



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 4th July 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Simon Bamford (SB)	Martina Platts (MPI)
Ben Bradbury (BB)	Catherine Roche (CRo)
Alan Broomhead (AB)	Christine Reeves (CRe)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting	Victoria Vaughan (VV)
Kathryn Foster (KF)	Clive Watts (CW)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)	

Apologies:

Deborah Allen (DA)
Linda Burton (LB)
Sarah Parish (SP)
Lucy Phipps (LP)
Hayley Scott (HS)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JCu) – Clerk
Carolyn Ventress (CV) – School Business Manager

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, 9th May 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, there were no outstanding items.

Signed

Date

4. Trustee Approval

- a) School Improvement Plan (SIP): The top-level summary of the SIP had been circulated prior to the meeting. Langtree have bought into Kirkland Rowell's stakeholder survey; this will allow results to be benchmarked against the averages of other schools. There has been a slight hold up on the stakeholder survey due to admin delays, the hope is that it will be sent out this week. Trustees approved the SIP.
- b) School Budget 2024/25: This had been discussed at length at the June F&GP committee meeting, the minutes of which had been circulated. The F&GP committee approved the 2024/5 budget. AB called out the key assumptions made, some of these include:
 - i. Grant funding is down a little on the predicted figures but shouldn't cause a problem
 - ii. AWPU (income per student) increased by ~7% for this year. Inflation figures have been increased from 2 to 3%.
 - iii. Teacher's pension grant data has been confirmed, it is £15,500 less than expected.
 - iv. A new HR Administrator role is built into the budget.

The 2024/25 budget shows a small deficit; however, the 5-year budget is more positive than it has been in recent years. One of the main drivers for the deficit is additional TA costs due to the number of Year 7 EHCP students. The best approach for SEND and potential boost to staffing is being finalised. **Will the number of SEND children continue to increase in future years?** SB said that they have done some mapping from the feeder primary schools, indicators look like the increase in EHCP pupils is possibly an unusually high number for the upcoming year 7s only. **Are there any assumptions built into the budget for building work?** Not at the moment. The CIF bid will be re-submitted, there is also the Section 106 funding. Outside of these, any building work would be funded from the reserves. The Trustees approved the 2024/25 budget.

- c) Letter to Accounting Officer: AD drew Trustees attention to the Letter to the Accounting Officer which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Among a few other things, the letter notes that the ESFA aims to update the Academy Trust Handbook for the new academic year but that this has been delayed due to the general election.
- d) Langtree School Vision and Strategic Plan: This was submitted to trustees at the May ATB meeting. Trustees approved the Vision and Strategic plan.

Action: JCu to upload to the school website.

6. Committee Reports

- b) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 25th June 2024 had been circulated.
 - SB spoke about exams and Niki Smith, Exams Officer, and all of the great work that she does.
 - HS, as Careers Link, reported on Careers at Langtree. HS meets with Susannah Wood, Career Lead, every term. Langtree achieved 100% in 6 of the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks, which is slightly above average when compared with other Oxfordshire schools. Langtree is slightly penalised due to not providing A Level provision. Susannah is now moving away from the Careers Lead role; the position will be advertised. **There seems to be a lot of responsibility on the students to investigate careers, there is so much available to them, are they shown what to do/where to go?** SB said that they discuss careers during tutor time and are taken through what's available to them. Multiple careers related activities are being provided across all year groups.
 - Curriculum mapping was also discussed
 - Policies reviewed and approved: Early Careers Teacher

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

- On Friday 24th June a whole staff INSET day was held, with a focus on reviewing progress during this academic year and laying out priorities for the next. In addition to this there is a lot of CPD taking place, including SB and Charlotte Davis spending a day at Google Head Office in London to learn more about Ed Tech and AI.
- Admissions: There has been a slight dip in year 10 admissions, this is quite normal. **Are you aware that they may be more students coming from private education due to possible changes in government policies/fees?** SB said that they have seen a slow drift so far but nothing dramatic. Admissions into year 7 are full but the waiting list is not huge due to it being a bulge year.
- Attendance has dropped off a little, believe this is due to year 11 sitting their exams. Attendance for years 7-10 is well ahead of where it was this time last year.
- Suspensions are roughly in line with where they have been for the past few years.
- Activity Week will take place 10-14th July, there will be four residential trips, and year 10 work experience. For students who stay at school there will be an external PE coach for 2 days, in addition to The Oratory kindly providing the use of their facilities. **How do Pupil Premium (PP) students access trips?** There are payment plans, PP students are subsidised by 50% and camp is fully subsidised.
- A summary of strategic findings from recent SLT MAT visits has been circulated to Trustees. SB said that, if there were to be a change in political thinking then there are some MATs that he would feel comfortable with Langtree joining. Exploration work continues.

