



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 12th December 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present:

Deborah Allen (DA)

Emma Ashley (EA)

Simon Bamford (SB)

Linda Burton (LB)

Alan Broomhead (AB)

Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting

Kathryn Foster (KF)

Vicki Hamilton (VH)

Andy Lowe (AL)

Sarah Parish (SP)

Martina Platts (MP)

Catherine Roche (CRo)

Christine Reeves (CRe)

Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)

Hayley Scott (HS)

Clive Watts (CW)

Apologies:

Victoria Vaughan (VV)

In attendance:

Jo Cundy (JC) – Clerk

Carolyn Ventress – 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, 17th October 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. CRo has written to 5 corporations and is waiting to hear back from two of them. KPMG confirmed that Langtree is on their list but laptop refresh is not scheduled until 2026.

Signed

Date

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

- Questions were asked about home educating students and the process of informing the Local Authority (LA). SB said that once parents inform school that their child will be home educated they are given a 2 week 'cooling off' period, after which the LA is informed. Langtree will do everything they can to keep a child educated at school. ***If a child had been referred as a safeguarding case, would you take further action?*** SB said that the appropriate teams at the LA would already be aware of any issues.
- Has there been any progress with finding a SENCo assistant? A very experienced TA has agreed to take on a lot of the work that Susannah was doing.
- The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was discussed at the October ATM meeting and also at the Trustee Open Day. The ATB approved the SIP.
- The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement has been reviewed by both the Curriculum & Standards (C&S) and Pastoral Community committees, it was circulated to the board prior to the meeting. SB said that the statement is a review of the previous year's PP performance; it is a costed, evidence-based plan. Among other things it is used to inform the SIP and helps bring about improvements for PP students. ***At what point do you review performance against the plan?*** SB said that it is reviewed three times per year. ***How do you know that progress is being made?*** The statement is assessed against the SIP. P8 results show that progress needs to be made and the gap further reduced. CRo noted that it would be good for the P&C committee to have access to more transparent reporting, a greater understanding of barriers to learning, etc. would be helpful. CRo asked if the board could hear more on PP in the spring term.
Action: Add PP presentation to Feb/March ATB meeting.

4. Safeguarding

VH said that Sarah Burman has completed Langtree's safeguarding audit and VH has spent some time reviewing it. The document was circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. ***Is there a timescale as to when electronic signing in is introduced at Langtree?*** SB said that a lot of research has taken place, it looks like Langtree is moving towards electronic signing in but there is no definite timescale, but possibly by the end of this academic year. VH said that feedback from one child at the Trustee Open day was that they hadn't experienced a student lockdown since starting at Langtree. SB said that the decision was made to only practise a lockdown every 2 years so as not to create unnecessary anxiety but this could be reviewed, if needed. Trustees approved the Safeguarding audit for submission to OCC.

5. Trustee Approval

- a) **Re-appointment of Trustee - Catherine Roche.** Trustees and Members unanimously agreed to appoint CRo as a Trustee for a further four years, her new term of office will start on 28th January 2025.
- b) **Proposal for new trustee to join the Trustee Board** – Emma Ashley's personal statement had been circulated prior to the meeting. Introductions were made. Trustees and Members unanimously voted Emma onto the Trustee Board. **Action:** JC to update

Langtree Trustee Board and Register of Business Interests documents on the school website.

- c) **Langtree Board Objectives 2024/25** – Prior to the meeting AD had circulated the 2024/25 Trust Board Governance Objectives. Trustees approved the 2024/25 Objectives.
- d) **CIF Bid proposal for Science Laboratory Refurbishment** – A summary of the CIF bid had been circulated prior to the meeting. This highest priority project seeks CIF funding for Langtree to complete the refurbishment of two science labs which have multiple condition defects and are presenting the Academy with increasing health and safety risks due to non-compliance. The total cost of the work is £501,921. To achieve the maximum points from the assessment process Langtree must contribute £150,567 (30%) towards the refurbishment costs. The contribution would come from '106 Funding', approval for use of this towards the refurbishment has been granted by OCC. Trustees approved the CIF Bid proposal.
- e) **Pay Committee Terms of Reference** – these had been circulated prior to the meeting. Trustees approved the Pay Committee Terms of Reference.

LB joined the meeting at 8pm.

6. Trustee Updates

- a) **Trustee training** (standing item) – AD reminded Trustees that there is still a vacancy for the Training and Development Link Trustee, HS has very kindly taken on the induction part of the role. Also, with VH stepping down as Trustee, the board is now looking for a Safeguarding Link Trustee. VH reminded Trustees that Safeguarding training must be done every 2 years and to please forward any certificates to the Clerk and to also log any and all relevant training.
- b) **School Improvement Partner (SIP)** AD explained that the SIP is someone who partners the HT, acting as a mentor. The SIP also helps provide an objective review of HT performance. The previous SIP retired at the end of 2023. Interviews to find a new SIP were held last year but a suitable partner was not found, the search continues.

