

'ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

Local Governing Body – Minutes of Meeting held on 12th March 2025 at 5.00 pm

Governors present:

Mrs M Down (MD)
Mrs R Duff (RD)
Mrs A Keith (AK)
Mrs P Roy (PR)
Mrs J Taylor (JT)
Mr D Wilkinson (DW)

In attendance:

Mrs T Jones (TJ) Clerk to the Governors

* 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 Mrs C McNab (CM), Revd N Parish (NP), Ms E Smit (ES) and Mrs K Marches (KM).
2. Mr A Holliman (AH) had stepped down from the LGB. No governors joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams.
3. JT welcomed new parent governor Mr Wilkinson, who had been elected with effect from 26 February 2025. Introductions were made. The meeting was in quorum.

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. No governors declared interests in the agenda items for this meeting.

Governance information

5. The LGB took as read the status reported in the agenda for the meeting
6. No governors' terms of office were due to end before the next meeting. AK's term of office as Foundation governor would end in June 2025 and her reappointment would be proposed.
7. David Wilkinson had been elected as parent governor.
8. There were three vacancies for Foundation Governors (Two PCC, one Diocese recommended and appointed by Trust Board) and an additional vacancy for a Foundation Governor had been notified – with effect from end of the academic year. TJ had contacted unsuccessful parent candidates to invite them to consider putting themselves forward as candidates to fill the Foundation Governor vacancies.

Training on the Governor role in Admissions appeals

9. Training on the governor role in School Admissions appeals was deferred to the summer 1 meeting.

Chair's Actions and other Urgent Business

10. No emergency actions or decisions had been taken as Chair's Actions on behalf of the Governing Body since the last LGB meeting.

Leadership report spring term 2 2025

11. Governors received the spring 2 Leadership report and MD was invited to report headlines. Governors recorded thanks to the staff, leaders and ELT team involved in the Ofsted visit.
12. MD highlighted key points including the phased return of the Co-Head teacher from 22 April 2025 and the support provided by Bethan Willets from ELT and from HR. MD was pleased to report changes to

the TA structure, and that there were now level 2 and level 1 TAs at the Schools, recognising the skill set of St Martin's support staff and enabling focus on specific specialisms. The aim of the changes was to support and impact the learning of pupils in class. RD said that the new arrangements made it easier to access the support available and governors welcomed the fact that this group of staff felt recognised,

13. MD said that leaders were very mindful of the wellbeing of staff and this had been evident in feedback in the Ofsted inspection. MD reported on initiatives and the implementation of an additional two afternoons of wellbeing interventions for pupils.
14. Governors welcomed the evidence from the report following the SIP visit and that Talk4Writing was moving forward and asked for a clarification of *Guided reading*; MD said that adjusted approach to guided reading delivered whole class teaching which focused on improving the elements and skills of VIPERs (vocabulary, inference, predict, explain, retrieve, summarise), as well as fluency and active learning.
15. Governors noted focus on the story of St Martin and the story of the Good Samaritan to support understanding of the St Martin's values and ongoing development of pupils' understanding of spirituality.

Safeguarding

16. The report was noted. MD outlined improvements in visibility of the duty DSL, clarifying the DSL team approach, and would share the DSL Refresher with governors for the next meeting. **Action: MD**
17. The Safeguarding Lead Governor had visited the school to seek assurance on safeguarding and had attended the Ofsted inspection. The report from the most recent safeguarding assurance seeking visit would be provided to governors. **Action: ES**

Risk Register

18. Governors received the updated register and commented that it now appeared to more accurately reflect risks and the measures in place to mitigate them. Key risks were noted as number on roll and budget concerns, both in the current financial situation and as impacted by declining infant numbers.
19. MD reported ongoing discussion of the best model for the Infant School in light of the reduced NOR in September 25. The current model was 3 classes of 30 but there were only 72 children in the 2024-25 reception. Although there were 120 applications for 2025-2026 reception, only 68 were first preferences and given falling infant rolls, it was likely that most pupils would receive their first choices.
20. DW asked about the timing for reducing the Planned Admission Number (PAN) if needed; the earliest that this change could be made was for entry in September 2027 and change was subject to consultation and approval by the Trust Board. Surrey would be consulted and had not supported a reduction when asked informally this year.
21. MD outlined pros and cons of reducing the PAN. The impact on finances of carrying vacancies within the larger PAN was outlined and the cost of running classes which were not full. JT pointed out that the Trust finance paper had made it clear that finance in education was being squeezed, there were lots of pressures and uncertainties and there could be some challenging decisions to take as a result.
22. Governors asked if the School needed to reduce from three to two classes to affect a reduction in its PAN; MD said that it was better to reduce to a two-form entry and budget accordingly and then increase numbers as demand increased. There was always some mobility among teachers and it was hoped that if needed any changes could be made sensitively.
23. JT highlighted that the other six year groups were currently full and that schools were allowed to go over-PAN in key stage 2. There was time to consider any decision on this but she agreed with MD that planning for the current and next year's Early Years classes was needed now...
24. MD said that smaller classes in Early Years could have a positive effect on these pupils' learning and AK asked if there had been any impact on demand for places from the increase in VAT on private school places; this development had not yet impacted St Martin's. There were also uncertainties related to local development, for example of Epsom hospital which would include some residential development.

