

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 19th May 2022

Present:

In attendance

Ms C Barenbrug
Mr R Barlow, remotely
Mr A Blount
Mr J Cliff, Chair
Miss R Punter
Mr R Taylor, Vice Chair
Mr D Terry

Mrs C Sheehan, Acting Joint CEO (Finance and Business)
Mrs G Sesli, Acting Joint CEO (Education and Safeguarding)
Mrs V Bolton, COO

1. Apologies for absence

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

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

- 2.1 None.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of 31st March 2022 were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair, subject to minor amendments.
- 3.2 The Board ratified the Chair's action taken to approve the draft minutes of the meetings to approve the appointment of a new Headteacher at HPS and a new Head of School at SMCPA in March 2022.
- 3.2 Trustees requested that the timeframe for completion of actions be added to the matters arising report, including the original and any revised timeframes. **CS/GS/VB to action.**

4. Board and committee membership

- 4.1 The Board and Committee membership document had been omitted from the meeting papers and would be brought to the next meeting. **KC to action.** A verbal update was provided on recent changes to membership, including the intention of Cllr Ellis to resign from the Trust after many years of service at MPS, and the proposed appointment of Mr Cross as Chair of the Local Academy Council (LAC) at MPS.

5. Executive report

5.1 Acting up structure

- 5.1.1 Trustees were referred to the paper on the Interim Acting Up Structure, including a proposal for Heads of School to act up as Interim Headteachers, which was approved by the Board.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 19th May 2022

- 5.1.2 Trustees asked how the schools which were in the Ofsted window would be supported to prepare for their visits. It was reported that an online training session had been set up with an external experienced Headteacher, which would be followed up by bite-sized workshops throughout the second half of the summer term.
- 5.1.3 In response to a question as to whether any actions were required by Trustees following the recent changes to the Executive Team, it was confirmed that this was not the case. With the interim structure now in place, the Trust would continue to support schools to maximise the benefits of being part of a Trust, such as CPD, curriculum subject leadership networks and wellbeing support. A successful Trust strategy day had recently been held, attended all the new Headteachers; very positive feedback had been received.

5.2 External safeguarding audit

- 5.2.1 Trustees were referred to the commentary in the Executive Report on the findings and actions of the external safeguarding audit and were informed that the red- and amber rated actions in the safeguarding action plan were being prioritised for prompt resolution; all outstanding actions would be completed by the Trust Board meeting in July 2022 **GS to action**. Single central registers were being monitored very closely and all aspects of safeguarding were being reviewed. Procedures for ensuring the compliance of single central registers were outlined.
- 5.2.2 Trustees asked whether emerging issues, such as the historic on-boarding of staff without supporting references, had been addressed (including the cause as well as the action) and were advised that priorities had been outlined and half-termly checks were in place. A comprehensive report would be brought to the next meeting. **CS to action**. The safeguarding diagram had been updated to reflect that the Acting CEO (Education and Safeguarding) was the Trust Safeguarding Lead. Trustees asked whether there were any concerns relating to the number of recent changes to the holder of the Trust Safeguarding Lead position and was advised that this was not the case and the Trust was comfortable with the Trust Safeguarding Lead position being fulfilled by the Acting CEO (Education and Business).

5.3 Plan of strategic development

- 5.3.1 The Executive Team reported on the recent strategy session with senior leaders, including the new Headteachers. Discussions had been held on the strategic vision and objectives of the Trust. The views of Trustees on the strategic vision and objectives would be sought at the Trust Board meeting on 7th July 2022. **CS, GS, VB to action**.
- 5.3.2 Senior leaders (including the new Headteachers) had welcomed the collaborative approach to the strategy session, which would be cascaded down to staff at all levels of the Trust. Careful consideration would be given to how the collaborative approach would be communicated to stakeholders. A vision statement would be drafted and launched at INSET day at the start of the new school year in September 2022, with a view to inspiring stakeholders to work together and communicate effectively and transparently at all levels of the organisation. **CS, GS, VB to action**.
- 5.3.3 A good session had been held on the different programmes and resources used by the Trust in the context of tight budgeting. It had been agreed that Headteachers would discuss the pros and cons of programmes and services with their peers to determine which were most effective.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 19th May 2022

