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THE LANGTREE SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST COMPANY ("THE ACADEMY TRUST")

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**MINUTES of a Meeting of the directors of the Academy Trust held at Langtree School, Woodcote, Reading, RG8 0RA, on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:**

Geoff Braham (GB)

Will Bromage (WB)

Alan Broomhead (AB)

Jesse Cleverly (JC)

Vicki Hamilton (VH)

Rick Holroyd (RH)

Antony Ketteridge (AK)

Neil McIntosh (NM) (items 7 – 11)

Val Nowell (VN)

Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)

Dennis Rocks (DR)

Tracy Sedwell (TS) – Chair

Mark Vitty (MV)

Graham Webber (GW) (items 1 – 6)

**In attendance:**

Helen Batten, Clerk

Quorum was confirmed.

**1. Introduction**

- The Chair welcomed new governors (tbc) and introductions were completed.
- Apologies were received and accepted from Sue Ambler, Brian Davies and Regina Grosier. GW would need to leave the meeting early and NM would be arriving late.
- Since the last meeting, Sarah Loveland had decided to stand down from the governing body due to pressure of other commitments and governors thanked her for all her hard work on behalf of the school.
- No substantive items were notified for AOB.
- GW declared that he serves on the Schools Council Trust. Information will be provided by all new governors to complete the register of interests.

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Signed ..... (Chair) Date .....

## 2. ATB meeting, 6 December 2016

**2.1 Minutes** which had been circulated were agreed to be an accurate record and signed by TS for filing in school.

**2.1 Review of Actions/matters arising:** Unless noted below all agreed actions had been completed or would be covered in discussion at this meeting.

- **Document storage** (item 3.2): It is understood that further information will be circulated following security checks. **Action: SA**
- **Young carers** (item 3.2): Governors acknowledged that all school activities are fully inclusive so the needs of the approximately 35 currently identified young carers are taken into account. However a specific governor link will provide a useful layer of oversight and VN will establish this role in the first instance, with a view to handing on to VH in future.
- **Committee deployment** (item 4.1): Following recent changes, deployment was confirmed:  
Pastoral & community – JC, VH, AK, TS (chair tbc); Jan Holroyd will provide SLT input.  
Finance & general purposes – AB (Chair) GB, WB, BD, RG, RH, DR.  
Curriculum & standards – TS (Chair), SA, NM, VN, JSR, MV, GW + James Doyle (SLT).

## 3 Governor appointments

**3.1 Co-opted governors:** Following previous general agreement, the recommendation for the reappointment of VN and appointment of GB, VH and GW was formally agreed by Members of the Trust (AB, JSR, TS).

**3.2 Vice Chair:** It was agreed that JSR will take this role and governors thanked her for her commitment. However she will not be able to take the Chair so there remains an urgent need for succession planning.

## 4 Committee reports

**4.1 Finance & General Purposes:** Minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> January had been circulated. AB presented key points and updates:

- **SLT appointments:** The committee has looked at proposals in detail and updated information would be presented under item 6.
- **RHI payment:** Ongoing difficulties in obtaining the payment were noted. AB also explained that the amount received will depend on usage of the system, which has been reduced due to technical problems.

**4.2 Curriculum & Standards:** Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> January had been circulated.

- **Self-evaluation:** RH confirmed that the SEF will be updated following the forthcoming team leaders' meeting, and will be circulated to governors.

The cycle of improvement where the SEF and performance data feed into the School Improvement Plan was briefly explained for the benefit of new governors.

**4.3 Pastoral & Community:** The committee has not met since December. The next meeting is scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> March.

**5 Headteacher's report:** The report had been circulated.

**5.1 Staffing:** RH noted the recent success in making a strong maths appointment, against a general shortage of maths teachers. This follows the excellent recent appointments in Art and MFL. Teacher turnover at Langtree is generally below average which indicates a good level of employee satisfaction and provides stable arrangements which benefit pupil progress.

**5.2 Bullying:** In response to questioning RH clarified that all incidents, including those of a very minor nature, are recorded and this can present a misleading impression. The incidents shown were not serious and have been fully dealt with through a restorative justice approach involving students and parents. There are no current concerns.

**5.3 Exclusions:** A governor noted that smoking incidents appear to be relatively high and enquired whether this is a developing trend. RH clarified that students are always excluded for smoking, which is not the case in most other schools. These figures vary somewhat from term to term and there has been a small recent spate of incidents amongst a particular group of students which is being effectively dealt with. RH also explained that winter conditions tend to be different and a higher number of exclusions is generally expected during terms 1 – 3 than in the second half of the year.

