



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held via video conference on Thursday 27th January 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)	Sarah Parish (SP)
Alan Broomhead (AB)	Lucy Phipps (LP)
Linda Burton (LB)	Catherine Roche (CR)
Alan Dunstan (AD)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Jean-Francois Fava Verde (JF)	Kirsty Rogers (KR)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)	Annie Temple (AT)
Claire MacVicar (CM)	Clive Watts (CW)
Neil McIntosh (NM)	Nima Zarrabi (NZ)

Apologies:

Ken Coveney (KC)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)
Graham Webber (GW)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JCu) – Clerk

Governor challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted.
- No substantive items were notified for AOB.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item.
- As the first point of the meeting JSR asked governors if they were in agreement that his meeting could be held remotely – this was agreed by all governors.

Signed

Date

2. ATB meeting, 2nd December 2021

2.1. Minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record, and were signed by JSR. These will be dropped into school for filing.

2.2. Review of Actions/matters arising: Unless otherwise discussed, assigned actions had been completed. Matters arising not covered by the current agenda were considered:

- Complete Prevent and GDPR training (item 2.2) – This is almost complete by JC
Action: JC
- Confirm KCSIE has been read and understood **Action:** JC and KC to confirm
- Confirm that Companies House, etc. have been updated with the new Members
Action: SB to confirm
- Thank you to VH, AD and GW for the Thank You cards to staff which were well received.

3. Headteacher’s Section: SB presented the report which had previously been circulated. Discussion raised the following points:

Masks are being retained in classrooms because of the current high Covid numbers in the local community. Thankfully, school absence due to Covid seems to be settling at around 20 on any one day, and has not returned to the high levels seen before Christmas.

School Performance and Standards: The numbers in parenthesis denote the Pupil Premium (PP) children within the co-hort. The P8 number is an internal estimate based on 2019 predictions, it is not a very robust comparison, but it is useful for internal use. **What is the national expectation for PP and non PP children?** The national standard for P8 is only produced after the results, it would be set at 0, then anything with a plus is better than average. **Should governors be happy with 81.67% and 53.85% (PP pupils) for 4+ at English and Maths?** If pupils achieved 81.67% that would be a good result. The PP number dropping to 42.86% is of concern, it is going in the wrong direction. However, the number of PP pupils is quite low and the figures can be very skewed by just one or two pupils. There are two students who are on Langtree’s roll but who are educated at Meadowbrook – but their results are still included within this data.

Admissions: Langtree roll is full, when a student leaves there is always someone waiting to take the place. The Year 6 applications were heavily oversubscribed.

Attendance: Due to Covid attendance is struggling, there was a massive dip before half term. However, it is currently in line with the current national average.

Safeguarding: **There were 17 priority cases, is that a typical number?** Yes. There are 17 cases currently live and being actioned, but this doesn’t necessarily mean that they are of a serious nature.

Monitoring: The Year 7s have been causing some concern with their reading levels and also behaviour. School believes that, even without Covid, it would probably have been a challenging year group. There are small signs that things are improving, some tentative shoots of recovery. There is a diverse range of abilities and behaviours but staff are now more able to focus on the more extreme cases.

School uniform tender: The tender process is ongoing. Thank you to CW who has provided a great deal of support. No matter what the result, there will be a supplier change as most of the suppliers tendering are better quality, and all are cheaper, than the current supplier.

4. Curriculum Development - discussion

SB presented 'The Curriculum at Langtree School'. A brief overview of the following was covered:

- Overview of the National Curriculum
- How the National Curriculum is supplemented by additional statutory requirements such as RE, PE, PSHE, etc.
- Langtree's curriculum map
- Enrichment activities that are offered at Langtree, and how they are adapted to all students

Governor discussion

SB explained how at the start of each academic year parents and students are invited in to school for a Curriculum Information Evening, and in addition to this, more curriculum information is published on the school website. ***Is the information available on the website comparable to what other schools publish?*** SB said that Langtree's Curriculum Map is on the school website, it was put together before Covid though, and now requires some updating.

Action: SB to review what curriculum information other schools put on their websites, and to provide an update at the March FGB meeting.

Enrichment activities offered at Langtree are much broader than the learning that is offered in the classrooms; from theatre trips, to creativity days, and a forensic science experience. The curriculum is also adapted for various groups. A fully academic curriculum is not suitable for all students however, and adaptations such as the Hackney Literacy Project, Prince's Trust and Bespoke specialist support are also offered. And for the more able students, public speaking groups, Ewelme Maths Challenge, subject specific programmes such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are offered. Governors are responsible for governing what the school offers. The Curriculum and Standards committee in particular reviews whether the curriculum is successfully meeting the needs of students and is enabling them to access employment after education. Feedback on students' results and also their destinations post-16 feed into this information.

