

Coppice Primary Partnership
Meeting of the Trustee Board
Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 40pm
Via Zoom

Note: In the absence of a CEO/Trust Leader, Trustees are responsible for operational matters and this will be reflected in the Board Minutes.

Present: Carole Hardy (Chair of Trustee Board), Peggy Murphy (CEO Standards), John Edgar, Isabelle Linney-Drouet, Andrew Maitland

In attendance: Andrew Lacey (Trust Business Manager) Carina Cuddington (interim Accounting Officer)

Clerk: Emily Moon

Agenda item and discussion	Action/decision
1 Welcome and Apologies for absence CH welcomed all to this meeting. All present.	
2 Declaration of business interests 2.1 No new interests to declare. 2.2 Trustees confirmed they had received and accepted the CPP Code of Practice for governance, the trust Acceptable Use and Wi-Fi policies, and the GDPR governance privacy notice.	
3 Minutes of the last meeting (7 October 2020) and any matters arising 3.1 The minutes and confidential annex were agreed as accurate record of discussions and hard copies would be physically signed when circumstances allowed. 3.2 All actions from last meeting have been completed or are listed on the agenda for discussion.	EM
4 Appointment of Trust Staff <i>Update on Trust Leader</i> 4.1 CH confirmed that Mark Chatley is commencing employment with CPP on the first day after the Easter holidays. The first two terms up until September will be treated as familiarisation time to the Trust and the schools but we will send him background and reading material in January 2021. CH confirmed he would be joining the AGM to introduce himself. <i>Update on Senior Staff in Schools</i> 4.2 Anita Makey will be leaving the trust at the end of December. She has worked at LPS for well over 15 years and PM feels it would be nice for trustees to send a card and flowers as a thank you and good luck for the future. CH confirmed she already arranged to present a gift and flowers to her at the end of term assembly and CH will write a card on behalf of the trustees. 4.3 AM role will be replaced by a fourth assistant HT coming from a Tunbridge Wells school and will start in January 2021. SH decided that LPS will have 4 assistant HTs who will teach 2 days a week with 3 days leadership time. The replacement is extremely passionate about wellbeing which is something SH wishes to work on within LPS. 4.4 PM advised that one of the assistant HTs at LPS is pregnant, therefore will offer an interim post to one of the teacher's in the school to cover maternity leave.	
5 Strategic Direction <i>Trust Strategic document- update</i> <i>CEO termly report on curriculum and standards (verbal report)</i> 5.1 PM advised trustees of 2 options, being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry on as we are and wait for MC to start in April and take the trust forward how he wishes; or • Start to draw up a plan to hand over to MC. 	

5.2 PM feels that a recovery plan would be best commenced in April 2021 for both pupils and the staff, considering the ongoing effects of covid19 still taking place. PM asked trustees how they wished her to proceed.

Q. Has anyone spoken to MC about how he feels about it?

PM confirmed he hadn't been spoken to however PM feels MC may wish to come into something fresh for him to start work on, and the next two terms would most likely be dominated with dealing with covid19. CH also felt MC might not be in the position to pick up on the recovery plan immediately, as he needed to spend time focusing on the individual schools and where they are in terms of the curriculum.

5.3 CH queried whether Ofsted will be visiting schools and PM stated they had confirmed they would not be entering schools in January and thinks they won't be until Easter.

Q. Could PM create a strategic framework which gives MC starter but can apply his stamp

CH felt that we should be encouraging the HTs to have a break over the Christmas holiday and should be given time to return to school without loading more onto them in the first 2 weeks of term. Also come January there may be a spike in covid19 cases due to the mixing that is being allowed at Christmas so it will be a challenging time for the HTs. CH said that MC may feel that being asked to write a recovery plan as soon as he starts could be quite overwhelming so felt it best that if he had a framework that had already been discussed with the HTs, being a starting block for him.

5.4. PM confirmed she would commence work on this after February half term.

Feedback from Internal Review

5.5 PM had asked each of the HTs to put any of the SLT or curriculum staff in front of her and PM could quiz them on their plan going forward. PM confirmed that GM put their staff in front of her separately whereas PM and RP decide they would do so in a group. PM went through the main school improvement plans and picked out different things to ensure that both the SLT and middle leadership understood what was going on and confirmed HT were not allowed to speak. The areas of development were things they brought up in the discussion and were areas they decided they wanted to work on. PM confirmed:

CPS

Their strengths being:

