

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

Local Governing Body (LGB) – Approved Minutes of Meeting held on 22nd June 2023 at 5.00 pm at the School

Governors present:

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

In attendance:

Mrs T Jones (TJ)	Clerk to the Governors
Mr H Betterton (HB)	Trustee (to 7.10 pm)
Mrs J Hawkins (JH)	ELT Chief Operating Officer (COO) (to 6.15 pm)

* 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 SC, PG and NP. SJ attended online.. The meeting was in quorum. JT welcomed trustee representative HB and the ELT Chief Operating Officer, JH, who attended for the Finance, HR and Resources and Infrastructure items.

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.
2. TJ reported that a resignation had been received from PG and a parent governor election would be commenced in the summer term. PG had volunteered to remain on the Local Governing Body in order to attend any other event or meeting this term at which her presence as a governor was needed. No other meeting was identified and it was agreed that PG's resignation would therefore take effect from 22 June 2023.

Finance

3. The April 2023 Management accounts and the Draft Revenue Budget Report as at June 23 had been published for Governors. JH highlighted that the accounts showed a more positive financial position than previously seen at the May meeting, largely because of the release of the energy contingency and changes in staff costs.
4. JH highlighted assumptions made in developing the draft budget, which reflected those used for Draft 1 and were presented in the Draft Revenue Budget Report as at June 23. Questions were invited.
5. Governors were referred to the report on Benchmarking and supporting notes, including the comments on staffing which explained differences in the expenditure at St Martin's in comparison with other schools.

Capital reserves

6. JH reported that St Martin's CIF (capital infrastructure fund) bid had not been successful and explained that she had not published the Premises report to Governors in advance of the meeting as they had not seen this information in this format previously and some key decisions would need to be taken this year

on premises expenditure. The roof works proposed were not considered essential, as although it was old, its condition was not impacting education. St Martin's therefore had the option to not address the roof issue at this point, to re-submit the CIF bid for next year or to spend the earmarked money on another asset, such as IT. JH noted that St Martin's now received its devolved formula capital (DFC) directly, rather than it being held by the Diocese, and that this could be spent on IT. JH felt that further work needed to be undertaken to explore premises options before decisions were taken.

7. AT asked whether consideration should also be given to whether the condition of the roof could deteriorate if issues were not addressed now; JH would share the report from the roof survey and noted that the project would be large. **Action: JH**
8. Governors asked about urgency related to addressing a crack in an interior wall; JH reported that the problem had been professionally assessed and a response from the insurers was awaited. JH suggested that until it was confirmed that the costs would be covered by insurance, the School should not commit significant capital expenditure elsewhere, for example on IT. JH assured Governors that the School and Trust were working with the surveyor, the civil engineer was giving advice on the matter and RPA had confirmed that the issue should be managed as it was currently being addressed. The Trust and School were managing the process of getting specifications for addressing the matter and ensuring safety. There was no risk of the wall falling.
9. JH shared on screen the Conditions Survey and explained that this document was an assessment by room and asset of the condition of St Martin's and gave details of issues and concerns and a status report on assessments, such as the fire risk assessment, legionella test. The Survey was used to prioritise how issues should be addressed through the year, focusing initially on those issues which had been risk rated red (highest priority). The conditions survey would be shared with the LGB after it had been seen by the Trust Board. **Action: JH**
10. JH highlighted the associated cost summary of estates priorities for investment over a ten-year period. This schedule would be colour coded to highlight those which were key to address and the document would be shared with the Co-Head teachers and Governors. **Action: JH**
11. In summary, JH reported that capital available to St Martin's consisted of approximately £32k of funding for energy purposes, £30k of DFC and £13k for IT. The Energy grant could be redirected to other priorities as St Martin's had already implemented many energy related measures which might otherwise have been needed.
12. Good Estate Management - JH assured governors that the principle would be to make risk-based decisions informed by the Good Estates Management principles. JH clarified that this work was not yet complete because more information was needed on various matters before it would be possible to prioritise them.
13. Governors were invited to raise questions on the material presented. ES sought clarification about the decision to resurface the playground and whether the report highlighted matters which were necessary, for example because they were dangerous, and maintenance issues. JH confirmed this understanding of the report and that the report also related to the Estates Strategy which would be considered by Trustees. The reviewed document showing the estates vision and strategy had been put on Teams. As examples, at St Martin's the 'wish list' included refurbishment of toilets, provision of a multi-use games area and, of lower priority, air conditioning in the upstairs classrooms. These documents would need to be taken into account with decision taking about funding and risk management of issues in line with the conditions survey.
14. The Local Governing Body noted the Budget report, overview from the COO and responses to questions provided at the meeting.
[Post meeting note: The four year budget was uploaded to Teams on 25 June 2023 in the LGB Management Accounts folder
<https://esherlearningtrust.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/Governance-StMManagementAccounts/Shared%20Documents/St%20M%20Management%20Accounts/LGB%20Budget?csf=1&web=1&e=dyiSCW>