7. Committee Reports

- a) **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 28th November 2024 had been circulated. CRo chaired item 7a.
 - Discussion of the recent audit took up a large part of the committee meeting.
 - The budget position for 24/25 is currently showing an in-year deficit of £150,000 vs £27,000 originally budgeted. School is yet to hear from the Government regarding the increase in funding announced in the autumn budget. Areas such as Capital funding, SEND and NI rates are cause for concern.
 - The flood in September has caused significant damage to the Sports Hall floor, this is being investigated. RPA (insurance) have responded well to lingering issues. The proposed work will take place in Summer 2025.
 - It is expected that two Internal Scrutiny reports will take place in 2024/25, to cover procurement and site compliance. ***It would be good to have a longer-term view of the site, will the site compliance project feed into GEMS?*** For GEMs, a complete audit of

the buildings and facilities must to be updated every year, this in itself can highlight priorities. A surveyor is also conducting an Options Appraisal to assess the site.

- Policies approved were: Whistleblowing, Reserves & Investment. Freedom of Information, Pay Policy for Teachers, and Pay Policy for Support Staff were all deferred to the January committee meeting.

b) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 26th November 2024 had been circulated.

- Kate Shakespeare, Head of English, talked about how the curriculum is evolving.
- The reading intervention programme, such as Hackney Literacy Programme, has been very successful. Struggling readers are also assigned reading buddies which has been a great success with 56% lifting 2+ grades.
- English 2.0, a more accessible GCSE qualification, will be offered from 2025.
- The PP Strategy Statement was discussed at length.
- Policies approved were: Careers Statement

Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 27th November 2024 had been circulated.

- Some Teaching Assistants still do not have the necessary computer hardware, such as Chrome books, and are having to use their mobile phones to access work with students.
- Stakeholder survey results were discussed. It was agreed that having the ability to benchmark with other schools was useful. SB said that the external provider was expensive and restrictive but perhaps a blended approach could be used going forward.
- Behaviour and safeguarding were discussed.
- The school nurse is now dedicating 2 full days a week at Langtree; she is building a good relationship with the students.
- The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement was discussed at length. Some progress has been made with the P8 gap between PP and non-PP students which has narrowed slightly suggesting that efforts are starting to deliver results.
- An enormous thank you to VH for her leadership and huge contribution to the committee!
- Policies approved were: Relationships & Sex Education, and Attendance. Supporting Students with Medical Conditions requires further work and was deferred to January.

8. Approval of statutory policies

- The Careers policy had been reviewed and approved by the C&S committee as well as HS, Careers Link Trustee. The policy was approved by the ATB.

9. Trustee Open Day - CR

During the Open Day Trustees had a good session with SB discussing the SIP, they then split into two rooms, each with a small group of Student Council representatives. Some of the topics covered/observations made were:

- Options: There is a good range of subjects, split between academic and vocational. A lengthy discussion about the Citizenship and Religious Studies subjects was held.
- Careers: There was little understanding about work experience, e.g. timing of it, help from

school to find a placement, etc. Students found the Careers Day very helpful.

- School council: Students felt there was scope for improvement, such as having input into the meeting agenda. SB said that the student council have only had one meeting so far, which was to outline their brief, the scope will develop. Students also said that they would like Trustees to attend their meetings.
- Safeguarding: Students reported that they generally felt safe in school. Some of the younger students mentioned that they are sometimes verbally bullied by older students, particularly when they know teachers aren't around, such as in the toilets.
- Students reported that they were happy to have phones away during school but had issues accessing their timetables. They also noted that there were some inconsistencies with how teachers dealt with students who had their phones out.

AOB

Careers update: HS reported that Langtree had achieved 100% in six out of eight of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Langtree is slightly penalised due to not providing A Level provision. Careers Advisors, Adviza Partnership has gone into liquidation, this has had a knock-one effect on students; cost effective alternatives are being reviewed. Despite this, students are still being provided career opportunities with mock interviews and work experience. Students who don't have parents with work contacts may struggle to find an appropriate work placement however there is a central bank of resources and the PP Champion also helps where possible. Langtree does put on a programme at school for students who can't find a placement. SB added that he has recently met with someone who is interested in the vacant Lead Careers role, he is hopeful that the position will be filled soon.

Finally, AD thanked SB and all trustees for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 21:12

Date of next meeting: 6th February, 7:00pm

ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 12th December 2024:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
3	Add PP Presentation to Feb/March ATB meeting	JC	March
5b	Update Langtree Trustee Board and Register of Business Interests documents on school website	JC	January
5g	Include Trustee Training as a standing item on each agenda going forward	JC	Ongoing
8	Approved Policies <i>to go on school website:</i> Careers, Whistleblowing	JC	ASAP
	Committees to review the ATB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September