



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Trustees of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School,
Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 11th December 2025 at 6.00 pm.**

Present:

Deborah Allen (DA) arrived at 18.38

Emma Ashley (EA)

Simon Bamford (SB)

Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Meeting

Kathryn Foster (KF)

Freya Garner (FG) left at 19.29

Andy Lowe (AL)

Sarah Parish (SP)

Catherine Roche (CRo)

Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)

Hayley Scott (HS)

Mark Taylor (MT)

Clive Watts (CW)

Apologies with Consent:

Dan Brooks (DB), Karen Brown (KB), Christine Reeves CRe)

In attendance:

Sarah Lonorgan (SL) – Clerk, Carolyn Ventress – School Business Manager

Trustee questions, challenges, and support are shown in red italics.

1. Introduction

- The Chair opened the meeting at 18.05 and welcomed new Trustees Freya Garner and Mark Taylor, as well as the School Business Manager Carolyn Ventress to the ATB.
- Apologies were accepted.
- Quorum was confirmed.
- The Chair invited items for Any Other Business (AOB), but none were raised.
- No material interests were declared by trustees for any agenda item.

2. Minutes of the previous ATB meeting, 16th October 2025

2a. The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record, signed by AD, and subsequently filed at the school.

2b. All actions were reviewed and confirmed as either completed or covered within the current agenda.

Signed

Date

3. Audited Annual Accounts 2024 – 25

- It was noted that the school had received a clean audit report from the auditors, with minimal findings and only minor points highlighted, which EA confirmed had already been addressed (timing of POs, supplier quotes, declarations of interest, staff ID).
- Trustees' responses were confirmed as included in the audit.
- Trustees unanimously approved the audited annual accounts.
- **Action:** SB and AD to sign off the accounts following the meeting.

4. Headteacher's Report:

- **Site Maintenance:** SB outlined a major structural issue with the Drama Studio ceiling, resulting in significant disruption to staff and student spaces including the staff room, IT support, reprographic areas, and the drama studio. It was noted that the required building works were unlikely to be rectified before the start of the new school year. SB expressed appreciation for the support from the School Business Manager, staff, students and parents; CV confirmed they were awaiting an engineer's report, and an emergency funding application was in progress.
- **"How was staff morale impacted when the staff had no staff room and were required to split up into smaller rooms?"** – SB confirmed that it has had an impact, but the staff and students were adapting well; no parental complaints had been received and the SLT were continuing to look for alternative solutions such as using the meeting room in the bungalow and exploring the viability of portacabins (high cost). It was noted that options were being explored in consultation with the unions and the staff.
- CRo referenced the recent upgrading of facilities at a local school, and it was noted that she would provide the details of the foundation to the head for additional consideration. **Action:** CRo to share the name and contact details of the building developer.
- **School Events:** SB gave an overview of recent school events which included the Harvest Festival (donations to Wallingford Food Bank), Odd Socks Day (Anti-Bullying Week), the Remembrance Day assembly, a creativity day (language and cultural activities) and a Certificate Presentation and Awards Evening (guest: Krishan Bodhani, CEO of Porsche UK).
- **School Performance:** SB outlined strong results in most subjects; English and Travel & Tourism are under review with new strategies in place following a meeting with the Chief Examinations Officer.
 - **Admissions:** 627 pupils on roll; some movement in and out.
 - **Attendance:** 94.2% overall, with a slow rise, and FSM attendance was 90.3%. Persistent absence was 14.8%, which is better than the national average.
 - **Behaviour & Safeguarding:** 10 suspensions so far this year, 82 reports of

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Headteacher: Mr. S. Bamford

Deputy Headteacher: Ms. S Burman

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- concern with 8 priority cases. Some challenges, particularly with year 8 (bulge year), but there are signs of improvement with all year groups
- **Vulnerable Students:** 80 pupil premium students, SEN and EHCP numbers detailed in the HT report
 - **Health & Safety:** No significant issues beyond the drama studio.
 - **Staffing:** No changes; succession plan completed.
 - **Trips & Visits:** Multiple events completed and planned.
- ***You mentioned behaviour being more challenging during the bulge years which occur every five years? Have you learnt anything about the underlying reasons behind this trend?*** SB confirmed that while there is a detailed understanding of behaviour patterns, isolating a single underlying cause has proved difficult. He confirmed it was likely to be the result of a combination of factors. Hypotheses included changes to systems and processes, the impact of having five classes, wider catchment areas, or simply a greater number of children.
 - **School Improvement/Development Plan:** SB confirmed that the School Improvement/Development Plan (SDP) is an iterative document, reviewed regularly. While a new format had recently been introduced following input from the School's Improvement Partner, there were no substantive changes and no points of note for the Trustees at this time. A copy of the School Development Plan is included in the ATB folder.
 - **Staff Succession Planning:** SB confirmed that the succession planning exercise was useful. Documentation would be held centrally and not shared with Trustees due to the sensitive and confidential nature of its content.

