



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School, Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 7th December 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Geoff Braham (GB)
Will Bromage (WB)
Alan Broomhead (AB)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)
Ken Coveney (KC)
Vicki Hamilton (VH)

Neil McIntosh (NM)
Dennis Rocks (DR)
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Mark Vitty (MV)
Graham Webber (GW)

In attendance:

Simon Bamford (SB) – Deputy Head
Helen Batten (HB) – Clerk
Dawn Challis (DC) – School Business Manager – items 1 & 2 only
Ed Passmore (EP) – Critchleys – items 1 & 2 only

Governor challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- JSR welcomed everybody to the meeting.
- Since the October meeting Regina Grosier had resigned due to health issues.
- Apologies were received and accepted from Sue Ambler, Rick Holroyd, Antony Ketteridge, and Val Nowell.
- Quorum was confirmed.
- No items of AOB were notified.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item.

2. Presentation of 2017 accounts and reports

- The Annual Report for 2017 and management letter had been circulated to all and examined by F&P committee.
- EP reviewed actions taken to address concerns identified in 2016. The following additional information was noted:
 - ~ Authorisation of expenditure: *Is the extra step in procedures leading to any delays or concerns?* DC confirmed that the new system has been in use for some time and is running without any problems.

Langtree School, Woodcote, Reading, Berkshire RG8 0RA

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Headteacher: Mr R Holroyd B.A. M.A. Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Bamford Assistant Headteacher: Ms S Burman

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- ~ Signed staff contracts: Missing contracts from OCC related only to individuals who transferred from the authority to the academy. DC clarified that the school has signed contracts for all current staff members and this point will be updated.
- ~ Budget summaries: DC clarified that these reports are available on the system to those who need them.
- New points raised this year were noted. EP also confirmed that the audit was a straightforward process, reflecting the excellent financial controls in school.
- EP then took governors through the key points in the financial statements and reports, emphasising that the in-year budget surplus and small carry forward sum presents a positive message and, while finances are not completely secure, the accumulation of funds indicates that the school has good financial systems and is moving in the right direction.
- AB confirmed that detailed scrutiny by F&P committee raised no further points. Following a recommendation by AB, governors approved the accounts and reports for signature, noting that the management letter appendix will be updated as agreed.
- Governors thanked EP and DC for their attendance and they left the meeting.

3. ATB Meeting, 12 October 2017

3.1 Minutes had been circulated, and were agreed to be an accurate record and signed by JSR for filing in school.

3.2 Review of Actions/matters arising: Unless noted below, all agreed actions were complete or covered by the current agenda.

- **Exit interviews** (item 3.2): JSR reported that she has looked at the feedback received with RH, who will be picking up some specific actions as a result. It is planned to conduct another survey during the course of this year (probably March 2018) which will provide an indication of whether they feel that these points have now been addressed.
- **Student planner** (item 3.2): SB confirmed that the new planner has been very successful and works well with 'show my homework' online.
- **Food survey** (item 3.2): VH reported that P&C committee has looked at the results and will be arranging to repeat this survey after the planned changes are complete, to see if students feel that things have improved. *Some unhealthy choices seem to be available every day; how do we know that the food offer is in line with requirements?* SB confirmed that Aspens will be meeting all current standards. The new payment system also enables parents to see what has been purchased by their children. *Whilst acknowledging that we would not want to over-cater, it is a concern that often some choices run out.* VH confirmed that P&C committee will continue its overview of the canteen and identify any specific points to be raised with Aspens.
- **Safer recruitment training** (item 4.3): GW has completed online training and recommended a course provided by the NSPCC at a cost of £30 per person.
- **Governor development in SIP** (item 7): Work is ongoing to prepare a proposal for discussion. **Action: DR**
- **Governor recruitment** (item 8.1): It was clarified that the constitution contains no specific requirements about categories of staff governors, although it has been

previously agreed that a non-teaching staff governor would be a helpful addition to the governing body. This will be publicised to staff during the forthcoming Governor Open Day. **Action: JSR**

Earlier enquiries with potential community governors are ongoing, with the aim of finding one or more suitable candidates from the wider community, as it will now be necessary to look at a replacement for Regina Grosier.

- **Governor induction training** (item 8.2): It was agreed to look at setting up a bespoke session led by Tim Bartlett in Q1 2018, which would be open to all governors. **Action: JSR**

4. Committee reports

4.1 Finance & General Purposes: AB drew governors' attention to key points in the minutes of 16th November, which had been circulated.

- **Members of the Trust:** It was confirmed that Members should number between three and five, and current Members are AB, NM and JSR. The process for changing Members will be checked. **Action: HB**

4.2 Curriculum & Standards: Minutes of 21st November had been circulated.

- **Humanities presentation:** Notes from Head of Humanities, Charlotte Davies, had been circulated and JSR reported an excellent presentation. SB confirmed that the new chairs requested on Charlotte's 'wish list' have already been ordered.

