



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School, Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 6th December 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)	Lucy Phipps (LP)*
Alan Broomhead (AB)	Christine Reeves (CRe)
Linda Burton (LB)	Catherine Roche (CRo)
Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting	Kirsty Rogers (KR)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Sarah Parish (SP)	Annie Temple (AT)
	Clive Watts (CW)

Apologies:

Jesse Cleverly (JC)
Nima Zarrabi (NZ)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JC_u) – Clerk
Hayley Scott (HS)

Governor challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item.

2. ATB meeting, 6th October 2022

- 2.1.** Minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record and will be signed by AD. 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:
- JC has completed all required training
 - Admissions policy has gone to public consultation, waiting to hear back from OCC

Signed Date

3. Formal AGM of the Langtree School Academy Trust Co Ltd

- a) Approval of Langtree School Academy Trust Accounts to 31 August 2022: The accounts were presented by auditors Cooper Parry to the Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) committee at the 14th November 22 meeting. These accounts, along with the External Audit Findings, were subsequently made available for all governors to view in the FGB Google Drive. AB reported that there were no major issues identified in the Accounts. The following items were noted:
- Overall, the net surplus was greater than forecast, but that has been eaten up by spending on the CIF projects.
 - Cooper Barry had queried how the CIF expenditure was dealt with, they were satisfied with the explanation.
 - The audit and regularity status are both green. A couple of new issues were highlighted - the School Business Manager not signing the Declarations of Business Interests, and consistency between named governors on Langtree's website and Companies House, these have both since been rectified.
 - Two issues were highlighted from last year's audit; one of these has been corrected, the other, regarding staff contracts, is still outstanding. Long standing employees who were originally contracted with OCC do not have signed contracts. SB noted that Langtree is changing HR advisors, after which, all employee contracts will be reviewed and renewed where necessary, this issue should therefore be rectified.
 - In conclusion, Langtree's financial position is sound and the accounting systems are properly maintained. AB recommended the accounts for approval. The 31st August 2022 accounts were subsequently approved by the FGB.
- b) AB noted that the auditors hadn't been as prepared as Carolyn Ventress, School Business Manager, and the F&GP committee would have liked, but he believes that this issue has now been rectified. On the recommendation of AB, Members agreed to re-appoint Cooper Parry as Langtree School's auditors for the coming year.
- c) A list of Governor appointments, re-appointments, resignations and committee memberships for the period January – December 2022 had been circulated.

The AGM closed at 7.25pm

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

- It is really pleasing that so many of the extra-curricular events are back on after years of the covid pandemic. Creativity days, whole school assemblies, geography field trips, etc. have all provided incredible breadth and depth of learning. Huge thanks to the staff who are going above and beyond to run such trips during a busy schedule.
- The Ofsted inspection will now likely take place after Christmas.
- Langtree was a finalist for Secondary School of the Year in the inaugural Education Today Awards, reaching the final shortlist of five schools.

- The number of pupils on the school roll remains stable.
- The current year 11 cohort are unlikely to do as well in their summer exams as the previous year. Collectively, the P8 is not where we believe it should be. **Is it the cohort, or are there other factors?** This year the mock exams have moved back before Christmas as, last year, it had been reported that students were burnt out and there was too much pressure on them over the Christmas period. They are probably not working as hard towards their mocks as the last couple of cohorts, there is less chance that the mock results will be used towards their final grades, as was the case in the last two years.
- Nationally, pupil attendance continues to drop. This week, in particular, appears poor due to seasonal viruses and an increase in covid.
- Due to an issue with the lesson change bells there have been several unplanned evacuations. All have been completed successfully. School has teamed up with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at The Oratory, and a 'penetration test' of the site security was organised. The positive outcome of the test was that the 'person' was challenged by a member of staff and escorted to the office to sign in. However, it was six minutes before this occurred and the intruder did walk past several members of staff.
- There are a relatively large amount of staffing moves, some positive and some negative, these are all detailed in the Headteacher's report.
- Gratitude was expressed to governors for their huge support, particularly to CRo for her work on the Pupil Premium (PP) strategy, and to CW on his Health and Safety and contract work which have been invaluable.
- Ofsted's Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) has been shared with governors. It is a very positive report with Langtree scoring in the top 20% of schools for every category. **The number of suspensions is high, is that a concern?** Yes, but it is defensible. Langtree has high standards; smoking, fighting, etc. will always be sanctioned by a suspension. CRo noted that there are clear, firm boundaries, but making sure that there is pastoral support and follow through is really important. **Persistent absence in Autumn 2020 was 12.8%, how does that compare with Autumn 2022?** In 2020 there were two pupils who were only in school for two hours a week, this skewed the results, the data for Autumn 2022 shows an improved picture. **During 2020/21 0% of teachers had at least one period of sickness absence, is that correct?** This data is not formally required to be monitored however, Langtree does now have a more robust tracking process and it will be monitored going forward.

