



**MINUTES of a Meeting of the Directors of the Academy Trust, held at Langtree School, Woodcote, RG8 0RA on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:**

Simon Bamford (SB)  
Geoff Braham (GB)  
Alan Broomhead (AB)  
Paul Burrows (PB)  
Linda Burton (LB)  
Scott Chambers (SC)

Jesse Cleverly (JC)  
Ken Coveney (KC)  
Vicki Hamilton (VH)  
Val Nowell (VN)  
Jan Seal-Roberts (JSR) – Chair  
Annie Temple (AT)  
Graham Webber (GW)

**Apologies:**

Will Bromage  
Duncan French  
Neil McIntosh

**In attendance:**

Helen Batten (HB) – Clerk  
Dawn Challis (DC) – School Business Manager

*Governor challenge is shown in red*

**1. Introduction**

- Quorum was confirmed.
- Apologies tendered were accepted. Governors wished NM a swift recovery from illness.
- Mark Vitty (staff governor) had tendered his resignation. Governors thanked him for his work on behalf of the governing body.
- It was agreed to discuss the staff governor vacancy under AOB.
- No governor declared a material interest in any agenda item.

**2. ATB meeting, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019**

**2.1 Minutes** had been circulated. Subject to clarification that the governor referred to in item 5.1 should be VN, the minutes were agreed to be an accurate record and signed by JSR for filing.

**2.2 Review of Actions/matters arising:** All matters arising would be covered by the current agenda.

Signed .....

Date .....

Langtree School, Woodcote, Reading, Berkshire RG8 0RA  
Tel: 01491 680514 Email: office@langtreeschool.com www.langtreeschool.com Twitter : @Head4094  
Acting Headteacher: Mr S. Bamford Acting Deputy Headteacher: Ms S Burman  
Acting Assistant Headteachers: Mrs J. Holroyd and Mrs S. Wood

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**3. Headteacher's report:** The report which had been circulated was discussed:

**3.1 Student turnover**

- *Could the school have done anything further to support the student who has been withdrawn?* SB confirmed that all issues were fully dealt with in school as they arose. He is confident that everything possible was done to help the student to stay at school and in the end it was a question of parent choice.
- *What actions were taken in respect of the other student involved?* The other student was sanctioned according to the behaviour policy and there have not been any further concerns.

**3.2 Admissions**

- *How have staff reacted to plans to expand Y7 effective from September 2019?* SB reported that OCC unfortunately made this information available to others before it had been announced by the school. However, full discussions followed and no concerns were raised by staff. AT confirmed that she is not aware of any issues being raised by the staff as a result of this decision.

**3.3 Behaviour & safeguarding**

- An anonymised exclusions report was tabled and discussed. SB confirmed that the overall picture is similar to recent years. The majority of incidents relate to a very small group of students and the school is continuing to work with them in every way possible, although there are significant challenges for a small school in arranging alternative provision.
- *Is it a concern that a high proportion of exclusions are students with additional needs?* Because we do it well, Langtree is a popular choice for students with additional needs so we do have a relatively high percentage of SEN across the school. This is reflected in the exclusions data, and is currently not considered to be a concern.

**3.4 Staffing**

- Governors were pleased to note the strong ongoing support from other local schools.
- *Are there any concerns about recruitment of a DT teacher?* SB confirmed that there is interest in the vacancy from suitable candidates and he is confident that a strong appointment can be made in time for September.
- *How are the current DT arrangements running for this year's GCSE students?* As previously discussed, the current situation is not ideal but we are continuing to do everything possible to provide these students with the quality of teaching that they need.
- *Is it a concern that three English teaching positions became vacant at once?* No, this was pure coincidence due to completely different reasons. We have taken this opportunity to recruit some very strong teachers. As a result we are currently slightly over-staffed but in a good position to accommodate the larger Y7 intake in September.
- *With regard to the planned associate SLT roles, is it a concern that children are not at the right place on entering in Y7?* On the contrary, we have tended to under-estimate Y7 based on previous primary curriculum requirements, although there is a wide variance due to cohorts and the approaches of feeder schools. However, we need to focus on filling gaps in Y7 rather than going back to basics.
- *Have Y7 children learnt a language at primary school?* MFL is part of the curriculum, although the quality of provision varies.

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- *Is there a way of improving consistency across primaries?* SB hopes that attendance at the primary cluster meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May will provide some further information about the current support available for local schools, and how Langtree can link into this.
- *Will the associate SLT roles become a rolling programme for senior teachers?* We envisage that post-holders will undertake 1 – 2 year projects, after which the role can be passed to a colleague. It is hoped that this approach will offer excellent development opportunities that will benefit individual staff members as well as the school.

### 3.5 Student allocations

- *Has DT uptake been affected by the change of course which does not suit many students so well?* Materials Technology provides a different approach which is more like the old DT course, however there was not enough uptake to make this viable.
- *Why are some students unable to get their choices?* This happens every year to some extent when students choose less popular combinations which end up in the same block. We prioritise meeting 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices but can sometimes be unable to offer 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> choices. We discuss the situation individually with the student and parents and assist with alternative choices.

**3.6 Creativity day:** JSR reported a very positive and enjoyable visit to the school during Creative Day, when she observed students enjoying a wide range of activities across the school. A fantastic opportunity for so many of our students!

**3.7 Stakeholder survey:** The survey will be distributed after Easter, with questions kept as similar as possible to last year for comparison. However, following consultation with staff, some questions will be adapted to make them more relevant to support staff, and the survey will include additional questions around workload. The survey will also ask for student and parent feedback on the new reports. A full report will be provided to the May FGB.

