

## **ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS**

### **Local Governing Body (LGB) – Approved Minutes of Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 at 5.00 pm at the School**

#### **Governors present:**

Mrs N Ahronson	NA				
Mrs S Chorley (from 5.15 pm)	SC	Y	Mrs A Keith	AK	Y
*Mrs M Down	MD	Y	Revd N Parish	NP	Y
/Mrs K Marchesi	KM	Y			
Ms P Gadsby	PG	Y	Ms E Smit	ES	Y
Mr A Holliman	AH	Y	Mrs J Taylor (Chair of Governors)	JT	N
Mrs S Jeffery	SJ	N	Mrs A Todd (Vice Chair)	AT	Y
Vacancy			In the chair		

#### **In attendance:**

Mrs T Jones (TJ)	Clerk to the Governors
Ms Z Lever (ZL)	ELT Chief Finance Officer (finance and resources items 2 – 4; to 5.50 pm) - online
Mrs H Wolvert (HW)	Assistant Head teacher

\* The Co-Headteachers Mrs M Down and Mrs K Marchesi share the role of Headteacher governor but count once towards a quorum and have a single vote where the Local Governing Body needs to vote on a matter.

#### **Observers to Part 1: None**

#### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence from this meeting had been received from Mrs Taylor and Mrs Jeffery and were accepted. An apology for late arrival had been received from SC. The meeting was in quorum.

#### **Declarations of Interest and confidentiality**

1. There were no interests declared in the agenda items for this meeting. Governors noted the confidentiality statement and the St Martin's Vision Statement provided in the agenda which underpinned all that was done at the Schools.

#### **Finance and Resources agenda**

2. Governors echoed the thanks in AH's pre-submitted questions to the ELT team for the helpful commentary in the Finance Report which accompanied the December figures. This had helped governors' review by pointing out variances between budget and previous periods with explanations.
3. ZL reported that the projected year-end forecast outcome shown in the Management Accounts for December 2022 was £148, 971. The projected position had improved as a result of the reduction of £40k in the energy forecast and St Martin's 2022-3 share of the additional grant from DfE (Maintained Schools Additional Grant) which would be received by academies in April 2023. Governors noted that £93k was allocated to St Martin's and that 5/12 had been applied to the current year and 7/12 would be applied to the 2023-24 budget. There had also been changes related to the filling of the caretaker vacancy and the cost of additional staff cover. The net effect of other movements in expenditure was zero.
4. ZL assured governors that the Trust was continuing to review energy costs and the Trust had agreed to keep the 30% contingency in place to cover anticipated fluctuations and adjust as necessary. A separate paper on the energy review had been provided to the LGB.
5. ZL reported that the accounts showed a forecast end of year carry forward of £143k and there was no change to the capital position. The accounts showed expenditure of the energy efficiency grant of £30k which would be on energy efficiency initiatives based on the Conditions Survey reports.
6. The LGB welcomed the improvement shown in the financial position. AH had welcomed the note that standard reporting timings would be reverted to and ZL confirmed the hope that the ELT team would be back at capacity and able to meet the standard reporting timetable shortly.

7. No further questions were asked at this point but made a number of points related to the financial position of the schools in their subsequent discussion.
- SC arrived at this point.

### **Benchmarking**

8. The LGB received the benchmarking report prepared by ELT using the DfE benchmarking tools. ZL drew attention to the fact that the conclusions were based on figures to March 2022 and that while benchmarking was useful to highlight 'direction of travel' and potential questions to ask, it should be noted that there could be significant variation between how schools deployed staff etc, which could make comparison difficult.
9. In a pre-submitted question, ES had asked what St Martin's connection was to the schools listed and compared to; the list was what the DfE considered to be 'like or similar' schools and was based on size of school and local demographic. Governors could use the DfE benchmarking tool to derive comparisons with other schools if they wished.
10. The LGB considered AT's pre-submitted question about the benchmarking of Teaching spend in the highest 10% of similar schools. It was noted that St Martin's had agreed a strategy of funding teaching to avoid having to use supply teachers wherever possible. AT had asked whether this strategy, which had been a successful strategy for the school up to this point, would be continued and about feedback from the Trust on this. The Co-Head teachers reported that they wished to continue this strategy and the Trust was supportive but that energy costs had to be borne in mind. The Co-Head teachers assured governors that they did not necessarily replace like for like and highlighted the challenge of recruitment, especially for support and lunchtime staff. (Currently vacancies for a member of support staff, and 2 lunchtime supervisors).
11. The Co-Head teachers sought governor approval of a proposal to employ two SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) students, currently placed at St Martin's, for the next academic year.
12. Governors noted that the budget provided for one new SCITT to be employed and the risk of employing a second SCITT, given uncertainties at this point in the year about the movement of other members of staff. Governors commented on the cost of recruitment and risk of losing the option to recruit a SCITT in whose training St Martin's had invested. MD said that traditionally St Martin's-trained SCITTs stayed in the profession.
13. AT asked for the cost of not employing this SCITT to be quantified; ZL said that the lag during the covid period was being corrected now and an increase was being seen in teachers' moving to other schools. The known cost of employing an additional SCITT could be compared with the potential cost of having to fill a vacancy with a more experienced teacher. The SCITT route might result in an estimated saving of approximately £20k. MD had commented that there was currently a vacancy for a TA.
14. Following discussion, the LGB agreed the request for the Co-Head teachers to recruit two SCITTs.

