

GREAT TORRINGTON SCHOOL
Academy Trust
 Company Number 769819.
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Full Governing Board Committee Meeting
Thursday 12th February 2026 at 3.30pm in B9



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	Apologies
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	Apologies
Wynne, Colin	CW	Co-opted Governor	Present
Pateman, Jo	JMP	Clerk to the Governing body	Present

MINUTES

Minute Reference	Minute Item	Information and Action Required	Decision/ Action
2025/26/ FGB/ 43	Apologies	Apologies had been received from ELC and LW, these were sanctioned.	I, D
2025/26/ FGB/ 44	Conflicts of Interest	None declared	I
2025/26/ FGB/45	Wellbeing Survey	JSR attended to present the results of the staff wellbeing survey. Exactly the same survey as last year to allow for direct comparisons, the results from 2026 and 2025 were compared. Q – what was the uptake? 72 this year.	I I Q

		The survey questions are exactly the same, and the survey was circulated to staff at the same point in time, but this year there have been mock exams after Christmas, whereas in previous years there has not been mock exams. We may have a few staff feeling a little overwhelmed due to marking. Feedback and praise, SLT make a point in staff briefings of thanking people for going above and beyond and continue to use Steplab to pass on positive feedback too. It was noted that although the results were roughly the same, there had been a small positive shift. Q – behaviour is a focus of the school and board, why is it still a concern with the staff? It could be that as we focus on behaviour so much, this can make staff psychologically focus on behaviour more. ABL suggests that any school given this survey at this time would have similar comments and behaviour would be a focus too. Overall staff morale is slightly better, and staff have indicated that they know where to go for their wellbeing. We are a supportive school and on the whole staff feel supported. JSR left at 4.05pm and NMM joined.	I I I Q I I
2025/26/ FGB/ 46	Minutes and Matters Arising	The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025 were approved and agreed to be signed. The new Q Card for Children in Care had been released and circulated to the committee.	I, D I
2025/26/ FGB/ 47	Committee Matters	Items brought to FGB from the T&L and Resources committees <u>Teaching & Learning</u> The pupil premium strategy was presented and approved by the committee. The following questions were asked by the committee: • Q – do we have a pupil premium governor? No, although we have discussed previously having a disadvantaged pupil governor to oversee SEN, CiC and PP. • Q – have you reviewed attendance? Attendance for all subgroups is dropping; our PP are roughly 10% below those of non PP. In the past FSM was the worse attending group, then a slight increase for PP but they are now both pretty much equitable. • Q – why is CiC attendance so low? Previously these were our best attenders but over the past few years we feel CiC have become more complex, often the relationship with carers has broken down and there is far less stability with the providers.	Q Q Q

		• Q – are fewer people prepared to have CiC? Absolutely yes, more of our CiC are with companies and not in family homes. There is less consistent care and continuity. In addition, a lot of our CiC now come from out of county. • Q – how does that work? Badly, also the continuity of social workers is really poor. These children are constantly advocated by people who do not know who they are and have never met them. • Q – is this happening elsewhere? It is not specific to our area, although North Devon is supposedly a ‘safe’ area and often used for pupils, but it is not unique just to Devon. • Q – are the reasons for nonattendance for PP and others different or unique? More PP are due to transport, home based issues, a desire to be at home, a percentage in terms of persistent non-attenders who are PP are fairly represented. • Q – what is the school plan to address this? We continue to work with all of our families to get all students in, to continue working with hard to reach families, we know that the personalised approach makes a difference, but we are dealing with cultural issues as a school. We know this starts at primary school, the two schools with poor attendance in the area are two of our feeder primary schools. If there is a history of nonattendance before they join GTS, it is difficult to engage them. It’s also a bit of a culture problem; pupils are feeling a bit poorly and parents just let them have the day off. • Q – have you looked at/visited other schools with similar attendance or pupil needs? ABL and NMM visited Park and Pilton last year, they are bigger schools. They have similar problems with pupils with emotional school avoidance, SEMH, SEN needs and anxiety. The difference in both schools is that they have a huge amount of space, different groups of pupils have different areas, we just have the Hardy Centre. • Q – does it help having them in different groups and areas? For some pupils, yes. The pupils who are EBSA (emotional based school avoidance), will have a reduced timetable and a specific area with small group work. In our Hardy Centre we have 3 members of staff who work with a variety of diff needs, whether that is SEND, SEMH etc. • Q – are these schools putting more money into this? They must do yes. They must be using SEN and PP budgets. • Q – challenge 5 cultural capital, how are you addressing this? The only thing we can do is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils go on as many of the trips as possible. There are an increasing number, one of the lines for this budget is the £150 contributed towards PP going on trips. The correlation could be that more pupils are going on those trips but also, we have more students who are eligible.	Q
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		The bullying policy was presented to T&L and recommend for approval to FGB. The committee ratified this decision.	I, D
		The committee received feedback on the progress of the new GCSEs, which they will continue to monitor.	I