**3.8 National funding:** SB reported a positive response to the recent letter to parents. Media coverage of these issues continues to be high, however it is also clear that the government is not really listening to concerns. A template letter to write to local MPs has been provided to parents and will be circulated to governors. SB has also requested a meeting with the Henley MP, John Howell.

**Action: SB**

## 4. Governor updates

### 4.1 Drama studio

- JC updated governors on activities since December. The fundraising consultant, Liz Haigh Reeves (LHR), has advised that a pared-down scheme won't actually suit Langtree so well and it has been agreed that we need something that is lettable and will create an income stream. Following further discussion with the architect, Ridge, costings are now awaited for a revised scheme that can be achieved in two stages.
- The fundraising working group has considered setting up fundraising activities based on this project and also wider work to develop programmes of giving. This latter aspect will start in advance of the main push for the drama studio, which won't become active until major donors are secured.

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- JC emphasised that this project will involve a lot of extra work over a sustained period. LHR will advise further when the size of the task is known. From the outset governors will need to have a clear understanding of what is required and be sure of their ability to meet it.
- The promotional video featuring the students will be shown at the next meeting.

#### 4.2 Committee membership

- It was agreed to formally constitute a fundraising committee comprising the current members of the working group: JC (Chair), PB, SC, KC. Terms of reference will be prepared for FGB approval.
- Membership of committees was confirmed as follows:
  - ~ Curriculum & standards: VN (Chair), SB, NM, JSR, GW.
  - ~ Finance & general purposes: AB (Chair), SB, GB, WB
  - ~ Pastoral & community: VH (Chair), LB, DF, AT
- It was agreed that the governing body is currently big enough, although capacity will be stretched with the establishment of a 4<sup>th</sup> committee and there will be further pressures due to vacancies or if individuals need to be less active for a period. JSR will highlight the staff governor vacancy in meetings with staff. It was also agreed that we would continue keeping an eye out for one or two other (non-parent) potential governors.

**Action: JSR**

#### 4.3 Governor training

- Completion of Prevent training by all governors is ongoing. **Action: JC, KC**
- SC and DF have completed induction training. SC reported that this was a useful and straightforward process. Governors were reminded that 'The Key' provides information and guidance on all aspects of governance. Advice on GDPR requirements for governors will be included in the Langtree induction package. **Action: DC, VH**

#### 4.4 Strategic governance working group

- KC was congratulated again on the previous work of the Strategic Governance working group comprising AB, KC, VH and NM.
- Governors agreed that the recommendation to alter FGB agendas to give greater prominence to headteacher reporting has had a positive impact, and that in consequence meetings are now better focussed on the core purpose of the school.
- Governors discussed Ofsted points around governor effectiveness. It was agreed that the governing body does work strategically on aspects such as school sustainability, funding, staff development and the drama studio project, and does not get unduly involved in operational matters. However it was agreed that as the next step, governors need to ensure that there is good evidence of working strategically, and of the impact the governing body is having on school improvement. It will therefore be helpful to reflect and evaluate more. Governors should also have a clear view of how we envisage the school developing over the next few years. The working group will take these ideas and consider some possible actions for future discussion.

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- SB recommended that the role of the governing body in monitoring school improvement should be better defined, so that governors clearly take ownership of the SIP, follow the progress of actions and assess impact. The working group will also consider some specific activities to progress this aspect.

**4.5 Use of GoogleDocs:** GoogleDocs had been used to distribute paperwork for this meeting alongside email. It is intended to move entirely to GoogleDocs when everyone is comfortable with this, and governors were reminded to check they can access the site and raise any concerns with the school.

**4.6 Governor morning:** Proposed arrangements for 9<sup>th</sup> May had been circulated. Governors were reminded to confirm attendance.

## 5. Committee reports

**5.1 Finance & General Purposes:** Minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> March had been circulated with no queries arising. Governors were requested to address any further comments to AB.

**5.2 Curriculum & Standards:** Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> March had been circulated.

- VN provided further information about the Drama presentation.
- *AT raised staff concern that students doing less well in English are being diverted away from MFL whereas research shows that studying a MFL can benefit them. Lack of MFL also precludes students from achieving the E.Bacc – and subsequently attending certain Russell Group universities in later years. Governors agreed that this is a concern, especially for later developing boys, and asked SB to give this further consideration.*

**Action: SB**

**5.3 Pastoral & Community:** Minutes of 11<sup>th</sup> March had been circulated.

- VH drew attention to concerns that the school is increasingly needing to fill the gaps as LA support for young carers is withdrawn.

**6. AOB – Governor attendance at school events:** It was agreed to revive the register of governor visits to school. All governors were asked to provide relevant details to the Clerk.

**7. Date of next meeting:** Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 7:00 pm

JSR thanked all governors and closed the meeting at 9:20 pm.

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Signed .....

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**ACTIONS LIST from FGB meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019:**

Minute	Action	By whom?	By when?
3.8	Circulate template funding letter for MPs.	SB	ASAP
4.2	Publicise non-parent governor role(s).	JSR	May FGB
4.3	Complete Prevent training online.	JC, KC	ASAP
4.3	Provide GDPR advice for governors for inclusion in induction pack.	DC, VH	May FGB
5.2	Consider increasing access to MFL for students less able in English.	SB	May FGB

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Signed .....

Date .....