



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 9th May 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Deborah Allen (DA)	Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting
Simon Bamford (SB)	Sarah Parish (SP)
Ben Bradbury (BB)	Catherine Roche (CRo)
Alan Broomhead (AB)	Hayley Scott (HS)
Linda Burton (LB)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)	Clive Watts (CW)

Apologies:

Kathryn Foster (KF)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)
Lucy Phipps (LP)
Christine Reeves (CRe)
Victoria Vaughan (VV)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JCu) – Clerk

Trustee challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

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

2. ATB meeting, 14th March 2024

- 2.1.** ATB minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed by AD and filed in school.
- 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: SP noted that she has arranged a meeting with Susannah Wood, SENCO, to discuss some of the SEND questions that have been raised recently by Trustees. **Action:** SP will provide a report from her meeting with Susannah at the July ATB meeting.

Signed

Date

3. Headteacher's Section: SB presented the report which had previously been circulated.

Discussion raised the following points:

- Year 11s have started their public exams; they have been well supported by staff with the usual plethora of revision sessions and help. This cohort seems to lack the same work ethic of previous years, they appear to be a little complacent.
- A Year 8 student was very close to being permanently excluded for failing to follow Langtree's most basic expectations, the child has now started at another mainstream school. **Did the child have any special needs? Do we have a sense of failing those needs?** CW, who was selected for the Permanent Exclusion panel hearing, said that, after reading the notes, he felt that the school could have done no more for the pupil.
- The annual Stakeholder Survey for staff, students and parents, will take place again this year. Kirkland Rowell have been selected to undertake the survey; paying for this service means that the results can be benchmarked against averages for other schools. The results will be shared with Trustees at the July ATB meeting.
- Admissions: The number of pupils on role is fairly stable. A new year 8 student will be joining us after a successful appeal. A year 7 student who left Langtree now wants to return but there is no space for her. A year 9 school refuser has decided to home educate, this is after only attending Langtree for 2 days over a 3-month period.
- Headline data is now available on the DfE attendance tracking tool. Generally speaking, attendance is improving - absence, and persistent absence are declining.
- **The HT report notes that there were 185 Reports of Concern, this sounds like a large number, is it?** Every single Report of Concern (RoC) is included, it therefore is not a large number, it is consistent with previous years.
- **There are currently 22 students with an EHCP, 2 of these are in year 11 and therefore leaving this year, but there are 11 new year 7 students with an EHCP starting in September - approximately a 40% increase. It is down to Langtree to find the extra provision required. The burden on the school is tremendous, can Langtree limit the number of EHCP students?** SB said that it is a legal requirement that, when an EHCP child names a particular school, the school must admit them. Susannah is working through the likely additional requirements for September but there is no guarantee that her forecast is reality – often when a child transitions up to secondary school they need a different type of help than they did at primary school. **Is there an idea of the number of children coming through from years 5, 4, etc?** SB said that it is something they will look into. CRo said that it would be good to educate ourselves and look at what other schools are doing to accommodate the increase in SEN children. SB said that they have been trying to recruit 3-4 Teaching Assistants (TAs) but have only managed to find 1 ½ so far.
- Huge thanks to all of the Trustees involved with the various panel meetings that have taken place over the last few weeks. Also, thank you to those Trustees who attended the Open Day.

4. Trustee Approval

- a) Proposal for new Trustee to join the Trustee Board – Martina Platts. Unfortunately, Martina was unable to join this meeting due to a prior engagement but her CV had been circulated prior to the meeting, Martina also attended the Trustee Open Day and met a number of Trustees then. Trustees unanimously voted Martina onto the Trustee Board. Martina will sit on the Curriculum & Standards Committee.

