

## ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

### Local Governing Body – Minutes of Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 5.00 pm

#### **Governors present:**

Mrs M Down (MD)  
Mrs R Duff (RD) (formerly Ms Squizzoni)  
Mr A Holliman (AH)  
Mrs A Keith (AK)  
Mrs C McNab (CM)  
Mrs J Taylor (JT)

#### **In attendance:**

Mrs T Jones (TJ) Clerk to the Governors  
Ms E Smit (ES) From 5.10 pm – Prospective Foundation Governor (appointment as Foundation Governor confirmed 17 October 2024)  
Mrs H Woolvet (HW)

\* 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.

#### **Apologies for absence**

1. Apologies for absence from this meeting had been received and were accepted from Revd N Paris. Governors welcomed the news that Mrs Marchesi would return from long term absence on account of illness in the summer term.
2. Since the last meeting, Mrs Todd and Dr Wang had stepped down from the Local Governing Body and Mr Holliman had been re-appointed as a Foundation Governor. Governors welcomed Mrs McNab, new parent governor, to her first meeting. The meeting was in quorum.
3. TJ reported that nominations for the posts of chair and vice chair had been received from JT and NP respectively. The Local Governing Body elected Mrs Taylor as Chair and Revd Parish as Vice Chair for 2024-25.

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

4. The LGB noted the confidentiality reminder and St Martin's Vision, which was central to all that was done at the School. Governors completed declarations of interest for the year 2024-25. No governors declared interests in the agenda items for this meeting.

#### **Chair's Actions and other Urgent Business**

5. The Chair of Governors reported that no emergency actions or decisions had been taken as Chair's Actions on behalf of the Governing Body since the last LGB meeting.

#### **SIAMS**

6. HW presented overview training on the SIAMS inspection framework. Although, it was now thought that the Junior School would be inspected in 2025-26, ongoing development as a school of faith and of spiritual education for all pupils remained a priority. Copies of the PowerPoint presented at the meeting are available on Resources Bank in Teams. Key points included
  - Five yearly inspection, notified one week before the inspection.
  - Key focus - *By focusing on **impact** above all else, SIAMS explores ways in which each school's theologically rooted **Christian vision** drives the work, and enables the school to live up to its foundation as a Church school.*
  - Although the inspection will result in a judgement, the process should be a celebration of all that St Martin's does not just as a school of faith but also because St Martins Schools genuinely have children at the heart of all that is done in its community.
  - Although St Martin's Schools live its vision and values, SIAMS will be an opportunity to present St Martin's in the best possible light and a major issue in preparing for the inspection is to select the key evidence from all the evidence available.
  - New SIAMS framework with greater emphasis on the school being part of an academy

