

GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL
Academy Trust
 Company Number 769819.
 A Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in England
Full Governing Board Committee Meeting
Thursday 11th December 2025 at 3.30pm in E2



Attendees	Initials	Position	Comments
Balman, Sharon	SB	Parent Governor	Present
Beer, Emma	EB	Member Appointed	Present
Bloodworth, Andy	ABL	Headteacher	Present
Chipperfield, Caroline	CC	Parent Governor	Present
Cox, Elizabeth	ELC	Staff Governor	Present
Machin, Michael	MM	Co-opted Governor	Present
Newberry, Ian	IN	Member Appointed	Present
Tennant, Sian	ST	Parent Governor	Present
Wall, Lesley	LW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Wynne, Colin	CW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Pateman, Jo	JMP	Clerk to the Governing body	Present

MINUTES

Minute Reference	Item	Minutes	Action/ Decision
2025/26/ FGB/20	Welcome	The board voted Sian Tennant (ST) onto the board as a new parent governor and agreed that ST would join the T&L committee.	I, D
2025/26/ FGB/21	Apologies	No apologies had been received and all governors were present.	I
2025/26/ FGB/22	Conflict of interest	As the Resources meeting on 4 th December 2025 was not quorate, several agenda items from Resources had been added to the FGB agenda. This includes personnel, ELC will therefore have a conflict of interest and will be asked to leave at this stage.	I

2025/26/ FGB/23	Accounts	KLR joined the meeting at 3.40pm and provided a brief update from the meeting with the accountants on 04/12/25. There were no questions and the committee voted and agreed to formally approve the accounts.	I D
2025/26/ FGB/24	Audit	ABL was in attendance for this agenda item only. The internal audit plan for 25/26 had been circulated to all, the board accepted the plan from the auditors and did not identify additional areas requiring further assurance at this time. The board agreed to move the internal audit back to May/June to allow time for the new finance manager to settle in their post. The outstanding audit items as at 25.11.25 were reviewed and discussed. There were no comments.	I I, D D I
2025/26/ FGB/27	Finance	The Terms of Reference for the Finance Governor were reviewed and adopted. The financial reports from September 2025 were reviewed. Q – what are our current reserves? £870,000.00, we are well within what we can store in reserves.	I, D I Q
2025/26/ FGB/ 25	Reminders	For info only: <u>Training</u> – a reminder for governors to complete safeguarding, prevent and GDPR training on the national college. <u>Companies House</u> – please all log onto Companies House to verify your identity and forward the confirmation code to KLR	I I
2025/26/ FGB/ 26	Governor Privacy Notice	For info only – please read the privacy notice (based on DCC template) detailing how we use governor information, what information is collected and where it is shared Privacy Notice – Governors – 2025	I
2025/26/ FGB/28	Policies	5 - Safeguarding policy and summary of changes was reviewed and the policy was adopted. 4 - Charging & Remission policy (no changes) – the policy was adopted. 18 - Finance policy (in mark up) – no questions, the policy was adopted. <u>KLB and JMB joined the meeting at 3.53pm</u> 12 - H&S policy reviewed by governors. Q – first aid – does the school hold epi pens and inhalers? Yes, these are covered within the medical policy. The governors agreed to remove the list of first aiders as the certificates often expire, causing the policy to require constant updating. The policy was adopted.	I, D I, D I, D I I Q D
2025/26/ FGB/29	CIF bid	The submission deadline is 16 th December, tenders are due back today, but none received as yet. Estimate costs had been circulated with the agenda.	I

