



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Academy Trust Board (ATB), held at Langtree School, Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 9 July 2026 at 19.05.

Present:

Alan Dunstan (AD) – Chair of Trustees.	Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)
Deborah Allen (DA)	Hayley Scott (HS)
Emma Ashby (EA)	Mark Taylor (MT)
Dan Brooks (DB)	Clive Watts (CW)
Janet Haresnape (JH)	Simon Bamford (SB) — Headteacher
Sarah Parish (SP)	

Apologies with Consent:

Catherine Roche (CRo) — Vice Chair of Trustees; Freya Garner (FG), Christine Reeves (CRe).

Absent:

Karen Brown (KB)

In attendance:

Sarah Lonorgan (SL) — Clerk, Carolyn Ventress (CV) - School Business Manager

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

1. Introduction

- The Chair opened the meeting at 19.05; welcomed those present and the meeting was confirmed as quorate.
- Apologies for absence had been received and accepted as noted.
- No trustee declared a material interest in any agenda item.
- It was noted Christine Reeves would step down as a trustee at the end of term.
- The Chair invited notification of any other business; items relating to the School Development Plan and Chair succession were taken under Any Other Urgent Business.

2. Minutes of the Previous ATB Meeting – 14 May 2026

- The minutes of the ATB meeting held on 14 May 2026 were approved as an accurate record, subject to a minor grammatical amendment. The minutes would be signed by the Chair (AD) and filed at the school.
- Matters arising were reviewed and all actions from the previous meeting were confirmed as complete or covered within the current agenda.

Signed
Chair of Trustees

Date

3. 2026-27 School Budget for Approval

- The 2025-6 management accounts showed an in-year deficit of approximately £73,000; taking account of the capital contribution towards the Drama Studio and drainage works, an overall reduction in the region of £330,000 was anticipated, leaving reserves at a reduced level which it was expected would improve over time.
- The Board discussed the implications for the funding of the bulge-year intakes and considered several scenarios to stress-test the budget. The principal sensitivities were identified as pay increases and recent site works. It was noted that the budget offered limited opportunities but also carried notable risk.
- CV presented the 2026-27 budget for approval. The budget had been developed and refined through the Finance & General Purposes Committee, at which the School Business Manager had presented the figures and taken questions. The Board noted that budget-setting continued to be affected by the late release of funding information from the DfE, which had a bearing on the timing of committee and Board consideration.
- In considering the budget, the Board noted the effect of committed capital expenditure on the school's reserves position, including the Drama Studio works and in-year investment in ICT (approximately 100 new Chromebooks purchased to support the mobile phone policy). Pay awards were identified as the most significant ongoing pressure, alongside the wider financial impact of recent external events. The bulge-year intakes were discussed both in terms of their funding implications and as a potential means of strengthening the school's financial position over the medium term.
- The Board recognised that the budget contained a degree of risk, with limited opportunities to improve the position in-year and agreed that the position would continue to be monitored closely through the Finance & General Purposes Committee. In particular, the condition and ongoing maintenance of the school site was highlighted as a real risk, given the age of the estate and the uncertain outcome of the school rebuilding programme.
- The Board unanimously approved the 2026-27 budget whilst noting the impact on the reserves and future risk.

4. Headteacher's Report

The Headteacher's report had been circulated in advance and was taken as read. SB drew out the headline points, and trustees — having reviewed the report ahead of the meeting — sought further assurance and provided challenge, as recorded below.

a) Self-Evaluation and Stakeholder Surveys:

- SB reported that the stakeholder survey data had been analysed; the overall picture was positive, and that surveys would be undertaken annually to allow consistent tracking over time.
- An infographic was shared with Trustees, outlining the headlines of the data and demonstrating the value of the investment made in Google Gemini, as a ringfenced AI capability for use at varying levels within the school
- The Trustees saw the value in infographics and the use of AI where relevant but highlighted that it needed to be used with caution (spelling/imagery/environmental impact/cost) and requested that additional supporting information and data (pertaining to how the figures had been derived) was shared by the school before the start of the new academic year. SB acknowledged the limitations of AI-generated visualisations in representing the underlying commentary and reinforced that the school were managing the roll-out cautiously, highlighting a recent conference visit he had attended on the risk of overuse and the environmental impact of AI.
- ***Have the survey outcomes been shared with parents?*** SB confirmed that the data would be shared with parents in due course.

