

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors**  
**held at Hayes Primary School at 7pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

**Present:**

Mr C Lees (Chair)  
Mrs J Brinkley (CEO)  
Miss R Punter  
Mrs C Cousins  
Mr R Taylor (from minute 5.6, 14.4)  
Dr I Raitt  
Mr J Martin  
Mr D Okafor (from minute 5.4, 6.4)

**In attendance:**

Mrs C Sheehan, CFO  
Mrs V Bolton, Trust Services Manager

**Clerk:**

Miss K Crossley

**1. Elections and appointments**

**1.1 Appointment of Clerk to Directors and Company Secretary**

- 1.1.1 The re-appointments of K Crossley as Clerk to Directors and V Bolton as Company Secretary were approved by Directors, effective immediately.

**1.2 Election of Chair of the Board**

- 1.2.1 It was confirmed that one self-nomination had been received for the position of Chair of the Board for a period of one year. The re-appointment of C Lees until the first meeting of the Board in the academic year 2019/20 was proposed by R Punter, seconded by C Cousins and approved by Directors, effective immediately.

**1.3 Election of Vice Chair of the Board**

- 1.3.1 It was confirmed that one self-nomination had been received for the position of Vice Chair of the Board for a period of one year. The re-appointment of R Taylor until the first meeting of the Board in the academic year 2019/20 was proposed by C Lees, seconded by C Cousins and approved by Directors, effective immediately.

**1.4 Appointment of membership, Chairs of Committees, Chairs of Local Committees, panels and working parties**

- 1.4.1 Directors approved the revised Board and Committee membership (September 2018), appendix 1).

**2. Apologies for absence**

- 2.1 Apologies had been received from J Cliff and L Falk.  
2.2 Directors were satisfied with the reasons given for absence and accepted the apologies.  
2.3 The meeting was quorate.

**3 Completion of forms**

- 3.1 Directors completed the following forms:

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests (appendix 2)

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Code of Conduct (appendix 3)  
Fit and Proper Person (appendix 4)  
Related party transactions (appendix 5)

- 3.2 Directors confirmed that they had read the criteria for auto-disqualification from directorship (appendix 6) and confirmed that none were applicable.

#### **4. Board Business**

##### **4.1 To note changes to the Board and remaining terms of office**

- 4.1.1 Directors noted the following changes to the Board and Committee since the previous meeting:

- J Tibbalds had resigned as a Director of the Trust but would remain in post as a Local Committee member at HPS
- B Simpson had resigned as a Director and Chair of the Achievement and Curriculum Committee.
- I Raitt had been appointed Chair of the Achievement and Curriculum Committee.
- R Punter had been appointed Chair of the HR Committee
- L Sokoloff had resigned as Chair of the MPS Local Committee, and J Ellis had been appointed Interim Chair.
- B Hawes had been appointed Chair of the CPS and DRIS Local Committees, which operated jointly.

- 4.1.2 The terms of office of all Directors were noted.

- 4.1.2 The renewal of R Taylor's term of office for a further four years with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018 had been approved by the Members at their meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

##### **5. Minutes of previous meeting**

- 5.1 The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (appendices 8 and 9) were approved by Directors and signed by the Chair.

- 5.2 Directors were referred to the matters arising report (appendix 10) detailing actions which had been completed and the status of outstanding actions as follows:

- 5.3, 7.2 The CEO reported that she had been working with the Trust Safeguarding Lead, visiting schools to take stock of safeguarding arrangements, including after-school clubs. A report would be presented at the next Board meeting. **JB to action.** It was confirmed that all staff had completed safeguarding training and had read Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018).

- 5.4, 6.4 The Trust Services Manager (TSM) had been working with the Communications Officer and the HR team on enhancements to the Trust website, which were expected to go live in mid-October. Current vacancies at all schools would be displayed as rolling images with links to the full advertisements. The HR team had developed innovative ideas to increase the effectiveness of the recruitment process, and a vacancy for an HR Team Leader had been advertised to address capacity issues. Directors were mindful of the need for a

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strategic and sustainable approach to recruitment, which was a national issue and the largest risk to the Trust.