## **6 SLT appointments**

- A paper had been circulated and updated financial information modelling two alternatives was tabled. RH explained the rationale for the recommendation to move to an SLT including Head, Deputy Head and Assistant Head, with a view to extending the team further when finances allow. Although the current vacancies must be advertised externally, there would be a higher cost to the school in general in appointing externally. However external appointments also bring the significant advantages of new ideas and experience. Following discussion governors agreed the proposed structure as recommended and agreed that the appointments must be made on the basis of the best candidates for the roles regardless of financial implications.
- RH also explained the anticipated impact of the new national fair funding arrangements, which was intended to benefit schools in the lowest funded authorities like Langtree, but will actually make matters worse. Owing to the weighting on deprivation factors, the proposed formula would mean a 1.3% reduction in funding

equivalent to £38 000. This reduction seems to be common with other small secondary schools in the area. This will be extremely challenging as all easy savings have already been made. Governors asked how they can best support the school in this respect. RH recommended the governing body writes formally to the local MP highlighting concerns. It was also agreed that individual governors should also write to various individuals and bodies if they wish, and key points and contact details will be provided. **Action: RH**

- It was agreed that a Transition Group of governors will lead on SLT recruitment, and TS will contact all governors to set this up. *[Post meeting note: The Transition group was confirmed as AB, BD, JSR, TS, & GW.]* TS confirmed that all governors will be informed of the dates and details of the process. **Action: TS**

At this point GW left the meeting and NM arrived.

## 7 Governor training & visits

**7.1 Induction:** Proposed dates for a bespoke session will be circulated. **Action: TS**

### 7.2 Governor Open Morning

- VN reported from the recent event which included lesson visits, assembly, a teacher presentation and School Council session. VN's report will be circulated. **Action: TS**

- Governors discussed points raised by the School Council, including concerns about perceived classroom disruption, and inconsistency in approaches to discipline and marking/feedback, and asked how such concerns are addressed by the school. RH and MV acknowledged that these points are of great concern to the students and from their perspective have not yet been resolved. All student concerns are taken seriously but in some cases these are very low level problems and in other cases it will take some time to effect changes.

RH confirmed that all points raised have been communicated previously and a number of pieces of work, with student involvement, have been put in place in response. As a result the Code of Conduct has been revised, with the onus on students to uphold it. Regular book trawls and work within departments has shown the effectiveness of the revised marking policy is effective through improved quality and consistency of marking and feedback. RH acknowledged student perceptions that rewards systems seem to favour those students who don't generally perform or behave well, which may be seen as a reflection of life in general. However it is important to ensure that we also recognise the best and a strategy to celebrate attainment is now in place. As a result, SLT are planning a new reward for Y10 'Stars' based on the latest tracking information, to celebrate those who are doing very well. This pilot could be repeated in all other years.

Governors then asked how this progress is fed back to students. RH confirmed that reports are provided to School Council and staff are also working with student leaders and pupil panels on a number of aspects. SLT will review progress against the points raised by the report and ensure that full feedback is provided.

Governors asked RH to thank the School Council for a most informative and useful meeting and to confirm that their concerns have been discussed by the governing body as requested. **Action: RH**

**8 Staff survey:** Numerical results had been circulated. 58 out of 78 staff members had responded, and further written comments were also received.

- RH confirmed that he has met union representatives to discuss how to move the survey findings forward. Key themes were around workload, including exam changes and marking requirements as well as the general pressures common across the profession; communication issues, which will require further investigation; and behaviour/application of sanctions etc, which may link to student concerns and also needs further investigation. An action plan will be devised to address the concerns raised.
- TS noted the excellent response rate and thanked staff members for taking time to complete the survey and RH for progressing the resulting actions. Although there are some areas which require further unpicking, this was a valuable activity which has drawn a clear line from which progress can be evaluated. An update will be provided to the next meeting.

## **9 Policy reviews**

**9.1 Data protection:** A recommendation from F&P committee had been circulated and was approved.

**9.2 SEND:** The updated policy, reviewed by C&S committee, was approved.

**10 AOB:** None.

**11 Next meeting:** Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

**ACTIONS LIST from meeting 7 February 2017:**

Minute	Action	By whom	When
2.1	Complete Dropbox security checks and provide additional details as required.	SA	Asap
6	Provide suggested contacts and points for inclusion in letters regarding funding concerns.	RH	Asap
6	Confirm Transition Group membership	TS	Asap
7.1	Circulate suggested governor induction training dates.	TS	Asap
7.2	Circulate Governor Morning report	TS	Asap
7.2	Thank School Council for meeting governors and confirm that concerns raised have been discussed.	RH	Asap

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Signed ..... (Chair)      Date .....