

**Coppice Primary Partnership**  
**Meeting of the Trustee Board**  
**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 5.30pm**  
**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), John Edgar, Isabelle Linney-Drouet, Andrew Maitland, Peggy Murphy (CEO Standards – joined initially via telephone), Neil McDonald

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

**Visitors:** Mark Chatley (Trust Leader designate)

**Clerk:** Clare Nursey

Agenda item and discussion	Action/decision
<b>Item 1 Appointment of Trustee</b> Trustees unanimously <b>agreed</b> the appointment of Neil McDonald to the CPP Trustee Board.	
<b>2 Welcome and any introductions</b> CH welcomed everyone to this meeting and all present introduced themselves to NM and explained their roles.	
<b>3 Apologies for absence</b> CH explained that Emily Moon (Trust clerk) was unwell, and thanked Clare Nursey (former clerk, now CoG CPS) for agreeing to clerk this meeting.	
<b>4 Declaration of business interests</b> 2.1 No new interests to declare. 2.2 AL would arrange for NM to receive a declaration form and other necessary paperwork following his appointment as a trustee, and set up a CPP email address.	AL
<b>5 Minutes of the last meeting (10 February 2021) and any matters arising</b> 3.1 The minutes and confidential annex were agreed as an accurate record of discussions and hard copies would be physically signed when circumstances allowed. 3.2 There were no matters arising - all actions from last meeting have been completed or were listed on the agenda for discussion.	EM
<b>6 Development of Trust Support Services</b> This item was taken at the end of the meeting with discussion contained in a confidential annex.	
<b>7 Strategic Direction</b> <i>Trust Strategic document- update</i> 7.1 There was no update for this meeting.  <i>CEO termly report on curriculum and standards (verbal report) including future teacher assessments</i> 7.2 PM advised there was little to add to her written update provided after the last meeting. Schools were now fully open though there had been a few bubble closures at LPS and SKPS. All teachers had been provided with lateral flow test kits for use at home. This term had been a settling in period and staff and children were pleased to be back, although it had been a hard term and staff were looking forward to the Easter holiday. <b>Q. Would any teachers be continuing to shield after shielding officially ended today?</b> PM – not aware of the situation at schools but assumes a doctor’s certificate/sick leave would be needed for those who did not return to work. <b>Q. Would children have settled back in and be ready to start the catch-up curriculum after Easter?</b> PM – suspect settling in will take longer. Curriculum catch up will run on and everyone will work hard to do what’s needed.	

<p>MC – has spoken to HTs. Priority is settling in but HTs are thinking forwards too, about how the curriculum needs reforming. One AHT in very positive discussions with a secondary school about what is most important to cover before transition as it is inevitable that secondary schools will inherit children with gaps. ILD confirmed that FST and CPP are working closely on academic gaps and social skills, as both trusts are here for the children and want the best for them.</p> <p><b>Q. Will similar challenges apply next September too as current Year 6 has missed most of Year 5?</b>  PM – evidence is that most issues will arise for current YR and Yr1 as they have missed so much of the formative EYFS curriculum, but Covid will have had impact on all the children in school. MC advised that Sir Kevan Collins (Education Recovery Commissioner) held the view that it would take 5 years for children to catch up as the lack of formation in YR and Yr1 would impact on subsequent learning.</p> <p><b>Q. Is there flexibility to adjust the curriculum in year to respond to the needs of the children?</b>  MC – there might be potential for this, although the EY curriculum with its focus on communication, problem solving skills etc, was very different from the Yr1 curriculum which introduced academic subjects. Provision was continuous already, and much would depend on the specific cohorts - there could be no blanket approach. CH asked MC to encourage HTs and SLTs to review and change the curriculum as necessary and to assure them of trustees’ support for their decisions.</p> <p><b>Q. Are all 3 schools working with their local secondary schools to facilitate transition this year?</b>  JE was not sure whether SKPS was in close contact with their nearest secondary school – MC would follow this up with the HT.</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p><i>Senior leaders on F/T contracts</i>  7.3 Discussion contained in confidential annex for trustees.</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p><i>Overstaffing policy</i>  7.4 CH reminded trustees of CPP’s policy of recruiting early in the year to attract quality teachers, and the agreement to recruit surplus staff to fill vacancies likely, but not certain, to arise as teacher resignations could be submitted until the end of May, leaving little time to recruit for September. Surplus staff were recruited on permanent CPP contracts, funded through the top slice charged to schools, with the understanding that they would fill a vacancy which arose at any of the schools in the trust. This policy had worked well previously but faced a challenge now as early indications had shown SKPS had to lose 3 staff next year due to low numbers on roll/maternity leave returning (but see para 11.3 below). HTs had been very helpful and LPS had agreed to employ one of those surplus teachers, but all were perhaps understandably reluctant to employ staff they had not themselves recruited. There was a further reluctance to employ experienced and therefore expensive staff when budgets were tight and suggested NQTs would be more affordable, but it was unfair to expect the better off school in the trust to carry the cost of surplus staff. AL reminded trustees that last year’s trust budget had included 1 surplus member of staff as a safety net, but CC pointed out that when surplus staff went into a school it reduced the recharge to all schools.</p> <p>7.5 CH asked trustees to consider whether the overstaffing policy, which was unwritten, should be continued in these circumstances.</p> <p>7.6 Trustees recognised that overstaffing presented a financial risk but agreed that it was important to ensure employment of sufficient quality teachers each September. There was still a shortage of quality teachers, and quality teaching would drive pupil numbers and benefit income. Surplus teachers could be usefully employed (eg covering maternity leave, PPA) until a permanent post became available.</p> <p>7.7 As trust leader, MC agreed that the overstaffing policy was sensible and advised the key points were to ensure clarity of understanding and equity across the 3 schools - vacancies at any school should be offered first to surplus staff. A written procedure would be helpful, and he would discuss the design and process of this with HTs to ensure buy in.</p>	<p>MC</p>
<p><i>Future Schools Trust – curriculum training notes</i></p>	



