## ST MARTIN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

### Local Governing Body – PART 1 Minutes of Meeting held on 9th March 2026 from 5.00 pm

**Governors present:**
M N Baker (NB)
Mrs M Down (MD) Headteacher
Mrs C McNab (CM)
Revd N Parish (NP)
Mrs P Roy (PR)
Mrs J Taylor (JT) Chair
Mr D Wilkinson (DW)
Ms C Wynn-Mackenzie

**In attendance**:
Mrs T Jones (TJ) Clerk to the Governors

**Apologies**
Mrs H Rattos (HR)

**Apologies for absence**

1. Apologies for absence from this meeting had been received and were accepted from Helen Rattos (HR). The meeting was in quorum. The CFO had offered to be in attendance at the meeting and Cm would report instead from her meeting prior to the LGB to discuss finances.

**Declarations of Interest and confidentiality**

2. TJ reminded the LGB of the need to for confidentiality of items raised at the meeting and drew attention to St Martin's Vision, which was highlighted in the agenda and central to all that was done at the School. No governors updated their interests or declared interests in the agenda items for this meeting.

**Finance**

3. As Finance Link (Lead) Governor, CM provided a written report with papers for this meeting and all present confirmed they were able to access the document. CM had attended the finance Link governor meeting, 4 March 2026 at which the link governors were briefed by the Chief Finance Office (CFO).
4. CM reported that the first indicative budget for 2026-27 had now been developed and showed a surplus in year 1, with a less positive position shown for the subsequent two years as was often seen at this point in the development cycle. The budget was indicative only as assumptions were yet to be approved by the Trust Audit and Risk Committee.
5. CM reported an anticipated increase in GAG funding by 1.6% and that additional fund previously remitted (NI top up and School business support fund) were likely to be rolled up into overall funding allocation. The new IMF (Inclusion Mainstream Fund) announced in the White Paper published on 23 February 2026 was effective from 1/04/26.
6. NB asked a**bout the source of the GAG funding;** this was the main element of school funding and came from the Department for Education (DfE). NB **sought clarification of the role of ELT in the School's finances;** St Martin's paid an annual fee (top slice) to Enlighten Learning Trust (ELT), the multi academy trust (MAT) which St Martins Schools were a part of, to cover centrally provided services, including support on finances and guidance on how the School deployed its grant funding. The Trust Board was responsible for approving the budget for each school.
7. CM highlighted where planning assumptions could change. The next iteration of the budget would be reviewed in the summer term for approval at the end of June and submission by the end August. JT asked if the meeting schedule could still accommodate this timetable; TJ confirmed that St Martin's meetings were scheduled within the ELT specified window for meetings and she would alert if there was any change needed, for example because of delayed financial information.

8. JT asked **about the impact of the Schools White Paper on EHCPs in process**; MD said that there were relatively few pupils with EHCPS (Education Health amd Care Plans) at St Martin's and confirmed that applications for EHCPs were being made only for pupils with the highest level of need at present and this approach would continue.
9. CWM asked **what the basis was for the allocation of the IMF**; it was understood that this would equate to £44 per pupil on roll and allocated for every pupil rather than just those with special needs. JT asked **what this was as a percentage of the current funding**; MD said that £44 equated to about 1 hour of the time of a teaching assistant whose support ranged from delivery of specific interventions for pupils with needs, to support catch up after absence or to stretch potential higher attainers. Every child was therefore likely to be supported at some point. In previous years, a TA had been deployed in every classroom.
10. CWM asked **if the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) would be impacted by the change to how Surrey County Council was structure**d; the LGPS was thought to sit outside the Surrey structure.

