

**The Spring Partnership Trust**  
**Final adopted minutes of meeting of the Members of the Spring Partnership Trust**  
**held remotely on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 6:45 pm**

**Present:**

Mr J Cliff, Chair  
Ms R Punter  
Mr S Bhalla

**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 Stealey and Mrs Nelson. 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 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, which had previously been approved by email, were ratified as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

**4. CEO Report including major strategic developments**

- 4.1 Members referred to the CEO report and congratulated the Trust on the retention of 'Good' ratings from Ofsted inspections at HPS and SMCPA.
- 4.2 Members asked for the rationale for the consultation to move the role of Teaching Assistant with Named Pupils (TAWNC) to Teaching Assistant, and was informed that benefits included pupils not being reliant on a single member of staff, greater flexibility of deployment of staff and flexibility for teachers in terms of running small groups and interventions. Members asked how the Trust managed the allocation of funding and the need to demonstrate that schools were meeting the recommended number of hours for individual pupils, and were advised that it was important for pupils to avoid dependency on a single member of staff and for headteachers and SENDCos to have flexibility to create sustainable staffing structures and meet the needs of their pupils through a variety of interventions. Staff worked with families to improve understanding of the benefits of sustainable models.
- 4.3 The Chair noted that the Acting Joint CEOs had collaborated effectively to achieve the current strong position of the Trust. The three Headteachers who had joined the trust in September 2022 had settled in well, and Members congratulated the Acting Joint CEOs on the collaborative culture. Trustees were very comfortable with the steadiness of the model and the clear differentiation between the Acting Joint CEOs, who had demonstrated desire to drive the Trust forward, working together to create opportunities and work with other trusts.
- 4.4 This minute was deemed to be confidential. see confidential minute 1.
- 4.5 In response to a question about how pupil numbers compared with those of other trusts, it was reported that comparative data was not available, however Midfield Primary School was full with a waiting list. Pupil numbers at Hayes Primary School had dipped, which was

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unusual. There had been a decline in pupil numbers in primary schools nationally. The Trust was considering how to address low pupil numbers at one school, which was currently only 70% full. The Executive team are exploring solutions on how to increase pupil numbers.

- 4.6 Following changes to leadership, morale in schools had increased and collaborative relationships had developed. Staff had bought into the centralised curriculum, and centralised services remained a strength.
- 4.7 The Trust was mindful of its responsibilities to pupils and staff, as well as of its fiscal responsibilities, and strove to deliver the best possible outcomes for pupils. The strengths of the Trust included highly experienced staff, good geographical locations of schools, strategic reserves and a wide range of educational opportunities. However the current size of the trust was unsustainable, with no opportunities to take on new schools within the borough. Trustees were exploring growth opportunities with two trusts.
- 4.8 The Acting Joint CEO (CS) outlined the financial benefits of being part of a larger MAT such as opportunities for economies of scale and guaranteed capital funding for investments across all school sites. The Trust had been successful during AY22/23 in securing CIF funding for 4 projects.
- 4.10 Members welcomed the range of positive new initiatives and asked how the Trust maintained momentum. It was noted that a more outward-looking approach had been adapted, such as the Chair's conversations with other local chairs and the Acting Joint CEOs developing networks with leaders at educational conferences, which offered opportunities to seek the views of school leaders at national level and to share successful practices established at the trust.
- 4.11 Members asked whether the trust was prepared for growth in terms of supply systems and infrastructure and were informed that a scalable model had been developed by the central team. Processes were regularly reviewed to ensure best practice,

## **5. Review of Trust Board composition and governance**

- 5.1 Members were referred to the Board and Committee structure. The Chair provided an update on the recruitment of 3 new Trustees with relevant skills in 2022/23. The Local Advisory Council structure continued to work well. The Chair of the Local Advisory Council at MPS had accepted an opportunity to support both Midfield and Leeson's Primary Schools, from which both schools would benefit. Members welcomed the appointment of new trustees and the dynamic of support, challenge and mutual trust.

## **6. AOB and dates of next meeting**

- 6.1 Members asked whether any schools had reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) and were advised that it was suspected this was the case in at least one school. A decision had been taken for the Trust to commission its own surveyors, rather than wait for the DfE to assign surveyors. The COO was working closely with Headteachers and trustees, including researching temporary alternative venues and communication with parents. The Chair was confident that appropriate actions had been taken quickly.
- 6.2 The next meeting would be held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 at 6:45 pm at The Warren.

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6.3 The meeting closed at 7:30 pm.

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