



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,  
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:**

Deborah Allen (DA)	Martina Platts (MP)
Emma Ashley (EA)	Catherine Roche (CRo) - – Chair of Meeting
Simon Bamford (SB)	Christine Reeves (CRe)
Kathryn Foster (KF)	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Andy Lowe (AL)	Clive Watts (CW)
Sarah Parish (SP)	

**Apologies:**

Alan Dunstan (AD)  
Hayley Scott (HS)  
Victoria Vaughan (VV)

**In attendance:**

Jo Cundy (JC) – 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, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

- 2.1.** ATB minutes which had been circulated were approved as an accurate record. The minutes will be signed by CRo and filed in school.
- 2.2.** Review of Actions/matters arising. Unless otherwise discussed, assigned actions had been completed. Safe Forum provision: SB noted that a Safe Forum is about creating a culture, to feel empowered to call out when something doesn't feel right. Langtree offers a number of options. Confidential 'Student RoCs' (Report of Concern) which everyone has access to. This takes the form of a Google Form, accessible on the website. Any student can submit a RoC which is reviewed / monitored by the Safeguarding Team.

Signed .....

Date .....

The system is well used, there are about 600 student reports each year, ranging from lack of toilet paper to serious and concerning online behaviour. Submissions are monitored for any particular trends or patterns. There is also a Staff equivalent. Regular assemblies are held which address topical subjects. Student Forums are a safe space for anybody who wants to raise an issue. Anti Bullying ambassadors are also in place, and regular well-being surveys are carried out. Finally, the PSHE programme is adapted every year with age-appropriate topics. ***CW referred to the recent High Court ruling on transgender and that trans girls/boys should not be allowed to use the toilet or changing facilities of the sex that they identify with. CW asked what Langtree's provision is?*** SB said that there is a gender neutral toilet accessible to all.

Risk Register: EA said that she hasn't received any feedback from the recent committee meetings regarding their Risk Register review, please let her know any comments once the Register has been discussed.

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

- Public exams started last Thursday, so far they have gone well, students have been following expectations. There was an issue with the Travel & Tourism cohort who unfortunately had to retake an exam that they already sat in January. The exam board changed the specification and the students had to take the exam after they had submitted their coursework. ***What checks and balances are in place to prohibit this from happening again?*** The Exams Officer takes responsibility for the error. She is usually fastidious with these things, it was just human error. ***Was it because she has too much on?*** I don't believe so, it was just something that was unfortunately missed.
- ***Persistent absence has improved; do you know the reasons why?*** SB said that the 23/24 cohort year 11s contained a relatively high number of persistent absentees who were included in the March but not the May report due to they being on study leave.
- ***There were six sexual harassment incidents, are there any trends?*** SB said that none of them happened in school. Two of the incidents were the same student, he doesn't believe that the incidents are linked. ***Is the racial harassment number higher than last time?*** Yes, it involved a number of Year 7s. SB noted he believes it is connected to something students had seen online, they didn't realise the connotations attached to it.
- ***There are a number of suspensions due to vaping, are students immediately suspended for this? Is there a better way of dealing with it?*** Students are automatically suspended if they are found vaping, or are in a group with others that are vaping. ***Vaping is so addictive, is the expectation too high to believe students can go all day without having a vape?*** There has only been 1 repeat offender, we believe they can manage a day without it. It is important to have a deterrent and clear rules. Support and help is offered, including a referral to meet with the school nurse who offers patches, etc. Vaping and the dangers of vaping is also covered in the PSHE programme.
- ***Has the staffing of key roles, and vulnerability if someone were to leave, been assessed?*** Yes, but only anecdotally, everybody is key in a small school. We have a

contingency plan for all key members of staff; it is reviewed by the finance committee periodically.

- SB noted thanks to HS who has offered to do another forensic science evening for staff free of charge.

#### 4. Trustee Updates

- **CIF Bid:** EA said that Langtree hasn't yet heard the result of the bid, but it is due imminently. The contractor is progressing well to deliver on the science lab work, the plan is to start as soon as the public exams finish and will take place over the summer holidays. *Have the SEND Team reviewed the plans for the science labs with regards to any disadvantaged groups?* SB said that accessibility is a statutory requirement so this factor has been considered. **Action:** SB to send science lab plans to Oxfordshire County Council Access Team for their thoughts, and also to Langtree's SENDCo.
- **External Auditors Appointment:** An audit tender, led by Minerva, took place. Seven auditors were offered to bid, three actually put in a bid. The existing auditors Cooper Parry came out the cheapest and best overall. The total contract price will increase but it will be a three-year flat rate, this was considered a positive outcome given the general upward trend towards audit costs in the market. *There were some criticisms previously of Cooper Parry, have these been resolved?* Yes, Carolyn (Business Manager) raised the issues and they have all been addressed. Members are required to approve the appointment, this is likely to take place before the next ATB meeting. **Action:** Members to meet and review/approve recommendation to appoint External Auditor
- **Trustee Training:** In HS's absence JC said that there is no outstanding training; a few refreshers will need to be taken in the Autumn term. Trustees thanked HS for doing an excellent job keeping on top of trustee training.