- Communication to the community could be a challenge as the new framework uses different terminology and judgements are either J1 (school lives up to its foundation as a Church school) or J2 – the school has issues to address. (Previously identified as good, excellent or requires improvement.)
7. HW outlined the inspection questions. Governors discussed the rooting of the values and provision in the St Martin's vision and HW noted that pupils and staff needed to be confident in their articulation of the vision. ES asked if the Schools had referenced the simplified version of the Bible when developing the vision; HW confirmed this. It was planned to strengthen the theological underpinning of St Martin's through further simplification, for example through focus on the story of the Good Samaritan, which was relevant to all of the School values.
  8. AH asked if the Diocese had a view on how the vision should be articulated; HW said it was about making the vision personal to the school and its community and ensuring it was pitched as appropriate for all ages.
  9. HW reported that she had discussed with the Diocese adviser (Susan Coster) the response to the school wider context particularly a growing proportion of the school community characterised their faith as 'other' or 'no faith'. The adviser said this was addressed through the vision being well embedded at St Martin's. MD said that the school prayer was based on the vision, and assemblies explored a line from the vision.
  10. ES asked whether the children were expected to express the vision and values with reference to stories from the Bible; HW said that a strength of the previous inspection had been that children were motivated to make changes themselves in light of their understanding of the vision, which had been valuable evidence that the pupils are living the St Martins vision and values and know that they are theologically underpinned.
  11. Governors explored the inspection questions and noted the need to be selective in the identification of examples from the wealth of evidence of how St Martin's Christian vision pervades its provision. Consideration was being given to also developing case studies for every question with relevant detail.
  12. Regarding inspection question 2 *How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision*, AH asked if this related to RE or all subjects; HW said that St Martin's followed the Guildford Diocese RE curriculum but the question related to the broader curriculum. AH asked how this worked in other subjects; examples included
    - teaching of PE highlighted that pupils were all individuals (every child is precious) with unique strengths,
    - in science, lessons highlighted spirituality through awe and wonder of the world as well as, where appropriate, what Christians would believe in respect of scientific learning.
    - St Martin's enriching curriculum experience is key.
  13. Regarding inspection question 2 *How is daily collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually*, Governors noted the many different forms of collective worship engaged in, including singing assembly, worship led by prayer leads in class, celebration assembly, and that the children enjoyed these different worship opportunities.
  14. Regarding inspection question 4 *How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in which pupils and adults are treated well*, governors highlighted in particular the efforts made to understand the school community and provide support as needed. For example, support was provided for those for whom English was not their first language. HW suggested that this could go further, for example through considering support needed at parent consultations, through providing translations of school reports and doing so in advance, and exploring whether the newsletter as currently presented was overwhelming for these families. Governors asked about access to translation services; google translate was a useful tool and provision of documents in word would make this more accessible.
  15. HW said that consideration was being given to whether there should be an even deeper understanding of the school community – and relevant adaptation - for example of the number of children from one parent families. JT highlighted recent research which indicated a decline in the number of parents nationally who introduced their children to their faith and said that this could have an impact on the St Martin's community and what the School provided. HW said that it was essential to understand the community served by the School. Spiritual development was offered formally through the Spiritual Moral Social Cultural curriculum.
  16. Governors noted the importance of being able to evidence what the School had done in light of its knowledge of its community. AH reminded the meeting that staff knew much about their community anyway and ES said that it was clear that leaders were not just reactive but did lots of work in anticipation of issues, preventative work etc. MD said that this could be improved further, for example

knowing more about the EAL group, families' experience of formal education and their aspirations etc. This was part of the ethos that everyone is welcome and of encouraging a feeling of belonging.

17. ES asked if there was a reason for not teaching traditional Christmas carols; this decision was partly about ensuring appeal to the children but some traditional carols were sung.
18. Governors asked about the return to school, the new cohort and how the School was addressing identified needs; a wider spectrum of parenting skills was evident, and the new cohort had a deficit in speech and language as well as some issues with independence etc.
19. On behalf of the LGB, JT thanked HW for her presentation. Governors noted that it was important for the Local Governing Body to live out the vision also. The template for monitoring visits would be reviewed to confirm it included a prompt for governors to highlight evidence of the vision that they had seen during their visits to the Schools and the vision would be added. MD would add to the Leadership report template a section for half termly update on what the School had done in relation to SIAMs.

