



AN 'OUTSTANDING' SPECIALIST PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

Ofsted 2009

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 Thursday 16th April 2015 at 7.00 pm.

Present:

Mel Bibby (MB)

Alan Broomhead (AB)

Brian Davies (BD)

Kevin Davies (KD)

Rick Holroyd (RH)

Sue Lea (SL)

Sarah Loveland (SLo)

Val Nowell (VN)

Rob Pickering (RAP)

Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR)

Tracy Sedwell (TS) - Chair

Mark Vitty (MV) – item 4.1 onwards

In attendance: Helen Batten, Clerk

1. Introduction

- Quorum was confirmed and TS welcomed everybody to the meeting.
- Apologies were received and accepted from Neil Macintosh (NM) and Jules Varnham (JV). Robin Peirce (RP) was absent.
- No additional items of business were notified.
- No member declared any interest in current agenda items. VN notified that she is no longer connected with Diamond Floors Ltd.

2. Minutes of 11th February: Minutes which had been circulated were agreed to be an accurate record and signed by TS for filing in school.

3. Review of Actions/matters arising

- **Langtree 100** (item 3): RH reported that a meeting will take place next week with the remaining officers of the charity.
- **Health & Safety audit** (item 3): RH confirmed that the report has been provided to Sarah Hobbs.
- **Windows, room 15** (item 3): RH confirmed that the funding bid has been successful, as noted in the HT report, and external doors and windows will be replaced as necessary.

Signed (Chair) Date

- **Staff governor vacancy** (item 6.1): RH is following up some recent interest and will report further. **Action: RH**
- **Governors' Code of Conduct** (item 6.1): TS explained she will be recommending agreement of a Code of Conduct, to be revisited annually with other governor documents, and a proposal will be brought to the July meeting. **Action: TS**
- **Website compliance** (item 7.4): RH reported that the recent website update has resulted in the loss of some links. Work is ongoing with the provider to ensure that all statutory information is displayed.
- **Skills analysis** (item 7.1):
 - BD reported that coverage is generally good and that targeted recruitment will fill the identified gap in financial expertise. An identified weakness is knowledge of the wider context of education and funding arrangements. Although this can be picked up from individual research BD suggested that this may also form the basis of some useful group training. A report of findings will be circulated. The survey will also be repeated within the next six months using the updated framework. **Action: BD**
 - In discussion it was agreed that it would be helpful for governors to meet with a current Ofsted inspector to discuss some of the questions that governors are likely to be asked. It was also agreed to look at setting up a session with other academy schools to look at some of the wider common issues and share knowledge and experience. RH will progress both activities. **Action: RH**
 - The possibility of a formal governance review by the LA, which looks at all aspects of governance as part of school leadership, was also discussed, and may be considered again when other governor activities are established.

4. Committee reports

4.1 Finance & General Purposes: Minutes of 19th March had been circulated:

- **Astroturf pitch:** RH reported that installation is now in progress and running well, with no concerns raised. Work is currently ahead of schedule due to the fine weather, and is likely to be complete before the 1st June target date. Plans are in hand for an opening event, such as a tournament, which will bring as many potential users as possible to the facility. Publicity materials are being prepared for the local community and user groups, and also a version including sponsorship information for businesses.
- **Budget:** AB drew attention to reported budget discussion. Based on the current model a shortfall is anticipated due to the general reduction in academy funding and the increased staff pension and National Insurance payments which will need to come out of this. More work will be completed by the committee in order to present a balanced budget

proposal to the governing body. RH also confirmed that he is briefing staff on these issues.

- **Biomass boiler:** AB confirmed that further work on this project has been suspended until the budget review is complete. It will then be necessary to decide whether anticipated savings will be sufficient to justify the cost of installing a biomass system.

MV joined the meeting at this point.

- **Governor recruitment:** In response to the recent campaign a number of people with financial expertise have expressed interest in joining the governing body. In anticipation of RAP standing down in July as notified, it was agreed to look at appointing two further governors to ensure that all tasks are covered, and that F&P committee will make the necessary decisions for approval by the full governing body. **Action: AB, RH**
- **Solar panels:** AB reported that further clarification of some points is awaited and it was agreed to proceed with the installation if satisfactory information is received. Decisions as appropriate will be taken at the next F&P committee.