**Leadership report**

11. Governors were invited to raise questions on the Leadership report for spring 2026 which had been updated with current data. Pre-submitted questions and responses are available as a separate appendix to the minutes. CM asked **what accounted for the increase in special needs evident in the data;** the increase reflected the focus on early identification of need and implementation of support, even if the funding had not yet been agreed, plus in recent years there had been an overall increase in the numbers of pupils with SEND. MD reported that there were two additional EHCPs in the Infant school and a 6% increase in the number of pupils with EHCPs in the Junior School (now 14) with 11 more applications underway and expected to come through before Easter. MD assured governors that deployment of resources was tracked very closely to be able to justify the funding spent on staff allocated to support these pupils.
12. PR asked **why these pupils had not been evident in figures seen previously;** in some cases presentation was age related and needs emerged as pupils progressed through the school. In addition, in Year 4, which was a high needs year group, the need of some pupils might not have been detected but had now become clear. The SENCo was vigilant to ensure access to appropriate professionals, such as STIPS and educational psychologists, to support identification and better understanding of the pupils.
13. In a pre-submitted question, CWM had asked abo**ut the apparent large increase in number of suspensions & exclusions** (eg. 3 suspensions in Autumn 25/6, compared to 1 for all of 24/25) and **whether any reasons for this had been identified**; MD said that this was largely on account of the change in policy to implement a graduated response to behaviour. MD gave an example of a pupil who had previously been excluded and was now about to return to reintegrate following a period of alternative provision. Implementing a clear graduated process enabled parents and staff to be clear about how support and interventions would graduate in response to the escalation of behavioural incidents and in line with the defined policy. Letters had been formalised and there was clear communication with parents when a pupil needed to be internally excluded as a step in the behaviour management process. The increase also reflected that pupils were presenting with more extreme needs and dysregulated behaviour and the need to respond to resulting incidents. **In response to query about how internal exclusions were implemented**, MD clarified that pupils who were internally excluded completed their learning separately from their classmates, in a very boring environment and restorative conversations were conducted to help them understand that the exclusion was a consequence of their behaviour and to be able to return to class afterwards.
14. MD said that the IDSRs (shared during the meeting) highlighted as areas for improvement outcomes for writing, which were below national and of concern particularly given the demographic of St Martin's families, and attendance of vulnerable groups. Both were identified as priorities in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) which had been updated as a result. It was therefore agreed to focus this term's deep dive on writing instead of SEND and Early years as originally planned. (SEND will be a focus in the summer term and the SENDCo will be in attendance at the summer 1 meeting and governors had monitored early years at the spring term learning walk on 24 February 2026) The update from the English lead was provided on Teams and would be uploaded to the meeting folder. **Action: TJ**

15. JT asked **whether there were specific aspects of writing to address**; there was a big focus on foundational knowledge, such as pencil grip, letter formation, children's resilience to writing.
16. As a follow up to the question raised at the previous meeting about the impact of the two-week half term, CM asked i**f any fines had been issued to parents for unauthorised absence and if so who managed the paperwork, received the money and whether parents had actually paid these fines;** the process was implemented by the School and the fines remitted to Surrey. So far four parents had paid and three further fines had been issued.
17. CM had asked a**bout the response to the new coaching tea**m; an update was given in the question template document but it was noted that the team was in the early stages of development.
18. CM had asked w**ho dealt with the administration of subject access (SAR) requests** which could be time consuming; the majority of the work was completed by School staff with the Trust providing advice.

**Safeguarding**

19. Data had been provided to the spring 1 meeting and JT's spring term safeguarding monitoring visit was scheduled for 25 March 2026.
20. Governors received a powerpoint on the local context of safeguarding and noted as key issues in Epsom and Ewell – drug relationships, county lines, anti-social behaviour (which could include witnessing anti-social behaviour in the town and lead to an emotional response being triggered by unrelated incidents) and the dangers associated with the railway level crossings on Epsom/Ashtead Common. Key was to implement an appropriate child centred approach to support pupils to understand the dangers and take precautions.
21. Staff and governor responses to a question in the spring 1 safeguarding quiz, had been clarified in the slide on the process for reporting an allegation which the DSL had circulated. The SENDCo had also reinforced learning at her meeting with TA [see document on allegations against a member of staff provided in the resources subfolder within the Training folder on Governor Teams channel.LADO 1.pdf]
22. The link to the spring 2 safeguarding quiz would be forwarded before the end of term. **Action: TJ**