**Action: TJ/MD**

### **Verbal Leadership update**

20. Governors noted contextual data for 24-25 including the increasing number of pupils with special needs, mental health issues and the KS1 communications needs and independence and socialisation needs of pupils entering reception.
  21. MD highlighted outcomes data from summer 2024 included in the draft Leadership report and the Data over time document.
  22. MD reported actions undertaken to promote the school in order to improve number on roll, including online prospectus, leaflet and new video showcasing St Martin's. This work had been supported by the previous Assistant Headteacher. In addition, the School had increased its social media presence, through posting news on Instagram etc.
  23. The School had engaged with current parents regarding their feedback from the show rounds and areas which could be improved; as a result school tours/show rounds had been revised, for example with bigger groups being shown around by Head teacher and Deputy Head teacher, and a presentation from year 6 pupils. The presentations were popular with parents.
  24. Governors asked what accounted for other local schools such as Wallace Fields Junior School being full; MD said that feedback indicated a perception that parents would not be able to secure a space at Club Vale, the wrap-around care provider at St Martin's, which discouraged them from applying. The manager of Club Vale was therefore now also present at the show rounds to reassure prospective parents on this.
  25. JT asked how large the pre-school provision was as these pupils could feed into St Martin's; there was no preferential status for families who were attending the re-school and many of the families who used the facility as it was convenient would not necessarily select St Martin's as their local school of choice.
  26. AH asked whether St Martin's had considered opening its own nursery provision; this had been considered and there were lots of advantages, but capacity was an issue. Governors asked about the potential of St Martin's Pre-School federating with the Schools and suggested the associated benefits, such as stability, sustainability, might be welcomed.
  27. AH asked if there were any potential new ELT members which were early years providers and might feed into St Martin's. The new requirement for schools to join trusts in groups of three was noted.
  28. JT asked whether St Martin's took opportunities to forge links with local nurseries and pre-schools; MD confirmed that initiatives were in place such as story time, sharing resources etc.
  29. CM asked if Surrey had issued figures for future years; Surrey's figures suggested an initial increase in the school age population which would be followed by a dip again. The figures would be monitored. There was a deficit of places for Year 3 in Epsom and Ewell and St Martin's was full and a surplus of places in Reception, where St Martin's also had spaces. The Diocese acknowledged the trend for church schools, which were previously the school of choice, to not be full.
  30. Governors discussed the potential impact of St Martin's location, for example close to expensive local housing. A recent you Gov story that people were increasingly not identifying with specific religions or identifying as atheist, could be reflected in parents choosing community schools instead of faith schools.
  31. MD said that there was also a perception that St Martin's was full and governors supported the increased visibility on the website etc that spaces were available. It was suggested that this could be advertised in Epsom and Ewell Families and to ask NP to raise the matter with the Children and Families Lead at the church.
- Action: NP/MD**
32. AH asked whether staff were demoralised by the lower than usual uptake; MD said that staff were aware that there was a risk associated with the numbers but were not concerned.
  33. The Local Governing Body recorded thanks to the Schools in responding to the situation and in particular for engaging the previous Assistant Head teacher to work with HW to improve marketing

resources. JT confirmed that the Admissions Committee would consider this further and report any recommendations to the next LGB meeting. If required, there would be time for the Schools to consult after the December meetings of the LGB and Trust Board on changes to the Admissions Arrangements for 2026-27 and the LGB confirmed membership of the Committee for 2024-25 as AK, NP and JT.

**Action: Admissions Committee**

#### *Quality of education – outcomes data summer 2024*

34. The LGB received the data provided (see Attainment Summary 2023-24) and congratulated the School on the outcomes data from summer 2024. MD highlighted bigger gaps evident for writing and reading/maths lower down school; PP children underperform by comparison, outcomes for the Year 4 multiplication test celebrated, including those of PP children.
35. Challenges for KS1 included increasing special needs, mental health and communications needs, independence and socialisation skills of pupils entering reception. MD said that it was important to ensure that no children went under the radar and leaders' focus on harder to reach/easy to ignore families.
36. AH said that he would welcome provision of a standardised data sheet showing progress data (similar to the attainment data shared). MD confirmed the focus by teachers on progress and ensuring that pupils reached expected or greater depth in accordance with their prior attainment.
37. CM sought clarification of the designation TA against Year 2; MD clarified that this indicated that data for Year 2 was now all teacher assessed.
38. AH noted that Year 6 appeared to be stronger than previous years; MD said that this was emphasised as pupils moved into Year 6 with increased level of rigour and focus in preparation for SATS requirements and increased confidence. This included the level of confidence in the year 6 team which was greater than lower down the school.
39. RD reported that the intervention programme was designed to deliver short, sharp and focused interventions to plug gaps and catch up in the run up to SATs. The intervention teacher was deployed in years 4, 5 and 6. As a parent, ES confirmed evidence of the focus in Year 5 on preparing for year 6 and emphasis on aspirations for this year. MD said that there was a blend of both approaches and the curriculum was a continuum journey through the school towards Year 6.
40. AH congratulated the School on the outcomes for the Yr 4 Multiplication Test and noted that pupil premium pupils had performed close to their non disadvantaged peers. AK said that children in Year 3 were excited to be able to use the Times Tables Rock Stars programme and noted that motivation was also supported by celebrating results such as in assemblies. ES commented positively on motivational activities and the experience of the teachers.