NM recently wrote a paper on his current thoughts on the national curriculum which was circulated to governors prior to the meeting; here he discussed his paper, and views. NM said that a recent article highlighted the 'absurdity of England's National Curriculum'. The article discussed curriculum content and how lockdown and home schooling had revealed to a parent (of primary school aged children) how the curriculum lacks creativity, and instead focuses on a need for evidence to show pupil's progress and achievement. NM believes that schools can be seen to have a gaming approach to curriculum management, including ways to assist children to improve their GCSE results, but not to improve their education. As an academy, Langtree has curriculum options. After the recent period of lockdown and home schooling, it would be worthwhile asking parents involved with homeschooling for their feedback on the lesson content. NM added that he believes there is potential for Langtree to be taken over by a multi-academy trust, and that we need to be ready for that. SB and JSR said that conversations had taken place with local schools and the outcome from those meetings was that schools are currently happy as they are but, should this situation change, discussions would re-start. NM summed up that governors should all be thinking about curriculum, and what Langtree should, and could, be doing to ensure that the curriculum is inspiring and fit for purpose.

Wider discussion followed.

SB said that he didn't believe the secondary school curriculum was as lacking in creativity as this article implied was the case in primary schools. The obligation of schools is for children to pass assessments and to give them the best opportunities possible. **Action:** Via the stakeholder survey, SB to seek feedback from parent/carers on the curriculum, based on the home learning experience.

Governors thanked NM for raising the issue and for all his work on curriculum, including his paper.

5. Governor update

- AD informed governors that the Pay Committee met in December for SB's Performance Management Review (PMR). Wyll Willis, former Headteacher of Wallingford School, was also present at the meeting as an advisor to SB and the school. Wyll apparently performs a similar role at 5 other schools so has a wealth of knowledge to draw from. Objectives were agreed that would serve to enhance SB's career development and to further develop Langtree School.
- CW said that Health and Safety is up to date, and that all outstanding actions have been ticked off. A recent walk around with the School Business Manager was completed, and all operating procedures are up to date.
- Proposal for two new governors to join Langtree FGB:
 - Kirsty Rogers is a Deputy Headteacher at a local secondary school, she is also in charge of curriculum and standards at that school. Kirsty explained that she would like to join Langtree to give back to her local community and also to expand her own experience of other schools. Governors unanimously voted Kirsty onto the governing board. Kirsty will join the Curriculum and Standards committee.
 - Nima Zarrabi works in Research Equity at Invesco, he has gained both a Masters and PHD in Finance. Nima is a visiting lecturer at Kings College and Queen Mary University in London, and feels he could add value for younger students. Nima also has a young child, with another on the way, and having attended school in another country, he would now like to understand more about schools in the UK. Governors unanimously voted Nima onto the governing board. Nima will join the Finance and General Purposes committee.
- Governors unanimously agreed to renew the term of office for Linda Burton for another 4 years. Linda's term of office will start on 6th March 2022.
- Neil McIntosh is sadly stepping down as a Governor and as a Member of Langtree's Governing Body when his term of office ends on 1st March 2022. JSR said that Langtree has had the benefit of NM's experience and expertise for many years, and will be hugely missed. Governors thanked NM for all he has done for Langtree.

6. Committee reports

- **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 17th January had been circulated.
 - AD said that two premises surveys had recently taken place, one in October, commissioned by Langtree, for budgeting planned maintenance. The second survey, in December, was

Signed

Date

part of the DfE 2nd Condition Data Collection (CDC2), to inform the government on the condition of schools in England. It will be interesting to compare the two reports.

- The two CIF bids were submitted on 15th December, the outcome is due in Spring 2022.
 - Within budget monitoring, income has increased by £40,000 and expenditure has increased by £54,000, resulting in an in-year surplus of £143,000. School finances are currently in a very healthy condition.
 - The ESFA (Education, Skills and Funding Agency) audit was discussed. Langtree had been given a limited amount of time to respond to their 8 mandatory requirements. In total there were 10 Best Practices Recommendations. Progress is being made on the requirements, but the Langtree team are querying one of the items which relates to whether there is need to distinguish between Members and Trustees.
 - A Scheme of Delegation has been drafted in response to the ESFA audit. The document is based on the Financial Procedures Manual, Key recommendations, and other sources of MAT Scheme of Delegations. This is currently being reviewed.
 - The Finance and General Purposes Terms of Reference were amended to meet the ESFA recommendations, AD noted the changes. The updated F&GP Terms of Reference were approved by the Full Governing Body. **Action:** JCu to save the amended version in the Google Drive.
 - If the CIF bids are won, Langtree's contribution would result in a large hit on the financial surplus. It was agreed that the School Business Manager will build 2/3 scenarios for the next 5 years which would include possibilities such as increased DfE income and another bulge year. The framework could help inform decision making over time and be prepared for various eventualities.
-
- **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 11th January had been circulated.
 - JSR advised that Jan Holroyd had provided the committee with an overview of how evaluation of learning is now taking place, in response to the change in the Ofsted Framework. The Senior Leadership Team will also now be using the Framework to form the basis of their monitoring across the school.
 - The committee discussed the cohorts that are causing concern, mostly in Year 7, although Year 9 was also touched upon – being more variable and complex.
 - The Year 11 mocks have been completed, SB will provide an update on these at the March FGB meeting. **Action:** SB to provide update on mock results
 - The Remote Learning policy was approved by the committee. The SEND policy was also provisionally approved by the committee, however, apologies were made as SP (SEND Governor) and VH were not consulted. This is now being re-reviewed.
-
- **Pastoral & Community:** Minutes of 17th January had been circulated.
 - A new school nurse will be starting soon, but she will do only 1 day a week, which will be remotely, as opposed to the previous nurse who was in school 4 days a week. A list of 8 students who need ongoing support has been shared with Sarah Burman who will ensure the respective Head of Years are aware.
 - The sponsored walk raised £7000 which has gone back into the school funds. The subject of online sponsorship was raised, it was thought this might open up funding to a wider audience.