- **Action: Circulate the more detailed stakeholder survey data to the Trustees (SB)**
- **b) New Mobile Phone Policy update:** SB reported that the Term 6 trial had worked well, with pupils adhering closely to the policy, near-universal compliance and very few confiscations. Around 55% of pupils objected to the policy, citing reduced productivity in lessons and safety on buses. To mitigate the reduced use of personal devices, the school had purchased approximately 100 new Chromebooks for departments, though it was acknowledged that in many respects a laptop was not a direct substitute for a personal device.
- **c) In-year admissions and behaviour:** SB reported that a cohort of six to eight in-year admissions, not originating from Langtree, was presenting significant behavioural challenges and was a major concern for staff and pupils. Several pupils were receiving off-site alternative provision. The school had appealed against a number of these admissions without success. The complexity of EHCP provisions specified by local authorities was noted as a continuing concern.
- **d) Parental engagement and attendance:** The Board discussed parental engagement, noting that one parents' evening was held per year for each year group, together with a Meet the Tutor parents evening for year 7 and curriculum information evenings for new parents. It was noted that Pupil Premium families were given first access to parents' evening bookings.
- The Headteacher was asked by Trustees whether pupils with SEND/EHCPs could also be given priority access to parents' evening bookings; provide more recorded detail behind pupils' reasons for leaving the school be recorded more clearly; that the Headteacher's report highlighted more clearly what was new since the previous report and what were the reasons behind the increase in persistent absence.
- SB agreed to note reasons where possible and to highlight changes in future reports. On attendance, SB explained that the recent spike in persistent absence was attributable to Year 11 examination leave, together with an element of reporting error on the DfE absence monitoring portal.

5. Committee Reports

- **a) Finance & General Purposes** – EA presented the committee report headlines beyond the detailed budget update provided within agenda item 3.
- An initial draft Climate Action Plan was taking shape and would be brought back to the committee in September. On internal scrutiny, the cyber-security risk audit was being followed up, with good progress reported (10 of 14 actions complete and the remainder being risk-assessed for completion and retesting by September). Work to update the risk-register format, mitigations and risk reporting had been undertaken (EA and CV) and would be taken forward in the next year. It was noted that there was nothing further to report on Health & Safety. The committee had reviewed four policies (First Aid, Health & Safety, Data Protection and Privacy Notices), two of which were on the agenda for approval.
- **b) Curriculum & Standards** – JSR presented the committee report. The committee had received a presentation from the Head of Drama (Gill Pym), noting the inclusive nature of drama and its importance for pupils, strong outcomes, and the participation of 28% of Years 7–10 in the previous production. The need for specialist assistance and improved IT access, to be met in part by the new Chromebooks, was noted.
- The committee discussed the management of EHCP expectations, for rising Year 7

- pupils. As each child had individual needs, it was emphasised that expectations should be set out clearly and as early as possible — at Year 6, or on later entry — and that documentation was key. Approximately ten SEND summary sheets had been produced but had not yet been approved for use; approval was likely by the middle of next year, pending further work with the SENDCo.
- **Have parents been asked to instigate a review of their child's EHCP with the local authority?** SB confirmed that annual and, where necessary, emergency reviews took place, but that the level of support from the local authority varied case by case.
 - **c) Pastoral & Community** – in the absence of FG (apologies), the committee report was presented by SP. Behaviour data showed an increase in behaviour patrols but fewer lunchtime/SLT detentions, and teachers had been provided with a de-escalation script. A trend was noted of the same pupils — including those with SEND/EHCPs and Pupil Premium — accounting for most behaviour issues.
 - It was noted that nurture provision would be more focused, with a new Head of Year being introduced for Year 8 to allow Bev Belcher, the current Head of Year for 7 & 8 to focus on EBSA and other hard to reach students as they progress up through the school. Progress on Section 19 funding was reported, with West Berkshire, Reading and latterly OCC having responded positively. SP reinforced that the Deputy Head had also reinforced that the mobile phone policy was working well, with continued monitoring of suspected use in classrooms and toilets. On the SEND summary sheets, the committee had reviewed other academies' websites and considered the OCC information less easy to access; SP would meet the SENDCo (Susannah) next term.
 - As only two Trustees had been present, three policies could not be approved at the committee and were brought to the ATB for approval (see Statutory Policies below). The Chair confirmed that he was working to strengthen the committee's membership.

6. Trustee Approval

- **a) New Articles of Association / School Funding Agreements** – AD reported that the Master and Supplemental Funding Agreements had been approved by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Charity Commission and were included in the pack. The revised Articles of Association had been approved by the DfE but remained with the Charity Commission for final sign-off. The Board agreed to approve the two funding agreements and their publication on the school website, The Clerk agreed to circulate the details of the funding agreements to trustees. As there was some uncertainty as to whether the full documents were in the pack, **it was agreed that they would be circulated with a deadline for comments and treated as approved if no comments were received before the end of term. Action: AD/SL**
- **b) School Strategy Proposal** – following the strategy meeting of 11 May 2026, AD reported the outcome of the trustee ballot. Of 16 votes cast (one spoiled), a majority — approximately two-thirds — were in favour of proceeding to further investigation. AD reinforced that the ballot was not a decision to join a multi-academy trust (MAT), but to examine the school's options through a strategic-options and due-diligence process.
- The Board agreed to proceed to the next stage. AD recommended establishing a small working party (approximately two members of the SLT and three trustees) to refine the strategic-options paper and due-diligence framework prepared by SL, with a view to reaching a decision on next steps by the winter. **The matter would be placed on the October agenda to determine how to progress. Action: AD/SL**

- **c) 2026-27 Committee and ATB Meeting Calendar** – the calendar had been circulated to all committees and was available in the shared folder and on the drive. Arrangements were broadly unchanged from the current year, save for minor timing adjustments and the F&GP Committee meeting being held one week, rather than two, before the ATB at which the budget is presented. The Board **approved** the dates, subject to keeping the July timing under review given the late availability of DfE budget information.