A Director asked about the promotion of the employee experience and was informed that this was part of separate, larger project, which included the wellbeing survey, 'Talk to Me' sessions for staff to speak to the CEO, and events such as the involvement of TAs across the Trust in a national support staff day.

5.5, 7.4.5.1 The CFO reported that the Trust had liaised with a broker regarding the renewal of the insurance contract, but that communication during the school holidays had been difficult. A quote for a one-year renewal had been received from the existing provider (at an additional cost of £2k in comparison with a three-year renewal), which had been approved by a group of three Directors to whom authority had been delegated for this purpose at the meeting in July 2018. The additional cost was considered acceptable as it gave rise to the opportunity of a significantly cheaper quote in a year's time. The approval was ratified and signed by Directors.

5.6, 14.4 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.1.

5.7, 14.5.4 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.2.

## **6. Chair's report**

- 6.1 Directors were referred to the Chair's report (appendix 11) and approved the Chair's action relating to the purchase of a dishwasher at SMCPA which had been urgent on health and safety grounds.
- 6.2 A discussion followed on the contract with Olive Dining, under which the 'contract surplus' was returned to the Trust at the end of the financial year, totalling c£20k over the three-year contract period. It was understood that this was standard practice for catering contracts, and the profit was usually reinvested in the schools. Directors sought to understand the implications for the Trust if Olive Dining became insolvent. The matter would be considered at the next FARCO meeting. **KC to action.**

## **7. Trust Development**

### **7.1 CEO/EHT Report including:**

#### **7.1.1 Overview of key issues, incl progress towards targets**

- 7.1.1.1 Directors were referred to the CEO report (appendix 12) and appendices (appendices 13-19) and were advised that Trust and school improvement strategies were more closely aligned than in previous years, with a view to raising attainment in four key areas: boys, disadvantaged pupils, high attainers and reading. Funding had been pooled at Trust level to address these issues, and included:
- the Trust NQT programme, under which training sessions would be coordinated for 12 NQTs by two senior school leaders and other Trust staff, offering the NQTs opportunities for collaborative training across a group of schools.
  - An inspiring and challenging curriculum, bringing together curriculum goals, with shared targets for writing, consistent assessment, moderation against the same standards and consistent use of Target Tracker for reading, writing and maths.

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- the development of emotional and physical resilience through outdoor play and learning
- a project which would be rolled out at HPS and MPS in January 2019 on shared pedagogy and planning, aimed at preparing schools for changes to the Ofsted framework in 2019
- the intention to measure the 'Big 6 Trust Goals' consistently, with a consistent upper KS2 curriculum including shared costs, staffing and practice, which had been informed by analysis of the outcomes of SATs in 2017/18.
- shared business and education infrastructure, supported by the IT Working Party.

7.1.1.2 In response to a question from Directors as to how these plans would be achieved sustainably, it was reported that the next step would be to draw up a business development plan based on the schools coming together through shared pedagogy and redefining the Trust's niche in the market. It was agreed that a reference to the sustainability of these plans would be added to the document. It was also noted that budgets needed to be cascaded down from Trust to school level. **JB to action.**

7.1.1.3 A discussion followed on the recruitment of NQTs. It was acknowledged that while a proportion of NQTs would stay on at the schools in which they trained, retention could be boosted through broadening the range of training routes (PGCE, Schools Direct, SCITT, Bromley Schools Collegiate) through which NQTs were recruited. **JB to action.**

7.1.1.4 The CEO described improvements which had been made to the curriculum following the KS2 results (appendix 14), including:

- a common rubric for target-setting, using the same formula to ensure robust targets
- half-termly tracking of progress and attainment through Target Tracker Multi, reviewed by the CEO and EHT
- tracking based on consistent statements
- curriculum goals for writing, in which all targets needed to be met to prevent gaps from developing
- a common upper KS2 curriculum, in which one class teacher would be responsible for preparing Y6 pupils for secondary school. After SATs in May, the Y6 teacher would work with Y5 pupils to identify areas of concern for the next academic year.
- New assessment papers: NFER was considered the most realistic means of assessing the whole curriculum and offered a scaled score at the end of each term. Some pupils who had not achieved the expected standard in the July 2018 SATS had only very narrowly missed the expected scaled score; NFER assessments would enable more flexible intervention.