5. Trustees' Approval

5a. Langtree Strategic Plan

- The Langtree Strategic Plan was approved by the Trustees. AD confirmed that a review of the current strategic plan would be completed at a strategic workshop scheduled for 3pm on 11th May 2026.
- AD provided an update on an NGA training session attended regarding the growth of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), noting that the current government was in favour of larger MATs. Two pages of notes had been received from the Clerk, which would be included at the strategy session.
- It was agreed that the SLT would join the Trustees and the clerk was tasked with adding the meeting to the calendar. **Action:** Clerk to schedule the strategic workshop for 3pm on 11 May 2026, ensuring both SLT and Trustees are invited.

5b. CIF

- Apologies were noted for the delayed receipt of the CIF document. The use of reserves for capital contributions was discussed.
- The committee noted the principles behind the points-based system and how these were applied to determine contribution levels and the impact on the school's reserves.
- The Trustees approved the recommendations of the F&GP Committee as follows:
 - **Boilers:** No contribution was approved, (£0), as recommended by the committee.
 - **Drainage works:** A 20% contribution (£42,689) was approved, recognising this as a critical element for the school's operation.
- ***Do we have a strategic plan for site management?*** SB confirmed that such a plan was in place; however, day-to-day issues continued to present challenges. He also clarified that whilst the DfE was placing greater emphasis on infrastructure, funding remained insufficient, requiring difficult prioritisation decisions. It was noted that CV would upload the approved CIF application ahead of the 16th of December 2025 deadline.

5c. Safeguarding Audit

- AL confirmed he had met with Sarah Burman, our Safeguarding Lead to discuss the audit. AL explained that the safeguarding landscape and expectations are continually evolving, and both staff and trustees must remain responsive to new risks and statutory requirements.
- Six safeguarding flags have been carried over from the previous year into 2025/26, highlighting ongoing areas for monitoring and action. The head teacher emphasised the school's commitment to safeguarding, noting that both Safeguarding and Deputy Safeguarding Leads are in place.
- ***Is the update of the School Central Records a shared responsibility between the School and the Trustee Board?*** The clerk clarified that this responsibility lies with the school and confirmed that NGA guidance on the Single Central Record will be circulated to trustees. **Action:** Clerk to share the NGA Single Central Record Guidance.
- The committee unanimously approved the safeguarding audit. AL outlined that the safeguarding landscape and expectations continued to evolve, with staff and trustees needing to recognise the need to adapt to new risks and statutory requirements.

6. Trustee Updates

- **Compliance Training:** The clerk confirmed that all compliance actions were up to date and thanked trustees for their due diligence
- **Trustee Training – HS** confirmed that all trustee training was up to date on Smartlog. The clerk confirmed that they were following up with the school to get access to the school's NGA account to provide training for the newly appointed trustees and conduct a skills audit in 2026. **Action:** Clerk to secure the NGA log in from the school
- **Articles of Association:** The chair confirmed that the Articles of Association were created in 2012, and changes were needed to reflect the structural change from Directors to Members and Trustees. – Following guidance from OCC. AD proposed to remove clause 50a and insert a trustee appointment procedure, with a draft being circulated to trustees before the end of the term. The trustees approved the approach in principle.
- **Trustee Open Day:** SB confirmed the date of the next Trustee Open Day as January 8th, 2026 and thanked the trustees who had already confirmed their acceptance of the invitation and invited others to confirm their attendance. ***What is Trustee Open Day?*** AD outlined that it was an opportunity for the trustees to have detailed input from staff on relevant educational issues and meet students from varied age groups of the school council. ***How do we find out more about the details and how do we sign up?*** SB confirmed that the details were available via a link in the Head Teachers' Report. **Action:** Trustees to confirm their attendance at the open day via the shared link

7. Committee Reports

a) Finance & General Purposes (EA)

- EA welcomed KB and MT to the F&GP Committee.
- **Audit and Accounts Review:** The committee reported that they had reviewed the annual accounts and financial statements with the auditors, Cooper Parry. The audit was generally positive, with only minor control points identified, most of which had already been addressed.
- **Budget and Operational Update –** The forecast deficit for 2025/26 has increased to £110k, up from the original budget of £57k and the previous meeting's forecast of £89k. The main drivers for this change are staffing costs, particularly due to the Step into Teaching recruitment, and several smaller, less predictable variances (such as rates amendments and alternative provision costs).
- **Prioritisation of Capital Expenditure:** The committee examined the prioritisation list for capital and maintenance projects. Significant progress had been made in consolidating the list, but further work was needed. It was agreed to implement a two-stage approach: CV would identify projects that could be managed internally, while a working party would be set up to review and prioritise more significant capital projects.
- **CIF Bid:** Two projects were confirmed as being progressed, with submissions due in December. The committee discussed the cost implications for the school for each bid

submission.

