

The Spring Partnership Trust
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Members of the Spring Partnership Trust
held remotely via Webex at 6pm on Monday 12th July 2021

Present:

Mr J Cliff, Chair
Mr S Bhalla
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO
Mr S Narracott
Mrs J Nelson
Mr I Stealey

Clerk:

Miss K Lewis

1. Apologies for absence, constitution of the meeting

1.1 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mrs V Boaden. The meeting was quorate.

2. Pecuniary Interests and Register of Persons with Significant Control

2.1 There were no changes to the Register of Persons with Significant Control.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

3.1 Members ratified the approval of minutes of the AGM and Members' meeting of 25th January 2021 (appendix 1), which had previously been approved by email and uploaded to the Trust website.

3.2 All matters arising had been completed.

4. CEO Report including major strategic developments

4.1 Members agreed to accept a verbal report.

4.2 The CEO reported on the development of nursery provision over three school sites as part of the strategic aim to ensure financial sustainability. Numbers continued to be robust despite the challenges of the pandemic. The nursery that had been started during the pandemic had done well. Trustees would continue to look at developing this provision. Another benefit was the transfer of children from the nurseries to Reception.

4.3 Members congratulated the CEO on the success of this venture. The business model of 15 hours of nursery provision was explained which ensured that the nurseries were fully funded.

4.4 Another project was a holiday club being piloted at MPS. Separate funding had also been received from the borough to run a holiday club for disadvantaged pupils in the summer holidays for 40 children, who would be from MPS and SMCPA. This club was being run using the same model as for the Trust club.

4.5 The development and progress of local advisory councils (LACs) was discussed. The CEO had attended a number of LAC meetings. The councils were providing a good opportunity to work further with parents. Examples were working on securing funding and ways to develop an allotment and outside space and on the development of the music hub, which would link to wellbeing and mental health. It was felt that there was now more understanding of the role the LAC. However, there was still work to be done to improve communication on the role of Trustees and LACs were being encouraged to record questions to the Board at their meetings to ensure a flow of information. It was acknowledged that it was also important for Trustees to visit schools to raise their profile and to see firsthand how schools' function.

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- 4.6 A discussion took place on the 'Paws.b' curriculum for mental health and its progress, and how it was being implemented across the schools. As reported at the January meeting, 'Paws.b' had been paid for by a grant from a leading social housing provider which paid for one member of staff to manage mental health in a mindful way. A mental health and wellbeing Trust leader had been appointed who was an existing member of staff and had been practicing the techniques for some time. The aim was to embed these across schools.
- 4.7 Members asked if one a member of staff was enough. It was explained that the key was to improve the quality of teaching in this area. There would be some children who required referral to other agencies to deal with their specific needs. The recent restructure was taking the focus away from a family social care role which is the responsibility of these agencies, towards schools as educators and focusing resources on the pupils to ensure maximum impact.
- 4.8 Members asked how the Trust was intending to deal with a recent issue raised by parents. It was reported that the Chair and CEO were currently discussing a response to parents' questions.
- 4.9 Members were updated on the latest position on the DRIS/CPS merger. The legal work was under way and formal notification had been received from the Regional Schools Commissioner and Secretary of State to amalgamate. A local councilor had suggested the new name of Elmstead Woods Primary School which was felt to be entirely appropriate given the school's location. Parents were being notified and events arranged to mark the merger. The LAC had been involved. It was a calm and settled community.
- 4.10 The building work on the CPS site would be completed by the end of the summer holiday so there should be no disruption for the new term. The next phase of development would happen when the DRIS site had been sold. Years 4, 5 and 6 were small classes but the lower years were filling up.
- 4.11 A number of CIF bids had been successful and had provided substantial funding for school premises improvements.
- 4.12 KPI measurements were working well. The CEO reported on the Trust strategic aims and progress.
- 4.13 A Member had raised a number of questions in advance on the March Trustees meeting, one of which was Members having sight of the strategic plan. It was agreed that the CEO would circulate a copy. **JB to action.**
- 4.14 The Member had also referred to external scrutiny of academic data. It was explained that there was now less emphasis on data. While there would still be end of KS2 and end of Reception assessment, Ofsted's focus was on the quality of education – what the curriculum looks like and its impact – and would speak to subject leads and children. The Trust was therefore looking at rejoining Challenge Partners. It was asked if the Board felt that Challenge Partners would provide external scrutiny. The CEO confirmed that it would. Three schools were due Ofsted inspections.
- 4.15 There were no further questions under this item.

5. Review of Trust Board composition and governance

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- 5.1 Members were referred to the Board and Committee membership (appendix 2). It was a strong Board but unfortunately some directors were standing down. Kelly Hawker and Ruth Punter's terms were ending in September. Replacements were being sought with the relevant skills particularly in the areas of education, HR and finance.
- 5.2 LAC membership was noted.

6. Responses to questions raised by Members

- 6.1 A response to questions received in advance had been responded to under item 4. The Chair invited further questions.
- 6.2 It was asked whether anything would change for schools across the Trust on 19 July and the lifting of remaining restrictions. It was confirmed that this would be very near the end of term. However with cases rising, schools would continue to exercise every caution.

7. AOB and date of next meetings

- 7.1 There was no other business
- 7.2 The next meetings would be held on:
Monday 24th January 2022 at 6 pm at The Warren
Monday 11th July 2022 at 6 pm at the Warren
- 7.3 The meeting closed at 7.00 PM

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