7.1.1.5 Directors were concerned to ensure that there was sufficient capacity for intervention, and were advised that the Trust was working towards this, in particular at LPS, where recruitment was underway. Every half term, the CEO and EHT would meet with HTs/HoSs to review targets, identify issues and look for evidence of rapid improvement through interventions. In response to a follow up question as to whether sufficient materials were available, the CEO quoted the example of effective measures which had been introduced to tighten up the monitoring of free readers from Y3, including the need to ensure that reading records were signed by parents and for staff to ensure the books in the book corners were of a sufficiently high standard.

7.1.1.6 A Director asked whether the Trust was confident that Target Tracker Multi ('TTM') would produce consistent, reliable and comparable data and was advised that the use of TTM was being closely monitored to ensure data was meaningful. It was noted that this matter had been discussed by ACC, and it had been agreed that data reports would be supplemented by a one-page executive summary from class teachers or HTs/HoSs. Directors were concerned to ensure that tracking software was used in all schools in all

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year groups as a means of early identification of issues. It was explained that the software was available in all schools, but there were differences in the way in which it was used, depending on the level of development of the schools. It was confirmed that assessments were conducted in all year groups, not just Y6, and were moderated to sense-check and ensure that standards were being met.

- 7.1.1.7 A Director asked for an update on CPS, and was informed that a number of factors affecting the school had changed: the building work was complete, behaviour had improved as a result of Nurture provision, the school was fully staffed, and planning was underway to ensure cover for impending maternity leave.

The remainder of this minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 14.3.

- 7.1.1.8 An update was provided on staffing at LPS: expressions of interest had been received in the advertised teacher vacancies and the Trust was confident that vacancies would be quickly filled. Waiting to fill the vacancy permanently, whilst having difficulties of its own, meant that children did not suffer the extremely disruptive impact of long-term use of supply teachers. . A booster teacher for Y6 would be recruited to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.

The CEO advised Directors that the school was in the first phase of improvement, following the change in head teacher and had been affected by a number of distressing events which together with staff shortages created a challenging experience. A Director asked how success in improving staff morale would be measured, and was advised that the wellbeing survey and 'talk to me' sessions had provided valuable insight. Directors also asked whether it would be appropriate to reduce the number of objectives set at LPS to temporarily reduce the burden on staff. It was explained that expectations of the schools' achievements in relation to the Big 6 Trust Goals were dependent on the starting point of each school, although progress would be expected at all schools. Directors requested an update on LPS staffing at the next meeting, including a contingency plan outlining what would be done urgently should no teachers have been appointed in the current round of recruitment. **JB to action.**

## **7.1.2 Review any strategic/political developments**

- 7.1.2.1 There were no updates on opportunities for expansion.

## **7.1.3 Review of MAT Improvement Capacity Framework**

- 7.1.3.1 The CEO advised that the MAT Improvement Capacity Framework (appendix 20) had been partially completed and had proved a useful reference document to share with senior staff.

## **7.2 CFO Report**

### **7.2.1 Insurance contract**

- 7.2.1.1 This matter had been discussed in minute 5.2, 7.2.

### **7.2.2 Pay Award**

- 7.2.2.1 The CFO referred Directors to the paper on teachers' pay award for 2018/19 (appendix 21), outlining recommendations from the Secretary of State for Education following recommendations from the STRB. A verbal update was provided on the STPCD recommendations which had recently been released, confirming the following uplifts:

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- 3.5% to the minima and maxima of the unqualified and man pay ranges
- 2% to the minima and maxima of the upper pay range and allowances
- 1.5% to the minima and maxima of the leadership pay ranges

7.2.2.2 Directors were informed that, subject to interpretation of the calculation methodology of the pay grant, the financial impact of the awards to the Trust would be:

- c£11.8k if the recommendations were applied only to the minima and maxima of the ranges
- c£32.3K if the recommendations were applied to the minima and maxima of the ranges and a 1% uplift was applied to all pay ranges in between the minima and maxima.