#### *Annual data*

41. Annual data for 2023-24 on behaviour, including exclusions and attendance, complaints, health and safety and the annual GDPR report were noted.
42. Governors discussed the safeguarding data provided. AH sought clarification of the data on the number of children open to Early Help, which stated that 24 pupils had been identified during 2023-24 for early help intervention while the note below the table stated *Internal Early Help intervention without support from external services: 14; Early Help Assessment and intervention plan with other agencies/partners: 4*. MD clarified that the designation was created with Surrey and the four was included within the 14.
43. Governors welcomed assurance that the school response to several racist and homophobic issues was having an improvement on behaviour. AK asked how the children who had been on the receiving end of the incidents had responded; MD clarified that there had been three offences involving different children and the parents were supported by the school. The parents of two of the children had not heard previously about the matters but had welcomed the communication and the school response.

#### **Risk Register**

44. JT suggested that an update should show the impact of some of the actions taken to address identified risks and asked when the updated risk register would be available. MD would request the Trust to provide the updated risk register. **Action: MD**
45. AK asked about the reference to allocating the Sports Premium budget for Forest School and whether this funding benefitted pupils in both schools; MD said that the funding was balanced across the schools as it was allocated partly to cover the time of the Sports Lead, who worked in KS2. AH asked if Forest Schools interventions were available to pupil premium children; MD confirmed that such interventions was provided where needed.

46. ES sought clarity on the comment on financial benefits related to the staffing structure. Governors explored the comments on the benefits of the new model to support pupils since the resignation of the two ELSAs and noted participation in the new nurture project, use of the Boxhall profile identification tool to assess all children to identify specific support needed, and specific training to help all staff provide nurture and support where needed. MD said that in the past, there may have been a tendency for vulnerable pupils to share issues with an ELSA where a quick catch up with the class teacher could have been more beneficial.
47. AK asked if the school could access ELSA support through the YMCA where the ELSAs now worked; this was confirmed. RD said that some pupils had been referred and were accessing 1:1 support, from the Primary School Early Intervention practitioners at YMCA and YMCA was also able to access resources such as Mind Works for a 6 – 8 week programme if needed.
48. AK asked if some strategies could be transferred to the classroom and this was confirmed.
49. ES asked how the teachers had received the change in approach and about capacity; RD said that no negative responses had been received that the approach was not manageable. Teachers had been upskilled to become more nurturing and support relevant children. 12 children previously seen by the ELSA team as needed higher time commitment were being seen by Mrs Dove, a practitioner with specific training.

### **Estates**

50. The LGB received an update on addressing premises matters identified in the Conditions Survey and noted work to patch the roof this year.
51. The LGB agreed that a sensible approach to the recommendation for replacement of fire doors was to have an incremental planned programme for the installation of maglocks, initially on high-risk doors and new doors.
52. JT sought confirmation that in other respects, leaders were happy with the conditions survey presented and MD confirmed that the survey was appropriate and noted that consultant advice was awaited on whether it was worth making a CIF bid again for identified premises risks and the budget included an appropriate sum for repairs this year.

