

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 5.30pm**  
**At Loose Primary School**

**Present:** John Edgar (Vice CoT), Mark Chatley (Trust Leader), Neil McDonald, Andrew Maitland, Peggy Murphy

**In attendance:** Carina Cuddington (Financial Consultant), Andy Lacey (Chief Operating Officer)

**Clerk:** Clare Nursey

*Trust Board present at the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 approved these minutes as a true and accurate record*

Agenda Item & Discussion	Action / Decision
<p><b>1 Welcome</b> JE welcomed everyone to the meeting in the CoT's absence.</p>	
<p><b>2 Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Carole Hardy (Chair of Trustee Board) and Isabelle Linney-Drouet. The meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
<p><b>3 Declaration of business interests</b> There were no new declarations of business interests.</p>	
<p><b>4 Minutes of the last meeting (19<sup>th</sup> October 2022) and any matters arising</b>            4.1 The minutes of the last meeting held were agreed and would be signed electronically by JE.            4.2 Matters carried forwards from the last meeting:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note on Finance governor role and LGB training – ongoing (T3)</li> <li>• MC to report educational KPI's to Education Committee for review – T3</li> <li>• An abbreviated version of Data Pack to be reported to Trustees – due in T3</li> <li>• Trust vision and mission statement re-wording – ongoing (T3)</li> <li>• Update H&amp;S Policy to reflect new ASHP boilers at CPS</li> <li>• Process appointment of new Member</li> </ul>           4.3 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM had carried out H&amp;S visits as planned but had not been able to access the St K's site</li> <li>• New LGB at St K's to replace IEB would not be agreed in T3</li> </ul> </p>	<p><b>MC/JE</b>  <b>MC</b>  <b>MC</b>  <b>MC</b>  <b>AL</b>  <b>?CH/JE/AL</b></p>
<p><b>5 Trust Matters</b>  <i>Approve annual accounts and recommend to Members</i>            5.1 Trustees received the annual accounts and report to Members. CC advised that Kreston Reeves would not after all be able to attend the Members' meeting but had attended the last F&amp;A committee meeting, where they had reported that the audit process and outcome were both very successful. Only small adjustments had been made by the auditors, relating to opening/in year balances, CiF funding and pension adjustments. KR had made only 2 minor recommendations, one relating to a Gifts policy (a limit, maybe £35-50, on gifts given would be included in the Finance policy when it was reviewed in T3), and the other to an instance where a contract was not issued – CC stressed that this was due to human error not a fault in the process, however it did strengthen the case for a centralised HR function. Trustees <b>AGREED</b> wording suggested by AL to include in the audit report as the TB's response to these two findings.</p>	

5.2 CC took trustees through the papers presented and drew attention to the following:

- Clean audit report received
- Clean regularity report received
- Depreciation and pension rates were calculated on the basis of inflationary rates at 31 August (end of year) and had changed significantly since
- Significant bank balances held
- Debtors figure of £1.4m was distorted by money to come and to be paid out
- Liabilities were as expected
- All assumptions, justifications and estimates listed/explained in the papers
- Staff costs have increased
- Pension costs have increased (LGPS distorts this figure)

**Q. Has there been a pension gain over the year? Has Covid affected the picture?**

Pension “pot” is only reviewed every 3 years (normally shows a huge deficit). No noticeable impact from Covid.

- Two related party transactions had been reported to the ESFA: CC working as CFO, and PM who had provided training via FAW.

5.3 CC advised that the significant figure in accounts was the £1.368m held in reserves (an increase from £845k last year), reflecting the in-year surpluses. This high amount was unintended and resulted from a number of things including a faster than expected recovery in uptake of wrap round care post Covid, and several capital projects not going ahead due to Covid. The F&A committee had discussed investing some of the cash held in low-risk short term investments while interest rates were so high, eg £800k invested for 3 months with Barclays would provide £6k interest – for comparison, CPP had received only £166 interest in the last year. The F&A committee recommended such an investment, and the necessary change in the CPP Investment policy to allow this. Trustees **APPROVED** the investment strategy proposal and change to the policy.

