

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors**  
**Held at Hayes Primary School at 7.00pm on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

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**Present:**

Mrs J Nelson  
Mr C Lees  
Mr S Narracott (from minute 7.6)  
Mr N Holland  
Mrs A Bury  
Mrs B Simpson  
Mrs J Brinkley, Executive Headteacher  
Mr S Whittle  
Ms J Tagg  
Mr R Taylor (from minute 7.3)  
Mr K Colville

**In attendance:**

Mrs K Partridge, Trust Business Manager (until 7.6)  
Mrs C Sheehan, Trust Finance Manager (until 7.6)  
Mr A Lowing, Head of School SMCPA  
Mr N Vitarana, Head of School HPS

**Clerk:**

Mrs V Bolton

**1a) Appointment of Chair**

Nominations for the role of Chair were received for Clive Lees. The Directors approved this appointment for the academic year 2015-16.

**1b) Appointment of Vice Chair**

Nominations for the role of Vice Chair were received for Robert Taylor. The Directors approved this appointment for the academic year 2015-16.

**2. Apologies for absence, acceptance of absence, absence**

2.1 No apologies for absence were received and no absences were recorded.

**3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

3.1 No pecuniary interests were declared.

**4. Complete Pecuniary Interests Forms**

4.1 Pecuniary Interest forms were completed by all Directors and senior staff for the forthcoming year.

**5. Minutes from the Board meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**6. Matters Arising**

**6.1 3.5.5.4 Ofsted response teams**

It was confirmed that Ofsted are expected at HPS from March 2016 and at SMCPA within this academic year.

**6.2 3.6.9.2 Compliance with Equality Act**

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An equalities audit with an external adviser had taken place at HPS and the same process will be undertaken at SMCPA. A report on the findings of these audits will be brought to the next meeting of the Trust Board. **JB to action.**

6.3     *4.6 Trust Board self-assessment*

It was confirmed that external validation of Governance will be carried out in the spring term. **CL to action.**

6.4     *4.11 Directors Trust expansion working party*

A meeting of the working party will be scheduled within the next few weeks. **VB to action.**

6.5     *6.2 Skills audit*

This item is ongoing.

6.6     *6.4 NGA MAT 21 questions*

Reponses to the MAT 21 questions and the Academy 20 questions had been reviewed and appropriate action plans drawn up. Progress had already been made in some of the areas highlighted in the review.

6.7     *10.14 (meeting of 19.3.15) Trust Offer*

The Directors were informed that work had been carried out on a draft Trust communications strategy. Information on the Trust will be published on both school websites by half term and a closed Facebook page will be set up for Directors and senior leaders to facilitate the sharing of information about the Trust.

6.8     Directors were requested to send a short biography to the Clerk for publication on the Trust webpage. **All to action.**

6.9     The Directors were referred to the matters arising document and the commentary on the agenda (see Appendix 6 and 6a). All other matters arising had been completed.

**7.     Trust Development**

7.1     The Directors were referred to the minutes of the latest FARCO meeting (see Appendix 7di) and were provided with an update of committee activities. The financial year is being closed down for both schools. Quotes had been sourced for spend requests at both schools and maintenance work had taken place over the holidays. Potential contractors for the installation of a modular classroom at HPS will be considered at the next FARCO meeting. The final spend request for the construction of the classroom will be brought to the Trust Board for approval in the spring term.

7.2     It was stated that contracts are continuing to be considered across the Trust, for example, in the renewal of the catering and IT contracts to ensure value for money.

7.3     The Directors agreed the proposed accounting policies for the Trust for the year ending August 2105, as recommended by the auditors (see Appendix 7d.iv).

7.4     A lengthy discussion on the current financial position took place based on the draft income and expenditure report (see Appendix 7v). It was confirmed that both schools are currently in surplus and preparations are going well for the external audit process taking place next month. The Directors considered the issue of insufficient SEN funding and were informed that while applications have been made by SMCPA for banded funding the approval process for these applications can be very slow and frequently unsuccessful and this

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source of funding is therefore unreliable. The salary of the Behaviour Specialist is funded entirely by PPG at SMCPA although her services are sold to other schools. It was stated that it should not be the case that schools in a stronger financial position within the Trust are required to subsidise services for other member schools.