## 11 Business Matters

### *Report from FAC*

11.1 CH thanked AL for taking minutes at the FAC meeting on 23 March in EM's absence.

11.2 AM summarised discussions at that meeting:

- Management accounts – forecast for end of August was now £398k, slightly below plan but reasonable and the budget was resilient.
- Funding letters – contained no surprises (SKPS roll had increased by 1 since the December 20 update seen by trustees).
- The 3-year budget showed that the trust's risk averse approach in assumptions had paid off during this challenging Covid year. Information on support staff pay now received – discussed at para 11.7 below.
- Estate management – Conditions Surveys now received for all 3 schools, AL taking these forwards. Work has started on the 5 urgent items identified. CIF bid decisions should be known April/May and may cover some items - the trust had received £1.75m funding from CIF last year which had been very pleasing. CH suggested NM's expertise would enable him to input usefully at the next meeting.

11.3 CC updated the meeting on next year's budget plans:

- She had met each of the HTs to go through the budgets in detail and the picture was very positive across the trust.
- SKPS admission numbers for September YR – 64 allocated so cannot reduce to 2 classes as originally planned (therefore 1 fewer surplus staff). RP confident will pick up more - leaflet drops have already generated 4 enquiries this year. CC will enquire if the school had received any pupils via the LA. The school would drop to 2 classes in Yr2 due to low numbers, not renewing a temporary contract. If numbers increased in this year, SLT staff / 0.4 FTE cover teacher will share the class. They are also overstaffed with 2 TAs; however potential 1:1s / HLTA used for class cover, so there would be no more recruitment. A 2% increase in funding had been assumed and with prudent management SKPS should have £102k in-year surplus, falling to £14k and £27k in subsequent years of the plan as the reduced NOR impacts. No "wish list" items were currently included – MC would discuss these with RP after Easter.
- LPS – overstaffing by 3 teachers 21/22 and 22/23, dropping to 1 in 23/24 onwards was provided for in the budget plan, which showed an in-year surplus of £68k, falling to £12k and £20k in subsequent years.
- CPS – the "barebones" budget plan showed a surplus of £65k in year 1, increasing to £96k in year 2 then falling to £49k in year 3.

11.4 MC remained concerned about SKPS numbers until acceptances had been received, and suggested it may yet be necessary to have a cut-off point before deciding whether to run with 2 or 3 YR classes. He would speak to RP. CC reminded the meeting that SKPS had very high mobility, with 31 joiners since September, and growth would be limited if there were not 3 classes in the year.