**Risk Register**

23. Governors received the Risk Register update for February 2026 and JT asked a**bout the testing of the emergency plan**. MD reported that staff were trained in the lockdown procedure and a role play exercise was conducted at Inset. However, she did not feel it appropriate to upset pupils by practising this procedure. Governors were assured that when a lockdown had been required, on account of the report of a bomb at a neighbouring building, the pupils had responded calmly which validated this approach. LGB supported the decision of leaders in this matter.
24. CM had a**sked how the 71 first choice applications received for Sept 26 compared to the number of Sept 25 applications and about the conversion rate to actual starters**; currently there were 73 applications listing St Martin's as their first preference and at the same point last year, there were 69 first-preference applications, with 84 children ultimately starting in Reception in September 2025. It was hoped to see the numbers increasing before September again this year. JT noted that applications and number on roll (NOR) was likely to remain an amber risk given the birthrate and it was noted that the place planning team predicted that there would be surplus places for 60 children (two classes) in Epsom and Ewell in September 2026.

**HR update**

25. The LGB received the HR report from the Trust and **sought clarification of the autumn term teacher turnover figure of 3.08;** this data was reported as a percentage of the average number of staff in the period and related to the stepping down at the end of term of the co-head teacher.
26. MD reported that several support staff had left to join the previous SENDCo at a specialist provision. NB asked **about total staff numbers**; there were 30 teachers and 50 support staff. As a follow up question, NB asked whether the Headteacher felt this was sufficient; it would be good to recruit more support staff MD noted that in the past it had been possible to overrecruit teachers and this overcapacity had supported the Schools when there were periods of absence or resignations. In response to CWM's **query, it was confirmed that the recruitment reported would fill the current vacancies**.

27. MD identified that there was potential risk associated with ECTs struggling to adapt to teaching and with the workload. DW sought clarification of the provisions for ECTs; MD clarified that ECTs (Early Careers Teachers) had two years of support, 10% non-classroom time in year 1 and 5% in year 2 and this replaced the previous arrangements for NQTs (Newly Qualified Teachers) )who were given one year of support,
28. CWM asked **whether the employee assistance programme provided counselling**; this was confirmed and that the programme was well used and thought of. A spate of unpleasant emails was a particular current challenge for staff, with parents using AI to word their communications and demanding immediate response from teachers to the concerns raised.
29. NP asked **what could be done to prevent unacceptable treatment of staff, recognising that the Governors had a duty of care towards staff at the school, and whether there was anything in the parent agreement;** MD confirmed that the parent agreement did ask parents to commit to treating staff appropriately and that previous action taken had included warnings and a ban of a parent from the school premises.
30. Governors discussed scenarios faced by teachers receiving such communications, the resulting stress on teachers about to deliver learning to a class of pupils and the potential detrimental impact on the teacher/pupil relationship. Governors **supported the proposal to change the process for receiving parent communications, in order to filter communications**. It was hoped that this would help teachers to feel supported in how they handle their responses, by giving them time to consider and respond. NP suggested that a triage system might help; consideration was being given to requiring parents to complete a form which would be reviewed by a member of the office team initially and passed on as appropriate for response. Teachers were also being encouraged to telephone parents in response to emails as this could help to prevent escalation.