Resources and Infrastructure

15. Compliance Checks - JH highlighted annual audits which had been completed in recent weeks, including the RPA insurance review, a full H&S audit overseen by the Trust H&S Officer and St Martin's Site Manager; Review of cyber security, audit of business continuity planning and planned DfE audit on finance and governance. JH said that it was not unusual for a trust to have this level of activity.
16. JT asked about the aim of the Cyber security review; this would feed into the IT strategy, which was almost complete but had been revisited to consider the impact of artificial intelligence. At the same time, there was also work to consider IT across the Trust.
17. JH pointed out that the Trust had also volunteered for a procurement audit, including full review of procurement processes, achievement of value for money across the schools etc. The findings would be

- reported by the end of the summer for implementation in the autumn term. JH welcomed the robust contract management processes supported by Julie Woodley who had been in post a year.
18. JH invited questions on agenda items 2 – 4. AT asked about the impact of the recommendation related to the staff contingency and of not spending this money; MD said that St Martin's had too many teachers and needed to address balance when it was appropriate to do so. Deployment of teachers and support staff was under consideration in light of known information about the 2023-24 cohort. In addition, applications had been submitted, and feedback was awaited, for seven EHCPs.
 19. AT recognised that modelling was underway and ratios were being considered for the 2024-25 budget year and asked when decisions would be made about any changes needed; JH said that it could be necessary to take decisions in-year but assured governors that leaders were not looking at structural changes, and only considering those which occurred naturally.
 20. Governors sought feedback on the recruitment of other schools to the Trust; JH confirmed that the budget was based on a worst-case scenario and assumed that no other schools joined but assured governors that opportunities were being looked at to deliver cost reductions in the central team because the planned additional schools had not yet joined. For example, the team had been reduced by an administrative post and JH's contract had been changed to term time only. JH confirmed that the Trust was actively pursuing opportunities for growth and there could be new members as early as January 2024 but some applications could take 18 – 24 months.
 21. HB assured governors that the Trust was being as proactive as possible in this respect and regarding robust due diligence to support this process. JH reported that progress reflected the changing educational environment and maintained schools were not pursuing academisation with the same urgency that they had when the 2022 White Paper was initially issued.
 22. AH asked about the opportunity for reduction to the top slice; the top slice was calculated on a per student basis. As a follow up question, AH asked what a ballpark figure for reduction might be; if the new schools arrived, the top slice could reduce by about 2% and the Trust aimed to get it to a top-slice of 5.5%. JH said that benchmarking confirmed that ELT was not the most expensive trust in terms of its top-slice and appeared to deliver more central support for its top-slice than other trusts.
 23. AH acknowledged that the figures presented a worst-case scenario but noted, looking at the 2024-25 budget, concern that decisions might need to be taken which affected elements which were central to what St Martin's wanted to deliver, such as the Meerkat provision.
 24. AH asked what MD thought the impact would be of losing teachers through attrition and how the offer to the pupils would be affected; MD said that currently, St Martin's had lost one teacher and gained two, thus adding one teacher of extra capacity. This was not sustainable. However, over time there tended to be fluctuations as teachers chose to move for example for development purposes. A balance and management was needed to achieve the optimum mix of experienced and less experienced teachers, but MD noted that while newer teachers were being supported to develop, they themselves were gaining experience. MD highlighted support in place for the new SENCO and that to date no St Martin's teachers had left the profession.
 25. Regarding the curriculum, St Martin's investment included the transition from Power Maths to White Rose and Talk for Writing, which Governors had received a presentation on at their last meeting. Although some ongoing support was required, it was now possible for St Martin's staff to apply these approaches based on their training to date.
 26. AT asked about the impact on teachers of plans to reduce support staff; support staff could undertake more interventions and the approval of EHCPs could help to reduce barriers more quickly for relevant children.
 27. Governors noted that the Resource and Infrastructure report included cross referencing to the Scheme of delegation to support visibility of responsibilities delegated within the Scheme of delegation and enable the LGB to feel confident that it was receiving the information it required to ask appropriate questions and fulfil its role. The role of the LGB was to monitor and report to Trustees via its minutes and Chairs communications.
 28. The Local Governing Body noted the reports made in the Resources and Infrastructure Report or in the Leadership report on breaches of site security, Health and Safety and Accidents, Premises and Gems reported and IT infrastructure management, a number of which were reported above.
 29. A report on Health and Safety compliance checks and accident reports was provided. JH suggested that further detail on these areas was explored with the appointed lead Governor for Health and Safety. St Martin's had traditionally appointed lead governors for Resources, which included Health and Safety, but it was planned to include appointment of a specific governor lead for Health and Safety with governor appointments in the agenda for the autumn 1 LGB meeting. **Action: JT /TJ (agenda)**
 30. Background was given on the review of the Risk Register, in line with the revised scheme of delegation. JH highlighted the need for a consistent approach and application of the policy to enable trust wide review and assessment of risk priority. Risk assessment was shown as red for all schools and all