### *Equity Fund*

11.5 Trustees received a report on plans for Equity Fund spends. CC explained that this was money saved on a trust leader salary during 19/20 and 20/21 and spending was intended to achieve impact for children across the trust. LPS had agreed that the money should be spent in the other 2 schools to balance out opportunities. CPS proposed spending on the outdoor area (EY and quad area) and to boost reading, including purchase of a Reading Bus (AL advised he was investigating possible grants towards this). SKPS proposed developing the outdoor area, buying a hen house and chickens, and investing in Forest School training. These approved spends would leave £16k in the Equity Fund and allocation would be considered once final costings had been received.

### *ESFA School Resource Management self-assessment*

CC

MC

<p>11.6 The FAC had discussed the return and recommended it for approval to the TB. Trustees <b>approved</b> the return for submission to the ESFA by 15 April.</p> <p><i>Support staff pay update</i></p> <p>11.7 Advice had been received from the LA that their pay award for support staff this year was 2%. AL reminded trustees that CPP staff had been assured under TUPE that their T&amp;Cs would match the LA's and he asked trustees to approve this 2% award for CPP support staff.</p> <p>11.8 Trustees <b>approved</b> a 2% pay award for support staff.</p> <p>11.9 One further item in annex for trustees.</p> <p><i>Term time only contracts of employment</i></p> <p>11.10 AL advised the trust was awaiting further advice from the LA.</p>	MC
<p><b>12 Governance</b></p> <p><i>Scheme of delegation</i></p> <p>12.1 The updated Scheme of delegation had been circulated to trustees (small changes needed to change reference to EHT to TL, and remove repeated reference to Accessibility Plan). Trustees were concerned to ensure that the Scheme matched any Terms of Reference for LGBs, as well as requirements in the Articles of Association, Finance policy etc, and JE and CN queried how governors should monitor finance processes and whether HTs should send paperwork on all exclusions to CoGs. It was agreed that LGBs should review the revised Scheme at their next meetings and send any specific comments to the TB for further consideration.</p> <p><i>Update in regards to Member and LGB Vacancies</i></p> <p>12.2 SKPS LGB held one vacancy. LPS LGB also had one vacancy and CH would follow up with Tim Williams (HT FAW) who had been suggested for the role.</p> <p><i>Governor visits after Easter</i></p> <p>12.3 CH advised she had discussed these with PM, CC and HTs and they were agreed that wherever possible visits and meetings should remain via zoom, eg finance monitoring. Where this was not possible, protocols should be agreed in advance, governors should not enter classrooms, and visits should take place outside school hours. Arrangements would be reviewed as government lockdown plans progressed.</p> <p><i>Governor Hub</i></p> <p>12.4 CH advised there was an urgent need to put in place some more efficient and secure way of circulating governor/trustee papers. Longer term the plan was to use Office 365 which would allow better circulation and storage of documents, but for the short term at least CH recommended buying into Governor Hub. CC recommended the system and trustees agreed CPP should buy in. AL to action.</p>	LGB's  CH      AL
<p><b>Safeguarding matters including Health &amp; Safety and Disability matters</b></p> <p>Nothing urgent to report.</p>	
<p><b>10 Chair's Actions/ Correspondence and any other business</b></p> <p>The chair advised she had received and responded to only 1 letter prompted by her letter to parents about breaching Covid guidance, and she had no further actions to report.</p>	
<p><b>11 Confidentiality &amp; Publication of minutes</b></p> <p>Main minutes to be circulated to LGBs and be publicly available once approved at the next meeting.</p>	
<p><b>14 Next meeting</b></p> <p>Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 5.30pm</p>	

Signed.....

Date.....

<b>Para</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>
2.2	Arrange relevant paperwork/email address for NM	AL
7.2	Check if SKPS working with secondary school on transition	MC
7.3 (annex)	Discuss SLT contracts with HTs	MC
7.7	Discuss overstaffing policy/process with HTs	MC
7.8	Identify dates for governor training session on curriculum	MC
9.2	Amend Code of Conduct re required% attendance	CH
9.3	Review Complaints policy/include that governors for panels can be drawn from any school in the trust	CH
10.1	Review Behaviour policies (positive handling)	MC
10.1	Circulate list of trust and school leaders	CH/MC
11.4	Check if SKPS has received pupils via LA	CC
11.4	Discuss YR numbers with RP (2 or 3 classes)	MC
11.9 (annex)	Discuss support staff pay with HTs	MC
12.1	Review revised Scheme of delegation and send comments to TB	LGBs
12.2	Contact TW re LPS LGB vacancy	CH
12.3	Arrange purchase of Governor Hub	AL