

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

Present:

Mr C Lees, Chair
Mr R Taylor, Vice Chair
Mrs J Covill
Mr I Raitt
Mr K Colville
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO/EHT
Mrs J Nelson
Mrs B Simpson

In attendance:

Mrs K Partridge, Trust Business Manager
Mrs C Sheehan, Trust Finance Manager
Mr N Vitarana, HPS Headteacher
Mr A Lowing, SMCPA Headteacher

Clerk:

Mrs V Bolton

1. Apologies for absence, acceptance of absence, absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from J Tagg, K Arnold and M Gibbs.
- 1.2 It was noted that N Holland had recently resigned as a Director due to time constraints. The Directors thanked N Holland for all he had done for HPS and the Trust, and specifically for his role as Chair of FARCO.

2. Pecuniary interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary interests were declared.
- 2.2 A potential conflict of interest regarding minute 6.17 was declared and is recorded in the confidential minutes.

3. Minutes from the Board meeting held on 8th Dec 2015

- 3.1 The minutes from the meeting of the Directors on the 8th December were approved by the Board and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 The Directors were referred to the matters arising report (see Appendix 4) and discussed the following points:-
- 4.2 *4.3,7.6 School Financial Values Standard*
This exercise will be completed at a convenient time for the FM. **CS to action.**
- 4.3 *4.4,7.20 Stakeholder feedback*
The Directors were provided with an update of the recent parent surveys carried out at the parents evenings at each school. At SMCPA 98% of parents agreed that the school was well lead and managed. 82% of parents reported that bullying was dealt with well. In response to this statistic the school have introduced a new PHSE education system and 'talk' boxes have been set up in each classroom for pupils to raise any concerns anonymously. As a result of parents requesting more information about how their children are progressing the school have introduced half termly reports. The response rate at SMCPA was thought to be considerably more than 50%. It is anticipated that responses in future parent surveys will be able to be compared and that it is reasonable to expect that improvements will be made.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

At HPS 100% of parents reported that their child felt happy and safe. The school reported that improvements had been noted between the Dec 14 and Dec 15 parent surveys. One of the key issues highlighted at HPS was the high number (43%) of 'don't know' responses regarding how well bullying is dealt with in the school. This is due in part to parents not having an opinion as their child had not been affected. In order to increase awareness of anti-bullying measures in place at the school, information has been shared with parents in the newsletter, posters have been put up around the school and anti-bullying workshops have been arranged. The school have also carried out a parent consultation session as a result of the responses to the question about the level and amount of homework set.

4.4 *6.12 Trust Vision statement*

It was stated that a Vision and Values workshop is taking place with staff, governors and Directors from across the Trust. The purpose of this workshop is to unpick the value statements in order to create a cohesive vision statement for the Trust. This workshop is also expected to benefit communication across the Trust and development of relationships.

4.5 *6.27 Training of external staff*

It was confirmed that suppliers working at HPS, specifically sports staff, had received the appropriate training for dealing with pupils displaying challenging behaviour which was one of the key recommendations of the recent report concerning a serious safeguarding incident that occurred at another school.

4.6 *6.3,4.6 Trust Board assessment*

The possibility of external assessment will be revisited in the summer term. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to delay any external assessment until the new schools have joined the Trust. **CL to action.**

4.7 All other items had been completed or were covered during the meeting.

5. Chairs Report and Commentary on agenda

5.1 The Directors were referred to the Chairs report and commentary on agenda (see Appendix 5) and no questions were raised.

6. Trust Development

6a) EHT Report

6.1 The Directors were referred to the EHT Report (see Appendix 6) and were asked to consider whether there was any reason to not proceed with the acceptance of school C and school D into the Trust in order to continue with the due diligence process.