5.4 Trustees **RECOMMENDED** the annual report and accounts to Members for approval.

*Receive summary audit report for compliance*

5.5 Trustees received and **APPROVED** the annual audit report for compliance from Hacker Young. This was a clean audit report summarising the 3 audits during the year.

*TL written update on standards*

5.6 The written report had been circulated and MC advised this was now tied in to the KPIs. He added to the report:

Continuous Improvement

- Trust Training focused on ECT training last year. With no ECTs this year, the decision was made to disaggregate an INSET day into 6 twilight sessions. Sessions on Behaviour and Challenge had run this term
- Staff had been encouraged to be more involved in trust wide training; one school had requested further training after a trust session; one member of staff had volunteered to help with training in T3
- Examples of progression pathways now included, some might offer good secondment opportunities

Staff First

- LPS now showing more distributed leadership
- CPS leadership strengthened with appointment of 2 AHTs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St K's at capacity, but perhaps lower leadership capacity than other schools, trustees should be aware. Further discussion in confidential annex for trustees.</li> <li>• LPS structure – challenge posed by need for supply to cover illness etc. Tried a new model with TAs but did not resolve the problem</li> <li>• CPS structure – stable teaching staff but turnover in admin and site staff; adding 3<sup>rd</sup> EYFS teacher (0.6) from January to free up EYFS leader time</li> </ul> <p><b>Q. Can you lead a “department” in a part time post?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – need to invest in and provide capacity for the person to undertake the role and ensure the expectations for the role match the time given to complete it.</li> <li>• ST K's structure – teachers relatively stable and stable long-term supply in place. Unable to recruit for maternity leave after 3 ads. Discussion in confidential annex for trustees.</li> </ul> <p>Quality Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative judgement data available for Year 3, cohort is a concern in all 3 schools due to lower than national outcomes last year.</li> <li>• New subjects aligning where new schemes brought in</li> <li>• External reviews very positive</li> <li>• First internal review shows recommended actions being implemented</li> <li>• Feedback on aligned History and Geography curricula suggests teachers find them too “tight” – need to define message that flexibility is allowed</li> <li>• Staffing comparisons are as expected</li> </ul> <p><b>Q. How effective is Nurture across the 3 schools?</b> Need to undertake a qualitative and quantitative review</p> <p><b>Q. Who leads Nurture across the trust?</b> No leader yet in place. MC will lead a review and provide a framework which can support nurture evaluation</p>	
<p><b>6 School Reports</b></p> <p><i>Feedback from LGBs</i></p> <p>6.1 STK IEB meeting had nothing to report or feed back to the Trust Board.</p> <p>6.2 CPS LGB had further discussed the role of local governors. CoG had met MC for a useful discussion and the written advice from MC and JE was now awaited. CN noted that the CST review (later on this agenda) might be relevant and helpful. CPS LGB had also queried whether the trust had a policy on not using gender specific language in documents. MC advised that gender neutral language (eg “pupil” rather than “him” or “her”) was generally in use across the trust and no new policy was needed.</p> <p>6.3 LPS LGB commented that it was clear from the latest Vision statement that the TB had considered and accepted the feedback from LGBs. The Trust's approach to CiF bids was discussed.</p> <p><i>Update on Loose HT recruitment</i></p> <p>6.4 Interview day was tomorrow. Discussion in annex for trustees.</p> <p><i>St K's PAN application</i></p> <p>6.3 There had been no response to the consultation, so as its own admissions authority the trust could publish the new PAN in February 2023 and apply it for admissions for 2024.</p>	<b>MC</b>
<p><b>7 Strategic Direction</b></p> <p><i>Trust strategic document</i></p>	