		<u>Resources</u> The committee extended their thanks to KLR for her time as the school finance manager and wished her well in her new role. The committee agreed a solution to cover the CFO and finance in the interim by appointing DMAT on a service level agreement. Q – was there any reference to the problems from the previous time DMAT supported GTS with finance? KLR was happy and confident with the service, DMAT are themselves much more established than they were previously. The catering contract was reviewed, and the committee have agreed to purchase the existing minibus, as the most cost effective option. There have been a few teething problems with the catering contract, staff are not particularly enamoured with the start, but things appears to be settling now. Condition survey – staff have been tasked with obtaining quotes for a building surveyor, as opposed to a condition survey, to check the areas not already covered in reports and bring this all together into one report which would become the GTS condition survey.	I Q I I
2025/26/ FGB/ 48	Policies	8 – Complaints policy – the committee were referred to the attached guidance <i>School Guide to Parent Complaints</i> and informed of a training session for governors on 17th March 2026 on complaints and recognising the six different types of complainant. Governors were also referred to a full complaints toolkit and mediation information on the Devon Education Services Governance Website. ABL advised he anticipates information coming out soon from the DfE regarding complaints, and the board will possibly need to revisit the policy at that time. The policy was approved. 33 – Capability policy – no changes, still the current policy, the board re-agreed the delegated responsibilities highlighted on the front page. The policy was approved. 13A - Sex and relationships policy – the policy is currently still valid, and the amendments listed are updates for September 2025. The policy was approved.	I I D I D I D
2025/26/ FGB/ 49	Safeguarding	General update as provided at T&L and Resources: It has been a busy start to the year, and the school are reviewing where we are in terms of communicating safeguarding with pupils. The response to Tik Tok is ongoing, the personal development curriculum is being adapted, and we have additional assemblies around this too. This is a good case study of how we have responded to current issues.	I

		Mobile phones – we were ahead of the game, we have already reiterated our policy regarding phones to parents and our expectations, aware other local schools were going to some lengths to ensure phones are not in schools. Letter to parents, information to pupils as a reminder of expectations, phones must not be used on the school site, must be dropped off. Q – do they listen? Culturally they know what is expected, they know if they get their phone out it will be confiscated. We do need to crack down on them leaving at the end of the day i.e., having their phones out in the corridor as they are leaving. Also staff need to be consistent with logging which pupils use their phones at the end of the day. NMM (DSL) attended to present the safeguarding report to the board. Q – any particular concerns? The increase in MASH figures. Q – on page 2, the comment about very little recorded on the racist incident log, could you explain please? On CPOMS when staff are logging an incident, there are some staff where a child may say, I am being bullied and they believe that is their experience, but one incident where it is not bullying the staff may put it down as bullying as a category on CPOMS. When then looked at by HoL and pupils coaches, it is not logged as bullying. We may need to go back and edit the CPOMS log. Q – are all racial incidents reported to DCC? Not necessarily, these are reported on the BPRI form, the threshold on it is quite vague, there is a discrepancy, are we logging it at the right threshold, we are picking it up and dealing with it. Log on CPOMS, then track racial and bullying to see if one off comment or needs to go on the Devon BPRI form, there is work there to do.	I Q I Q Q Q
2025/26/ FGB/ 50	Attendance	GTS currently have 51 children on part-time timetables. Q – any particular year groups? Year 10 are our biggest year group with the number of part-time timetables. Q – are those adapted timetables which could revert back to normal? A lot of them will not shift. The idea behind it is that they should be temporary, with a view to get pupils back in. What tends to happen is the opposite and timetables are reduced and reduced. This is a real focus of the LA at this time. Q – are most of these parent requests? Parents, backed up by medical support, occasionally the school realising it is a supportive measure that is needed, but the majority are from the child and their parents. GTS are starting to look at these pupils as their own vulnerable group, as there are now so many.	I Q Q Q I