**Estates report and H&S**

31. MD updated the report to the LGB on Estates Health and Safety and Compliance with the news that the School had secured £7k towards the cost of an external classroom which would accommodate 60 children for outdoor learning and provide shade during breaks etc. CM asked **how the funding had been secured and DW asked if it would cover the full cost of the outdoor learning space**; the Forest School lead had applied for the grant from Surrey and the PTA had agreed to support the rest of the costs (total £9 - £10k).
32. CWM asked about th**e risk associated with the positive testing on legionella**; the outbreak was in a shower which was not used and did not therefore present the same level of risk as if found, for example, in drinking water. Remedial action was being taken and the readings had reduced.
33. DW asked **whether there was still risk associated with a pupil going outside the perimeter fence**; the risk remained although the child had received a consequence and behaviour was better now.
34. MD gave background on the two accidents in forest school and assured governors that risk assessments were in place as appropriate for the space and year group and being followed and the second incident had occurred while staff were dealing with the first one, triggered by the dysregulation of a child. As learning points from the incidents, staff had identified communication with the families involved and reinforcement of pupils' learning on specific equipment which had been removed at present. A thorough investigation was being carried out.
35. PR asked **how about the health of the two pupils involved**; although a pupil had suffered a head injury and mild concussion, there was no permanent issue. NB asked **what was meant by 'dysregulation'**; the child had an escalated emotional reaction to an issue which led to their behaviour and triggered the accident.
36. JT reported that her governor monitoring meeting would take place on 11 March 2026 and key points from the spring term meeting of H&S link governors, including the importance of succession planning for site premises staff. Governors noted that the Estates team felt it was unlikely that the CIF bid for the repairs to the roof would be successful and the premises team planned therefore to undertake remedial action in the interim. The classrooms would be left undecorated so the damage remained visible, but apart from this the rolling schedule of classrooms etc redecoration remained in place.
37. The LGB supported the proposal for succession planning for premises staff across the Trust, and encouragement of candidates to undertake a recognised NVQ qualification, and noted that it was

important to be aware of the wellbeing of the St Martin's Premises Manager in implementing any plans for training of others.

**Governance information**

38. The LGB noted the summary on the agenda; no governors' terms of office were due to expire before the next meeting or the end of the academic year and the appointment of Nick Baker as a Foundation Governor had been confirmed following completion of required safeguarding procedures and training.
39. JT and MD had met before the LGB meeting with a prospective Foundation governor and welcomed her enthusiasm and understanding of the role. TJ would liaise with the prospective governor regarding taking their application forward and JT suggested that NP meet with the candidate to explore the role of Foundation Governor more fully. **Action: NP/TJ**

**Reports from Governor monitoring and visits**

40. The LGB received the report from the Spring term governor monitoring morning held on Tuesday 24 February 2026 and focused on Early Years. Governors commented that the Early Years leader had been impressive and was clearly knowledgeable of the phase, had implemented initiatives to meet the needs of the cohort and had further plans. Governors had enjoyed the Story Assembly and commented on how engaged the pupils were. MD said that leaders had decided to introduce the story assembly to immerse children in Bible stories through role playing and it had been received with enthusiasm as shown by the number of volunteers for roles in the assembly.
41. CWM reported from her governor monitoring visit to discuss Attendance (a written report was provided with the monitoring reports for this meeting). The meeting had focused on the new role of Mrs Woolvet as Attendance lead and how tracking included looking at the overlap of vulnerable pupils and groups who were also persistent (PA) or seriously absent (SA) in order to identify appropriate interventions.
42. CM and JT had reported on monitoring of finance and H&S under items 3 and 9 above. The spring visit to monitor SEND was scheduled for 11 March 2026 and PR planned to attend the SEND coffee morning. Written reports from this meeting and DW's meeting to monitor teaching and learning would follow. **Action: PR/DW**
43. It was agreed to schedule a learning walk in the summer term focused on writing. TJ would ask governors to feedback their availability to attend on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. **Action: TJ**

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

44. The draft part 1 minutes of the previous meeting of the Local Governing Body held 2 February 2026 were approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chair. The update on actions arising from the previous minutes was noted and the table of actions further updated at the meeting. The updated action list is included at appendix 1.
45. CM aske**d if there were any concerns about Aspens remaining to provide school lunches pending tendering of the contract** ; MD said that there were issues with the current provider, related largely to administrative matters, which could be addressed, and portion sizes which related to the guidance. However, it was better for St Martin's to be part of the tender process through the wider MAT and the current provider would remain in place on a temporary basis with rolling renewal of the contract.

