



MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School, Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Tuesday 6th March 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Geoff Braham (GB)
Will Bromage (WB)
Alan Broomhead (AB)
Paul Burrows (PB)
Linda Burton (LB)
Jesse Cleverly (JC)
Ken Coveney (KC)

Vicki Hamilton (VH)
Rick Holroyd (RH)
Neil McIntosh (NM)
Val Nowell (VN)
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair
Graham Webber (GW)

In attendance:

Simon Bamford (SB) – Deputy Head
Helen Batten (HB) – Clerk

Governor challenge is shown in red

1. Introduction

- JSR formally welcomed PB and LB to their first governing body meeting, and introductions were completed.
- Apologies were received and accepted from Sue Ambler, Dennis Rocks and Mark Vitty.
- Quorum was confirmed.
- No items of AOB were notified.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item

2. ATB Meeting, 1st February 2018

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

2.2 Review of Actions/matters arising: All assigned actions had been completed or would be covered by the current agenda. There were no further matters arising from the minutes.

Signed

Date

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

3. Committee reports

3.1 Finance & General Purposes: Minutes of 20th February had been circulated.

- **Cleaning contract:** A new quote has been received and the agreed move to the new arrangements will take place. *Were alternative quotes requested?* AB confirmed that we will ensure we act within our rules to let this contract, but are otherwise satisfied confident to go ahead with the new company as previously discussed.
- **Responsible Officer visit:** All necessary actions arising from the RO report are being picked up in school. However the suggestion that scanned copies of signed FGB minutes should be posted online has raised some concern, and this apparent requirement will be checked. **Action: AB, HB**

3.2 Curriculum & Standards: VN presented minutes of 20th February, which had been circulated.

- **Design & Technology:** The presentation from Sonia Allen will now take place at the next C&S meeting.
- **French exchange:** RH clarified that, although staff changes meant it was no longer possible to deliver the original plan and thus sadly a reciprocal visit for Langtree students cannot take place, it is intended to revisit this again next year. The activities that did go ahead this year went well, and students gained a great deal from their experiences. Governors thanked RH and staff members for all their work in organising the exchange.

3.3 Pastoral & Community: The planned meeting could not go ahead due to sickness/lack of governors, and has been rescheduled to 26th April. It was agreed that PB and LB will join the P&C committee.

4. Head's report & updates

4.1 Head's Report: A report had been circulated and noted.

- **Staffing arrangements:** *Is the perception that staffing is becoming more difficult an accurate one?* This is certainly the case for us, and this reflects the national picture. However it is very positive that the appointment of a maths teacher is hopefully now in hand, as this is one of the subjects that is particularly difficult to staff. *Can governors do anything to help the situation?* The Association of School & College Leaders (ASCL) has completed a survey and will be lobbying MPs based on its results. Any additional publicity by governing bodies to raise awareness of the impact of having to pay fees for agency staff, on school budgets that are already severely squeezed, will be helpful. *Do we know what is driving the problems of teacher recruitment and retention?* It is not a clear picture and there are many different factors nationally. Surveys have identified poor morale due to lack of support, increasing workloads and financial pressures. There are also well-publicised concerns about teachers leaving the profession very early, although Langtree doesn't tend to see those problems and we have a very low staff turnover generally. However teachers find it very expensive to live in South Oxfordshire, which can make recruitment especially challenging here.

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- **Ski trip:** Governors were pleased to note the extremely positive feedback from one of the instructors, and thanked the students for being such excellent ambassadors for the school. Governors also thanked staff members, Sarah Darkins, Mary Taylor-Lane and Mark Vitty, who accompanied the trip and whose input clearly helped to make it so successful. Parent governors agreed that the trip had offered great opportunities which were very much appreciated by their children.
- **Exams administration:** Governors thanked SB for leading the replacement exams team, and extended good wishes to Hilary Protheroe who remains on long-term sick leave.

4.2 Drama studio: JC reported that Liz Haigh Reeve has now been appointed as agreed and is looking forward to working with the school. The next step will be to meet with the architects to agree further details about the envisaged building, following which Liz will complete a feasibility study and proposed strategy for consideration. This initial work has been funded by donation and will involve visiting the school to define what resources we can bring to the project and what must be sourced externally. If a decision is then taken to proceed, a dedicated fundraising committee will be established.

4.3 General Data Protection Regulations: SB has attended ASCL training, as set out in the HT report. He noted that preparation will involve a significant change of approach, so that we can justify all data that is kept and ensure that it is used in a compliant way. A data audit will be completed and reported to the next Finance meeting. *Will the new requirements be a hindrance to the everyday life of the school?* We already have the systems in place that will enable us to work in a compliant way, but we will need to make the shift to using them. This is a good time for a beneficial culture change. We will be able to manage this change and will probably find that it makes a number of things easier.