schools needed to undertake regular risk assessment as a priority. Governors were invited to review the draft Risk Register and comment to JH. The Risk Register would be provided to the summer Trust Board meeting for approval. **Action: All**

31. No other questions were raised and JH invited governors to send her questions at any time without needing to wait for meetings. JT thanked JH for her report and clear explanations.

JH left at this point

Chair's Actions and other Urgent Business

32. JT reported that she had not had to take any emergency actions on behalf of the Governing Body since the last FGB meeting.

Leadership report from the Co-Head teachers

33. The Local Governing Body received the Primary Leadership Report for reporting period spring term 2023. Updates for spring term had been made in purple and Governors were invited to raise questions.
34. AH welcomed the appointment of a mental health lead and asked about support for staff who were involved in the use of reasonable force; MD confirmed that if this was required, staff usually anticipated such situations and de-escalation efforts were made with staff on hand to support where this was likely to be needed. Afterwards, an incident was discussed and appropriate support provided to staff. The incident was recorded on CPOMS and parents informed. In this way, triggers for events could be identified. RS reported that incidents were dealt with well from a staff wellbeing perspective and staff felt well supported and looked after, such as through release time which could be necessary as such incidents could be very emotional.
35. ES recognised that all bullying incidents were investigated and asked how victims were supported if it was concluded that an incident did not constitute bullying; MD said that behaviour could still be inappropriate, even if it was not classed as bullying, for example because it was not relentless or targeted, and it was important for the behaviour to be stopped and the individual to know that they had been heard. Adjustments were put in place to support the child not to behave in this way again and there could be learning to help children to understand the effect on others of words which they might not have realised were unkind. If the matter had been intentional and targeted, measures could include working in a group to understand the impact of this behaviour.
36. Support would vary depending on circumstances and could include talking about friendships. As a follow up question, ES asked whether an ELSA would undertake this work. It was noted that sometimes the most important element was for the victim to know that their voice had been heard.
37. AK asked about the follow up for a child who had been a victim of racism; MD said that there would be a very bespoke response where racism was involved, the policy was followed and restorative measures implemented focused on the children concerned. MD reported on parent voice to address the effect of what happened to the child. Key was always to follow the policy until the behaviour was addressed. Ultimately, if such behaviour persisted, it could lead to exclusion and wider education was delivered as appropriate.
38. JT asked about the class where there appeared to be a concentration of behavioural issues and whether consideration was given to adjusting the class composition as a result; MD said that much had been learnt from transition at the end of 2022 and from February/ March the message was communicated to parents that if it could be of benefit to the group there could be some movement between classes at the end of the year. Movement would always be considered in light of whether change would have a positive, negative or neutral effect on each child. The strategy of afternoon mixing in preparation for the next year was working well, giving experience of changes to classes.
39. MD said that parents were kept informed and a Governor who is parent at the School confirmed the clarity of related communications. Another parent commented that their child was happy with the arrangement.
40. NA asked if the plan was for classes to always be mixed at year 5; MD said that this was not the plan and consideration would always be needed about whether such change might cause unbalance and affect hidden networks. The children were already experiencing change through the changes to their key adults and parents were often keen to preserve support networks for their children.
41. AK asked when the appointment of the new SENCO would be announced. It was confirmed that this would be reported in the newsletter on 23 June 2023. Governors congratulated RS on her appointment to this role and asked about other changes in this area; the previous SENCO would continue as Inclusion Lead and focus on inclusion, and EHCP applications would be the responsibility of RS. RS would continue to run the Meerkat room. The Inclusion Administrator would support both roles.
42. AK sought clarification of the definitions of inclusion and SEND; inclusion was broader and contemplated all the barriers affecting a child, what the school needed to do to address them. In the case of a child

with special needs (SEN), these would be addressed by the SENCO. Clear job descriptions had been developed and the roles would be clarified to parents. ES welcomed the appointment of a dedicated SENCO to deal with increasing need.