5. Trustee Updates

- a) **SEND report:** SP has written a report on her recent SEND meeting with Susannah Wood but, unfortunately, is unable to attend the July ATB meeting to discuss it and answer any questions. VH said that there is to be a new Assistant SENCO and, hopefully, more TAs will be recruited. There are more SEND children at Langtree than most comparable schools, this is mostly due to Langtree's excellent reputation. VH said that one concern is that TA absence is higher than the rest of the staff, this disrupts consistency for students and also increases the workload of the other TAs. To help build TA morale it was suggested that Trustees periodically attend the SEND weekly team meetings to show support. Discussion regarding CAT scores and their use ensued. BB said that the scores should be used by teachers as a rough guide and not be prescriptive. **Is the Literacy programme only available to SEND students?** No, it is offered to all students who it is felt would benefit. **Are SEND students and their parents asked for feedback on how things are going?** Yes, and EHCP students, as part of their plan, have an annual meeting. **Action:** As there were a number of questions it was felt that SP should discuss the report at the October ATB meeting.
- b) **Annual Planner:** The creation of an Annual Planner was one of the recommendations from the NGA External Governance Review. It is a timetable of important events to be considered each term and should be a helpful reminder for committee chairs when creating their meeting agendas. It is a work in progress, there will undoubtedly be updates to the Planner.
- c) **Training and Reporting:** The October 2023 Trustee Skills Audit highlighted a few areas where Trustees felt they lacked knowledge. In response to this, two modules – Developing

Strategy, and School Finance - have been identified as useful short courses to develop the perceived needs of trustees. Details of these modules are included within '5d. Trustee Training, July 2024' document saved in the July ATB Google folder. It is expected that all Trustees complete one new training module every long term which equals to three per academic year. All completed training should be logged, this can either be done by Trustees, or provide the information to JCu.

Going forward, Safeguarding training will now be done via the NGA module: 'Essential Safeguarding for Governors/Trustees', instead of Smartlog. This should be completed every two years, the competition certificate should be sent to JCu.

Finally, Trustee visits to school for activities, such as a concert, do not need to be recorded but all formal visits regarding Link role meetings, etc. should be recorded.

HS has kindly volunteered to take on Trustee Induction training from VH who has done a sterling job. The Board is seeking a volunteer to take over the role of Training & Development Link Trustee from VH, please let AD know if you are interested or would like to know more about the role. **Action:** AD to provide an update on this vacancy at the October ATB meeting.

- d) **Trustee training (standing item):** See c) above
- e) **Exclusion Panel de-brief report:** The exclusion panel met to debrief on the process and procedures from the recent permanent exclusion (which was rescinded). Recommendations for modifications to the Exclusion Policy were made, the updated policy will be reviewed at the next P&C committee meeting.
- f) **Review 2024 Objectives:** At the beginning of 2024 the board governance objectives for the calendar year were discussed. These have all either been met or are in progress, to be completed by December 2024.
- g) **External Governance Review – Final Progress Report:** All of the recommendations and resulting actions, except for one, are now concluded. The one outstanding recommendation is to have three non-trustee Members, it is hoped that this will be achieved by December 2025.
- h) **Meeting Dates – 2024/25 Academic Year:** A provisional set of meeting dates had been circulated prior to the meeting. These were discussed and changes are required.
Action: CRo to inform of preferred dates, JCu to update and re-circulate.

6. Committee Reports

Finance and General Purposes: Minutes of 18th June 2024 had been circulated.

