

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes (incl confidential minutes) of a meeting of the Directors held at
Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 8th February 2018

Present:

Mr C Lees (Chair)
Dr I Raitt
Mr J Cliff
Mrs J Brinkley (CEO)
Miss R Punter (from minute 4)
Mrs C Cousins
Mrs B Simpson (from minute 5)
Mr R Taylor (from minute 5)
Mrs M Brighty

In attendance:

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

Clerk:

Miss K Crossley

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from P Verghese.
- 1.2 Directors were satisfied with the reasons given for absence, and accepted the apologies.
- 1.3 The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary interests were declared.

3. Board Business

- 3.1 The following changes to Board and Committee membership (appendix 1) were noted:
 - S Nagappan had resigned as a Director due to increased work commitments
 - G Monaghan had resigned as a Local Committee member at HPS
 - K Patel had resigned as a Local Committee member at SMCPA
- 3.2 On the recommendation of the Local Committee Chair, Directors approved the renewal D Cartwright's term of office for a further four years from 13th March 2018. The appointment of S Balabaskaran and S Hunt as Local Committee members at MPS was approved.
- 3.3 Recruitment at Board and Local Committee level was underway to fill the recent vacancies.
- 3.4 The terms of office of all Directors were noted.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

- 4.1 The minutes, confidential and highly confidential minutes of the meeting of 7th December 2017 (appendix 2) were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.
- 4.2 Directors were referred to the matters arising report (appendix 3) detailing actions which had been completed and the status of outstanding actions as follows:
- 4.3 *6.7, 4.7, 8.3 GDPR planning*
- 4.3.1 Directors asked whether the Trust would be able to demonstrate compliance with GDPR before the requirement came into effect in May 2018. The following was reported:
 - A timetable for compliance had been set out based on advice from an external consultant, and information had been received as to the level of detail required.

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- An audit had been completed in preparation for mapping processes and an action plan had been drawn up on the processing of data relating to pupils, parents and staff.
 - A working party had been established, with representatives from each school as well as the Trust Services Manager (TSM) and a member of the HR team to cover all data streams.
 - Careful consideration was being given to the appointment of a Data Protection Officer. Knowledge of data protection legislation, independence from the data processing process and authority over senior leaders were key specifications of the role, and it had not yet been determined whether the role would be outsourced or covered internally. Outsourcing was expected to be affordable, and final costings were awaited.
- 4.3.2 The Trust recognised that further research and work was still to be undertaken, but was confident that it would be able to demonstrate that sufficient progress towards compliance before the requirement came into effect. There was still a lack authoritative guidance on the more detailed aspects of GDPR requirements which meant that actions could not be completed at the present time. An example of this was the lack of official advice for how long data on former pupils should be retained. In response to a question, it was confirmed that GDPR processes and procedures would initially be paper-based, but that the Trust was keen to move to software when finance and capacity allowed.
- 4.3.3 Directors were satisfied with the outline received on progress to date, and requested a further update at the next meeting. **VB to action.**
- 4.4 This minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 11.1.
- 4.5 *6.4 Inspections at HPS and MPS*
Directors were advised that the Challenge Partners review at HPS had involved a broad review of teaching and learning, whereas the Ofsted inspection had identified one narrow aspect of concern: spelling and grammar of boys in the middle prior attainment group. This was a national issue related to changes to primary assessment. The issue was included in the school improvement plan, and progress had been seen during CEO monitoring visits.
- 5. Chair's report**
- 5.1 Directors were referred to the Chair's report (appendix 4) and asked whether the Trust was satisfied that rapid improvement was being made at CPS. It was confirmed that a fair assessment would still be 'Requires Improvement' due to inconsistency in standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Steps were being taken to drive improvement; there were pockets of good teaching and learning. Behaviour and attendance had improved through the family worker and the attendance officer as well as the opening of the nurture room. The overall picture was one of improvement. The senior leadership team was strong and would be rated 'Good' against some criteria. In response to a question, Directors were advised that it was difficult to characterise the rate of improvement, but that progress was as rapid as possible, given the challenges faced by the school.
- 5.2 Directors were updated on challenging circumstances at LPS, where staff had been devastated by the recent sudden death of a long serving and much-loved member of staff. The remainder of this minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 11.2.

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6. Trust Development

6.1 CEO Report (appendices 5-13)

6.1.1 Consideration of the Strategic and Annual Business Plans and progress towards targets therein

This minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 11.3.

6.1.2 KPI data for all schools

This minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 11.4.