43. AH asked about matching support staff to interventions; the SLT and SEND leadership would work together to ensure the co-ordinated approach needed.
44. ES thanked leaders for the EBSNA overview provided with the papers.

School Improvement Planning

45. It was agreed to defer to the September LGB meeting the workshop to gather feedback from governors on the longer term (5 year) strategic priorities for St Martin's. An overview of the Walkthru's would also be given at that meeting.
46. Governors welcomed the tabled draft School Improvement plan (SIP) for 2023-24, with priorities streamlined against this year's plan, and commented on the plan for lunchtime activities to support learning to play. MD said that the priorities resulted from school self-evaluation and pupil outcomes, and the SIP would include a writing priority, although the recent moderation of Year 6 writing gave confidence regarding this year's results and the bought in moderator had been impressed with Year 2. It was noted that fewer pupils were assessed at greater depth.
47. NA asked whether writing included handwriting and spelling and, as a follow up question, whether covid was the cause of current issues; handwriting and spelling were included and had been impacted by restricted opportunities during the pandemic for play which supported the development of writing skills. In addition, pupils' lack of stamina resulted from the disruption of the pandemic and there had been a change in expectations and pupils were more exposed to tablets and other devices.
48. AT asked if the new SIP would affect the changes already introduced to address writing; MD said that it was planned to continue to progress interventions like Talk for Writing, which were already having impact. A new approach to learning spellings was being adopted and parents gave feedback on approaches for learning spellings.
49. ES asked whether there was more that could be done to incentivise pupils to discuss their reading; MD said that pupils were already encouraged through their daily reading plus conversation to discuss what they were reading. MD said that the SIP would include under the Teaching Reading focus better ways of moving everybody on and the School was using the DfE report for information about ways to encourage reading. A key aim was to develop a passion for reading in our pupils and much work had already been done to enhance the curriculum. Governors identified discussed fundraising channels for parents to support the provision of books at the School

Safeguarding

50. The LGB noted the report on safeguarding provided in section C of the Leadership Report. The Safeguarding Governor was asked to provide a written report on her summer term safeguarding focused governor assurance visit. **Action: SC**
51. AH and AK reported from attendance at the safeguarding meeting for parents; although the event had not been attended by as many parents who had signed up for it, feedback had been very good and one parent had taken and circulated notes to their year group. Governors suggested ways of making this worthwhile content available to other parents, for example through access online or repeating the session. [**Post meeting note**; online safety is already included in the rolling programme of information sessions for parents]. Governors said that parents would welcome signposting to useful sources of information and MD would also circulate a link to a safeguarding film. **Action: MD**
52. Governors received positive feedback on the school lunch tasters provided at the safeguarding evening.

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

53. The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Governing Body held 11 May 2023 were approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chair. The report on actions arising from the previous minutes was noted and AK reported that the revision of the school prayer for 2023-24 had been approved and would be published in new school diaries. Following the presentation made to the previous meeting, examples of expected and greater depth writing were available for review at this LGB meeting. TJ and JT had reviewed the template for governor assurance visits and suggested amendments to the report provided by JT from her leadership visit which were designed to support governor scrutiny.

Local Governing Body matters

Report from assurance-seeking visits by Lead Governors

54. The LGB received the written report from the assurance seeking visit on leadership and management. TJ highlighted that the second report was a reformatted version and she would update the report

template to include subheadings of Intent, implementation and impact against which governors would be prompted to report. **Action: TJ**