6.2 It was confirmed that school D had just completed a section 8 Ofsted inspection and had continued to be awarded a 'good' grading. It was stated that the introduction of a progress and attainment tracking system had contributed to the successful inspection, and the HMIs specifically acknowledged the input from staff across the Trust and the visible benefits of the infrastructure of the MAT such as the impact of strong leadership and the collaboration of the schools. The Directors congratulated the CEO/EHT and other staff members on this impressive achievement and thanked all involved for their hard work.

6.3 The Directors were informed that the Headteacher of school C had announced his retirement from September. A final due diligence meeting with the school would take place

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

later in the week and it was stated that the school and governing body are assessing what the impact would be on the progress of their pupils as a result of joining the Trust. It was confirmed that the Regional Schools Commissioner had agreed to school C joining the Trust. It was agreed that communication would continue with the staff and governors of school C in order to allay any concerns.

- 6.4 A discussion took place on the proposed 6% GAG contribution from all member schools. The Trust Business and Finance Managers had worked closely with school C on their budget forecast in order to make the allocated contribution affordable. The breakdown of this budget and how the 6% contribution will be funded will be brought for discussion at the next FARCO meeting. **CS to action.**
- 6.5 The Directors sought the views of the Headteachers of the existing member schools about the 6% contribution and were informed that the financial benefits of the MAT are understood, particularly in the current climate of continued reductions in primary school funding. It was stated that the percentage of GAG contribution would continue to be assessed by the Directors if the Trust expanded further in future and therefore this figure would likely reduce.
- 6.6 It was confirmed that the GAG contribution would cover the core costs of running the Trust which would include the following:-
- salaries for the CEO/EHT, Business Manager, Finance Manager and clerking services;
- future due diligence costs;
- audit fees;
- marketing;
- trustwide behaviour services.
Additional income would be generated by the CEO/EHT as a result of supporting other non-SPT schools in the future and the behaviour/outreach services if capacity available.
- 6.7 It was requested that further clarification regarding how staff salaries would be covered/charged when working across member schools be brought for discussion at the next meeting of FARCO. **CS to action.**
- 6.8 It was suggested that the scheduling of the FARCO meetings for next term may need to be considered to ensure the necessary financial discussions relating to the expansion of the Trust can be covered at the appropriate time. **RT to action.**
- 6.9 It was confirmed that current TSPT schools, school C and school D would be full in EYFS from September and that this situation would be likely to continue (pupil numbers are critical to financial stability).
- 6.10 The Directors enquired whether the core Trust staff would have the capacity to take on an additional new member school within the next academic year and were informed that this would be determined by the systems in place at the potential new member school and how much administrative support the school would require. The central Trust structure would continue to develop over time to ensure that capacity be made available. It was highlighted that the capacity of the Headteachers would also need to be considered, again depending on the level of support required by the potential new school.
- 6.11 A discussion took place on the longer term growth of the Trust and whether potential new member schools from other local boroughs could be considered. The EHT advised that preliminary discussions had been held with two further schools which may wish to join in September 2016.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