6.1.3 Report on the implementation of the Supporting Pupils with a Medical Condition Policy

In response to a question from Directors as to whether the Trust was comfortable that the detailed requirements of the Supporting Pupils with a Medical Condition policy were being met at all schools, the CEO confirmed that all Headteachers would be asked to review procedures and confirm that they were in accordance with the Policy. **VB to action.**

6.2 Operations Report

6.2.1 Critical Issues Update

6.2.1.1 It was agreed that the need to provide a summary of assessment and other data would be added to the Critical Issues Report (appendix 15). **Clerk to action.**

6.2.1.2 This minute was considered confidential, see confidential minute 11.5.

6.2.1.3 Directors discussed concerns about the quality of the written HR Grievance Procedures and advice from Liberata which had been identified during the course of recent panel hearings. Procedures required revision, and it was felt that decisions to initiate formal proceedings had been taken in haste in some cases, with no attempt to resolve matters locally as management issues. It was suggested that provision could be made for local cases to be reviewed internally (for example, with the involvement of a senior leader from another member school) before resorting to formal proceedings. In the event of formal proceedings being unavoidable, it was suggested that consideration should be given to populating panels from senior or middle management staff, rather than from governance structures if the HR Procedures allowed for this. It was reported that consideration was being given to how best to ensure all types of hearing were conducted appropriately, including training for relevant Trust staff. **VB to action.**

7. Safeguarding

7.1 Directors noted the high number of child protection plans and associated workload at LPS, MPS and SMCPA, and asked whether there would be sufficient oversight of safeguarding under the EHT structure from September 2018. It was acknowledged that the safeguarding risk was high in this cluster of schools, and would be mitigated by the appointment of Deputy Safeguarding Leads in all schools and a Trust Safeguarding Lead. **JB to action.**

7.2 Directors requested that consideration be given to a trust-wide review of the organisation, safeguarding and oversight of on-site after-school clubs. **JB to action.** A discussion followed on how the Trust discharged its responsibility for the safeguarding and progress of pupils educated off-site, and it was agreed that this was to be explored further at the next meeting. **KC to action.**

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- 7.3 It was suggested that a disclaimer be added to clarify that the circulation of flyers for holiday clubs and after-school activities to parents was for information purposes only and did not constitute a recommendation from schools. **VB to action.**
- 8. Policies**
- 8.1 Allegations Made Against Staff and Volunteers Policy**
- 8.1.1 The Allegations Made Against Staff and Volunteers Policy (appendix 16) was approved.
- 8.2 Accessibility Policy**
- 8.2.1 The Accessibility Policy (appendix 17) was approved.
- 8.3 EYFS Policy**
- 8.3.1 In response to questions from Directors, it was confirmed that the EYFS Policy (appendix 18) had been updated in line with the new framework, and compliance with the policy was monitored by school visits. The policy was approved.
- 8.4 Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**
- 8.4.1 Directors were informed that the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (appendix 19) had been cross-checked against the latest guidance for accuracy. The policy was approved.
- 8.5 Communications Policy**
- 8.5.1 The Communications Policy (appendix 20) was approved, subject to:
- standardisation of the use of 'parents' and 'parents/carers'
 - addition of a paragraph heading entitled 'Unacceptable Communications' to protect pupils and staff from malicious comments on social media.
- 8.6 Admissions Policies 2018/19 and 2019/20**
- 8.6.1 The review of the Admissions Policies for 2018/19 and 2019/20 had been delegated to a group of Directors, which had approved both policies on 15th December 2017.
- 9 Contracts**
- 9.1 IT contract**
- 9.1.1 Directors were referred to the IT tender report and appendices (appendix 21), including the recommendation, following completion of a full, compliant tender process, to award a three-year IT support contract to Platform 365 at a cost of £171,660. It was explained that the tendering of the support contract had been prioritised as there was an urgent need to improve support services at four of the six member schools. A discussion followed on the sensitivity of the outcome to the weighting of the criteria, and it was confirmed that the panel's unanimous decision after having attended the pitches aligned with the scorecard assessment.
- 9.1.2 Directors expressed concern that the proposed IT support contract made no reference to an over-arching IT strategy.. As such, Directors postponed making a decision regarding the IT support contract until there was greater clarity regarding how an IT strategy would be developed and implemented. Directors noted that the IT support provider (possibly Platform 365) should not be involved in the internal development of the strategy as this could give rise to a conflict of interest. The strategy needed to be devised by TSPT with help from the retained IT consultant and implemented by the provider.

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- 9.1.3 It was agreed that the situation would be reviewed urgently in order that day-to-day IT support services could continue to be supplied. **CS & VB to action.**

9.2 Catering contract

- 9.2.1 Directors were referred to catering tender report (appendix 22), which included a recommendation to award the contract to Olive Dining at a cost of c£190k (£2.08 per pupil), based on an estimated uptake of 30%. The recommendation was accepted. Directors requested that uptake data be collated and monitored. **VB to action.**

10. AOB and date of next meeting

- 10.1 The meeting closed at 10pm.
- 10.2 The date of the next meeting would be confirmed as soon as possible.

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;
- 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.

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