4.4 Health & safety inspection: GB reported that this will take place on 16th March. Preparations are at an advanced stage and there are no outstanding concerns. RH confirmed that much staff training was completed online during the snow closure so this aspect is now very much up to date.

4.5 Surveys: RH confirmed that surveys for staff, students and parents are in hand. As agreed, the parent survey will include additional questions about willingness to get involved with school activities, which it is hoped may lead to assistance with the drama studio project and other areas. Spring is a better time to complete this work, as findings will naturally feed into the monitoring and review activities that take place in the latter part of the year. Survey results will be provided to the next governing body meeting.

Action: RH

4.6 Website update: SB advised that the Pupil Premium report, showing the impact of spending last year and projected spending this year, was discussed by C&S committee and has now been published online. The update of the curriculum information on the website is in hand and new material will be posted. *How are we reporting on progress*

towards our agreed equality objectives? VH confirmed this will be included on the next P&C committee agenda, for discussion with Sarah Burman.

5. School Improvement Plan monitoring: The updated SIP showing progress since November had been circulated.

- RH explained that some actions cannot be completed until later in the year, while other things have deliberately been kept back to the review phase. Progress overall has been very good and it is not anticipated that any required actions will be outstanding at the end of the year. Of particular note is the huge progress in assessment and reporting, which will be trialled after the forthcoming Y10 exams. However the associated parent seminar was poorly attended and may therefore need to be repeated.
- *Will the staff changes affect the number of students choosing MFL for GCSE, and thus impact on the chances of us meeting our EBacc aim in 1.2?* We cannot answer this until all choices are known later this month. The considerable work completed by the current Head of Department will have an effect and, while we would not expect a huge shift this year, we would anticipate the trend of increased take-up to grow in future years. It is also important to note that, while our numbers of EBacc students are relatively small and we want to continue to increase this, the percentage of entrants achieving EBacc is high compared to other local schools.

6. Governor development & effectiveness

6.1 Working group: It was agreed that a working group, led by DR, and comprising AB, PB, KC, VH, NM and JSR, will develop an action plan to complete SIP section 3.5 - to ensure that governors play a more effective role in the strategic leadership of the school. NM drew attention to a useful article about challenging the headteacher that had previously been circulated, and it was agreed that the governing body will need to show that it has considered these aspects and is satisfied that the information received enables governors to ask the right questions to support school improvement. **Action: DR**

6.2 Training: Two sessions will be delivered by Tim Bartlett; dates are still to be scheduled, hopefully during late April/early May:

- Induction for new governors, to include PB, LB, WB, JC, KC, plus more experienced governors wishing to refresh their knowledge – VN and JSR expressed interest.
- A whole-GB workshop looking at strategic thinking and effective challenge.

Action: JSR

6.3 Governor open morning: Seven governors confirmed they would be able to attend on 27th March, from 8.15 am, to be notified to Mary Taylor-Lane. **Action: JSR**

6.4 Non-teaching staff governor: Discussion with staff members to continue efforts to recruit a non-teaching staff governor will take place during a regular Chair's visit. **Action: JSR**

Signed

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7. Policies

7.1 Reviews process: It was clarified that all statutory policies will be brought to FGB for approval; however all non-statutory reviews will be completed by committees. The updated schedule of reviews will be circulated. **Action: HB**

7.2 Staff conduct: *Is there a need for a separate staff conduct policy?* RH confirmed that standards of conduct according to the statutory documentation are made clear to all staff, and the disciplinary procedure sets out how breaches will be dealt with, and recommended that a separate staff conduct policy is currently not required. It was therefore agreed that no further action is necessary.

7.3 Admissions in to Y7, September 2019: It was clarified that this is a statement of our admissions rules and that no changes are required for 2019. The current (2018) policy, which had been circulated, was therefore approved subject to amending dates where necessary.

8. AOB: None

9. Date of next meeting: Thursday 17th May, 7:00 pm.

JSR thanked all governors and closed the meeting at 8.55 pm.

Signed

Date

ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 6th March 2018:

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
3.1	Check requirements for publication of governing body minutes	AB, HB	May FGB
4.5	Provide report on stakeholder survey results.	RH	May FGB
6.1	Schedule meeting of governing body effectiveness working group, to consider SIP section 3.5.	DR	Report progress to May FGB.
6.2	Set up training sessions with Tim Bartlett.	JSR	To take place in first half of summer term.
6.3	Confirm arrangements for governor open morning on 27 th March.	JSR	ASAP
6.4	Update on non-teaching staff governor recruitment after discussion with staff.	JSR	Report progress to May FGB.
7.1	Circulate updated policies information.	HB	ASAP

Signed

Date