### **HR**

15. The LGB received reports on Staff movement and attendance for the autumn term and noted that the absence figures were skewed by the data for long term absence of one member of the support staff. Governors were invited to raise questions for response by the Trust HR Manager (Helen Gash).
16. MD reported that the School Improvement Plan included targets for equal opportunities and the Head teacher report to the March meeting would include detail on relevant initiatives.
17. In a pre-submitted question, JT asked about governor training on Diversity awareness, which had also been highlighted in the LGB self-evaluation; the Co-Head teachers invited governors to attend the inset on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May on Diversity.
18. Governors noted that a pool of 7 staff members was trained in safer recruitment. To supplement the current pool of governors trained in this area, AK, SC and ES volunteered to complete Safer Recruitment training on Educare.  
**Action: AK, SC, ES**
19. KM reported the value derived by St Martin's from support from the Trust HR resource and in particular the quick response to HR queries, such as for advice on strikes by teachers for this term. MD said it was also reassuring to the Co-Head teachers, as non-HR professionals, to be able to follow the ELT procedures.
20. AT asked how staff were feeling about the strikes called by some teaching unions; the Co-head teachers reported the supportive approach from leaders to staff faced with this decision. AH welcomed the approach of good communications, understanding and goodwill. In response to query, the Co-Head teachers said the School did not expect any disruption from the attendance at the site by external representatives.

### **Finance and Infrastructure**

21. Members received the Resources and Infrastructure report to the LGB for January and asked about the Disaster Recovery plan; the plan was very similar to the previous plan, updated to provide for access to children's records offsite.
22. No breaches of Site Security had been recorded.
23. The LGB noted the report on Health and Safety provided within the Resources and Infrastructure report and it was clarified that reference was to the HT report for the autumn term. AT had asked about the outcome of the action for the Trust H&S Manager to review with the school the issue raised on the last report of corridors as a potential fire risk; the Co-Head teachers confirmed that initial actions had been undertaken, such as clearance of items being stored in the corridors, but this recommendation would be the subject of further review and risk assessment as it was important to preserve the primary school character of St Martin's through displays in corridors which were welcoming and engaging.
24. AT had asked what steps were being taken on the first two high risks highlighted related to fire signage and doors; three issues of high non-compliance had been raised which were quick to fix and all actions highlighted in red had been addressed.
25. To try to quantify the extent of non-compliance, AT had asked whether the January Citation report related to a full H&S audit, how many observations were made in total and what the overall judgement was from the audit. Governors agreed they would welcome clarity on the reporting criteria, such as definitions of risk rating, how risks designated as 'high' compared with classing something as immediate, and the scale /context of the non-compliance issues raised thought the H&S audit. The response from the Site Manager also indicated some confusion over the overall conclusion from the audit and noted that he was discussing this with the Trust H&S Manager,
26. TJ pointed out that some detail of the context was provided within the response to this question, which gave statistics from the audit, and confirmed compliance in 108 aspects, with no immediate matters of Non-Compliance identified, 7 matters of medium and 3 of low non-compliance, plus the 3 high compliance matters noted in minute 24.
27. ES asked whether the School had support for health and safety issues related to trees; the School purchased tree and ditches cover which included analysis and monitoring of the condition of the trees on the site.
28. In response to AH's query, it was confirmed that the audit included review of reports from the drills carried out at the School.
29. It was clarified that the Resources and Infrastructure reported reportable (RIDDOR) accidents and further information would be provided with the autumn term data in the Head teacher's report.
30. The LGB noted the updates on Good Estate Management GEMS Action Plan and planned maintenance projects and noted the report on IT Infrastructure management and the requirement on all governors to complete training on cyber security.
31. The LGB noted the report on Contracts/Project procurement. ZL reported that it was expected that the Risk Register would be brought to the March meeting of the LGB, following current review of the Trust risk register and scheme of delegation by the CEO and COO. **Action: TJ (agenda)**
32. No further questions were raised and the LGB thanked ZL for attending the meeting and her responses to queries from governors.  
ZL left at this point.