It was noted that the exact calculation and methodology of the pay grant was not clear and that the value of the pay grant would not be known until later in the autumn term.

7.2.2.3 Directors considered the pay award in the context of recruitment, retention and staff morale and noted that recent national press coverage indicated an expectation that the 3.5%, 2% and 1.5% uplifts would be applied to all staff pay on the relevant range, not just those on the minima and maxima. Directors requested that the financial impact of applying the uplifts across all pay ranges be presented at the next FARCO meeting, along with options to fund any shortfall in the pay grant, with a view to approving the award ahead of the October payroll deadline. Directors were keen to explore the possibility of paying staff more than the rates in STPCD in order to support recruitment and retention. **CS to action.**

### **7.2.3 Business development update**

7.2.3.1 The CFO advised that a report describing the work of the Business Development Officer to support the Trust and schools to maximise income generation would be circulated to Directors. **CS to action.** Strategies were regularly assessed for effectiveness, and successful approaches, such as the 40% increase in lettings income at HPS, were shared across the Trust.

## **7.3 Trust Services Manager Report**

### **7.3.1 GDPR**

7.3.1.1 The TSM invited questions on her report (appendix 22). In response to a question from Directors, it was confirmed that each school had received a report of DPO school visits, which had highlighted good practice and areas for development. Directors noted that the DPO was required to provide a report to the Board to inform Directors how GDPR was being implemented and asked that one be provided. **VB to action.**

### **7.3.2 Risk register**

7.3.3 Directors considered the risk item 'Trust loses effectiveness as it either grows too quickly or slowly' and were satisfied that the risk was appropriately rated.

7.3.3 Directors thanks D Okafor for supporting the Trust in measuring the impact of IT on targets.

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**8. Report from FARCO**

**8.1 Overview of key issues**

- 8.1.1 It was confirmed that the management accounts were reviewed monthly by the Chair and would be brought to all Board meetings, as required by the new Academies Financial Handbook.

**8.2 Review management accounts, latest internal audit report and KPIs**

- 8.2.1 Directors were referred to the management accounts to end June 2018 (appendices 23-26) and asked what would be done to address losses at before- and after-school clubs.
- 8.2.2 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.4.
- 8.2.3 It was noted that there had been a turnaround at the SMCPA clubs after three loss-making years. Directors acknowledged the benefits of wraparound care on attendance.
- 8.2.4 Directors noted the impact of unbudgeted staff costs for pupils with high levels of SEN/D at DRIS and asked how sustainability would be ensured. It was confirmed that the school was pursuing historical unpaid out of borough funding for two pupils, which was complicated by lack of accountability and poor record keeping. It was noted that the matter needed to be resolved before the year-end audit and that consideration may need to be given to seeking legal advice. **CS to action.**
- 8.2.5 In response to a question from a Director about the overall Trust deficit, it was explained that this had, in part, been intentionally generated to use restricted reserves (pupil premium) held by some schools which should have been used in earlier accounting periods, at a time before they were part of TSPT. Directors were concerned to ensure that pupil premium income was appropriately spent in the correct timeframe. It was confirmed that pupil premium reviews had been undertaken at all schools, targets had been set and that all funding would be accounted for at the end of the year. Other causes of the deficit were understood and included significant projects (eg new fencing at HPS, which used some long held but unused reserves) and unbudgeted salary increases.

**8.3 Consider and approve any spend requests over £20,000:  
Trust-wide play project- storage spend request**

- 8.3.1 Directors were referred to the proposal to install outbuildings for storage of equipment for the Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) project across the Trust (appendix 27). The following questions were asked:

Q: What were the 'loose parts' which would be stored in the sheds?

A: Tyres, ropes and recycled objects used for play.

Q: What were the academic benefits of outdoor play and learning?

A: These mainly related to the development of speech and language through immersion in outdoor play in all weathers throughout the year. Speech and language underpinned reading and writing. Staff had been trained in how to facilitate effective play. Most resources would be sourced from charities or through donations, the only cost would be for storage for equipment and appropriate clothing (pupils' own waterproofs and wellies).