- 55. The governor learning walk on Walkthrus was scheduled for Tuesday 26 September 2023.
- 56. Governors had been sent the link to complete their individual self-evaluation input for ELT and were reminded to complete their input as soon as possible if they had not already done so.
- 57. The LGB completed its self-evaluation collaboratively at this meeting. Governors agreed the suggested responses from JT and were invited to provide additional feedback by Friday 30 June 2023. **Action: All**
In respect of support that the LGB would like from the Trust, the LGB agreed to include ‘*Support with setting realistic LGB & Committee dates so that relevant Trust paperwork can be received*’ and noted in addition the comment, ‘*The CFO has a huge amount of information which can support the LGB. The LGB has welcomed her attendance at its meetings and support but notes that time is often limited to impart this information. It would be helpful if the Trust could devise other ways in which to deliver this information*’. TJ would update the attendance figures for this year with attendance at this meeting.
- 58. In response to a query from a Governor, HB reported that a governance review of the Trust would be conducted in the autumn term by the Confederation of School Trusts and would be likely to include discussion with heads and chairs about governance.
- 59. The Local Governing Body was reminded to complete the log of governor training undertaken and noted that a podcast would be provided from the ELT Safeguarding Lead for governors to listen to meet the requirement for regular safeguarding update training and the St Martin’s safeguarding documents that they would be required to read for the new academic year.
- 60. Governors noted the action to support GDPR compliance to review any St Martin’s documents held at home and shred or bring them in for shredding by the next meeting. Although documents provided to governors should not include personal data, and any documents shared for panels had to be left at school for shredding, the aim of this request was to set up a mechanism and reminder to ensure the regular disposal of any hard copies held by governors. **Action: All**

HB left at this point.

Compliance, Policy and document review

- 61. The Local Governing Body received and confirmed agreed the revised Positive Behaviour policy, which included updates from discussion of comments made by ES.
- 62. The Local Governing Body noted that the Attendance policy had been reviewed.

Meeting evaluation

- 63. Governors reflected on the impact of their meeting on children’s outcomes and welcomed the opportunity for a fuller discussion of the budget and to place on record concern regarding how restrictions might impact on pupils’ outcomes and delivery in line with St Martin’s values. Governors had highlighted a number of elements of provision at St Martin’s which were central to its ethos and values and which the School would wish to preserve.
- 64. Governors commended Music Lead, Mrs Kelleher for her enthusiastic work with pupils and noted the recent performance at Dorking Halls. In relation to paragraph 63, Governors noted that having a dedicated music resource, Meerkat provision and the School’s staffing policy were aspect of the School that they would wish to preserve.
- 65. The Governing Body recorded thanks and best wishes for the summer to all the members of staff at the School.

Date of next meeting

- 66. The next meeting was confirmed as 5.00 pm on 12 September 2023 and would be held at school. The agenda would include appointment to Lead Governor roles (as required by ELT and specific to St Martin’s), the five-year strategy, overview of pupil outcomes from summer 2023, other business agenda items.

Part 2 business

No confidential matters were raised.
The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

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

ACTIONS LGB Meeting 22 June 2023

Item	Action	Owner	Completion Date/Update
7	Share the report from the roof survey	JH	
9	Share conditions survey with the LGB after it had been seen by the Trust Board.	JH	
10	Share cost summary of estates priorities for investment over a ten-year period, colour coded to highlight priorities, the Co-Head teachers and Governors.	JH	
29	include appointment of a specific governor lead for Health and Safety with governor appointments in the agenda for the autumn 1 LGB meeting	JT/TJ (agenda)	
30	Governors to review the draft Risk Register and comment to JH.	All	
50	Safeguarding Governor was asked to provide a written report on her summer term safeguarding focused governor assurance visit.	SC	
51	Circulate a link to a safeguarding film	MD	
54	Update the assurance /monitoring report template to include subheadings of Intent, implementation and impact against which governors are prompted to report.	TJ	
57	provide additional feedback on self evaluation by Friday 30 June 2023	All	
60	review any St Martin's documents held at home and shred or bring them in for shredding by the next meeting	All	
	<i>Brought forward from previous meetings</i>		
10	Consideration would be given to T4W forming the focus for a Governor Learning Walk.	KM/MD	26/09/23
43	Clarify with new academic year procedures any change to DBS clearance requirements for governors.	TJ	For 12/09/23
52	Provide a written report of their regular visits to support Christian distinctiveness, including leading and participating in assemblies	NP/AK	
	complete Safer Recruitment training on Educare.	AK. SC	
	Schedule workshop discussion of draft five-year strategy to gather feedback from Governors on longer term plans.	TJ	12 September 2023
	Include in future agenda - question to support understanding of safeguarding information and keep the info current; Diversity and Inclusion	DSL /TJ	Ongoing – termly.