#### 5. Committee Reports

a) **Finance and General Purposes:** Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 had been circulated.

- EA reported that, as at P7, the in-year deficit for 2024/25 is forecast to be £85,388. This reflects the new NI rates being applied. There had been a slight oversight on the CSB Grant whereby some income was missed, this has now been corrected.
- The 2025/26 budget was discussed, including the anticipated increase in teachers' and support staff pay. *Suppliers fees will also have been hit by NI increases, are we expecting an uplift in these too?* EA said that normal inflation is being budgeted for, some things are going up but others, such as gas prices, are forecast to come down.
- The Benchmarking report was reviewed. Educational and Admin supplies seem high when compared to other similar schools. Carolyn is going to look into this and report back to the committee.
- The Internal Scrutiny report was discussed. There were 5 low, 1 advisory and 1 medium recommendation which have all been accepted.
- The Health & Safety report was reviewed. A lot of areas have improved due to various repairs done after flood damage which occurred during the winter storm.
- Policies approved were: Charging and Remissions, First Aid in Schools

- b) **Curriculum and Standards:** Minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025 had been circulated.
- JSR said that Debbie Lackey, Head of PE, spoke about Sports and PE at Langtree. Debbie was full of enthusiasm and positivity. Debbie reported that students are keen to get involved with extra-curricular sports and there has been lots of success against other schools.
  - About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Langtree students select PE at GCSE. In September a new vocational course, Sports Leadership, will be introduced which will offer a range of opportunities to develop leadership skills.
  - It was noted that the PE department has a high workload with the usual teaching and marking but also lots of fixtures and clubs after school.
  - The SEND policy was discussed: Sarah Parish, SEND Link Trustee, attended the meeting. All agreed that the policy is fit for purpose.
  - New GCSE Citizenship was introduced in September 2024 as an alternative to Religious Education. Interestingly, Citizenship has proved popular with boys, and RE with girls.
  - A review of tracking data on pupil progress and attainment will be done at another time.
  - Policies approved were: SEND
- c) **Pastoral & Community:** Due to various last minute scheduling conflicts this committee was unable to meet.

## 6. Approval of statutory policies

- The First Aid in Schools policy had been reviewed and approved by the F&GP committee. There were no major changes. The policy was approved by the ATB.
- The SEND policy had been reviewed and approved by the C&S committee. The policy was approved by the ATB. **How are Trustees monitoring the spend on SEND provision?** CRo said that the C&S and P&C committees hold joint responsibility for the policy. CRo suggested that the structure set out in 8.5 of the policy 'Evaluating the effectiveness of SEND provision' would be a useful structure for an annual report to trustees to better understand spend and its effectiveness. CRo added that, as part of this, it would be helpful to understand the profile of students' needs each year set out in line with the 4 x Areas of Need (Section 5.3). **Action:** SB to look at the current annual SEND report and consider if the structure can be updated in order to help with Trustee monitoring of effectiveness.

## 7. AOB Feedback from the Trustee Open Day

The two key focus areas for the Open Day were Langtree's Options process and the Careers programme. Trustees heard from staff responsible for those areas (Iain Wakefield, Careers Lead and Chris Nonweiler, Assistant Headteacher) and then followed up with focus groups with 2 x groups of students. Trustees reported that the Open Day was extremely productive and helpful and they were very impressed with all of the students that they met. Some of the key points are noted below.

- The year 9s commented that they liked the way Langtree organised the Options process, but would like more subjects offered. They found it difficult to decide which subjects to drop.

- The year 10 students said that they knew where to go to get Careers help and advice and that the interview day, while initially a bit daunting, was really worthwhile. Almost all students in the Group had already organised their work experience for this summer. All of the year 10 students said that they would, without question, recommend Langtree to others. The students were very proud of the school.
- When prompted to identify areas for improvement, students suggested the toilet facilities. They also noted that detentions were not always applied consistently by all teachers, and were sometimes for very minor offences such as a forgotten workbook.
- SB said that Langtree used to subscribe to Advizor for Career Guidance but, unfortunately, Advizor went into Administration. Langtree is reviewing what other provision can be put in place for next year.

Finally, CRo thanked SB and all trustees for their time and input, and closed the meeting at 20:57

**Date of next meeting:** 10<sup>th</sup> July, 7:00pm

**ACTIONS LIST from ATB meeting, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025:**

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
4	Send Science Lab plans to OCC Access Team and SENDCO for review re. Disadvantaged student groups	SB	June
4	Members to meet and review/approve recommendation to appoint External Auditor	AD	July
6	Review annual PP report with regards to Trustee monitoring	SB	July
	Include Trustee Training as a standing item on each agenda going forward	JC	Ongoing
	Approved Policies <i>to go on school website</i> : First Aid in Schools, SEND	JC	June
	Committees to review the ATB Scheme of Delegation at the start of the Academic year (alongside Terms of Reference)	Committees	September