5. Governance Updates

- a) Governance Review - Progress Update: AD, SB and JCu recently met with Lynne Fletcher from the NGA for a scoping meeting. A number of documents have been requested for review; these are being gathered. Lynne is preparing for the interviews of governors and key staff members, and plans to conclude the review process by February half term.
- b) Scheme of Delegation (SoD) Approval: the previous SoD has not been updated since 2016 and was quite lengthy, it referenced the Governors Handbook which has been updates several times since. AD has written a new SoD, modelled on the NGA template. This SoD is separate from the Finance SoD. **Should the Members column have ticks in it?** AD said that it is

important to recognise that while there are Members, they don't do anything different to Trustees. Governors agreed to leave the Members column blank. Governors approved the Scheme of Delegation and thanked AD for his hard work. It was agreed that, at the start of each academic year, the SoD would be reviewed at committee level alongside the committee terms of reference.

Action: JCu to coordinate uploading the SoD to the Governor's area of the school website.

- c) **Safeguarding Report:** VH informed governors that this report is an Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) document which schools must complete. Some areas of the report show that work is required, for example the Lettings policy needs to be more explicit, AB agreed to review the Lettings policy. Governors discussed 10.10 - Positive Handling/restraint and whether or not all staff should be trained on this. SB said that regular risk assessments are carried out, if there is a student with a high need then relevant staff would be trained appropriately. Currently there are no students at Langtree who pose this kind of risk.

Action: AB to review the Lettings policy.

PP Strategy Statement: The statement is almost finished but requires a little more finessing. It is similar to last year's report but with some good additions, particularly in terms of attendance, engagement with learning, building strong relationships with students and addressing barriers to academic progress. The statement will be circulated to governors next week.

Action: SB/CRo to circulate PP Strategy Statement.

SEND Report: SP recently met with Susannah Wood for a general review of SEND at Langtree and what's working/not working well, her report was circulated to governors prior to the meeting. SP noted that it would be useful to have a joint meeting between SEND and PP as there is a lot of cross over between the two. One of the main challenges nationally at the moment is the recruitment of Teaching Assistants. **Is there anything that is lacking at Langtree?** SP said that this was her first in-person meeting since covid and was more of a refresh, she will have a better insight going forward.

- d) **Proposal for new governor, Hayley Scott, to join FGB:** Hayley worked for the Metropolitan Police as a Forensic Practitioner (CSI) for 14 years. Four and a half years ago she set up a company called the Forensic Experience which runs educational and entertaining forensic events for children and adults in England. Hayley is also a university lecturer at Bucks New University where she runs the forensic studies modules. Governors unanimously voted Hayley onto the governing board. Hayley will join the P&C committee. **Action:** JCu to upload an updated Langtree Governing Body document to the school website.

6. Committee reports

Finance and General Purposes: Minutes of 14th November 2022 had been circulated.