7. Trustee Updates

- **a) Annual Planner 2026-27** – SL reported that the planner had been updated in line with the latest NGA statutory guidance and was in the ATB folder. It was approximately 95% complete, with some dates provisionally pending DfE input, for example the self-assessment checklist.
- **b) Trustee Training (NGA)** – SL reported that access issues arising from two separate NGA accounts had been resolved and that members no longer requiring access had been removed. SL would take over the delivery of training from HS, to allow HS to focus on careers and inductions, with a training refresh at the start of the new academic year. The clerk highlighted that the DfE had published Keeping Children, Safe in Education (KCSIE) the previous day and Trustees should familiarise themselves with the contents before the start of the new academic year.
- The Clerk recommended that all trustees completed complaints and suspensions training in the new academic year, in view of forthcoming changes to suspensions legislation and the need for a broader pool of trustees able to sit on panels.
- **c) ATB Objectives 2025-26 Update** – AD reviewed progress to complete the academic year. Succession planning remained outstanding (see Any Other Urgent Business). The CIF and Drama Studio works were expected to complete by the end of August. Committee membership, particularly the Pastoral & Community Committee, remained light and would be strengthened before the end of the year.
- **d) Careers Update** – HS reported that 95 pupils had secured work-experience placements, with a further 25 undertaking the Active Leaders course, and that a list of participating employers was being compiled and would be shared in September. The importance of work experience, and of pupils performing well on placement, was emphasised. A careers session for Years 8 and 9, arranged through Catherine Roche and Place2Be and delivered by Porsche, had been very well received, with Porsche's representative praising the pupils' engagement; pupil feedback on the session would be sought. It was noted that a post-16 options booklet was in draft.

8. Approval of Statutory Policies / Procedures

- **a) Data Protection** – reviewed principally to enable wider use of the school's ring-fenced AI within the Google environment, as approved by the school's Data Protection Officer. Trustees discussed GDPR and human-error risks, environmental impact, licence limits and pupil access. The policy was **approved**.
- Trustees questioned what was being done about the risk of overuse and the environmental impact of AI, and the risk of staff inadvertently entering pupil data into non-compliant personal AI tools.
- SB confirmed that safeguards, staff training and licence limits were in place, and that an AI policy was being drafted (addressing issues such as cognitive offloading) alongside

an updated Acceptable Use Policy.

- **b) Health and Safety** – approved, subject to clarification of the wording on committee monitoring and reporting arrangements raised by EA.
- **c) Early Careers Teacher** – JSR reported that the policy was straightforward and it was approved with minor amendments. The committee noted that it should monitor early-careers progress more thoroughly against its terms of reference.
- **d) Complaints** – the policy had been significantly revised and was approved, subject to minor amendments and the correct flowchart being reinstated on the final page
- **e) Behaviour Policy** – confirmed as easy to locate on the school's policy pages and approved without concerns.

9. Any Other Urgent Business

- **School Development Plan:** SB presented, in draft, a revised School Development Plan (on the back page of the survey booklet) simplified under three headings — Achieve, Belong and Thrive — each with three priorities, in response to staff-survey feedback on awareness of school priorities. The simplified format was welcomed as clear and easy to navigate.
- **Chair Succession:** AD confirmed that he would step down as Chair of Trustees with effect from 31 August 2026. The Board was pleased to confirm that Deborah Allen (DA) had agreed to take over as Chair, and AD would support DA through the transition. Tributes were paid to AD for his leadership and service to the school.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

- The Chair confirmed the date of the next ATB meeting as Thursday, 15 October 2026 at 19.00.
- The Chair thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting at 21.05.

ACTIONS LIST from ATB Meeting, 9 July 2026:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
1	Circulate the more detailed stakeholder survey data to the Trustees	SB	Before end of term
2	Circulate the Master and Supplemental Funding Agreements to trustees with a deadline for comments (approved if none received) and publish the approved agreements on the school website.	AD/SL	Before end of term
3	Convene a small working to refine the strategic-options paper and due-diligence framework; place the item on the October ATB agenda.	DA/EA/FG/J SR/SB	October ATB
4	Reinstate the correct flowchart in the Complaints Policy	SL/FG	ASAP