- 6.12 The Directors were referred to the costs associated with the admittance of school C and D into the Trust (see Appendix 6a)B) and it was confirmed that the total cost for the completion of the due diligence process at school C would be approximately £8,000 and would include an external financial due diligence assessment. It was stated that there would be no costs for the financial due diligence process at school D as it would be covered by the commercial transfer agreement as part of the academy conversion process. The Directors were informed that £6,000 of funding is available from the original MAT start-up grant and that an additional £10,000 of funding had been received by the Trust from the DfE to assist with expenses associated with the academy conversion and related MAT costs. The Directors approved the transfer of the £6,000 start-up funds from the HPS account to the Trust account. It was requested that the details of the DfE funding contribution be analysed by a Director. **KC to action.**
- 6.13 The Directors discussed the due diligence questionnaire (see Appendix 6a)C) which had been provided by the legal advisers VWV. It was confirmed that this scheme did not include detail on improvements in Teaching & Learning or full financial probity. The latter would be covered by the external financial due diligence report as stated above.
- 6.14 The Directors approved the decision to continue with the due diligence process at a cost of £8,000, subject to the parents and stakeholders of all schools being fully involved and informed. **JB to action.**
- 6b) Strategy**
- 6.15 The Directors were referred to the SMCPA strategic intention and aspiration document (see Appendix 6b)ii) which detailed how it is important for the school to secure a 'good' rating and to go on to have ambitions to achieve 'outstanding'.
- 6.16 The school and the LA are continuing to consider the possibility of expanding to a 2 form entry (fe) school, and eventually 3fe although it has been acknowledged that space would be an issue in the current premises. It was stated that the LA had considered the possibility of redeveloping some of the land neighbouring the site to assist with expansion plans. Discussions had taken place at the recent LGB meeting on the possibility of expansion and the governors had supported the concept but had requested confirmation from the LA that there is a need for a larger intake in the area. The Directors agreed that the options regarding expansion continue to be explored.
- 6.17 This item was deemed to be confidential.
- 6.18 It was stated that a school strategic intention document in the format supplied by SMCPA would be supplied by HPS at the next meeting of the Board. **NV to action.**
It was agreed that each Trust member school would be required to produce such a document in time.
- 6.19 The Directors were informed that a very successful Challenge Partners visit (led by a currently serving lead Ofsted inspector) had recently taken place at HPS and the school had received an 'outstanding' report which focussed on the effectiveness of the school leadership and the staff working as a team. Computing had been identified as an area of excellence. The Directors congratulated the school and thanked all staff for their hard work and commitment.
- 6c) Report from ACC**
- 6.20 The Directors were referred to the spring term ACC report (see Appendix 6c) and no questions were asked. It was stated that ACC visits had taken place at each school and that the attendees had reported noticeable progress at both schools.

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

- 6.21 In the summer term the committee will focus on enrichment – including music, RE and PE provision. A PE review had taken place at HPS and the same process will be undertaken at SMCPA. This review considered how the PE grant received by the school had been used to improve the teaching and performance in PE. There is strong participation in PE events by both schools.
- 6.22 The committee will continue to monitor the schools effectiveness at ‘closing the gaps’. Both schools were thanked for the significant amount of work put towards the successful phasing in of new assessment procedures.
- 6.23 It was suggested that the schools could consider further promotion of their performance. It is anticipated that this could be achieved by the increased use of social media platforms such as twitter.

6d) Report from FARCO

- 6.24 The Directors were referred to the spring term FARCO report (see Appendix 6d). The decision to cancel the outstanding invoice for £43,540.91 from HPS to SMCPA was approved (see Appendix 6d)i for full information).
- 6.25 A discussion took place on the reports written by the CEO/EHT and a Director regarding the previously identified budgeting difficulties (see Appendix 6d)ii). It was confirmed that while the auditors provide a ‘check’ of financial systems, the Directors are ultimately responsible for ensuring that adequate controls are in place. It was suggested that the Directors respond to the point raised regarding the level of challenge provided by Directors, whether this had been addressed and, if not, what plans are in place in order to address it. This will be discussed at the next FARCO meeting. **RT to action.**
- 6.26 It was confirmed that there had been significant improvements in financial controls and budgeting software reporting over the past 6-12 months. It was stated that the software in place can expand to cover more schools although there are limitations in consolidating reports. The Directors enquired whether improvements to the software could be considered as part of the cost of the expansion of the Trust but were informed that the software upgrade would not be financially viable. It was confirmed that schools C and D are comfortable with the reports produced by the current system.
- 6.27 The Directors were referred to the virement requests (see Appendix 6d)iii) totaling £27,880 at HPS and £14,180 at SMCPA, and approved the requests. It was suggested that the Trust consider the requirements regarding approval of virements and whether the approval limits could be amended going forward. The requirements will be researched and brought for consideration at the next FARCO meeting. **CS to action.**
- 6.28 The consolidated financial reports were considered (see Appendix 6d)iv). It was stated that consultancy income was made up of the CEO/EHT carrying out lead Ofsted inspections and working at school D as well as outsourcing behavioural specialist services. It was agreed that a discussion would take place at the next FARCO meeting regarding being able to ensure the Trust schools can operate within the restraints of the reserves policy. **CS to action.**
- 6.29 The Directors requested that discussions take place at FARCO regarding maximising use of school generated income within the current academic year for the benefit of the pupils. The March management accounts and proposed profit will be brought for the attention of the committee. **CS to action.**