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

46. JT had not had to take any emergency or urgent decisions as Chair's Actions on behalf of the Governing Body since the last LGB meeting.

**Policies**

47. The Local Governing Body noted the approval by the Trust Board of the policies on Pay, Executive Pay, Health and Safety and Educational Visits. The policy on Use of Restrictive Interventions (replacing the use of Reasonable Force Policy) would be provided in the summer term.
48. TJ reported that the St Martin's Health and Safety policy would be reviewed following approval of the Trust policy (no change to the previous year) and the Lettings procedure had been approved by the Headteacher in June 2025 and would be reviewed in June 2026. It was noted that leaders had reviewed the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives published on the website which had previously been deemed to comply with the requirement to publish these objectives. The Trust would provide a model template for the statement on how the school met its Public Sector Equality Duty,
49. JT drew attention to the draft minutes of the Admissions Committee meeting which took place on 24 February 2026 and highlighted that there were sufficient places for all families who had placed St Martin's as their first choice to gain a place at the School and on earlier review of three requests to defer

entry to St Martin's in reception until September 2027. The Committee had agreed in principle that the School could go over-Pan to accommodate an additional junior school pupil due to return from overseas shortly and likely to apply at that point.

**Governor update**

50. Governors had been invited to discuss the structure and operation of the LGB, governor links and Trust link governor meetings to feed into planning for 2026-27. Governors made the following points:-
    - The Finance link meeting was a useful forum for the CFO to brief all the finance governors at once.
    - The H&S link meetings similarly provided a forum for these governors to meet with the Trust Estates team and these meetings were more embedded now and proving useful.
    - Scheduling of Link meetings could be challenging but improvement had been made.
    - It appeared that SEND link meetings were operated more as network meetings for governors to share observations but PR said she would be able to report further when she had attended more of these meetings.
    - Governors felt that the overall system was more embedded this year and they felt supported and that it was a helpful process.
51. DW asked w**hether the link governor roles were now more evenly distributed**; JT said that she had not allocated a role to NB as newest governor and would continue in the roles of safeguarding and H&S link governor until the end of the academic year. Consideration of appointment to link governor roles would be a subject for the September meeting of the LGB. **Action: TJ (agenda)/ All**
52. Governors were asked to add any governor training they had undertaken to the log of governor training which can be accessed from the link provided (Governors Training Log.xlsx) **Action: All**

NP left the meeting at this point.

**Website review**

53. Governors asked who had conducted the review of the website and who would make the changes suggested; the review had been undertaken by AI and would need to be reviewed to ensure all the points were valid. A team of different staff members was responsible for different sections of the website. Members commented on the point about visibility and access to specific information. It was noted that many people would find the information they needed through using the search bar. Points would be considered and addressed over the coming weeks.

**Confidential matters**

54. No part 2 confidential matters were raised at this meeting .

**Meeting evaluation**

55. Governors confirmed that their discussion at today's meeting had maintained focus on the St Martin's vision and highlighted in particular their discussion of staff wellbeing and how to support staff with challenging parental communication. Governors commented that the way in which St Martin's kept the most vulnerable pupils at the centre of their support and provision was also aligned with the School's vision.

**Date of next meeting**

56. The next meetings of the LGB were confirmed as Wednesday 6 May and Monday 22 June 2026. NB gave apologies for absence for both dates on account of pre-existing commitments.
57. Governors discussed scheduling of meeting for 2026 and confirmed that LGB meetings would be held from 5 pm. The approach to alternate meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays had been useful during 2025-26 and governors were invited to feedback on preferences. TJ would liaise with NP regarding his preferred day for meeting but noted that Mondays were the best day for DW and CWM. **Action: TJ**

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

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



*Advice given by Governors at this Academy is incidental to their professional expertise and is not being given in their professional capacity.*