5. Trustee Updates

- a) **Staff Trustee:** Ben Bradley, Head of Music, was voted in as Staff Trustee on 22nd April 2024. Ben will sit on the Curriculum & Standards Committee.
- b) **Committee Changes:** There are some upcoming changes to committee memberships, in addition, some experienced Trustees are looking to step down from their roles within the next twelve months. AD has had conversations with various Trustees, notes of anticipated changes were circulated prior to the meeting. A clear succession plan is in place to ensure that the depth and breadth of knowledge and experience continues.
- c) **External Governance Review update:** An update on the status of the EGR was circulated prior to the meeting. Of the 61 recommendations made, 60 have either been actioned or are in progress. A final update will be provided at the July 2024 ATB meeting.
Action: Final EGR update at July ATB meeting.
- d) **Langtree Academy Trust Strategic Planning Framework:** The Strategic Framework session with Ed Vainker took place on 14th November. To create focus for the board AD has distilled the Strengths and Weaknesses from Ed's work, alongside working through guidance from the DfE, ESFA and NGA, and created Strategic Aims for Langtree to be posted to the school website. The Strategic Aims were circulated prior to the meeting.
Action: Trustees to review the Strategic Aims and provide feedback to AD by 14th June.
- e) **Policies/Staff Handbook:** There has been some ongoing concern that the new Staff Handbook, introduced in October 2023, was not a suitable replacement for 9 noted policies. The Clerk has reviewed the Handbook against the relevant policies and concluded that, while the Handbook is a useful overview for staff, there is not enough content for it to simply replace a detailed policy. Ben Bradley noted that, as a new staff member, the Handbook has been helpful to him. Discussion followed and it was agreed that the 9 policies should not be retired. Future reviews of the 9 policies would also need to include a review of the relevant section of the Handbook to ensure that they continue to be in line with one another. Since the meeting, Carolyn Ventress (School Business Manager) has agreed with this approach, she is in talks with the HR provider to find a better solution going forward.
- f) **Trustee Panels & Hearings:** There has been a huge amount of work involved for Trustees who agreed to sit on the various panels. AD thanked those Trustees for the tremendous amount of effort and hours they have put in. CRo noted that valuable learning has come out of the panel meetings. CW said that the recent exclusion panel will meet to debrief and review the exclusion policy and process. **Action:** CW to ensure the Exclusion panel debrief takes place and report any recommendations at the July ATB meeting.
- g) **Trustee training:** Trustees were reminded to record any relevant training on the training log within the Google Drive. The Clerk to check the name and location of the training log and circulate to Trustees to encourage its use. In addition, the link to the Trustee Training Programme will be re-circulated. Trustee Training will be a standing item on each ATB agenda going forward. AD also noted that VH does a large amount of work with the Trustee Induction training, this will need to be picked up by someone else once VH steps down from the Board. **Action:** Include Trustee Training as a standing agenda item, circulate links to the Trustee Training Record and Trustee Training Programme.
- h) **Open Day:** Thank you to all of the Trustees who attended the Open Day, it was really great to meet the students, and was an informative experience. A number of issues were raised. JSR said that, in the past, notes on key findings had been written.
Action: AD to write up the key findings from his focus group.

6. Committee Reports

Finance and General Purposes: Minutes of 25th April 2024 had been circulated.

- At the March ATB meeting it was noted that a small deficit of £9,000 for financial year 2023/24 was expected however, as at 30th April, the forecast is a £27,500 surplus. This is compared to an initial budget of £35,000 surplus. The five-year forecast is also looking much healthier than the budget approved in summer 2023.
- As already mentioned, there will be 11 students with EHCP's starting in September, costs for these students will be added into the budget, as well as some top-up funding. This is a potential financial risk to the school but not one that can be mitigated. Discussions regarding an additional member of Pastoral Team staff are ongoing and need to be finalised.
- Unfortunately, the CIF bid was not successful. It is believed that schools with RAAC were prioritised, and also that Langtree's bid was perhaps too large a project. A solution to the science labs issues now needs to be found – there is one fully working lab and three that are only partly working. **Can the bid be rolled forward to next year?** Yes, but it will need to be altered. A more holistic plan regarding the labs and expansion will be sought, SB and Carolyn are working on the plan. Other options, such as grants, are also being considered, the Wolfson bid will be submitted again in June.
- A free review of how the budget is spent has been offered by an SRMA consultant; this offer will likely be taken up.
- There have been a few issues with the cleaning contractor, Carolyn is working through this.
- Due to new information, the Pensions Appeal discussed at the March ATB meeting has been referred back to school for further review.
- Policies: The recent staff grievance that took place prompted the grievance panel to re-draft the grievance policy, this work is ongoing. It was recommended by the EGR that Langtree have a Trustee Expense policy, there is now one in place. **Would Well-being at Work be a more appropriate name for the Stress at Work policy?** **Action:** AB to update policy name to Well-being at Work.
CW noted that having background information and/or training on the policy subject matter is really helpful when reviewing policies. He prompted Trustees to be mindful of the purpose of the policy when reviews take place.
- Submissions to ESFA: There were none.
- Policies reviewed and approved: Charging & Remissions, Data Protection, First Aid, Stress at Work, Trustee Expenses, Write off.