5.4 Induction of new Heads

- 5.4.1 It was noted that although the new Heads had been invited to the Strategy Day and other sessions, the Trust was mindful of not sharing sensitive information, such as budgeting, until they were employees of the Trust. All staff would attend a whole Trust INSET day on 1st September 2022, and an informal social event would be held for the new Headteachers to meet the central team at The Warren, date to be confirmed. **?? to action.** Trustees would be invited to attend both events.
- 5.4.2 Trustees noted the delineation associated with the interim joint CEO roles and cautioned against the perception of the Trust operating different silos.
- 5.4.3 Trustees referred to the concerns raised during visits to schools by the central team about lack of resources and were advised that replenishment plans were being drawn up and consumables would be purchased fairly and proportionately for all schools. Audits of resources would be undertaken to determine what resources were needed. **CS/GS to inform Heads.** It would be important to continue to ensure clarity and proportionality of allocation of resources with staff as a means of responding to the perceived lack of funding which had been articulated during school visits.
- 5.4.4 Trustees noted that the perception that the Trust could not afford resources had arisen as a result of ineffective communication with staff on feeding efficiencies from the restructures back to schools. A different narrative was required, based on the investment in staff and resources, which would enable the Trust to change the narrative. Headteachers would be invited to flag up areas in which resources were lacking in their schools at the next FARCO meeting. **CS/GS to inform Headteachers.**

5.5 Monthly management accounts to March 2022

- 5.5.1 Trustees were referred to the monthly management accounts to March 2022 and asked why the EWPS breakfast and after school clubs were running a deficit of c£2.5k. It was reported that this related to lack of adherence to processes. An item on this matter would be added to the agenda of the FARCO meeting in June 2022. **KC to action.**

5.6 Contract approvals and/or spend requests over £20k: Top 100 books

- 5.6.1 The Committee was referred to the spend request for Top 100 books for all year groups, which had been recommended for approval by ACC and FARCO. Further to an action at the FARCO meeting in April 2022, it was confirmed that the Trust had negotiated a discount of £300 on the order. The Chair of FARCO thanked the Acting Joint CEO (Education and Safeguarding) for securing the discount. The request was approved.

6. Trust Committee business

6.1 HR Committee meeting, 9th March 2022

- 6.1.1 There were no questions from Trustees on the minutes of the HR Committee meeting on 2nd March 2022, which had previously been circulated by email.
- 6.1.2 There were no questions from Trustees on the minutes of the FARCO meeting on 29th April 2022, which had previously been circulated by email.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 19th May 2022

7. Local Academy Councils

7.1 Feedback from LACs and Trust response

- 7.1.1 The Chair reported that he had observed recent meetings of some LACs and had concluded that reflection was required to ensure that Local Academy Council members (LACms) felt involved and valued in their schools. In the first instance, the Chair would hold open conversations with LACms, listen to their views and report back to Trustees. Consideration would be given to inviting LACms to strategy meetings and INSET days. **JC to action.**

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 8.1 Further to the action at the Trust Board meeting on 31st March 2022, it was confirmed that the EDI curriculum had been reviewed at the ACC meeting on 4th May 2022.
- 8.2 An EDI working party would be established, comprising Trustees, members of staff with responsibilities for education, business and finance and HR and pupils. It was proposed that the facilitation workshops for separate functions (education and curriculum, business and finance, human resources) would be held to articulate what EDI meant in The Spring Partnership Trust, for example, how stakeholders should see themselves reflected with the organisation. Consideration would be given the conducting a parent survey from which actions would be generated. Trustees thanked Mr Blount for his offer to put the Trust in contact with a facilitator. **GS to contact AB.**
- 8.3 Trustees noted the need to balance the need to move forward with the EDI alongside other priorities under the interim structure. It was agreed that the following would be completed by the end of the summer term:
- working party set up
 - action plan with milestones drawn up
 - clarity re roles of EDI champions and other stakeholders. **GS to action.**

9. Policies for review

- 9.1. None.

10. AOB and date of next meeting

- 10.1 Trustees were informed that plans were being drawn up to address compliance issues relating to teaching and learning responsibilities. A paper would shortly be circulated to Trustees and agenda items would be added to the next meetings of the HR Committee and FARCO. It was intended that new structure would in place by the beginning of the autumn term 2022/23. **CS and GS to action.**
- 10.2 The Chair outlined discussions at a recent meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner, who had confirmed that he was satisfied with the interim leadership structure. The auditor had noted that the joint interim CEO roles played to the strengths of the Trust.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Thursday 19th May 2022

- 10.3 Trustees asked about progress with the work on the party wall at SMCPA and was advised that it was proceeding in line with the project plan.
- 10.4 Trustees congratulated the executive team on the quality of the meeting papers.
- 10.5 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 7th July 2022 at 7pm at The Warren.
- 10.6 The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

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