		KLH provided a summary including an update on a new leak over the office of the DSL. The CIF bid look for value for money and complex roofs will show a low value for money result. The school are requesting that the board agree a maximum contribution towards the CIF bid and ABL will ultimately make the final decision on which rooves are included, scaling back the project if necessary to achieve the highest percentage score. The board discussed and agreed to submit another CIF bid for rooves this year. KLR confirmed reserves again at £870k, following the reserves policy the school must keep £534k in reserves. After much discussion and two votes, the board agreed to contribute up to £50,000.00 towards the CIF bid and delegated authority to ABL to decide on the final project and scale back if needed to achieve the maximum percentage score. KLR, JMB and KLB left at 4.35pm.	I I D I
2025/26/ FGB/32	Minutes and Matters arising	The minutes of the FGB meeting held on 2 nd October 2025 were agreed as a true reflection of the meeting and approved.	I, D
2025/26/ FGB/30	Results	JSR joined the meeting at 4.36pm. <i>The 2025 Final Exam report for governors FFT & DFE and 2026 Cohort PFG Autumn governors</i> had been circulated with the agenda, this included the final results as published by the DfE. The data will be rechecked in January but GTS did not resubmit as there was no need for alterations to be made. There have been some improvements in the 7 to 9 grades in some subjects but in terms of remarks, nothing has shifted in English or maths at the 3 to 4 or 4 to 5 border marks. The school was strategic again this year in terms of saving money and selecting remarks. Teachers and subject leads download exam papers and review first before submitting for remarks. Q – does that put a lot of extra work on staff? Staff are asked to scan through papers, sometimes it is obvious, yes it does place a little more work on staff but allows the school to ensure funds are used in a more productive way. Some papers are automatically put in if within a few marks and most departments spread this out amongst their staff. This is also an excellent CPD opportunity for staff to understand the papers and ultimately, the staff want our pupils to do well and are happy to review papers for remarking. JSR had also provide the unpublished FFT self-evaluation which is not providing any information we were not already aware of.	I I I Q I

		Looking at next year's data and our current year 11, predictions are more positive, the aspirations and outcomes strategy has been implemented and is having good impact. Q – the school is on with the lower and middle, what does this mean? We would normally hit our FFT 20 target at lower end meaning the school is in the top 20% of schools nationally. 4+ we are FFT 20, 5+ we are FFT 40 and 7+ we drop off. Q – why are we only talking about 7+ now? We have been focusing on grades 7 to 9 and have introduced strategies, last year highlighted a lot due to the nature of the cohort, these are our covid cohorts i.e., no SATS data, big gaps in knowledge, the same could be said of our current year 10. We are seeing patterns exacerbated but on top of the results and setting aspirations, working with staff, we also have the added issue of increased mental health and other issues causing pupils to be disapplied, which is impacting on our progress 8, and is why this is so low. A number of pupils are not doing the full suite of 8 GCSEs (as a supportive measure), as we need to reduce the number they are doing so that they can achieve and still access further education, but this does have an impact on the school and results. Q – how confident are you in the accuracy of this data? Our staff are very good and most departments are accurate with their predictions. It is challenging, the 9 grades have been made harder and many pupils are now not hitting this grade. Q – but that is the same for all schools? Yes. Q – do you feel the new range of GCSEs offered to the current Year 10s will help with the progress 8 as pupils will be taking more subjects that they actually want to study, rather than just what is available? That is our hope. As discussed, we have increasing number of pupils providing medical notes stating that they must reduce the number of GCSEs, due to their mental health and we hope that by providing a broader range of subjects, it will help pupils remain motivated and reduce the number of pupils dropping GCSEs. The 2026/26 cohort all have gaps in their knowledge due to Covid. Some of the measures put in place previously are now being removed and we need to identify those and ensure any gaps are dealt with now. Q – again that must be the same across all schools? Yes, nothing is unique to Torrington however, some of our primary schools managed knowledge gaps in different ways. JSR left at 5pm.	I Q Q Q I Q Q I Q I
2025/26/ FGB/31	Sustainability Update	Moved to the next FGB meeting.	I