<p>7.1 MC advised that “Collaboration” had been added as the fourth strand in the Mission statement (p1), and he was now working on developing the trust’s longer term strategic aims.</p> <p><i>Agree KPIs and targets for 22/23</i></p> <p>7.2 MC advised these were very similar to KPIs for last year (end of year review of KPIs circulated). Progression pathways had been added to Continuous Improvement KPIs, and the recommended level of reserves had been increased to a prudent 6% under Finance and Business KPIs.</p> <p>7.3 Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> KPIs for 22/23.</p>	
<p><b>8 Policies and key documents</b></p> <p>8.1 Trustees received and <b>APPROVED</b> the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging and Remissions</li> <li>• Pensions (LGPS)</li> <li>• Risk Register</li> </ul> <p>8.2 Trustees were advised that all 3 schools had now updated their Pupil Premium statements and these were published on school websites.</p>	
<p><b>9 Finance &amp; Audit Meeting</b></p> <p><i>Report from F&amp;A Chair</i></p> <p>9.1 Trustees received the draft minutes of the F&amp;A meeting. AM advised that the committee had discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sept/Oct management accounts</li> <li>• the positive outturn at the end of August 22, and how to spend surpluses ensuring best value was achieved</li> <li>• the Kreston Reeves audit findings and KR’s complimentary feedback on the outcome and the process</li> <li>• CiF bids including a recommendation that trustees authorise a 5% financial contribution where this might be helpful; trustees had <b>APPROVED</b> this by email and now formally <b>RATIFIED</b> that decision</li> <li>• Audit areas for next year – agreed and notified to KR</li> </ul> <p><i>Management Accounts Sept/Oct 22</i></p> <p>9.2 Trustees received the Sept/Oct management accounts. CC advised that roll forwards amounts were higher than expected, and that in-year deficits shown were largely a matter of timing (delayed capital investments included this year).</p> <p>9.3 Significant revisions to budgets reflected the autumn teacher pay award, including NI etc, and an adjustment for support staff pay awards. Original budgets had included a 3% increase as this was the amount expected under the KCC agreement. However, NJC had agreed a minimum 10.5% award so it was prudent to strike a balance and include 7-8% in order to remain competitive in so far as this was possible while it was so hard to recruit in the education sector. The increase would impact on this year’s budgets till August and going forwards.</p> <p>9.4 Discussions had been held with the 3 HTs about capital spending plans. These were built into the budgets but a wait and see approach would be adopted in view of the uncertain economic climate.</p> <p>9.5 Plans included the assumption that income would increase by 2%. A KCC paper suggested that only 1% max increase would be awarded but CC was confident that top up funding would have to be paid if this was the case.</p> <p><b>Q. What would be the impact on funding if the DfE took over KCC as has been rumoured?</b></p>	

<p>Both AL and CC thought it unlikely that academy funding would be affected (except possibly advantageously) although maintained schools might be significantly affected. The National Funding Formula, though delayed, would apply to schools regardless of locality. KCC currently topped up school funding, retaining some for central funding purposes, eg High Needs, and while KCC was in such financial difficulties it was almost certain this funding would be reduced with the result that ECHPs would be harder to obtain and less HNF would be paid. MC and AL would look into the position further.</p> <p>9.6 CC advised that 3-year budgets had been revised and while these showed significant deficits, reserves remained strong. However, since revising budgets, bad news had been received about future energy costs, but on the plus side the schools had received additional capital funding to put towards energy, and could spend this anywhere if no energy linked project was identified. Amounts received were: LPS £23k, St K's £21k and CPS £18k.</p> <p>9.7 CC summarised that while the picture was bleak across the whole education sector, the trust had reserves to enable it to ride out a few difficult years, and there was no risk of clawback of unspent funding unlike at maintained schools which were subject to the balance control mechanism (BCM).</p> <p><i>Ratification of pay awards</i></p> <p>9.8 Trustees' <b>APPROVAL</b> of pay awards for leaders had been sought by email to enable payment to be made last month, and trustees <b>RATIFIED</b> that decision now.</p> <p><i>Estates and site management proposal</i></p> <p>9.9 Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the proposal for estate and site management, recommended by the F&amp;A committee.</p> <p><i>F&amp;A committee membership</i></p> <p>9.10 Trustees <b>AGREED</b> that NM should join the F&amp;A committee to gain from his H&amp;S expertise.</p>	<b>MC/AL</b>
<p><b>10 Education &amp; Curriculum Committee</b> Trustees noted the meeting had been cancelled and would be rearranged for T3.</p>	
<p><b>11 Governance</b> <i>Appointment of new Member</i></p> <p>11.1 Trustees were advised that the appointment of a new Trust member had not been progressed due to absences, and would be pursued in the new year.</p> <p><i>CST Assurance framework for trust governance proposal</i></p> <p>11.2 Trustees <b>AGREED</b> it would be useful to take this proposal to review governance further.</p> <p><i>School Governor responsibility for digital monitoring</i></p> <p>11.3 It had been confirmed that the pair monitoring safeguarding would cover digital monitoring.</p>	<b>CH/JE/AL</b>          <b>JE?</b>
<p><b>12 Safeguarding Matters including Health &amp; Safety and Disability Matters</b> MC had no matters to report.</p>	
<p><b>13 Any other urgent business including Chair's Actions / Correspondence</b></p> <p>13.1 JE had no matters to report.</p> <p>13.2 The following items of other business were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC advised that the trust had arranged a visit from the School Resource Management Advisers programme, to seek advice in light of St K's PAN reduction and the situation where LPS attracted little extra money despite high pupil</li> </ul>	