#### **School Evaluation and improvement plan review/monitoring**

33. MD highlighted the reviewed School Improvement Plan (SIP) which identified in red where some targets for priorities had not yet been met. SC commented on the amount of detail included in this SIP; MD said that for the first year of their co-headship this had been a useful aide memoire, but it was important that the improvement plan did not become unwieldy. See also response under minute 34.
34. AH said that the SIP appeared to include both priorities for improvement and ongoing activities and asked whether there was a document which sat below the SIP which detailed these. MD said that this question could be answered by outlining how the school self-evaluation and improvement priorities would be documented for 2023-24 and showed the plan currently being drafted. The new format included a 500-word commentary on each of the Ofsted judgements focused on what real improvements had been made by the current SIP and was thus designed to link evaluation clearly with the improvement targets for the following year. It would thus be more condensed than the current SIP.
35. AK asked who was responsible for writing the document; the SLT drafted the document, triangulating with what was seen in school and with school improvement support from the Trust. AT asked about timelines for developing the document; the draft would be submitted to the Trust on 10 February 2023, giving time over the summer term for challenge and to enable the priorities to be built into planning for the next academic year.
36. ES asked whether there would be a document for each of the Infant and the Junior Schools; evaluation and improvement would be covered in a single document covering both schools but it was important to

be able to extract specific information as required for the two schools which would continue to be inspected separately. As a follow-up question, ES asked about reference to EYFS in the framework document; EYFS was a standalone judgement by Ofsted and the document would cross-refer to all the Ofsted judgement areas.

37. Governors welcomed the approach, introduced by the Trust to make the improvement plan more manageable.
38. In response to a query, Governors received a brief explanation of metacognition.
39. The LGB discussed the response to the pre-submitted question about how the school planned to increase early identification of children with SEN and what was hoped to be achieved by this. The Co-Head teachers had responded that increasing SEND income to support the children could be achieved by applying more quickly for EHCPs for relevant pupils. Governors noted the interrelation of resourcing and quality of education and that the current financial pressures made it even more important to apply for funding where Ordinarily Available Provision could not provide the required support.
40. In response to the query about how teachers and support staff were “upskilled” to recognise, and support children with SEN, given the day-to-day demands of teaching, the Co-Head teachers had clarified that Ordinarily Available Provision met the needs of most learners but where needs were not fully met through this, an individual Action Plan (IAP) was written using the SEND profile of need and advice from outside agencies.
41. As a follow-up question, ES asked what benefit there was from not progressing an EHCP application; the meeting explored barriers to progressing applications, including the challenge of gathering sufficient evidence of need, which could be time-consuming. HW commented that it was important to ensure all possible evidence was provided to avoid an application being rejected and resulting delays in acknowledgement of need for example while an appeal was being conducted. The Co-Head teachers would investigate whether it was possible to start a second EHCP application while waiting for the response to an appeal to a first application.  
**Action: Co-Head teachers**
42. AH asked whether there was a resource within the Trust that St Martin’s could draw upon to support the EHCP application process and about the proportion of applications by parents; advice was available from the expert appointed to the Trust’s SEN project, but applications were made by the schools. Very few parents applied for an EHCP for their child but governors were assured that St Martin’s supported parents who did so, such as through providing the required reports. AK gave anecdotal feedback about the need to provide sufficient evidence and of pushing back when the LA rejected an application.
43. AH asked about the system in place in school to review and agree whether to pursue potential applications; the subject of EHCPs was on the agenda for every SLT meeting and the decision to progress an application was made jointly. ES supported the team approach to making these decisions.
44. Governors asked which staff were involved in developing the applications and whether they had time to undertake this role. The Co-Head teachers outlined the approach and the key members of staff. Governors acknowledged the value of investing in an Inclusion Administrator at St Martin’s and their support in the application process, including drafting the application and evidence gathering.
45. In response to query, it was confirmed that a follow up to the Trust’s review of SEN at St Martin’s had been delayed on account of ill-health but the School was implementing the action plan and recommendations from the initial review.

#### **Five-year strategy**

46. The Co-Head teachers circulated an early draft five-year strategy and proposed scheduling a workshop in the summer term to gather feedback from Governors on longer term plans.