Q: Why would there be three sheds at HPS?

A: There was a consistent ratio of sheds to pupils across the Trust (1:200). DRIS was an

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outlier because it didn't need a large shed but it had not been cost effective to buy a smaller one.

Q: What was the risk of the sheds not being used, for example, due to lack of donations?

A: The Trust had already received commitments for donations.

Q: Did all the sheds have to be bought at the same time?

A: Yes, to achieve economies of scale.

8.3.2 Directors were informed that one member of the SLT at each school would be a designated 'OPAL driver', with objectives relating to SIP targets. Most costs would be up-front, apart from staff costs, which would be on-going.

8.3.3 The request was approved by Directors, subject to:

- confirmation of the insurance arrangements for equipment and pupils' belongings stored in sheds

- annual updates to FARCO on the effectiveness of the whole OPAL project. **KC to update Business Planner.**

#### **8.4 Estates management update**

8.4.1 Directors noted that consideration had been given to devising a long-term plan to ensure that premises were monitored in accordance with the estate management tool released by the government.

8.4.2 In response to a question from Directors as to whether there were any concerns relating to asbestos, it was confirmed that all schools had completed the national asbestos survey, that asbestos was included in periodic health and safety inspections and that the issue was managed. All schools joining the Trust had provided an asbestos report and none had indicated any significant concerns

#### **8.5 TPST Key Issues update**

8.5.1 Directors reviewed the updated Schedule of Key Issues (appendix 28) and asked how staff absence was monitored. It was confirmed that the software had not been consistently used across the Trust, that staff training had been undertaken and that the matter was closely monitored by the HR Committee.

### **9. Report from ACC**

#### **9.1 Overview of key issues, incl review of summary report on KS2 Outcomes July 2018**

9.1.1 This matter had been covered under minute 7.1.

### **10. Safeguarding**

10.1 It was confirmed that

- all staff had received the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education document
- all staff, including TSPT central staff, had received safeguarding training.

10.2 Safeguarding reviews would be undertaken at all schools in early October 2018. The roll-out of the electronic safeguarding system had been staggered and was in place at some schools. A report would be provided at the next meeting. **JB to action.**

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**11. Health and Safety Update**

11.1 This item had been discussed under minute 8.4.

**12. Policies**

**12.1 Accounting policies**

**12.1.1** The attention of Directors was drawn to the requirement to approve the Accounting Policies (appendix 29) which would be used in the preparation of the annual accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The CFO confirmed that an increase in 2017/18 of capitalisation limits from £1k to £5k for individual assets and from £3k to £10k for grouped purchases would be appropriate. Directors approved this change and that all other existing accounting policies should continue. The accounting policies and scheme of delegation would be updated accordingly.  
**CS to action.**

**12.2 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

**12.2.1** It was confirmed that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (appendix 30) had been updated in line with KCISE 2018 and following review by the Trust Safeguarding Lead. Directors noted that the designated person for LAC and previously LAC must be a teacher and accordingly arrangements at one school had been changed.

**12.2.2** Contact details would be added for all Lead Safeguarding Officers. **VB to action.**

**12.2.3** Directors were concerned to ensure that the number of Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Officers in schools did not give rise to inconsistency. It was confirmed that this was not the case and that more than one officer was required to ensure cover in school at all times.

**12.3 Loss and Bereavement guidance**

**12.3.1** Directors agreed that the loss and bereavement guidance (appendix 31) which had been circulated for information, was a very useful resource.

**13. AOB and date of next meeting**

**13.1** The meeting closed at 9:20pm. The next meeting would be held on Thursday 7th December 2018 at 7:00pm at HPS, followed by drinks at The George.

Signed: ..... Date:.....  
Clive Lees, Chair of Directors

Minutes might be confidential for the following reasons:-

- a) information relating to an employee or office holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office, or a pupil or their family;
- b) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;

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- c) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Trust and its employees;
- d) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Trust;
- e) action being taken to prevent or detect crime to prosecute offenders;
- f) the source of information given to the Trust in confidence; or
- g) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Trust's functions.