<p>numbers. The feedback meeting had been held today and the adviser had commented that CPP had provided “the best information she had ever had from a trust”. The trust had been judged to be very well financially managed and no immediate cost savings could be recommended. The SRMA’s report would be sent to the ESFA once agreed by CPP. The SRMA had provided information on the integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP) approach, which MC and CC would review.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/programmes/school-resource-management-advisers">The school resource management advisers (SRMA) programme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CC’s position as CFO had been agreed to run for 12 months, until mid-April 23. Annamaria Potgeiter had been working with CC with a view to taking over the role and had proved very strong so CC proposed that trustees approved AP’s assumption of the CFO role from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023. AP would increase her working week from 3 to 4 days in the role. Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the proposal. <b>Q. Would 4 days pw week be enough to cover all the responsibilities?</b> CC advised she currently worked 1 day and AP 3 days, and 4 days was enough.</li> <li>• MC advised the trust had bought into a policy tracker to ensure trust policies were reviewed on time (responsibility for monitoring had previously been held by PA/trust clerk). He proposed a 2-year cycle for review for statutory policies where the DfE review period was ‘recommend annual’, as there was always the option to review mid-cycle if necessary. Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> a 2-year cycle for policy review.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>14 Confidential Items</b> <i>STK Support Staff</i> 14.1 See confidential annex. <i>Ratification of Trust Leader’s pay award</i> 14.2 Item taken at the end of the meeting and contained in confidential annex.</p>	
<p><b>15 Confidentiality and action points</b> 15.1 Confidential items were agreed and are contained in the confidential annex.</p>	
<p><b>16 Next Meeting Date</b> Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 5.30 pm</p>	
<p><b>17 Meeting Outcomes</b> 17.1 Ensuring clarity of the vision, ethos and strategic direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement to proceed with CST Assurance proposal to review governance</li> </ul> <p>17.2 Holding the executive Leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval of KPIs</li> <li>• Approval of pay awards</li> <li>• Approval of Site Management proposal</li> </ul> <p>17.3 Overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure that money is well spent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Resource Management Adviser’s feedback</li> <li>• Review of Annual report and audit reports</li> <li>• Budget discussions</li> <li>• Use of Reserves</li> </ul>	

Signed .....

Date.....

Para	Action	By Whom
<b>Actions arising from 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 not covered elsewhere</b>		
4.2	Report educational KPI's to Education Committee for review – T3	MC
4.2	An abbreviated version of Data Pack to be reported to Trustees – due in T3	MC
4.2	Trust vision and mission statement re-wording – ongoing (T3)	MC
4.2	Update H&S Policy to reflect new ASHP boilers at CPS	AL
<b>Actions arising from this meeting</b>		
6.2	Note on Finance governor role and LGB training – ongoing (T3)	MC/JE
9.5	Investigate position re possible DfE takeover of KCC	MC/AL
11.1	Process appointment of new Member	CH/JE/AL
11.2	Take forward CST Assurance framework for trust governance	JE?