- New initiatives being trialled in the school which showed teachers and subject leaders were safe to try new ideas. There were new initiatives around the 3 core areas - reading, writing and maths. PM said to them whether they have thought about using for a basis for research projects, as it helps other schools know what is going on, both those in the trust and those outside of it. CH reminded PM of CST and it being a good platform for this as they always welcomed these.
- There is excellent subject leadership and that should be celebrated and shared. The majority of subject leaders knew their subjects well and had a clear vision, as well as knew where their strengths and areas for developments were.
- The SLT work know the school well and well together.
- CPS was the only school who had a clear plan for using their covid catch-up fund. PM confirmed they are employing an extra teacher and asking whether teachers if they wish to do work clubs after school with kids they know and be paid for it.
- PM felt an obvious strength in the school was wellbeing of children and staff. Interventions are put into place for disadvantaged children, pupil premium and SEN children have interventions through nurture. PM particularly liked that staff are giving 30 minutes off a week to relax and catch up with colleagues.

Areas for development:

- Adding a TA to maths training.
- Developing an HLTA programme to ensure they are fully equipped to cover teachers.

- Where some subject teachers are not as strong as others, to use skilled leaders to coach and support them.
- Nurture – what does it mean to the school. This was an area that came up in all three schools.

LPS

Strengths:

- SLT could knowledgeably talk about responsibilities within the school.
- Pockets of excellence practice, such as subject shadowing, where a NQT1 was shadowing assistant HTs.
- LPS showed reflective practice within the school, whereby SH had initially stated they would be using the covid catch-up funding for Y6, however after reflecting on the data had decided they would use in YR and Y1.
- Introduction of the wellbeing was extremely successful. It was so successful they wish to do it every year which PM agreed that a non-curricular week for teachers to get to know the children would be great.

Areas for development:

- SH is aware she has been very operational and little coaching has taken place, so will focus on becoming more strategic and supporting her SLT team.
- Coaching culture focused with senior and strategic leadership team and PM feels it needs to be coaching more of the staff.
- Nurture and wellbeing needed a key development plan, however when PM asked them about nurture they all had different answers showing inconsistent understanding of nurture across the school.
- LPS has a brilliant curriculum overview but maths is not part of it and it should be and will be put into it.
- There was uncertainty on whether teachers were brave enough to follow pupil lead. With the recovery curriculum they need to follow, this will be a prime time to embrace this.
- There was an issue around de-escalation of behaviour within their improvement plan for lunchtime supervisors. However PM felt it should be for more and having debriefing sessions would be sensible and confirmed that there should be a formal policy around de-escalation.
- To write a covid catch-up plan.

SKPS

Strengths:

- They are very reflective and creative in their approach to curriculum learning.
- They have been undertaking subject leader shadowing in several areas which is an excellent way of training staff as is good for both the teacher learning and who is coaching.
- Wellbeing and mindfulness initiative is courageous; to have all children starting school in the morning and having freedom to do what they want as opposed to doing work straight away which has really helped children want to be in school. This demonstrates that they put children first.
- Leaders had an articulated understanding of their school and subject areas and team focused.

Areas of development:

- All leaders needed the same understanding initiative and development within the school.
- PM again felt that nurture and coaching needed focusing on to ensure all staff understand what coaching and nurture is.
- To complete covid catch-up plan.
- For SKPS to share with other schools.

<p>No, the catch up grant is based on £80 per pupil, which will be paid in three instalments. The schools had their first instalment in last month and the rest will come in during term 3 and 5. The new finance system allows us to mark this separately so it can be seen what these funds are spent on.</p> <p>6.6 ILD advised trustees that schools need to publish on their website how they have spent the covid catch-up fund. CH asked AL to speak to HTs to make them aware of this.</p> <p><i>School Strategic Plans (for info only)</i></p> <p>6.7 Trustees were provided with a copy of the school strategic plans prior to the TB meeting for their information.</p>	<p>AL</p>
<p>7 Policies and Key Documents</p> <p>7.1 Trustees had received and APPROVED the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Register • Safer Practice with Technology • Health & Safety Policy • Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy <p>7.2 CC discussed the Annual Report with trustees, who were provided with an electronic copy prior to the TB meeting. It has two elements to it being Financial Statements and Key Audit Findings. CC discussed each element being:</p> <p><u>Finance Statements</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reference and Admin details – CC asked trustees to confirm they are happy with these details. It was noted that SH was still listed as Head of School at CPS and needed amending. b) Trustees Report – very similar to last year but now has SKPS included. There are various references to covid19 through the report and how it has affected all areas for the trust. c) Governance Statement – this is a requirement and states how many meetings have been attended and if there is a good skillset across the trustees. d) Value for Money – the trust has completed a significant amount of value for money reviews over the year and are all listed. e) Impact of Covid19 – the outcome is much better than originally thought due to being able to furlough the wraparound care staff. The loss of income was therefore partially covered by this. Savings in utilities helped cover the additional hygiene costs incurred. f) Audit Report – this is a clean report and there were no areas of concern found by Kreston Reeves. g) Statement of Financial Activities – CC said these don't show much on the face of it, there being £15m income this year compared to £9m last year, where a lot of the income in 2019 was land and buildings at LPS and CPS. In 2020 this income would be land and buildings from SKPS therefore isn't physical income as such. h) Funds Note – this shows the income and expenditure which is relevant for trustees to note. i) Balance Sheet – this is really healthy with a net asset of £13m. CC asked trustees to note the tangible assets here, within the land and buildings there is a contentious issue with SKPS valuation, being valued at £8m, whereas CPS and LPS combined were £5m. KR thinks that SKPS is significantly overvalued, however the trust has third party evidence that this is what KCC had valued it, therefore the accounts can only reflect that. KR have included a statement here to state that it is felt that it has been overvalued, however this doesn't impact the trust operationally and has no effect on distributable reserves. j) Cash – The trust has significant cash of around £800k however will reduce over time as includes CiF project money received upfront, therefore cash is healthy across the trust. k) Funding at note 5 – this has increased significantly from last year due to being a three school trust now. Trustees to note the significant government funding from the job retention scheme, receiving £51k since March 2020. 	