- The key items discussed were the audit and also a budget update. The budget has been revised with the known factors; the surplus of £38,357 has changed to a £4,110 deficit. Deficits in later years are excessive and eat up reserves by 2025/26. The government have committed additional money to the education sector, details as to how this money will be spent will be provided in the near future. The current assumption is 2% income growth each year. Decisions on whether or not to take on a bulge year, and/or an alternative plan, will be taken in January when more should be known regarding planned government funding.

- The School Improvement Advisor recently visited, his thoughts were that Langtree is in a good financial position, especially compared to other schools. The government has also increased Capital funding, Langtree will receive an additional £14,000.
- The Financial SoD has been slightly re-formatted but with no change to content, it was circulated to governors prior to the FGB meeting. All governors approved the Financial SoD.
- The Risk Register was reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. It included one reduced risk level item and new entries to cover the risks from asbestos and possible intruders on the school site.
- **With the recent increases in interest rates, are there now better offerings for the money on account?** **Action:** AB to review the current offerings.
- Policies approved were: Emergency and Special Leave, Staff Grievance, Freedom of Information and Teaching Staff Pay. The Critical Incident Plan requires a substantial re-write and was therefore not approved, it may not be ready for the January 2023 meeting. The Support Staff Pay Policy has not yet been provided by OCC.

Curriculum and Standards: Minutes of 16th November 2022 had been circulated.

- Mark Smith (MS), Head of Science, presented an overview of Science. Biology was the strongest of the triple science subjects, girls performed better than boys. Chemistry results were the most disappointing, boys and girls performed comparably. MS continues to review Chemistry to improve outcomes, the syllabus has been re-ordered and, in lessons, there is more focus on thinking, and the ability to write formulae. In Physics, girls did less well than boys.
- SB said that post covid, each departments action plan has been developed, and their review has moved to the end of the academic year when teachers should have more time to work on them.
- Policies approved were: Careers programme, Online-Safety and ICT Acceptable Use, and Exams. The Target-Setting, Assessment and Reporting policy is still being worked on.

Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 15th November 2022 had been circulated.

- Internet safety was discussed; what Langtree teaches and when, and how the syllabus is communicated to parents.
- Ina Thorburn has been recruited as the new PP Champion, taking over from Annie Temple who has been doing a great deal of additional work in the time it has taken to appoint.
- The Mental Health survey will use the same questions as last year so that progress can be tracked. The survey will not be anonymised this will allow comparisons to be drawn across gender, age, PP, etc.
- Staff well-being was discussed - whether it was monitored and what was provided for staff to help their well-being.
- Policies approved were: Relationships, Sex and Education, and the Complaints policy.

Drama Studio update

- JC was not in attendance and therefore unable to provide an update on the Drama Studio. This item will be carried forward to the next FGB Agenda.

Approval of statutory policies

- The Careers programme had been reviewed and approved by the C&S committee. A discussion ensued regarding the fact that the programme refers to documents which are quite dated and should Langtree be looking to model more recent practices? SB said that Langtree achieves at least the minimum standard ie Gatsby Benchmarks, the provision at Langtree has evolved positively in recent times. The Careers programme was approved by the full governing board.
- The Teaching Staff Pay policy is an OCC model policy, it has been reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. The Teaching Staff Pay policy was approved by the full governing board.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 26th January, 7:00pm

Finally, AD thanked SB and all governors for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:08

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 8th December 2022:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
2.2	Admissions policy has gone public consultation, waiting to hear further		Ongoing
5.2	Upload the FGB Scheme of Delegation to the school website	JCu	ASAP
5.2	Committees to review the FGB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September 2023
5.3	Review the Lettings policy with Safeguarding in mind	AB	January 2023
5.3	Circulate the PP Strategy	SB	16/12/2022
5.4	Update/upload Langtree School Governing Body 2022-23 document	JCu	ASAP
	Report Online Concerns within the Headteacher's report	SB	Ongoing
6.1	Review if there is a better offering for Langtree's money on account	AB	ASAP
6.5	Approved Policies to go on school website, where appropriate: Child Protection and Safeguarding	JCu	ASAP
	Include Drama Studio update as standing item on FGB agendas	JCu	Ongoing