	Q – what is EBSA? Not just pupils who find it hard to come to school, also pupils who find it hard to come in and go to one lesson. It can start there and then it builds.	Q
	Q – do you have set subjects that those part time pupils must access, or is it what they choose? Often the school chooses core subjects, as that is what we want them in. Sometimes we look at starting at a particular time of day, or a particular lesson the child may like, to try and encourage them into school.	Q
	Q - how does that count towards data at the end of the year? This has a huge impact on our results data and attendance figures.	Q
	Q – if part time, are pupils at home when they are not in? Again, this varies. Sometimes they need to be in school to support them and their wellbeing. Equally if we can keep them in school and give them an alternative adaptive timetable, using the Hardy Centre, then we will do that. However, our Hardy Centre is not big enough.	Q
	Q – we talked a while ago about the potential or need to consider flexible schooling/timetabling, is there an update? This would only exacerbate the problem; the only positive is that we wouldn't need to complete annex Rs as with flexi school, pupil do not require an annex R. They can come and go, we worry about the structure. NMM has recently spoken with Pilton School, who had some flexi school pupils last year and they informed NMM that they would not be doing flexi school again.	Q
	Q – are parents choosing to electively home educate? Yes, a lot of parents who want to home school just do it. Others we have managed to speak with and persuade that it is not in the best interest of their child, and we manage to work together to keep that pupil in school. This can involve a reduced timetable. However, there are also a percentage where reduced timetables are not working, attendance remains poor and parents choose to EHE.	Q
	Q – when creating a reduced timetable do you already have in mind how you want it to work/end up? Yes for some pupils absolutely. We always know where we want to get to, some pupils simply move/progress quicker than others. ABL – even though we have done all the work and been creative and flexible they may not be here at the time we need them to count for attendance and if not, they don't get a mark. A pupil could be here for 3 hours in the middle of the day but don't receive any attendance marks due to the timing and this reflects on the school's overall attendance figures.	Q

		Q – do you find the parents are engaged? It really varies, many are grateful we are so flexible and take the time to help their child be in school, it also puts a lot on parents if they don't live locally as we are relying on the parents to transport their children.	Q
		Q – do children with the same issues have small teaching groups together? If they are in the Hardy Centre together, yes. We do try but the Hardy Centre is small. Some staff become frustrated as they see these pupils in and out, but they don't understand the bigger picture and that even a small amount of time in school can be a positive step for these children.	Q
		Q – is this something you could work on and would help the staff wellbeing survey too? Yes, we do put on PIPs and round robins, but it takes time, if I can have a conversation with a member of staff to say what is going on with that child they understand but that is time consuming.	Q
		ABL – we have done various INSETs and staff meetings explaining the complexities of these situations, but it is a frustration. The SLT and pastoral team are the ones on the ground and who end up having a lot of these conversations with these pupils, but it takes time and is not necessarily what we should be doing.	I
		Q – 10% of year group has these kind of adaptations, are there things we can do to the whole school that could reduce that, it is not going away? Ideally what we need is a bit more space, lots of cross overs with pupils who need this extra provision or reduced provision, some pupils are just anxious about coming into school, maybe a small space where they get to it without coming through busy corridors would be great. A bigger Hardy Centre, more staff and more space.	Q
		Q – do you design the learning around that cohort of students? Yes.	Q
		Q – if we are aware there are these gaps, are you looking at how we will address these to narrow them? Nothing obvious, we can see data sets all day long, drill down into those year 9s you will see we are doing everything we can, it's a complex issue. NMM left at 4.56pm.	Q
2025/26/ FGB/51 and 52	OFSTED and the Headteacher Report	ABL has structured the headteacher report to help narrate conversations with Ofsted. CW black and white copy – send to JMP	I