4.2 Curriculum & Standards: Minutes of 3rd March had been circulated.

- **Terms of reference:** Agreed terms of reference had been circulated and were approved, for signature and filing in school.
- **Policies:** It was clarified that the policy schedule is being examined by the SLT and committees should take no further action until an agreed update of responsibilities and review dates is available.
- **SEN provision:** RH clarified that the move to Education & Health Care plans means that the categories for SEN have changed, however there has been no real change in the number of students requiring additional support.
- **Interventions:** In response to concern noted, governors asked for further information about GCSE interventions. RH described the programme in place to boost attainment in Maths and English, noting that success in these subjects links strongly to students achieving 5 A*-C passes across all subjects. RH explained that intervention sessions are measured and well-planned and generally run for a limited number of weeks, but also acknowledged that this arrangement can have an impact on other departments as students will need to catch up missed lessons may lead to some additional work for staff. However RH also emphasised the immense pressure to deliver good results in Maths and English in a relatively small number of lessons per week, and the volume of extra work also being undertaken by staff in these departments to achieve this. The intervention programme is paying off in improved exam results, which means that students do not have to repeat these subjects at college. SL

also confirmed the importance for students of entering the next stage of their education with English and Maths in order to keep their academic choices as wide as possible. Finally RH explained that the intervention programme also needs to be kept manageable for the excellent specialist teachers who deliver it.

- **Gifted & talented inspection:** In response to a query RH confirmed that classroom behaviour has been monitored and further discussions have been held with students in order to understand their concerns better. Any significant findings will be reported to governors.

4.3 Pastoral & Community: Minutes of 25th March had been circulated, with no queries arising.

5. Headteacher's report: A report had been circulated and governors thanked RH for this update. Governors were particularly pleased to note the SSAT national awards and congratulated RH and all staff and students involved.

6. TA deployment: RH presented information, drawing attention to the following:

- All SEN funding is fully spent on eligible students and students with nominated hours of support are receiving this in full.
- The TA team has remained stable for some time and has not been reduced as a result of budget pressures. The team includes High Level TAs specialising in delivery of PP and literacy support.
- At 12.5% SEN at Langtree is higher than in other similar local schools and this needs to be kept in mind for strategic planning. SEN students tend to do well at here which makes the school a popular choice for parents, although we do not specifically market this aspect. Capacity is the driver in all admissions decisions, although appeals will give preference to SEN and LAC (looked-after children).

Governors asked whether current deployment is effective. RH confirmed that, as one of a range of measures in place use of TAs is clearly having an impact on achievement. There has also been recent emphasis on improving written feedback and developing verbal feedback through additional consultations.

7. Governing body development

7.1 Governor open morning: Governors reviewed the recent activities and agreed it was helpful to see the school in action on a normal day. In particular it was interesting to be able to sit through an entire lesson and governors commented on the exciting classroom experiences they saw. TS noted that the student panel members were particularly positive and forthcoming and it was helpful to understand their perceptions of activities in school to identify where information may need to be improved. It was agreed that it will be useful to repeat this

format, to keep governor knowledge current and to follow through activities and conversations from this visit.

7.2 Training update: The in-house training session on 20th April will cover data performance, based on Langtree data, with Raiseonline information to be circulated in advance.

8. Governing body organisation

8.1 Governor visits

- A proposal for structured governor visits had been circulated by RH and it was agreed that this format and schedule will fulfil the requirement for the governing body to develop its understanding of activities in school and increase its effectiveness. It was agreed to vary the days and within the restrictions of the timetable RH will try to arrange lesson visits as requested. RH also emphasised that governors are welcome to visit the school at any time by prior arrangement. **Action: RH**
- MV confirmed that teachers he has spoken to informally understand the need for governor visits. However some teachers may feel pressured by the visits and care should be taken to minimise this effect as far as possible. It was therefore agreed to ensure that no teacher is visited more than once during the year. RH will ensure that all staff are fully briefed about the purpose of governor visits generally and the implementation of the agreed programme, and also look at how honest opinion from staff can be gathered.

8.2 Vice Chair: Following the decision of RAP to stand down as Vice Chair, KD confirmed his willingness to stand. Governors agreed to appoint KD as Vice Chair until the first meeting of 2015/16 when Chair and Vice-Chair will be re-appointed.

9. Other business: Governor id badges are now complete, to be collected from the office when governors next come into school.

10. Date of next meeting: Thursday 11th June 2015, 7.00 pm.

TS thanked all governors for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

ACTIONS LIST from meeting 16.4.15:

Minute	Action	By whom	When
3	Update on staff governor vacancy.	RH	Asap
3	Draft governing body Code of Conduct for approval.	TS	July ATB
3	Circulate report on skills analysis & 20 questions	BD	asap
3	Progress meeting with Inspector to support Ofsted preparation. and general information session with other schools.	RH	asap
3	Consider possible session with other academy governors to look at common issues. Objective of meeting to be defined.	RH	June ATB
4.1	F&P committee to progress recruitment of two finance governors.	AB	asap
8.1	Progress arrangements for structured governor visits.	RH	asap

Signed (Chair) Date