**Action: TJ (agenda summer term)**

#### **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

47. The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Governing Body held 29 November 2022 were approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chair. The report on actions arising from the previous minutes was taken as read.

#### **Safeguarding**

48. KM reported that there had been little change to the safeguarding data received by Governors at the autumn 2 meeting together with assurance on safeguarding practices provided through the safeguarding audit. KM reported on Trust safeguarding meetings giving the opportunity to share good practice and provide support to DSLs.

49. KM delivered the presentation slides being made to all pupils to raise awareness of potential online safety risks. The presentation had been shared via Teams to all class teachers and illustrated to the LGB the potential of this communication tool.
50. Governors raised a number of queries from the presentation material and the Co-Head teachers would feedback to the Computing Lead the suggestion to make it clearer on the PowerPoint that children should *not* accept links. **Action: Co-Head teachers**
51. Governors discussed how the School raised the awareness of children and parents of online risks. The challenge of protecting children was acknowledged. The School highlighted to parents filters they could use to safeguard their children, but these were not universally implemented, and children could be exposed to online risks through discussion with their peers and older children, as well as through being exposed to the risks themselves. NP asked if there was training that he could undertake to be alerted to newly emerging risks of online communication, such as the phenomenon of influencers, and AT asked about guidance to staff to keep up to date with changing nature of online risks; the Co-Head teachers acknowledged the challenges and said that the Jigsaw programme, which the Behaviour and Attitudes lead governors had seen during their assurance seeking visit (see written report) was a valuable resource in this respect.

### **Compliance, Policy and document review**

52. AK reported from the Admissions Panel meeting which had discussed changes to the Admissions Policies for 2024-25 made in order to reference membership of ELT and align where possible to admission policies of other Trust schools, and to clarify the oversubscription criterion for children of staff members. The Diocese had confirmed that it was not necessary to consult on the changes which had been made for clarification and the updated policies were provided to the LGB.
53. The Local Governing Body confirmed the reviewed Admissions Policies for 2024-25.
54. The Local Governing Body ratified the updated three year Pupil Premium strategy and the impact statement for 2021-22, which governors had agreed by email to enable publication on the website by the 31 December 2022.
55. The Co-Head teachers had responded positively to the suggestion to train volunteers to support with targeted reading, noting the Trust's rigorous recruitment process for volunteers.

### **Committees**

56. The report from the Admissions Panel was given with the agenda item on compliance and a written report was provided on the OneDrive.
57. The Local Governing Body noted the terms of reference for the Finance and Resources Committee and the Education and Wellbeing Committee.
58. Governors who had not yet done so were asked to register with the Chair of Governors their preference for committee membership. NP said that as lead governor for School of Faith he would be more suited to sitting on the Education and Wellbeing Committee.
59. Committee chairs, dates of committee meetings and any adaptations to the lead governor model would be considered at the next meeting. **Action: TJ**

### **Local Governing Body matters**

60. The Local Governing Body received the written report from PG and AT from their visit on 6 December 2022 to seek assurance of Personal Development through seeing Jigsaw implemented in classes. PG commented on the light touch approach to encourage children to think about key issues and to discuss and express their views. A follow up visit was planned focused on using Jigsaw in Year 6.
61. JT had asked before the meeting whether a presentation of the Walkthru's could be provided to governors and it was agreed to add this to the spring 2 meeting. The Co-Head teachers suggested that they set up a structured monitoring session for a group of governors focused on Walktrus. The Clerk reported that she had experience of this approach working well in other schools, and that governors valued the opportunity for a learning work through which they could see an aspect of the School in operation, perhaps introduced by a school leader, and to discuss their feedback with their colleagues after the session.  
[Post meeting note; a similar exercise was arranged some years ago in preparation for SIAMS].
62. It was agreed that the session on Walkthrus should take place before the workshop on the Five-year strategy. **Action: Co-Head teachers**
63. Governors discussed the request to feedback plans for assurance seeking to support arrangements at the school and the development of a structured plan to ensure that all priorities were the subject of appropriate governor assurance seeking. TJ would re-send the email requesting this information to

governors. ES was encouraged to arrange a visit in line with her lead governor role. The Co-Head teachers confirmed the open-door policy towards governor visits.