	Context of the school – from the IDSR inspection data summary report, the Ofsted inspectors will be using this to form their opinions before they arrive. ABL has printed off the key information, anything looking like it has been cut and pasted comes from the IDSR.	I
	SEN support K – can see we are well above in the local authority, the LA told us to categorise our SEN K differently so there is no real definition of SEN K, we did that and it skewed our overall results within that bracket later on. Q – what do you define as school stability? The number of pupils coming and going.	I Q
	Page 4 – the number of pupils with FSM has gone up, partly due to the automatic on-rolling but also due to the economic climate for our families.	I
	Leadership and management – high staff absence has continued and is more specific to the strategic impact on the school. Increased unreasonable behaviour of parents, this is a public document parents need to read it, this is a national trend ASCL have recognised the impact of what parents are doing in terms of staff wellbeing and workload, it is having a significant impact. Also relevant to attendance, parents are now saying if you don't do this my child won't be coming to school and sometimes it is simply because they want to be sat with a friend.	I
	SEN K – issue just mentioned, around the 6 significantly below, other thing to note, the LA during the course of that year started their big restructure which is causing a huge amount of turbulence and impact on workload because people aren't doing the jobs they were doing previously. HVW does a piece of work and can't get an answer for 6 months.	I
	Strategic leadership focus – double, singles structure of school day and fourth option, this is the key messaging – improving engagement pace, outcomes and reducing the number of pupils not sitting 8 GCSEs. Not enough pupils are doing their full suite of GCSEs. Strategic piece of work last year around lesson times, changeover times etc., cannot allow Ofsted to say we have stumbled into this decline, that is wrong, the cohort have been in the school for 5 years, the school have already done this piece of work.	I
	Also note – personal development in as that is now part of the Ofsted framework – dedicated period, used to be called house time changed some of the structure, developed heavily on the Ofsted framework.	I
	Read aloud structured again - oracy and identification of oracy needs.	I

	Key thing to understand, we will not know the real outcome of these decisions for 3 to 4 years, but we will start to see an impact. You've seen reports last week on the new options, year 10s are switched on and focused, there has been a drop in internal truancy, pupils are turning up on time in the morning and getting on with their day. Losing tutor time first thing is not a perfect solution but the benefits are outweighing that loss.	I
	Staffing narrative – key things in summer 2024 we had 14 staff leave overall, 9 were teaching staff of those 8 were very highly qualified, experienced, well liked staff, also worth noting they got promoted or retired, which is a positive reflection on the school.	I
	Attendance officer role vacant for the whole summer term, we didn't have the attendance administrator either, NMM had to pick up a huge amount of admin.	I
	IDSR statistics – our periods of sickness at least 1 is significantly above the national average – that is the data sets – there was a little report within the IDSR and that was the significant thing. Staff absence is a challenge.	I
	Curriculum and teaching – to remind ourselves we have a cohesive training package, inset T&L and coaching, structured and targeted. We did have to pull coaching back this year due to budget and staffing. 1265 has time for CPD and training, JS and KVM continue to work for SWIFT.	I
	iTac – we host regionally what they call iTac – intensive teaching programme, 8 to 10 students who come in and do an extensive day with us, JS and HD lead. Important to understand the amount of teaching packages, we are training a lot of teachers, and they go on to do very well, and staff want to be trained here.	I
	QA last year – calm and purposeful classrooms, behaviour management and staff wellbeing supported by the WDU lead by SLT. Through the year we tweaked and continue to do so after consultations with staff, we are constantly listening to staff.	I
	Curriculum continues to be reviewed by MLT	I
	Late room trialled, decided to keep, good impact for not a massive thing, changed dynamic in the corridors and how quickly pupils get learning.	I

	Q – Exam access arrangements are they recommendations ? No and we do not always agree with them. This will get worse this year, extra time, running out of rooms, this year instead of additional time, they need time during the exam to have a break.	Q
	ATT8 score – progress 8 not in this as no SAT scores for this cohort. ATT8 scores the average of their 8 GCSEs – ours is low because we know lots didn't do a whole suite of GCSEs, we also had pupils not turning up for exams, parents accused the school of harassing pupils by calling them to get them in for their exams and going to their house.	O
	Those taken out of exams was after consultation with parents and medical evidence being provided. This was discussed SLT and never just ad hoc, we are always thinking is it in the best interests of the child not to do it.	I
	3 year trend – prior to this going on progress 8 always close to average and had significantly high levels of SEN, still have high levels of SEN but on this occasion we were not close to average. This was a particularly weak cohort, unique compared to other schools was not favourable – looking at neighbouring schools not favourable. When considering outcomes over past 5 years GTS performs around the national average, some slightly higher, some slightly lower.	I
	English, maths and science are around the national average. Overall Att8 is significantly below with a decrease however disadvantaged is in line.	I
	English Att8 was significantly below but that was the first time ever and our English department is a high performing department.	I
	Grade 4+ for English close to average, previously significantly above. Maths 4+ all close to average however Science 4+ is below average.	I
	English 5+ is average and maths 5+ is below. Languages close to average, above the year before.	I
	Using the data on which Ofsted will be making their judgements, our outcomes are still at or around average. Whilst we had a dip and we need to improve, we have not gone off a cliff, this is a blip.	I
	Narrative – if a school achieved 1 decent set of results out of 3, we wouldn't suddenly think everything is fine and this works in reverse. GTS has 1 set of not so good results, but that does not mean it's all gone horribly wrong.	I