### **Operation of the LGB; including lead roles, approach to Governor monitoring and visits**

53. JT reported from the Governor training from ELT, 26 September 2024, on the new model for governor monitoring. The link to the recording of the training would be provided. JT said that the new ELT model underlined the importance of monitoring by local governors and St Martin's was in a good position to be able to implement the new model as many of the governors had experience of this through its previous governance structure.
54. Governors explored the concept and benefits of the approach. JT said that key would be to ensure that monitoring and reporting was robust and encouraged governors to conduct visits focused on their lead roles and share their findings with their colleagues through visit reports as evidence. Governors commented on the challenge of scheduling meetings during the working day and JT noted that it would not always be necessary to meet with a member of staff, sometimes monitoring could be through a remote discussion, a book look, or combined with a visit to school for another purpose.
55. Some governors were concerned about the possibility of an increase in the number of meetings they needed to attend and requested a clearer picture of the purpose and frequency of link governor meeting across the Trust.

**[Post meeting note:** The Trust Clerk has provided the following clarification:-

The expectation is that there will be a 30 minute teams meeting with the link trustee and other link governors each term to share concerns and best practice, and for the trustee to feed down any key messages from the Trust Board. The Trust is aware of the need to manage governor and trustee workload and it is hoped that removing the committee structure will go some way to addressing workload balance. In addition, not all monitoring visits will require a trip to school; for example discussion of data/recorded information can be undertaken through a meeting online.]

56. The LGB appointed the following Link Governors
  - Safeguarding and LAC - ES
  - Governor responsible for liaison with the LA in the event of an allegation (child protection) against the Headteacher (usually Chair) -JT
  - Teaching and learning - JT
  - SEND and vulnerable groups (PP) - AH
  - Finance - CM

Christian distinctiveness – AK/NP

57. There was a vacancy for the required Governor Link for Health and Safety and experience in this area would be highlighted as a desired attribute in the call for parent governor nominations. **Action: TJ**
58. The agenda noted that there was flexibility for LGBs to appoint governor links for other areas which were school priorities, and initial training had suggested that for consideration - Wellbeing and EDIJ – staff and pupils; Estates/projects; Transitions, admissions and Marketing/ sustainability.
59. Link Governors were asked to contact the relevant school or trust leads for an initial meeting and report to the autumn 2 meeting. **Action: All**
60. Governors supported the proposal to hold further learning walks, linked to SDP priorities and MD suggested that governor monitoring could be combined with the learning walks. A date would be suggested. **Action: MD**
61. Reports had been shared from Governor monitoring visits on SEND held 25 June 2024 and Leadership and Management/TalkforWriting, held 15 July 2024.

### Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

62. The draft minutes of the previous meetings of the Local Governing Body held 27 June 2024 were approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chair. The report on actions arising from the previous minutes was taken as read.

### Policies

63. The Local Governing Body noted the following Trust policies which had been approved since the last meeting: Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Suspensions and Exclusions Policy, Complaints Procedure.
64. The school confirmed that Appendix A of the Safeguarding Policy had been updated with school contacts and posted on website and in key places around school.
65. The LGB approved the Relationships, health and sex education policy, which was a school-level policy.
66. Approval of the First Aid policy was carried forward. **Action: TJ**

### Safeguarding

67. The Local Governing Body noted the data on safety and safeguarding for 2023-24 given in the Leadership report. Discussion noted in minute 41 – 43.
68. TJ reminded governors of their robust discussions in the previous year of, for example, safeguarding related to the use of mobile phones and the LGB noted the ongoing need for focused discussion of safeguarding matters at meetings of the Local Governing Body, in response to the safeguarding data and the reports from visits of the Safeguarding Governor provided to meetings. As an update, MD said that in light of events during the previous year, including liaison with parents involved with the Smartphone Free Childhood group, the school had banned smart phones in school.
69. ES invited governors to suggest safeguarding topics for particular focus at future visits, such as online safety and child grooming, to ensure that safeguarding was sufficiently visible. Governors commented that ES's thorough approach to her role as Safeguarding Governors was reassuring and noted the action to highlight focus areas in light of their safeguarding reading and training. **Action: All**