- 7.5 There is a notional SEN element in the GAG funding. Out of this, schools are required to pay the first £6000 towards any SEN child. Above and beyond this element, SENCO apply to LBB for banded funding. A percentage of the TAs salaries supporting these children is offset against the banded funding. No consultancy income is set off against SEN staff salaries. These are funded by GAG and proportionally by banded funding. Case studies are being prepared to enable the EHT to discuss, with the Executives and Councillors SEN group at the Borough, why obtaining banded funding is so difficult. The SMCPA budget indicates a deficit unless consultancy income is factored in. This is not an unusual situation for schools nationally. The Directors requested that this area would continue to be discussed going forward.
- 7.6 The Schools Financial Value Standard would be considered by the Trust and would be circulated for the attention of Directors when it is available. **CS to action.**
- 7.7 The Directors were referred to the EHT report and the supporting papers (see Appendix 7a) and were informed that a working party had been put together in order to consolidate strategic plans for the Trust. A schedule of THINK meetings had been circulated to provide an opportunity for governors, directors and SLT members to work together to develop these plans, amongst other things. The importance of having a structural, systematic approach to taking on a new school was discussed, although it was suggested that the Trust be conscious of not investing too much time in this area as the process would only need to be followed on a few occasions. It was stated that this process would provide an additional benefit to the existing Trust schools as it would ensure consistency in practices.
- 7.8 A discussion took place on the proposal from the EHT and the Pay and Performance committee (see sub appendix 7b) that the job title 'Head of School' be replaced with 'Headteacher' due to the nature of the roles currently being performed, the increased appeal for future new employees and the fact that certain procedures are specifically required to be carried out by a Headteacher rather than a Head of School. Any potential changes to the payscale as a result of this title change would not have any impact on the budget. The Directors approved this proposal with immediate effect.
- 7.9 The proposal for the job title of Executive Headteacher (EHT) to be replaced by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was discussed (see sub appendix 7e and f). It was suggested that this title would be less of an issue for potential new member schools, it reflects more accurately the role of managing the Trust and that the term CEO is increasingly being used within MATs. The Directors agreed that the title for this role should be changed from EHT to "CEO and EHT" in order to retain the connection with the role of 'teacher' but to allow the term CEO to be used when appropriate. The Directors requested that the changes to job titles and other developing terminology be explained to parents as part of the communications plan. **JB to action.**
- 7.10 The Trust Board discussed the issue of work/life balance and the need for this to be considered for all staff, including the CEO/EHT (see Appendix 7e.i). It was stated that work is being done on the staff wellbeing policy and that there are support mechanisms in place for staff such as occupational health services. It was suggested that the work/life balance of staff needs to be considered alongside the culture of the work environment. **JB to action.**

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- 7.11 It was confirmed that an asbestos report had been carried out at SMCPA and any remaining asbestos was found to be sealed and satisfactory. It was stated that the LA had agreed to fund the removal of any asbestos found as a result of future expansion of the school to two form entry.
- 7.12 The Directors were referred to the report on the Trust draft strategic plan (see Appendix 7b.i) and requested that a firm draft of the action plan of how the Trust will achieve the stated objectives (including cascading objectives down to the schools and the staff, with local needs of schools factored in) be brought for discussion at the next meeting of the Board. It was also requested that an overall strategic vision be defined. **JB to action.**
- 7.13 The idea of a fifth strategic intention for 'developing governance in order to support the Trust in its ambitious aims' was discussed (see Appendix 7b) and it was suggested that the ownership of this strategic intention be considered as the objectives set may not be able to be met by the CEO/EHT. **CL to action**
- 7.14 The Directors were referred to the minutes of the last ACC meeting (see Appendix 7c) and a summary was provided as follows:-
- SMCPA
- an increase of 67% was made in the EYFS Good Level of Development (GLD) score
  - 83% of KS1 pupils made expected progress
  - reading, writing and maths KS2 results were all above the national average
  - work is to be done on closing the gaps, but all indicators are very positive
- HPS
- 99% of pupils achieved level 4 or above at KS2
  - 79% achieved level 5 and 26% achieved level 6 in maths
  - 2 pupils achieved level 6 in reading
  - SPaG results were much improved on last year
  - 88% of pupils passed the Y1 phonics test and the EYFS GLD score was 84.4%
- 7.15 The Trust Board acknowledged the work and effort made by all staff at both schools in achieving these results, and the effective use of day to day interventions to improve pupil outcomes.
- 7.16 The Directors enquired whether the CEO/EHT was satisfied, and why, that the new curriculum is in place across the Trust. The CEO/EHT confirmed that both schools were following the new curriculum which was evidenced/known through reviewing lesson plans, looking at exercise books, talking to the headteachers and learning walks. The Directors also enquired whether the CEO/EHT was satisfied, and why, that both schools were ready to 'assess without levels'. The CEO/EHT confirmed that revised assessment methods had been planned for during the last year and were now being used. It was explained that target setting will be more difficult for schools this year and there will be a lot to learn from completing the first academic year without levels. All new assessment methods are based on Assessment for Learning (AfL) which is already fully embedded in both schools. The Chair of the Achievement and Curriculum committee also confirmed that that committee had also been considering both these issues over the last year.
- 7.17 The set-up of the new national curriculum was explained to Directors. Academies are free to choose the school's curriculum in addition to the national curriculum which allows local needs to be catered for. It was suggested that the structure of the curriculum be considered as part of the joining process of future member schools.

