that the Diocese could provide to the school. SH said that she would look into this.</p>
15.	<p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>1. JC advised that JW is doing an amazing job and is the lead professional in many cases. There is a great deal of evidence to show that JW cares very much about the families she works with and has a deep understanding of their needs.</p> <p>SH advised that CPOMS recording has been refined so that information can be collated even more accurately. At Risk Children (ARC) Meetings are now being held internally and attended by SLT members and JW. These give a very clear picture of need and concerns.</p> <p>The GB were advised that MASH has reported a 150% increase in workload, and this is being seen in school in the increase of need as well.</p> <p><u>2. Policies.</u> It was confirmed that the new model policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection is being tailored for St. Martin's and will be ready to be approved by the GB at their next meeting on 5th December.</p>
16.	<p><u>Early Years</u></p> <p>1. The demand for Early Years places is continuing to grow year-on-year. JE is aware that there is a huge amount of work required by MT as a result. SH advised that she had weighted EYFS staffing to be above the required ratios but that the team are still struggling due to the high level of need amongst the children. Two children should really have 1:1 support. One has been allocated a 1:1 but then this means that the rest of the group are missing out on the positive impact that this team member can have on children.</p>

	<p>JC noted that it has been reported nationally that, post-Covid, speech and language needs at Early Years are increasing yet there are no reports of increased funding or much acknowledgement of the impact on this area that Covid has had. SH agreed that she is aware from other schools that they are also experiencing these same challenges and difficulties.</p> <p>LK observed that the Early Years cohort will not benefit from Covid Catch up funding either as this has been targeted at older children or children who were already in school when the EY children were still at home.</p> <p>RG raised that there is a risk that nationally exclusion rates could increase if schools continue to experience this level of need. SH advised that schools cannot legally exclude or refuse to admit children based on not being able to meet their needs. SH did not feel that she could always agree with this approach and that a school's ability to meet the needs of the child should be taken into consideration.</p>
17.	<p><u>Discussion: 'How has this meeting benefited our children and contributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school?'</u></p> <p>1. These were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors support the provision in the Hub and understand how it positively helps not just those children in the Hub but also has a positive impact for children in other classes • Governors demonstrated their wish to support and acknowledge staff • RG felt that discussions have had depth and included frankness about the dips in staff morale. • Governors recognize and support how school staff go 'above and beyond' e.g., SEND support, supporting community groups, providing a wide range of afterschool clubs

<u>ACTIONS FROM THIS MEETING</u>		
<u>Action</u>	<u>Person responsible</u>	<u>Date to be completed by</u>
1. Review school dinner charges and feedback to governors	SH and BT	6.2.22
2. Review letting charges for FISH and feedback to governors	SH and BT	6.2.22

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

- The GB agreed to adopt the new model Pay Policy
- The GB reviewed and agreed to re-approve the following policies: SEND, Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- The GB approved the 2021-22 GB Annual Impact Statement

Next meeting: Monday, 5th December 2022 (virtual) at 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Signed as accurate by the Chair:

Name of Chair:

Date: