

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees**  
**held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

**Present:**

Mr R Barlow  
Mr A Blount  
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO  
Mr J Cliff, Chair  
Miss R Punter, remotely  
Mr R Taylor, Vice Chair, from minute 4.1.3  
Mr D Terry

**In attendance**

Mrs C Sheehan, CFO  
Mrs V Bolton, COO  
Miss K Crossley, Clerk

**1. Apologies for absence**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Barenbrug, Ms Cartwright and Mrs Sesli.
- 1.2 No apologies had been received from Mrs Brookman or Mr Okafor.

**2. Declaration of pecuniary interests**

- 2.1 None.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (appendix 1) were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.
- 3.2 There were no questions from Trustees on the matters arising report (appendix 2).

**4. Executive report**

**4.1. External safeguarding audit – findings and actions**

- 4.1.1 Further to discussion at the ACC meeting in January 2022 and the Trust Board meeting in February 2022, Trustees were referred to the papers on safeguarding (appendices 4-9) in the Executive Report (appendix 3). A meeting had been scheduled between Mr Barlow, Safeguarding Trustee, and the third party who had conducted the safeguarding audit, to review outstanding points and actions. Trustees asked whether there were any safeguarding issues other than those identified in the external audit and were advised that clarification would be sought on the structure of safeguarding and chains of accountability. **JB/RB to action.** It was confirmed that a risk assessment was in place and that actions had been scheduled for the start of the summer term.

**4.1.2 Update on response to school visits**

- 4.1.2.1 Concerns raised by staff during school visits conducted by the Chair and CEO had been grouped into four areas. A piece of work was underway to address the perception that Heads did not have the remit to make decisions. Discussions had been held with senior leaders at all schools on staffing structures for 2022/23. The conversations had gone well and although it would not be possible to meet all requests, Heads had welcomed the opportunity to make choices within financial parameters. Dialogues were on-going and the

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opportunity for discussions to be held in person had allowed for greater transparency and understanding of decisions. Trustees asked whether significant changes to staff structures were planned and were informed that the main changes related to fixed-term contracts for tutoring, which would enable the Trust to extend additional staffing in coming years. The next steps in the summer term would be to consider key objectives in areas such as training for subject leadership and to work with the new Heads on staffing. **JB/CS to action.**

- 4.1.2.2 Trustees asked about the lump sum payment at EWPS and were advised that this related to a misunderstanding at the borough about the status of DRIS, but that this had subsequently been rectified.
- 4.1.2.3. The Trust was considering how to address teachers' concerns about the increasing impact of administrative tasks on teaching. The roles of Administration Officers (AOs) had been clearly defined following the restructure, and some refinements to the AO role had recently been clarified with Heads. Further administrative efficiencies would be achieved through starting to roll out the Arbor parent app in the summer term.
- 4.1.2.4 The Chair noted the importance of ensuring that the rationale for the roles of Heads, teachers and AOs were clearly understood when the new Heads were inducted in autumn 2022. **JB/GS to action.**

#### **4.1.3 Update on recruitment of senior leaders**

- 4.1.3.1 The CEO outlined interim arrangements for the HoS role at SMCPA in the summer term. Unusually, Mr Jamieson, HoS-elect, was available to start his role from the start of the summer term, however, plans had previously been agreed for Mr Frost, DHT at SMCPA and unsuccessful candidate, to cover the Acting Head of School role in the summer term, with associated personal development opportunities. Following discussion with both parties, it had been agreed that Mr Frost would cover the Acting HoS role for the summer term, with support from another senior leader. Mr Jamieson had welcomed the opportunity to spend time in KS2 at EWPS in the summer term to support the school during the secondment of the Headteacher to Hayes Primary School. Trustees noted the benefits of Mr Jamieson starting as HoS at SMCPA immediately and questioned whether these were outweighed by the needs at EWPS. It was explained that a series of interviews had been conducted for the acting-up roles, which offered valuable personal development for senior leaders and linked to wellbeing and staff perception of the Trust.
- 4.1.3.2 Trustees asked about the induction procedure for Heads and were informed that the teams would be brought together, key milestones would be agreed and release time would be put in place. **JB to action.** Trustees noted the need for clear induction processes for the new Heads to ensure that schools were not adversely affected. **JB to action.** Trustees would be informed by email of the temporary acting up remuneration. **CS to action.**
- 4.1.3.3 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 9.

#### **4.1.4 Monthly management accounts to February 2022**

- 4.1.4.1 There were no questions from Trustees on the management accounts to February 2022 (appendix 10).