Curriculum and Standards: Minutes of 29th April 2024 had been circulated.

- Committee changes: Sarah Parish and Lucy Phipps are moving to the Pastoral & Community committee. New Trustees Ben Bradley and Martina Platts will be joining the Curriculum & Standards committee.
- Ben Bradley provided an update on the Music department and its progress. Some of the things they are working on are: encouraging PP students' involvement in music, creating a new development plan, devising a new music curriculum, and promoting the study of GCSE Music to students. **Are there any special needs students who require additional support to access the music curriculum?** Each SEN student is very

different, lessons are planned around them. Students do not routinely receive TA support in music as support is often targeted in subjects with higher literacy needs.

- SB provided the committee with a data review. It was useful to get a snapshot of where things stand with an up-to-date RAG rating. Committee trustees noted their concern that the year 7 'Attitude to Learning' is low so early in their Langtree career.
- SB gave an update on preparing the year 11s for their public exams and voiced concern over their lack of work ethic.
- SB outlined the year 10 Options process, most of the students secured all four of their choices.
- Policies reviewed and approved: Curriculum.

Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 24th April 2024 had been circulated.

- Attendance, behaviour, exclusions and safeguarding reports were reviewed. Some time was spent on how covid has affected behaviour, attendance, etc. Y9 has worse behaviour than other year groups, years 7 and 8 suffer from a lack of resilience; this will show up in absenteeism and behaviour reports.
- The results from the November 2023 Well-being Survey were discussed. The performance and workload of the allocated school nurse was also noted, in addition to their expertise and excellent performance. Unfortunately, the most recent nurse has been off sick for a few weeks and there is again a reduced service; however, she is due back next week.
- The progress of vulnerable learners, including young carers (YC), was discussed. Discussion included which interventions work, benchmarking against other similar schools and best practice. School is trying to add a YC category into Satchel (new Management Information System), this is a work in progress.
- Policies reviewed and approved were: Attendance.

Drama Studio update

- Sadly, the article in the Henley Standard did not flush out the entrepreneur that we were seeking to take on the Drama Studio project. A more targeted approach is probably the next step - systematically calling on individuals/corporations. JC needs to develop a list of people; the architects may also be able to help with this. If the next phase doesn't produce any definitive steps forward then another more deliverable way of supporting the drama studio may be needed. **Could the Section 106 funding be used towards the build cost?** JC said that, while a new Drama Studio is an expansion, school feels that the science provision is a higher priority.

6. Approval of statutory policies

- The Data Protection Policy was reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. The only change was to include a section on the school promising not to sell trustee data on. CW noted that the policy states that CCTV signage has to be readable, for example by someone dropping a child off and questioned whether the signs complied with this requirement. DA said that it is best practice that individuals submitting Subject Access Requests (SARS) should provide identification; it was agreed that this would be included

in the policy. The Data Protection policy was approved by the Academy Trust Board.

- The First Aid in School Policy was reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. The bulk of the policy is unchanged, section 6.2, reportable injuries has been updated. The First Aid in School Policy was approved by the Academy Trust Board.

AOB

VH has kindly offered to host a garden party in July, further information will be provided.

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

Date of next meeting: Thursday 4th July, 7:00pm

ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 9th May 2024:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
2.2	SEND Meeting write up	SP	July 2024
5a	Amend Trustee Board document and upload to website	JCu	June 2024
5c	Final EGR update	AD	July 2024
5d	Review Strategic Aims, provide any feedback	All	14 June 2024
5f	Ensure Exclusion panel de-brief takes place, report findings at July ATB meeting	CW	July 2024
5g	Include Trustee Training as a standing item on each agenda going forward	JCu	Ongoing
5h	Write up key findings from Trustee Open Day Focus Group	AD	July 2024
6	Update title of Stress at Work policy to Well-being at Work	AB	ASAP
5a (From 01/24 mtg)	Formulate targeted training for weaker areas	JCu/AD	July 2024
5b (From 01/24 mtg)	Provide a summary of strategic findings from SLT's MAT visits	SB	July 2024
6.0	Approved Policies <i>to go on school website</i> : Attendance, Charging & Remissions, Curriculum and Data Protection	JCu	ASAP
	Committees to review the FGB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September