<p>l) Note 6 on page 39 – here you can see the impact of covid19. Income from other trading activities shows £292k this year compared to last year of £336k. Considering we also had SKPS included in this year's figures, the reduction can clearly be seen here.</p> <p>m) Staff Costs – trustees to note that two members of staff are in the band over and above £60k per annum and have to disclose these. The trust also has to disclose key management personnel. As expected this has increased, however not as much as expected due to DW's salary not being incurred for 4 months. It is also noted that CC and PM received no benefits for their role from March to the end of August.</p> <p>n) Note 13 – CC advised trustees that a change has been made here to the copy they had previously received. It stated there were no central services provided by the trust in year which was the case in 2019 but not in 2020 so this has been changed to reflect the charges made during the year and what each school was contributing. CC will circulate the amended document to trustees after this meeting.</p> <p>o) Statement of Funds at Note 20 - CC told trustees to ignore the pension reserve, the trust has to note their element of deficit in the LGPS, being £2.8m. CC stated this would never come to fruition and wouldn't have to pay out these monies. General Funds and GAG are the figures trustees should note and are the trust's distributable reserves</p> <p>p) Total Funds Analysis – CC noted that there has been a change here at page 51. It previously showed the trust had £24k, however the savings made from the EHT salary were within LPS', so have reallocated to the trust reserves, so now shows as £59k, LPS as £180k, CPS has £78k and SKPS has £235K.</p> <p>q) Capital Commitments – this looks concerning at £828k however this in its entirety is being funded through CiF grants and CC asked KR to acknowledge this within the report.</p> <p>r) Related Party Transactions at note 32 – this is where transactions with companies associated with the trust are listed, being CC at Edufin and PM at FAC. KR picked up that the trust had not notified the ESFA of the related party transaction where trust staff attended training at FAW, which the trust had paid FAW for. It was an error and had been completely missed however CC advised trustees that all finance staff have been notified and should therefore be picked up in the future.</p> <p>7.3 CC discussed the Key Audit Findings Report:</p> <p>a) Firstly, looking at the benchmarking data; the trust is slightly lower than the median in terms of pupil income, but expected as the south east is underfunded compared to other areas.</p> <p>b) Staff costs are at median level so there is no concern in this area.</p> <p>c) The teacher:pupil ratio was raised by KR to be looked at, however believe the number of extended services staff would contribute to this as the trust has a large number of employees which would alter ratios.</p> <p>d) Key Audit Findings at page 14 – this lays out the issues from last year which CC is pleased to confirm have all been resolved.</p> <p>e) Adjustments at page 18 – this is where KR had made adjustments to the figures given to them. CC stated this was an amendment to the land and buildings depreciation on the re-valuation as well as the accrued CiF grants whereby the trust had not yet received the funding at year end. Also included here is the movement in LGPS liability, as the pension report was not received until after figures were submitted. There was one unadjusted misstatement which was due to the change of systems whereby outstanding invoices had to be paid in the old system, therefore understating creditors and bank as is only a Balance Sheet movement, it does not affect the overall Trust position.</p> <p>f) Findings from this Year at page 20 – CC confirmed there was 1 medium risk and 2 low risk recommendations. The medium risk was the non-disclosure of the related party transaction of the FAW training. Training has been carried out of finance staff to ensure this doesn't happen again and AL confirmed he has already informed the EFSA this year in anticipation of further training that may take place. The two low risk recommendations were the</p>	<p>CC</p>