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees**  
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**4.1.5 School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist**

- 4.1.5.1 Trustees received the School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool Checklist (appendix 11) for information. The View My Financial Insights report had been received and would be analysed and brought for consideration to the relevant Committees in the summer term, factoring in the risks, red & amber rag-rated items to the KPIs and annual plans. **KC to action.**

**4.1.6 Litigation update**

- 4.1.6.1 Trustees asked about recommendations and lessons learned from the EHT's investigation into a pupil injury at SMCPA. The following was confirmed:
- daily risk assessments of the outdoor space are carried out and the status is recorded in a template
  - pupils continue to be reminded to play safely and follow instructions from staff
  - all Heads have been instructed to implement these practices at other schools.
- 4.1.6.2 Trustees were referred to the comments in the Executive Report on the litigation case. A discussion followed about how possible negligence may be managed by insurers with no acceptance of liability. Trustees asked whether the Trust was satisfied that mitigating controls had been put in place to address any concerns and it was confirmed that this was the case. The investigating officer was satisfied that the members of staff involved had acted appropriately. It was noted that the pupil involved in the incident had subsequently sustained other injuries outside of school and it was suggested that this warranted further investigation as a safeguarding concern. **GS to action.**
- Post-meeting note:**  
It had been confirmed that the child had had a couple of falls from his scooter in the park and that there are no safeguarding concerns.

**4.7 Contract approvals and/or spend requests over £20k**

**4.7.1 General and recycling waste contract**

- 4.1.7.1 Trustees were referred to the spend request for a general and recycling waste contract (appendix 12). In response to a question from Trustees, it was confirmed that the number and capacity of the bins was sufficient for the needs of the Trust. The request was approved and the contract with Suez Recycling Ltd would be in place for a minimum of 2 years from April 2022.

**5. Trust Committee business**

**5.1 HR Committee meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

- 5.1.1 The Chair of the HR Committee summarised discussions at the HR Committee meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, including gender pay gap reporting and revisions to the Grievance Policy to ensure that the right level of support was in place for all parties. Trustees thanked Mrs Brookman for creating a flowchart to sit alongside the policy. The Trust would share feedback with the HR provider on some of the challenges relating to HR procedures. **CS/RP to action.**

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees**  
**held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

**6. Local Academy Councils**

**6.1 Feedback from LACs and Trust response**

- 6.1.1 The Chair reported that there was a lack of clarity on the roles of Local Academy Council members (LAC members), which risked LAC members stepping down due to perceived lack of purpose. Suggestions to address concerns were made, such as sharing best practice of successful Local Academy Councils. Trustees noted the value of support provided to schools by successful LACs in line with the terms of reference, such as sharing feedback and local viewpoints with Heads, acting as ambassadors for the Trust and lending a supportive listening ear/sounding board for Heads, which could be shared with all LACs. The Trust would listen to the views of LACs and reflect on meaningful ways in which LACs could support their schools. **JC/JB to action.**

**6.2 Notes of TAC meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022**

- 6.2.1 There were no questions from Trustees on the notes of the Trust Academy Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 (appendix 13).

**7. Policies**

**7.1 Allegations Against Staff Policy**

- 7.1.1 It was confirmed that the Allegations Against Staff Policy had been incorporated in Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (appendix 14), which had been approved by Trustees in September 2021.
- 7.1.2 Trustees noted that the Headteacher at HPS would leave the school at the end of the spring term and asked what provision had been made to cover his role as Trust Safeguarding Lead. It was confirmed that the CEO would assume responsibility for the Designated Safeguarding Lead role. The website and policy would be revised accordingly. **VB to action.**

**7.2 Equality and Diversity Scheme**

- 7.2.1 The CEO thanked Mr Blount and Ms Punter for their support in updating the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme (appendix 15), which was approved.
- 7.2.2 The EDI curriculum would be brought to the next ACC meeting, **KC to action**, with a view to considering how EDI would be interwoven and embedded into the curriculum, reflecting the communities of stakeholders, removing barriers to education and ensuring access for all. The financial impact of the actions required would also be considered. The Executive Team would visit schools in the summer term to discuss the rationale for the Trust EDI offer. **JB to action.**
- 7.2.3 Trustees referred to the table in the Equality Plan 2021-2022 setting out dates for actions at Board and Committee level. It was confirmed that the following actions would be completed by the Trust Board meeting in May 2022:

- appoint EDI Leads in each school and in the central team

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees**  
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- establish school working parties, including parents
  - establish school level pupil diversity councils. **JB/GS to action.**
- 7.2.4 The review dates of actions in the Equality Plan would be aligned with the Business Planner. **KC to action.**
- 7.2.5 For the purpose of clarity, Trustees requested that the annual EDI plan be separated from the policy in future years. **JB/GS to action.**
- 8. AOB and date of next meeting**
- 8.1 Trustees noted the CEO's initial commentary (by email) on the recent publication of the Schools White Paper. An item on the impact of the paper on the Trust and how the Trust would meet its requirements would be added to the agenda of the next meeting. **KC to action.** An educational organisational growth plan would be shared at the next ACC meeting. **KC to follow up with RB.**
- 8.2 A list of school events would be circulated to Trustees and LACms. **KC to action.**
- 8.3 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 7pm at The Warren (please note change from original schedule).
- 8.4 The meeting closed at 9 pm.

Signed: .....Date:.....  
John Cliff, Chair of Trustees