### Governance Update

70. Governors noted the following status report
- three current vacancies for Foundation Governors (One 'PCC appointed'; two 'Diocese appointed'),
  - the term of office of ES was due to end 6/10/24 and a Parent Governor election would be held.
71. ES had been proposed for appointment as a Foundation Governor and the LGB confirmed its request to the trustees to consider appointing ES as a Foundation Governor following the end of her term as parent governor.  
**[Post meeting note: appointment by the Trustees confirmed 17 October 2024]**
72. JT's reappointment by the Trust was in process to follow the end of her term of office on 4/10/24  
**[Post meeting note: The Board of trustees has re-appointed JT].**
73. An update was given on recruitment to fill Foundation Governor vacancies. The vacancies had been advertised at St Martin's and Christ Church and JT had been invited to raise awareness of the vacancies at the service at St Martin's Church on 13 October 2024. **Action: JT**
74. The LGB noted the statistics on governor attendance for 2023-24 available from [Attendance stats.xlsx](#)

and governors were asked to update their contact information and confirm that the information could be circulated within the Trust, School, Diocese and SAfE.

### **Governors' training and compliance**

#### *Safeguarding*

- 75. Governors completed a signature sheet to confirm that they had read and understood parts 1 and 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, completed their annual safeguarding update training (NGA Essential safeguarding for governors and trustees). Governors noted the requirement to complete governor cyber security training [NCSC Cyber security training for school staff](#) and forward their certificates confirming this to the Governance Professional. **Action: All**
- 76. Governors were asked to also confirm their compliance with these requirements in the relevant google form when the link to the form was received. **Action: All**
- 77. The LGB noted confirmation from HR that all DBS and section 128 had been completed and the schools were compliant in this respect.
- 78. JT and AK had completed safer recruitment training.

#### *Other compliance matters*

- 79. The Local Governing Body adopted the trust protocols on Open Meetings and Alternative Participation, and the following professional negligence statement, which would be recorded in their minutes: Advice given by Governors at this Academy is incidental to their professional expertise and is not being given in their professional capacity.
- 80. Governors to agree to abide by ELT Code of conduct (2024-25)
- 81. The Local Governing Body noted assurance through the provision of copies of the RPA certificates that sufficient insurances were in place.

#### *LGB training and development priorities*

- 82. The LGB had concluded from its summer 24 self-evaluation of governance that its development priorities for 2024-25 would be strengthening links with parents and ensuring that a pool of governors trained in complaints was available to support panels for other ELT schools as needed.
- 83. In this regard, governors noted that their targets for training included training on complaints handling and noted that they would welcome a briefing on Admissions Appeals from a governor who had had experience in this area.

### **Confidential matters**

- 84. The LGB discussed pros and cons of the suggestion to implement a 2-week half term. Discussion is minuted separately.

### **Meeting evaluation**

- 85. Governors noted the value of their discussion at this meeting of SIAMS, reassurance of ongoing development of the Schools' Christian distinctive regardless of the scheduling of the SIAMS inspection; admissions and marketing initiatives, and the delegation of fuller discussion of admissions to the Admissions Panel with their conclusions to be considered at autumn 2 meeting; the invitation from the Safeguarding Governor to highlight focus for future assurance seeking and discussion.

### **Date of next meeting**

- 86. The dates for meetings of the Local Governing Body in 2024-25 were agreed as  
Autumn 2 – 4 December 2024  
Spring 1 – 29 January 2025  
Spring 2 – 12 March 25  
Summer 1- 19 May 2025  
Summer 2 – 18 June 2025

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

Signed.....Chair      Date.....