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

- 6.30 The Directors commented on the strong internal audit recently conducted but requested that the auditors be reminded of the format requested by the committee for the internal audit report. **CS to action.**
- 6.31 The Directors thanked the FM for the quality of the reports provided and for the hard work put in to improving the financial controls within the Trust.
- 6e) Considering and approving any spend requests over £20,000**
- 6.32 There were no spend requests to consider.
- 6f) Review Risk Register items**
- 6.33 The Directors were referred to the relevant risk register items (see Appendix 6f) and no changes were requested. It was suggested that the expansion of the Trust would impact upon the register and that this area be considered as part of the due diligence process. It was recommended that a working party be formed to consider revising the risk register once schools C and D have joined the Trust. **KP/CL to action.**
- 7. Administration**
- 7a) Committee membership update inc appt of Colm Lonergan as governor at SMCPA**
- 7.1 The committee membership document (see Appendix 7a) was approved. It was noted that R Taylor (Vice Chair of FARCO) would Chair the committee for the remainder of the year following the resignation of N Holland. C Lees would join FARCO in the short term.
- 7b) Governance Arrangements Document**
- 7.2 The Directors were referred to and approved the suggested amendments to the Governance Arrangements document (see Appendix 7b) and were informed that this document would be referred to as the Scheme of Delegation (SoD) from this point forwards.
- 7c) Director Training and CPD**
- 7.3 The training and CPD log of activity was discussed (see Appendix 7c). The Chair reminded Directors of the suggested training requirements circulated earlier in the school year. It was highlighted that all Directors are able to access Modern Governor for the year which provides many useful short online training modules.
- 7d) Policy list**
- 7.4 The Directors were referred to the policy list (see Appendix 7d) and thanked the LGBs for their work on getting the policies up to date across the Trust. The following points were noted:-
- a staff code of conduct will be introduced at SMCPA with input from VVV. **KP to action.** It was questioned whether a Trustwide code of conduct may be able to be created going forward. **KP to action.**
 - consideration will be given to drawing a clearer distinction between a 'policy' for which the Directors are responsible and 'procedures' for implementing the policy. **VB to action.**
- 7.5 It was stated that the Business Continuity Plans will be revised and brought for discussion at the next meeting of the Board. **KP to action.**
- 8. Reports from LGBs**
- 8a) Report from SMCPA LGB**

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

- 8.1 The SMCPA LGB report was discussed (see Appendix 8a) and the LGB were commended on their robust challenge, participation and discussion on the schools strategic documents.

8b) Report from HPS LGB

- 8.2 The HPS LGB report was discussed (see Appendix 8b) and the Directors were informed that plans are in place to consult stakeholders on parent, pupil and community issues.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the report would be amended to clarify the references to PP6 pupils in connection with bullying and attendance data. It was confirmed that attendance and persistent absence data and trends are assessed regularly by the LGBs and form part of the Headteachers report for each school. **KA to action.**
- 8.4 It was confirmed that the Inspection Dashboard documents had been published online for both schools. Directors were advised that these documents are compiled using computer generated statements. These documents will be circulated to the Directors for information. **CL to action.**