- **Policy Reviews:** All policies under review were approved, including the Teachers Pay Policy, which was updated in line with the latest OCC release and approved.
- **Health & Safety:** The committee noted that the new Smartlog system for recording health and safety checks was working well and had been well received by the site team. It was noted that the recent H&S audit would be the focus of the next meeting, and there would be a discussion about updating reporting practices to make use of Smartlog detail.

b) Curriculum & Standards (JSR)

- JSR thanked CRo for her contribution and attendance at the committee meeting, as they were discussing the Pupil Premium (PP) Strategy statement
- It was noted that Mark Smith (Head of Science) had attended the committee meeting to provide an update on recent science results with results in chemistry and physics strong; but some challenges in biology and 'bulge year' behaviour. Mark expressed satisfaction with the new science labs.
- There was discussion about the gender balance in science, noting more boys than girls taking the subject, and the topic of combined science was raised. It was noted that Langtree offered pupils the opportunity to study either triple or double science, which worked well overall. **Are different levels of papers common in school exams?** SB confirmed that for both maths, science and modern foreign languages different tiers of paper exist.
- Pupil Premium progress was noted, but some pupils were underachieving due to attendance issues; JSR outlined that more cases and evidence would be shared by the school at the next committee meeting.
- The committee conducted a deep dive into subject performance for GCSEs, with 100% grade 4+ highlighted in Spanish, music, and art
- It was noted that the PP Statement was reviewed and approved
- **High attainment and PP pupils are being supported and progressing well, are middle tier students (grade 3/4) being supported and progressing to the same degree?** A parent trustee gave confidence that the school is helping students sharing multiple examples of support for this student cohort.
- **Q Do you look back at children who haven't achieved as expected and understand the reason why** The head teacher and parent trustee confirmed this was fully embedded in school governance and pupil and parental reviews
- **Q: Are different papers based on capability a common thing in exams?** SB confirmed that maths, languages and science have higher and lower tier papers, which offer different levels of grading

Pastoral & Community (CR)

- CRo thanked JSR for her contribution and attendance at the committee meeting.
- The committee noted that a new attendance officer had joined the school, bringing a fresh perspective to attendance processes, and a new nurse who was reported to be working effectively within the school.

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- The committee discussed a spike in behaviour callouts, particularly in Year 8, and confirmed that behaviour management was under review.
- Overall attendance had reached 94.3%, with Pupil Premium student attendance at 89.8%.
- Six Team Around the Family (TAF) safeguarding cases were ongoing, with challenges noted in working with the OCC system; some students were accessing alternative provision, and staff well-being support was in place. (It was observed that the well-being survey process was more effective in West Berkshire than in Oxfordshire.)
- Attainment for Pupil Premium students had improved, with a continued focus on attitude to learning, aspirations, parental engagement, and enrichment activities.
- There were 134 young carers on the register, with 50 prioritised and 32 receiving support; the committee recognised that young carers were not a homogeneous group and commended the support systems in place.
- The Relationship & Sex Education (RSE) policy had been approved, and it was noted that the safeguarding policy would need further updating to address mobile/smart technology and AI.
- The committee discussed the significant time involved in securing external support for families, noting that outcomes were often limited.
- The Pupil Premium strategy had been discussed in detail, with step-by-step progress being made.
- The committee considered the cost and suitability of alternative provision for students with frequent behaviour callouts, weighing options between in-house support and external providers
- The Langtree Strategic Plan and Academy Trust Board Objectives had been reviewed and approved by the committee.

8. Approval of statutory policies

- The policies were approved as outlined in the agenda:
 - a) Annual Pupil Premium Strategy - approved
 - b) Teachers' Pay – approved

9. Any Other Business: No matters were brought forward or declared. The meeting closed at 8.55 PM

10. Date of next meeting: 5th February, 19:00pm

Action Items – Langtree ATB 11 December 2025

| Agenda Item | Action Description | Responsible Person(s) | Status | Deadline/Notes |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Sign off the accounts following the meeting. | AD/SB | New | ASAP |
| 4 | Share the name and contact details of the building developer in Purley. | CRo | New | ASAP |
| 5b | Schedule the strategic workshop for 15.00 pm on the 11 of May 2026, ensuring both SLT and Trustees are invited. | Clerk | New | ASAP |
| 5c | Share the NGA Single Central Record Guidance. | Clerk | New | Completed |
| 6 | Secure the NGA login from the school | Clerk | New | ASAP |
| 6 | Confirm attendance at the Open Day via the shared link | Trustees | New | ASAP |