		However, we can't get away from attendance. The narrative on this is it is not good, and we know other schools who bounced back from covid better than GTS. Persistent absence is below 90%. Page 24 – the government is focusing on attendance and have developed tracking data, and rightly so. NMM has shared FFT data with the board, ABL also has access to DfE data and can review this every single day, as the data is live. Every single data set is different including our own internal data, which is frustrating, however there is no denying that our attendance is low. Attendance data will go back to the pupils and when Ofsted visit we need to look at the pupils as individuals. ABL summary on attendance page 30 – less than 50% is severe absence, two of our very nearby schools are in the top 5 worst performing primary schools and are our main feeder schools. Do we have culturally within our region an issue with attendance and buy in to school. What is GTS doing, ABL is working in the Torrington Learning Community Partnership and also within the regional headteacher group to get some ideas. Devon inclusion strategy planning meeting – key discussion in Devon we have high numbers of part-time timetables that they need to reduce, high number of suspensions that need to reduce and high number of poor attendance. The problem is those 3 things are really linked and aligned but one will also cause a worse outcome than another, however you bring the three of those into check – rigid with attendance and more will be off. No more suspensions, equals an increase in part time timetables, so we can't really improve attendance. Local issue but nationally an issue too, although Devon is probably worse with all those three factors Suspensions – hoping 24/25 will be our peak year, if we extrapolate where we are now, feel will be a 1/3 down. Q – are we getting down that 35% due to being more lenient? No, definitely not. Governors to read the HT report fully as preparation for Ofsted.	I I I I I I I I I
2025/26/ FGB/ 53	Skills Audit	The committee discussed and agreed EB to organise a skills audit. The current skills audit used was not felt to be detailed enough and EB was asked to look for alternative options. The clerk to send the existing skills audit to EB.	I, D D

2025/26/ FGB/ 54	SIP	From annual cycle - Monitor progress against the governance section of the SIP. ABL working to align the outcomes and aspirations strategy into the existing SIP. Governors to review who has been assigned to monitor which aspects of the SIP.	I I
2025/26/ FGB/55	Sustainability	A sustainability committee has been established, and a first meeting held in December. A climate and sustainability SharePoint site has also been launched. MM and JMB attended the Devon Schools Sustainability conference. A formal Climate Action Plan is not yet in place, although several initiatives are underway. MM is slightly disappointed with the progress to date and is working to organise another meeting and gain more involvement from the people who have agreed to join the working party. IN – staff are very busy, and I believe JMB has made some progress towards a plan. Q – what can we say so far, any conclusions? We should be looking to have one or two parts of the plan in place, things which we can achieve. Q – if we were benchmarking against other schools how would we fare? We are probably on par with them. Staff are taking on sustainability in addition to their normal role. CW and ST left at 6pm	I Q Q I
2025/26/ FGB/ 56	Training	The committee were informed of the following training events and asked to contact the clerk if they are free to attend: • Complaints – how to recognise the 6 different types of complaints – Tuesday 17th March, Live interactive webinar 10am to 11.30am with Devon education Services • Ofsted – what the board should expect and how to prepare – Tuesday 24th March, Live interactive webinar 1pm to 2pm with Devon Education Services – do any governors want to attend? • Securing great outcomes for your disadvantaged (under-served) children – Wednesday 25th March, Live interactive webinar 12.30pm to 1.15pm	I
2025/26/ FGB/ 57	Governor Visits	LW requested the clerk re-send the governor monitoring responsibilities from the SIP.	I, A
2025/26/ FGB/ 58	Items Through the Chair	In the news this week, 90% of debt incurred by DCC SEN provision has been written off by the government. We hope this will allow the LA ability to make headway with SEN.	I
2025/26/ FGB/ 59	Final Point	What is the impact of this meeting on outcomes for pupils in the school? The board have reviewed attendance issues, impacts on behaviour and actions by the school The board have reviewed the Headteacher report and are preparing for Ofsted.	I
2025/26/ FGB/ 60	Dates	T&L 19th March 2026 Resources 26th March 2026	I

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Meeting finished at 6.03pm