Signed

Date

- VH had previously requested that school share the nature and number of complaints with the committee – but this is yet to happen. **Action:** SBa to follow up please.
 - Careers day is taking place on 17th February.
 - A Wellbeing survey was conducted in December. Compared with the results from the same survey conducted in July, there were - generally speaking - improvements of student wellbeing across the board. CR noted that it might be helpful to have a nationally standardized and recognized questionnaire so that benchmarking against other schools could take place.
 - Langtree's Equality and Objectives statement 2020/21 is available to view in the P&C Google Drive folder and will be published on the school website. It is a very positive report and takes into account the Wellbeing survey of 620 pupils with a high response rate of over 400 pupils.
 - The following policies were approved by the P&C committee: Behaviour, Admissions.
- **Drama Studio update**
AD said that he and JC continue to work with the architects on creating the initial script, which will then be converted into a story board, video presentation and/or brochure to be presented to potential sponsors. The aim is to have this in good shape by mid February 2022.
- **Approval of statutory policies**
 - The Admissions policy had been reviewed and approved by the Pastoral & Community Committee. Two mandatory changes had been made, the first was regarding the selection of pupils when school is oversubscribed, the second was regarding priority being given to Looked After Children from other countries. The policy generally doesn't change from year to year, although every 7 years it has to go to consultation with all stakeholders, which will take place in September 2022. **Are you happy with the policy as it stands?** Yes, it is fit for purpose. The Admissions policy was ratified by the full governing body.
 - The Behaviour Policy had been reviewed and approved by the Pastoral & Community Committee. VH said that the policy had recently been criticized by a parent who felt that it is more about sanctions than rewards. School has made some changes and made the policy more understanding of the drivers of poor behaviour. A paragraph on reasonable adjustments has been added and an allowance for a comprehensive assessment to be made, should it be needed. SB said that the policy is now more in line with how Langtree operates. AT said that staff had spent a long time discussing the language used, as it had been felt that some phrases were not general enough. AT added that the policy could go further to address the parent's concerns but staff are happy with it as it is. CW noted that when pupils receive Academic or Behaviour awards there is no reference to what the child has done to receive the award, and thus is arguably perceived as being of less value. SB said that it's an automatically generated message and relates to what the teacher has put into the system. **Action:** SB to investigate how this system can be improved
The Behaviour policy was approved by the full governing body.
 - The Teachers' Pay policy had been reviewed and approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee. AD said that it followed an Oxfordshire County Council model

Signed

Date

which had been customized accordingly for Langtree. The Teachers' Pay policy was approved by the full governing body.

- The SEND policy had been reviewed and approved by the Pastoral & Community Committee, although unintentionally without the input of our SEND governor (SP) and the P+C committee - apologies. CW said that he found this policy to lack consistency as the terms SEN and SEND were mixed around, but also that the SEND provision didn't seem to provide for all types of disabilities. SB said that the policy sets out to address both special needs and disabilities but there are sometimes differences between the two. SP and JF, in discussion with Sarah Burman, will review the policy and bring it back to the C&S and P&C committees for further review. **Action:** SP and JF to review the SEND policy.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 27th March, 7:00pm

Finally, JSR thanked SB and all governors for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:15

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 28th January 2022:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
2.2	Complete online Prevent and GDPR training and confirm when complete	JC	ASAP
2.2	Confirm KCSIE has been read and understood	JC, KC	ASAP
2.2	Ofsted Inspection Framework informational sessions to take place in the spring	SB	Spring
3.4	Confirm updates to Companies House, etc. have been made for the new Members	SB/KB	ASAP
4.1	Review what curriculum information other schools put on their websites, provide an update at the March FGB meeting	SB	March 2022
4.2	Via the stakeholder survey, seek feedback from parent/carers on the curriculum, based on the home learning experience.	SB	ASAP
6.1	Updated F&GP Terms of Reference were approved by the Full Governing Body. Save amended version in the Google Drive.	JCu	ASAP
6.2	Provide update on mock results	SB	March 2022
6.3	Share the nature and number of complaints with the P&C committee	SB	March 2022
6.5	Investigate how the achievement awards system can be improved	SB	March 2022
5.5	Approved Polices to go on school website: Admissions, Behaviour	JCu	ASAP
5.6	Review the SEND policy	SP and JF	Feb 2022
	Include Drama Studio update as standing item on FGB agendas	JCu	

Signed

Date