

The Spring Partnership Trust
Final adopted minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Members
of the Spring Partnership Trust held at Hayes Primary School
at 6 pm on Monday 23rd January 2023

Present:

Mr J Cliff, Chair
Mr S Narracott
Mrs J Nelson
Mr I Stealey, from minute 5.5
Ms R Punter

In attendance:

Mrs C Sheehan, Acting Joint CEO
Mrs G Sesli, Acting Joint CEO

Clerk:

Miss K Crossley

1. Apologies for absence, constitution of the meeting

1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Bhalla. The meeting was quorate.

2. Pecuniary Interests and Register of Persons with Significant Control

2.1 No pecuniary interests were declared.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

3.1 The minutes of the Members' meeting of 24th January 2022, which had previously been approved by email, were ratified as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

4. Review of Trust Board composition and governance

4.1 Members ratified Ms Punter's appointment as a Member, which had been approved by email on 9th January 2023.

4.2 Mr Narracott would stand down as a Member following the meeting. Members thanked Mr Narracott, a founding member of the Trust, for his support as a governor, trustee and a member over 20 years

4.3 The Chair proposed the appointment of Natalia Sandigurskaia as a Trustee and outlined how her HR and finance skills would strengthen the composition of the board. The appointment was approved.

4.4 The Chair provided commentary on current board and committee membership and arrangements for the performance management of the executive team. Members noted the low level of Local Academy Council (LAC) membership at two schools and were advised that this was a historic issue and consideration was being given to a solution. The majority of LACs were functioning well. The LAC terms of reference had recently been reviewed to ensure clarity of the role of LAC members and Headteachers.

5. CEO report

5.1 Members welcomed the Trust's new values, which had been launched in September 2022 and had been well received by stakeholders.

5.2 The Trust had welcomed three new headteachers at the start of the autumn term, who had settled in well, with high levels of support from the executive team.

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- 5.3 Leasons Primary School had been inspected by Ofsted in November 2022, with an overall judgement of 'Requires Improvement'. Personal development, behaviour and attitudes and EYFS had been rated as 'Good'. The outcome had been affected by challenges including the impact of Covid, low starting points of pupils, staffing, two floods and a lack of stability in the leadership team. Attendance at the school had improved but was still currently below the national average. The school was on an upward trajectory but would continue to face challenges such as high numbers of pupils with high levels of SEND.
- 5.4 A discussion followed on the increase in the number of pupils with high levels of SEND and the lack of resourcing. Many pupils had complex needs and had been inappropriately placed in mainstream schools, which at times resulted in disruption to learning. Recruitment of teachers and support staff for pupils who had EHC plans was challenging. The Chair had written to the portfolio holder at the borough to express the concerns about the lack of resources to support pupils with SEND. Members asked whether schools had received additional funding and were advised that although funding had been received for some pupils, SEND was not adequately funded.
- 5.6 Members asked about external scrutiny and were informed that the trust continued to subscribe to Challenge Partners. From 2023/24, Challenge Partners reviews would be scheduled for vulnerable schools. In addition, the trust would work reciprocally with other local trusts on 'Mocksteds' to prepare staff for inspections, with a focus on links to prior learning. Rapid improvement strategies were in place to address priorities such as content and subject knowledge/leadership.

6. Receive TSPT annual accounts for the year ended 31st August 2021

- 6.1 Members were referred to the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31st August 2022. A detailed discussion had been held on the revaluation of the Trust's land, with Trustees agreeing that no changes would be made. It had been agreed that building impairments would be reflected in the accounts. A planned in-year deficit had been created in relation to restricted reserves which had not been spent historically. Going forward, systems had been put in place to ensure that all restricted grants were spent in-year.
- 6.2 Members asked whether schools received additional income for energy costs and were advised that the trust worked with an energy broker to ensure the schools were on the best tariff.

7. Approve reappointment of auditors UHY

- 7.1 Members accepted the recommendation of FARCO to re-appoint UHY for external auditing in 2023/24. In response to a question from Members about audit partner rotation, it was confirmed that a robust review system with partner reviews was in place at UHY.

8. AOB and dates of next meeting

- 8.1 Members noted the Acting Joint CEO structure and asked how it aligned with the White Paper on increasing the number of schools in a trust. The Chair reported that most schools in Bromley were already in trusts, and that it would be difficult to attract candidates for a CEO of a five-school trust. The Acting Joint CEO structure, along with the COO role, had been in

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place since May 2022, was working well and had minimised costs. The trust would continue to collaborate with local schools on school improvement.

- 8.2 The next meeting would be held on Monday 10th July 2023 at 6 pm at The Warren.
- 8.3 The meeting closed at 6:50 pm.

Signed:Date:
John Cliff, Chair, Board of Trustees, The Spring Partnership Trust