4.3 Pastoral & Community: VH presented minutes of 23rd November, which had been circulated:

- **Publication of policies:** SB advised that he will check website publication of policies on receipt of specific queries. *[post-meeting note: SB has advised that the two documents mentioned, Equality Policy and Statement of Equality Objectives, are on the website.]*
- **Letting school buildings:** Following a query from VH, it was clarified that overseeing lettings, managed by School Space, falls within the operational remit of the school. Governors need to be satisfied that the necessary actions are taking place and to maintain an overview through regular reports. VH will check with Dawn Challis the processes involved and agree with her how governors should best receive feedback re School Space.
- **Drama studio:** JC outlined activities so far, including a presentation from students on the importance and impact of drama. It is hoped that a project leader will be identified shortly so that commissioning can commence. A further update will be provided to the February governor meeting. JC also advised that a new committee will be required to take this project forward. He will be able to take a leading role in this but would need to step down from P&C at that point.
- **Terms of reference:** Terms of reference, which had been circulated, were approved.

- **Committee membership:** Due to AK's current ill-health, it would be helpful for P&C committee to have another member to ensure quorum for meetings. This will become a necessity when JC steps down. **Action: VH to discuss with JSR**

5. **Head's report:** A report had been circulated and noted.

5.1 **Staffing arrangements:** *Is the high number of part-time teachers a concern from the student point of view?* SB explained that full-time solutions had been considered, however the quality of our part-time staff is extremely high and we have made arrangements that keep shared teaching of classes to the absolute minimum. All teaching arrangements will naturally be reviewed in the light of student outcomes.

5.2 **Sporting achievements:** Governors were delighted by the wide range of sporting achievements this term and thanked all staff concerned for providing these opportunities for students.

6. **School Improvement Plan:** A RAG-rated version had been circulated, showing progress on all activities this term. SB answered governor questions:

- *Is any specific training required for the new tracking software?* The system has been chosen on the basis of being simple and intuitive. Subject leads will receive training, to be cascaded to colleagues. The system will enable us to use our data as effectively as possible, and will be reviewed regularly as it beds in.
- *How many students are taking two languages?* There are 28 in Y8 and 24 in Y9.
- *How have the twilight sessions been received by parents and students?* Parent feedback indicates that all is running well and there are no concerns.
- *When will we have more information about the French exchange?* Due to the large number of students involved, sorting out arrangements will take some time. We are currently communicating with the partner school and will report further to governors in due course.
- *How have teachers and students responded to the increased focus on literacy?* All aspects of this work are in hand, and students and teachers are getting used to the changes.
- *What is the overall teaching staff perception of the SIP?* MV confirmed that teachers agree that all necessary points have been covered and actions and success criteria are clear. Everything is moving ahead well and there are no concerns.
- *'Show my homework' appears to be popular with students and is useful for parents; how are teachers finding it?* MV explained that the system has many benefits, but it can make it harder for teachers to remember to set homework as this no longer happens in class. A specific technical issue has been raised with the supplier but not satisfactorily resolved, which is frustrating.
- *What should students do if homework set is not clear?* SB confirmed that students know how to raise queries and we will look at reinforcing that message and also providing

further guidance to parents. He will also look at the process of setting homework again with teachers, to ensure that template guidelines are being followed.

- *Are staff happier with consistency now that standard operating procedures are in place?* MV responded that overall staff are pleased with the introduction of SOPs, which show that an identified concern has been addressed and can also be used for reference when necessary.
- *Does the school nurse have input into the SIP, in particular with reference to identified mental health concerns?* There will be a means to ensure the views of the nurse are taken into account, and SB will check this process with Sarah Burman. **Action: SB**

7. Policies

7.1 Recommendations for approval: Policies which had been circulated were approved as follows:

- Teaching staff pay
- Support staff pay
- Performance management
- Health & safety
- Whistle-blowing
- Child protection
- Home-School agreement

7.2 Procedure for policy reviews: It was agreed, going forward, to delegate all possible responsibilities for policy reviews to committees. Government guidance will be circulated.

Action: HB

A proposed procedure to ensure that policy reviews take place as required, and a master file of approved versions is kept up to date, will be circulated. **Action: AB, HB**

8. Governing body administration: All points had been covered in previous discussion.

9. AOB: Governors thanked SB for his attendance and useful updates.

10. Date of next meeting: Thursday 1st February 2018, 7.00 pm.

JSR thanked all governors and closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 7th December 2017:

Minute	Action	By whom	When
3.2	Convene working party to consider governor development section for School Improvement Plan, and report to FGB.	DR	February FGB
3.2	Continue enquiries to appoint a non-teaching staff governor.	JSR	Ongoing
3.2	Arrange governor induction training session to take place early 2018.	JSR	February FGB
4.1	Clarify process for appointing additional Trust Members.	HB	February FGB
4.3	Discuss ongoing P&C committee membership.	VH/JSR	ASAP
6	Check process for school nurse input into SIP.	SB	February FGB
7.2	Circulate DFE guidance on policies.	HB	ASAP
7.2	Circulate a proposed process for policy reviews.	AB, HB	February FGB.