64. Governors agreed the proposal to appoint NA as an additional School of Faith lead governor.
65. Governors were asked to provide their comments on JT's summary of the feedback from Governors to the governance self-evaluation questions (NGA's 'Twenty key questions for a board to ask itself') by the spring half term to enable any follow up action to be implemented prior to the next cycle of self-evaluation, which was expected at the end of this academic year and would focus on evaluation from the perspective of trust membership. **Action: All**
66. No nominations had been received for the position of Staff governor and the Co-Head teachers would continue to encourage staff members to put themselves forward for the role. HW attended this meeting as an observer to support her professional development (and had previously been elected staff governor). The LGB recorded the value derived from input from an elected staff governor. TJ would consider whether it was possible for the role to be shared by two members of staff. **Action: TJ**
67. No Chair's emergency or urgent actions undertaken since the last meeting on behalf of the Local Governing Body were reported.

#### Other matters

68. ES had asked about support to prepare Year 5s for SATS and the 11 plus exams. MD said that St Martin's pupils were well prepared for SATS, as evidenced by the pupils' outcomes, and examples were given of the approach to familiarise pupils with the tests without causing anxiety. St Martin's curriculum was designed to enable breadth and depth and the school ethos was not to 'hot-house' children for the SATS. Parents were able to access resources to support 11 plus and secondary school entrance exams and there were opportunities on the google drive for pupils to step up homework in preparation for secondary school. SC said that in her experience, the transition to secondary school had been supported by St Martin's approach and that there was not such a big difference in setting of homework at secondary as was perceived.

#### Meeting evaluation

69. Governors' reflections on the impact of their meeting on children's outcomes included the good discussion about SEND and EHCPs, including the impact on resources and outcomes of EHCP applications, discussion about recruiting a second SCITT and contingency planning for eventuality of strikes by school staff.

#### Date of next meeting

70. The next meeting was confirmed for 7 March 2023 in the PPA or ELT room. It was agreed to start the meeting at 5.30 pm to enable parent governors to book parents' evening appointments with teachers beforehand. A drop-in training session on Teams would be scheduled from 5.00 pm and the papers for the next meeting would be provided on Teams. Governors were asked to respond to the Teams message sent by MD by sending an emoji to confirm their access to Teams. **Action: All**

#### Part 2 business

No confidential matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Signed.....Chair      Date.....

#### ACTIONS LGB Meeting 31 January 2023

Item	Action	Owner	Completion Date/Update
18	AK, SC and ES volunteered to complete Safer Recruitment training on Educare.	AK. SC ES	
31	Include Risk register on March 23 meeting agenda	TJ	

41	investigate whether it was possible to start a second EHCP application while waiting for the response to an appeal to a first application		
46	Schedule workshop discussion of draft five-year strategy to gather feedback from Governors on longer term plans.	TJ	Summer term
50	feedback to the Computing Lead the suggestion to make it clearer on the PowerPoint that children should <i>not</i> accept links		
59	Include in agenda - Committee chairs, dates of committee meetings and any adaptations to the lead governor model	TJ	
62	Schedule session on Walkthrus before the workshop on the Five-year strategy.	Co-HTs	
65	Provide comments on JT's summary of the feedback from Governors to the governance self-evaluation questions.	All	By spring half term
66	Consider whether it is possible for the staff governor role to be shared by two members of staff	TJ	
70	Respond to the Teams message sent by MD by sending an emoji to confirm their access to Teams.	All	
	<i>Brought forward from previous meetings</i>		
25	Discuss with ES suggestion that it would be appropriate to recognise staff in the SIP.	Co-HTs	
25	Report further on the 'mock Ofsted' conversations conducted by the ELT CEO for all subject leaders to the next meeting of the LGB.	Co-HTs	On agenda 07/03/23
28	Schedule a review of curriculum development for next LGB meeting.	TJ	07/03/23
29	Clarify the statistics for bullying incidents in HT report.	Co-HTs	
48	Circulate meeting dates for the Committees.	TJ	07/03/23
49	Appointed lead governors to make appointments to visit the School to undertake an assurance seeking visit for their area of the SIP and let TJ know the date and focus of planned visits	All	TJ to resend emailed booking process 04/01/23
41	Sign to confirm adoption of the ELT Governor Code of conduct.	All	
46	Governors who have not done so, to complete new declarations of interest for the Register of interests and forward them to TJ.	All	
33	Review template for governor assurance visits to ensure appropriate focus and effective governor scrutiny.	JT/TJ	Review in light of new committees
36	Conduct staff governor election in the autumn term.	TJ	To repeat spring term
Part 2	Draft a statement to clarify the role of parent governor for inclusion in the newsletter.	JT	
	Include in future agenda - question to support understanding of safeguarding information and keep the info current; Diversity and Inclusion	DSL /TJ	Ongoing – termly.