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<p>accounting of the trade creditors and unadjusted errors, again due to the change in the finance systems and therefore would not occur again. The second recommendation being in relation to timeliness bank reconciliations, where SKPS reconciliation for August wasn't performed until November. CC advised trustees that since September a monthly checklist has been implemented with deadlines which need to be adhered to and confirmed AP is checking daily to ensure that these are being met.</p> <p>7.4 Trustees APPROVED the Annual Report and RECOMMENDED it to the members for the AGM.</p> <p>7.5 Trustees noted and APPROVED the recommendations from the Audit Report.</p> <p>7.6 CH thanked AL, CC and the team for their hard work in relation to the audit and had done a fantastic job at getting it completed in time for the AGM.</p>	
<p>8 Business Matters</p> <p><i>Report from FAC Chair</i></p> <p>8.1 AM confirmed that KR attended the last FAC and it was very positive feedback. The management accounts are looking very healthy.</p> <p><i>Receive September/October 2020 management accounts</i></p> <p>8.2 Trustees had received and had sight of the management accounts prior to the trust board meeting. CC wanted to remind trustees that it was unknown in regards to lettings and extended services income, as the schools required additional staffing for bubbles and midday meals therefore there are some overspends, however the trust has significant reserves to cover these.</p> <p><i>IT contract update</i></p> <p>8.3 Trustees had received a written report from AL in regards to the IT contract update. CC is to catch up with Ken but had received no concerns from the HTs so hope there is an improvement.</p> <p><i>Finance & procedures update</i></p> <p>8.5 CH confirmed trustees are aware of all the challenges the finance teams has faced. The new system is working well and all finance staff can contact CC or AP should they have any queries.</p> <p>8.6 CH advised that the finance staff member at CPS has resigned.</p> <p>8.7 Discussion of finance and procedure update in the annex section.</p> <p>8.8 Discussion of finance and procedure update in the annex section.</p> <p><i>Report from TBM</i></p> <p>8.9 AL had provided a written report to trustees prior to the trust board meeting and had nothing further to add to the content.</p> <p>8.10 CC asked trustees for the approval of the whiteboards at SKPS, as distributed by email previously, incurring expenditure of £17,032 for 12 whiteboards which would come out of their capital reserves. Trustees noted and APPROVED the whiteboards at SKPS.</p> <p>8.11 EM also asked trustees to note that she had circulated quotes in relation to the atrium at LPS prior to the meeting but was aware trustees may not have had a chance to look at this. Trustees agreed to look at the quote and to send through their approval or queries to CC and AL and can update SH as to the trustees decision and then can be ratified at the next TB meeting in February.</p> <p><i>Ratification of pay awards</i></p> <p>8.12 Trustees noted and APPROVED the ratification of the pay awards, which had been completed by email previously.</p> <p><i>Head office recharge proposal</i></p> <p>8.13 - 8.25 Discussion of head office recharge proposal in the annex section.</p>	<p>AL/CC</p> <p>CC/AL</p>
<p>9 Governance</p> <p><i>Resignation of Member</i></p> <p>9.1 CH confirmed that Jane Prideaux had resigned as member as of 24 November 2020 and therefore there is a now a vacancy which will require filling.</p> <p><i>Update re Trustee Vacancy</i></p> <p>9.2 CH has spoken with Bill Butler at Brachers to see whether they can provide a trustee or a member. CH will follow this up after Christmas.</p>	<p>CH</p>

Safeguarding matters including Health & Safety and Disability matters Nothing urgent to report.	
10 Chair's Actions/ Correspondence and any other business 10.1 The Chair had no further actions to report.	
11 Confidentiality & Publication of minutes Finance and Procedure Update and Head Office Recharge Proposal included the confidential annexe. Main minutes to be circulated to LGBs and be publicly available once approved at the next meeting.	
14 Next meeting Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 5.30pm via Zoom.	

Signed.....

Date.....

Para	Action	By whom
3.1	Signing and publication of minutes	EM
6.4	To speak with MC in regards to the staff training day in June 2021	CH
6.6	To speak to HTs in regards to publication of spending of covid catch-up funding on school websites	AL
7.2(n)	To circulate amended Annual Report to all trustees	CC
	Trustees to consider and send queries or approval to CC and AL who will update SH as to the trustees decision and then can be ratified at the next TB meeting in February	Trustees/AL/CC
8.3	Follow up with Ken re current IT situation	CC/AL
8.25	Draw up wording as per confidential annexe	CH/CC
8.25	Prepare letter for sending to HT as per the confidential annexe	CC/AL
9.2	CH to follow up with Brachers re member or trustee vacancy	CH