Finance

25. The LGB received the January FMR, period 5 finance commentary and draft budget finance commentary. Governors had discussed under the Risk Register risks related to admissions and the impact on finances of this year's lower number on roll.
26. MD highlighted the contextual introduction to the budget commentary. JT said that the draft budget was cautious and would be reviewed by MD and the Trust finance team. For example, it could need to be adjusted should the School receive an increase in grant from the Government to support the increased

in National Insurance charges. MD noted that it might be necessary to apply the £60k, which governors had ring-fenced as a contribution to CIF bids, to balance the budget.

HR

27. Governors received the HR report as at March 2025, which reported absence through sickness, staff turnover, vacancies. MD said that without including long term sick, attendance was generally above national average, with the attendance of teachers higher than that of support staff. Governors welcomed the report that there had been no grievances raised or failed probations.

Estates

28. The Spring term 2025 report on Estates and Health and Safety had been provided to governors and was taken as read. Governors confirmed the schedule of works identified in the Conditions Survey update and that priority works should be addressed through focusing current maintenance work accordingly.
29. JT reported that the site visit had had to be rescheduled because of the Ofsted inspection and she would report to the next meeting. **Action: JT**
30. The decision regarding the panel to choose new caterers was carried forward. **Action: MD/TJ Agenda**

Reports from Governor monitoring and visits

31. JT gave background on the approach to monitoring school improvement plan (SIP) priorities through termly Governor learning walks led by a member of the SLT and focused on a particular aspect of the SIP. Governors were able to see aspects of the SIP in practice in classes and discuss what they had seen with an SLT member.
32. PR reported that the governor Learning Walk on the WalkThrus and Talk for Writing held Tuesday 4th Feb 2025 had been a useful opportunity for governors to gain an understanding of the WalkThrus, which were being introduced to support teaching and learning, and then see evidence of a number of WalkThrus in classrooms during their learning walk. In response to a query, the *cold write* concept was explained.
33. The LGB agreed to continue this approach and a date for a learning walk would be set for the summer term. **Action: MD**
[Post meeting note: next learning walk will take place on the morning of 20 May 2025].
34. AK reported that she had met with the School of Faith Lead and attended KS1 assembly and would share a report with colleagues on the LGB. **Action: AK**
35. Reports from spring term monitoring by Link governors would be shared with the LGB, including from the visit on Talk4Writing. **Action: JT**
36. The appointment of a substantive Link Health and Safety Governor was carried forward
37. Governors felt there were insufficient governors present who had been able to attend the Link meetings and therefore deferred evaluating their experience of the new link governor approach and MAT-wide meetings. It was planned to discuss the model at the summer 1 meeting after it had been in place for a term. Governors noted the challenges of scheduling these meetings. **Action: TJ/All**

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

38. The draft minutes of the previous meetings of the Local Governing Body held 29 January 2025 were approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chair. The report on actions arising from the previous minutes was noted. MD said that the question on the IDSR arose from a misunderstanding and had been clarified.

Safeguarding

39. Governors had received safeguarding data for autumn term at the spring 1 meeting and an update on safeguarding training was provided in the Leadership Report and with the feedback from the Ofsted inspection.

Policies

40. The Local Governing Body noted the following Trust policies and documents which had been approved since the last meeting: Pay Policy, Health and Safety Policy and the Finance Regulations Manual. The St Martin's contextualised Health and Safety Policy would be published to Governors. **Action: MD**
41. The LGB approved the Positive Behaviour Policy but an update was in process and would be sent to Governors. **Action: MD/TJ**

- 42. It was noted that the St Martin’s Uniform policy based on the new Trust-wide template would be provided for approval in the summer term 2025.
- 43. The LGB noted the Teaching & Learning principles which had been provided for information.
- 44. TJ would clarify whether the EYFS policy had been updated at Trust-level and the St Martin’s policy would be reviewed and brought forward for review accordingly.
[Post meeting note: review due June 2025; St Martin’s EYFS Policy is a two year policy last reviewed September 2023].
- 45. The Accessibility Plan would be presented to the summer 1 meeting for approval. **Action: TJ/MD**

Governance Update, training

- 46. TJ confirmed that new Governors had been registered with the National Governance Association and were undertaking initial safeguarding and induction training. DW confirmed that he had read Keeping Children Safe In Education.
- 47. Governors were invited to identify any topics they felt they would benefit from training on and noted the implementation of FLick for staff training.
- 48. In respect of feedback on the new structure, leaders commented that the flat structure supported work life balance of staff. Governor review would take place at the summer 1 meeting.

Confidential matters

- 49. Part 2 confidential matters are recorded separately.

Meeting evaluation

- 50. Governors felt that discussion at this meeting had demonstrated clear focus on the St Martin’s vision to work to achieve the best outcomes for pupils and help them to achieve their potential.

Date of next meeting

- 51. The next meetings of the LGB were noted as Summer 1- 19 May 2025 and Summer 2 – 18 June 2025. Governors were invited to feedback their preferences for scheduling of meetings in 2025-26, and in particular days/times they cannot attend. **Action: All**

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.

Signed.....Chair Date.....