- The current forecast is that the school year will end with a budget surplus of £43,700, compared with the budgeted surplus of £35,000. Within this was a £27,500 reduction in energy costs and £5,257 increase in revenue from solar power.
- Encouraging developments within catering, the new account manager seems to be doing a good job. **Are pupils and staff enjoying the food more?** Sales have increased which implies that they are.
- Investments made within the banking platform are earning more interest than in previous years. The additional income will be reinvested for use as and when needed.
- Benchmarking was given due consideration. Generally, Langtree sits in the middle of the pack. There were red flags on both administrative supplies and educational supplies but reasonable explanations for these were provided and are therefore not of concern.
- Langtree is looking into paying for an 'Options Review': A building surveyor will review the

current use of buildings and provide a steer on whether changes would be beneficial.

- There are three projects for internal scrutiny: Financial controls around trips & visits, SRMA budget spending review, and pupil census investigation.
- Submissions to ESFA: There were none.
- Policies reviewed and approved: Grievance procedure, H&S policy, Performance Management. **Does the Performance Management policy include support staff as well as teaching staff?** Yes. **The policy notes that all staff, including support staff, have an appraisal, is this true in practice?** SB said that it is improving and developing but it is not quite where it should be yet. There has been a lot of progress with the management of support staff and continued improvement is noted in the SIP.

Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 19th June 2024 had been circulated.

- KF has kindly offered to prepare an article for publications in the local area regarding events taking place at Langtree.
- Attendance is meeting its target for students who are intended to be in school. Staff are doing all they can to get persistent absentees into school.
- On-call notifications have increased in comparison to the previous term but the number of children going on to SLT detentions remains the same. The increase in notifications is the result of a new, electronic, reporting system which is easier to use. It appears staff are using on-call earlier and it is acting as a preventative measure. This is being monitored.
- The school nurse is now in school once a week, the pastoral staff are extremely happy to have her back. The scope for whether a school counsellor is required is still on hold pending more information regarding the reorganisation of the School Nursing Service. SB said that the School Nursing Service is putting a triage system in place which will be available 24/7, in addition to having the school nurse one day a week.
- One formal parent complaint has been received; this is being dealt with in line with the complaint policy.
- Policies reviewed and approved were: Collective Worship, Behaviour, Designated Teacher for Children We Care For.

Drama Studio update

- Unfortunately, the recent article in The Henley Standard did not produce any leads. The plan now is to generate a list of individuals/corporations and systematically call on them. It would also be good to draw up an alternative route, a Plan B, for the drama provision at Langtree using the current facilities, the 'Options Review' noted in 6a could also be helpful.
Action: review if this should be added to the October ATB agenda

7. Approval of statutory policies

- The Behaviour Policy was reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. **How many teachers are trained to properly restrain a student?** SB said that the chance of a trained person being on hand when needed is remote. Restraining students is so rare that we don't see the need for it. **Within Sanctions there is no time frame included, an afterschool detention shouldn't be the same day, more clarity is required.** SB said that the sanction

is more effective if it is done as soon as possible. If parents can be contacted and agree to the sanction then we would like to have the option of keeping a student after school on the same day, but this would not be done without permission. The Behaviour Policy was approved by the ATB.

- Early Careers Teacher (ECT) Policy was reviewed and approved by the C&S committee. The ECT Policy was approved by the ATB.
- Health & Safety (H&S) Policy was reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. Only very minor changes were made. The H&S Policy was approved by the ATB.

AOB

VH reminded Trustees of the end of year supper party on the 16th July, please let her know by 11th July if you will be attending.

SB noted his thanks to Trustees for all of their help and support throughout the academic year.

Finally, AD thanked SB and all trustees for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:10

Date of next meeting: 17th October, 7:00pm

ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 4th July 2024:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
4d	Upload Vision and Strategic Plan to school website	JCu	July 2024
5a	Add ATB agenda item: SEND report discussion	JCu/SP	Oct 2024
5c	Interest in Training & Development Link Trustee to be sent to AD. AD to report update on vacancy at October ATB.	All/AD	Oct 2024
5g	Include Trustee Training as a standing item on each agenda going forward	JCu	Ongoing
5h	Inform AD/JCu of preferred meeting dates. JCu to update schedule and re-circulate.	CRo/JCu	July 2024
7.0	Approved Policies <i>to go on school website</i> : Behaviour, ECT, H&S	JCu	ASAP
	Committees to review the FGB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September