9. Policy approval

- 9.1 The Directors were referred to the final version of the Admissions Policy 2017-18 which had previously been approved via email (see Appendix 9) and subsequently submitted to the LA. Further consultable changes would be considered in the autumn term relating to the admissions policy for 2018-19. **CL to action.**
- 9.2 It was confirmed that a trustwide ICT Security policy was being developed which would be brought for discussion and approval at the next FARCO meeting. It was requested that the effectiveness of the security systems in place be assessed as part of this policy development, as well as issues such as use of LGfL email addresses by Directors and Governors, and cloud storage. **JB to action.**
- 9.3 The Directors were referred to the newly compiled trustwide HR policy which lists the LA HR procedures followed by the Trust and details any deviations from these guidelines. The Directors approved the HR policy.
- 9.4 It was suggested that a schedule of policy compliance be drawn up to allow new member schools to prioritise their compliance with Trust policies as soon as possible. **VB/JB to action.**

10. LGB / Director School visits

- 10.1 The Directors were referred to the visit reports (see Appendices 10 – 10b) regarding safeguarding and attendance. It was confirmed by the Headteacher that the single central register at HPS is up to date and that this area had been monitored as part of a recent governor visit.
- 10.2 The Directors enquired about the process of safer recruitment for cover staff and were informed that a process is now in place where agencies are added to a pre-approved list if they meet the necessary criteria and a due diligence process is completed for any new supply agencies.

11. Safeguarding: update on significant issues or those not dealt with at LGBs

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

- 11.1 The Directors were informed that there had been an increase in CAF work at SMCPA which had led to a more effective safeguarding approach across the school. Temporary family worker support had been brought in which would lead to a permanent role from September.
- 11.2 A discussion took place on the need to provide external support for employees regularly dealing with harrowing situations. Research had started on providing a trustwide counselling package and costings were being sourced. **KP to action.**

12. AOB and date of next meeting

- 12.1 The Directors were referred to the strategic intention document for SMC LGB (see Appendix 8a)i) and were informed that discussions would take place at a future point regarding the LGB/committee structure and remit but that the structure would remain as it stands until the next phase of Trust expansion had been completed.
- 12.2 The next meeting of the Trust Board will take place at 7pm on the 12th July 2016 at SMCPA.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed:
Clive Lees, Chair of Directors

Date:.....

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors
Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17th March 2016

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Minute 6.17

The Chairman declared a potential conflict of interest in that the following proposal to establish a new SEMH provision could impact on the business of Midfield Campus (Bromley Trust Academy's ('BTA') alternative provision) where the Chairman is retained as a self-employed contractor.

It was explained that there is an ongoing need in the community for SEMH places for children, particularly as the one unit available in the borough (Midfield Campus) is now at full capacity with longer term cases and there is no availability of spaces for children requiring short term assessments.

Ways to address this situation are being considered by the borough but it is likely that these solutions could take up to 2 years to establish. In the meantime schools across the borough do not have access to a centre for assessing SEMH needs of pupils who therefore continue to be expected to remain in mainstream education.

As a result of this long lead time and the pressing need, the Directors were referred to the report detailing the proposal to consider the possibility of the Trust establishing a new SEMH provision, independent of existing provision and separate to any proposals the Borough or BTA were considering (see Appendix 6b)ii). The location of any 'TSPT SEMH provision' would be determined by the EFA.

Directors were informed that this proposal is at a very early stage but it was requested that the possibility be kept under the consideration of the Trust. The agreement would be likely to be brokered between the Trust and the EFA, in effect sidestepping the LA. Funding would be received from the EFA at a rate of £10,000 per pupil. It is not yet known if there is a maximum cap applied to this funding but it was stated that the current EFA focus is on developing centres of this kind.

The Directors thanked Mr Lowing for the clear articulation of the proposal and agreed that this development could be considered a natural progression for SMCPA and that it should be beneficial to the children.

The Directors approved the proposal to pursue the preliminary exploration of the viability of the SEMH assessment Centre.

Signed:
Clive Lees, Chair of Directors

Date:.....