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- 7.18 The Board were informed of the increased importance of SMSC and British Values in the new Ofsted framework in all areas of schools. Prevent training had taken place at SMCPA and is due to take place at HPS this term.
- 7.19 The Directors were referred to the update from the Operational Review Group (ORG) (see Appendix 7e) and were informed that the ongoing action points are being addressed. A meeting of the ORG will take place at 4pm on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October at HPS.
- 7.20 It was suggested that a brief summary of parent/staff/pupil feedback could be provided as part of the EHT report in future in order to help Directors to be aware of stakeholders opinions. **JB to action.**

**8. Administration**

- 8.1 The Directors were referred to the revised committee membership list (see Appendix 8a) and were informed that Mrs Bury is to remain a member of FARCO for the rest of this term, and that Mr Narracott is stepping down as a Director but will assist the Audit committee until the 2014-15 accounts are signed off. The committee membership and structure and chairs were approved.
- 8.2 The Directors approved the default appointment of Mrs K Arnold and Mrs J Covill as Directors as the new Chairs of HPS and SMCPA LGB respectively.
- 8.3 The Directors approved the appointment of Dr I Raitt as a co-opted Director with immediate effect.
- 8.4 The Directors approved the re-appointment of Mrs V Bolton as Co. Secretary and Clerk to the Directors for the academic year.
- 8.5 A discussion took place on the issue of Director numbers across the committees and the fact that additional Trust schools may provide more Governors and Directors if necessary. It was noted that the Articles state a maximum of 10 Member Appointed Directors. While there is a general move in governance towards smaller Boards or FGBs it was also noted that it must be ensured that all necessary skill sets are covered at Director level. A discussion took place on the proposal of a new co-opted Director who could join ACC. This individual is known to two Directors and a headteacher. It was agreed that this proposal would be considered further. **BS to action.**
- 8.6 The Directors were referred to the revised Governance Arrangements document (see Appendix 8f) and the following points were made:-  
- minutes of Audit committee meetings should be circulated for the attention of Directors when available in order to comply with the new Audit terms of reference. **VB to action.**  
- it was agreed that the Pay and Performance committee (PPC) would continue to be referred to as such (as opposed to Pay and Staffing)  
- it was confirmed that the CEO/EHT Performance Management team had recently met and performed the PM of the CEO/EHT.
- 8.7 Directors were advised that the code of practice forms would be revised to include a reference to the seven Nolan principles and would then be circulated for all Directors to complete and return to the Clerk. **All to action.**

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8.8 The suggested training course list was circulated (see Appendix 8g) and all Directors were informed of the upcoming Bromley Governor Conference on the 14<sup>th</sup> November which would be beneficial to attend if possible. It was requested that all Directors make a record of any CPD undertaken, such as attending a course or reading relevant governance material etc, and notify the Clerk. **All to action.**

8.9 The Directors were referred to the risk register items report (see Appendix 8i) and no amendments were suggested. The highest risk identified relating to being a small Trust is being addressed by the intention to grow the Trust to 5 schools.

## **9. Reports from LGBs**

9.1 The Directors were referred to the minutes of the summer term SMCPA LGB meeting and the SMCPA key issues document (see Appendix 9a and 9b) and were informed that the school is behaviourally more stable and that the nurture provision is having a significant positive impact on pupil behaviour and outcomes.

9.2 The Directors were referred to the minutes of the summer term HPS LGB meeting and the HOS key issues document (see Appendix 9c and 9d) and were informed of the arrangements in place at the school with the BYMT and an external dance teacher. It was highlighted that due to the lengthy agendas for the LGB meetings it is often difficult to allow enough time to discuss parent, pupil and community areas. It was suggested that the ongoing management of these areas be considered by the new Chair of the LGB. **KA to action.**

9.3 The Directors thanked Mrs Bury and Mr Lees for their input over the past year as Chairs of LGBs.

## **10. LGB / Director School visits**

10.1 A discussion took place on the best way of carrying out governor visits in order to cover all areas in a way which does not place too many time demands on the schools. It was agreed that ACC visits would continue in the current format as they are also beneficial to the staff as a CPD opportunity. Areas such as compliance and financial probity can continue to be covered without too much disruption to pupils and teaching staff.

10.2 It was suggested that the management of Director input be considered as the Trust expands and it was requested that staff be made aware more regularly of Governor/Director input to both schools. **NV / AL to action.**

## **11. AOB and date of next meeting**

11.1 It was agreed by the Directors that the final adopted minutes of the Trust Board meetings would be published on the Trust page of the school websites from this point forward.

11.2 The Directors thanked Mr Narracott for his work as a Governor and a Director over many years including a period as Chair.

11.3 The Directors thanked Mrs Bury for her work as a Governor and a Director over recent years, in particular for taking on the role of Chair of HPS LGB. It was stated that Mrs Bury

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will remain a member of FARCO and the HPS LGB for the remainder of this term, and will then continue her role as a Governor at SMC LGB.

- 11.4 The Directors thanked Mrs Nelson for her enormous input over recent years as Chair of Governors and Chair of Directors. In particular Mrs Nelson was thanked for her outstanding commitment, dedication and knowledge.
- 11.5 The Directors were informed that an application is to be submitted for HPS to become a National Support School. Updates on this application will be provided to the Directors. **JB to action.**
- 11.6 The next meeting of the Trust Board will take place at 7pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at HPS.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

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

Date:.....