2025/26/ FGB/33	Committee Matters	<u>Items brought to FGB from the T&L and Resources committees</u> The outcomes and aspirations strategy 2025 was discussed at great length at T&L ((please see T&L minutes). The ECT Policy was presented at T&L, amendments were requested, which had been made, and the policy is now presented to FGB to be ratified. Governors agreed to ratify the policy.	I I D
2025/26/ FGB/ 34	Calendar	Academic dates for 26/27 had been circulated to governors with the agenda. The DCC proposed academic year runs until 27th July 2027, staff would like to finish on 23rd July 2025 and were asked to vote on how to spread the 5 INSET days (non-pupil) and 2 occasional days. Options were: <u>Option 1</u> – 2 x disaggregated training days, this means more time for meetings (5 weeks with 2 meetings). However, teachers would not be in school on 6th and 7th May 2027, during Mayfair. <u>Option 2</u> - 1 x disaggregated training day, this means staff would be in for an inset day on 7th May in-place of the additional meeting time mentioned in option 1. <u>Option 3</u> – 0 x disaggregated training days. This means less meetings, however teacher would be in school for training days on both 6th and 7th May. Results were as follows: • 51 staff have voted. • 2 x disaggregated training days = 36/51 • 1 x disaggregated training day = 8/51 • 0 x disaggregated training days = 6/51 Note to governors – there is a psychology exam on Thursday 6th May a.m., a sociology exam on Friday 7th May a.m. and a Drama exam on Friday 7th May p.m. Governors voted and agreed to adopt the academic term dates with 2 disaggregated training days as requested by the majority of staff.	I D
2025/26/ FGB/35	Policies	1 - Admission policy – the board considered the LA admissions arrangements for 2 years hence and considered any changes to arrangements. No changes were identified and the governors adopted the admissions policy.	I D
2025/26/ FGB/36	Safeguarding Update	ABL arranged for the Police to visit the school in November with a knife arch, as an educational piece of work. This is a Devon wide operation, and parents were written to after the event. ABL plans to do a whole school event in the future where all pupils have to walk through the arch. Frustratingly, we are still chasing staff for outstanding safeguarding training. Q – the 1265 included provision for staff to do that training? Yes.	I I Q

		The DSL has provided safeguarding questions for governors to ask pupils whenever they visit the school. The clerk will add these to the visit forms. The Head and SENCO have attended CP3 refresher training in December, there are a number of actions to enhance what the school are doing.	I I
2025/26/ FGB/ 37	Governor Visits	None.	I
2025/26/ FGB/38	HT PDPM	ABL declared a conflict of interest with this agenda item, IN did not feel he needed to leave the meeting as this agenda item was for information only, however if the board had any questions ABL could leave. IN informed the board that ABL's appraisal had been completed with the HT appraisal panel and the new SIP, Mark Walker. ABL had successfully passed his appraisal for the year 24/25 and objectives and targets set for the new academic year.	I
2025/26/ FGB/39	Items Through the Chair	CW's term of office ends on 15 th January 2026, CW would like to stand again as a co-opted governor. CW left the meeting whilst the board took a vote, CW was asked to return and informed that the board had voted and agreed to co-opt him onto the board for a further term.	I D
2025/26/ FGB/ 40	Final Point	What is the impact of this meeting on outcomes for pupils in the school? The board have considered at great lengths a CIF bid and fixing rooves to make the school building a safe environment for pupils. The aspirations and outcome strategy day been reviewed again and an update on results, with a review of progress for the current year 11. The academic term dates had been set for 26/27. The account had been approved.	I I I I
2025/26/ FGB/41	Personnel	ELC and ST left at 5.03pm. Staffing – ABL provided HR and occupational health costs for the previous 2 years and this year to date. OH and HR costs have tripled. In addition, staff being absent results in an increase in cover costs and has a direct implication on pupils as they are not having the continuity of their regular teaching staff. Q – is there a pattern to absences? Some are random, there is mental health, long term health implications etc., it is a range however there is a definite increase in mental health. Q – is this common? There is definitely an increase and in terms of GTS, staffing issues are taking a greater toll at the moment that it has previously done. Governors need to be aware of the financial implications, the effect on other staff and ultimately the impact on pupils.	I

		Q – what can we do to buck this trend, I do not believe it is mirrored in industry? At the moment we are flagging this for information only but further work needs to be done. The staff absence figures report will be presented and the next Resources meeting and will provide further breakdown, allowing for greater scrutiny. Q – is there an opportunity for a shared service i.e., HR and or OH? We could look at an informal agreement with other schools or a local MAT, there are management agreements. Q – do you know which services other schools use? A number are using PHP Law, we did trial PHP last year with one HR issue. Q – the school has pupil coaches, do you have a staff coach? We are offering wellbeing events in the Hardy Centre once each half term however the last meeting was not very well attended. One of our staff members if also offering free counselling. The staff leave and absence policy will be presented at the next Resources meeting – this will need to be carefully worked through as we may need to being amending this to reduce absences and appointments. The meeting moved to Part 2 to discuss staffing.	
2025/26/ FGB/42	Dates	T&L 29th January 2026 Resources 5th February 2026 FGB 12th February 2026	I

The meeting finished at 6.02pm