TCAT
THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST

Quality and Standards Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday 6th November 2025, 5-7pm

Venue: TCAT Professional Development Centre

Chair: Sheila Yates

Clerk: Melissa St. Clair m.alexander@tcat.uk.com

Committee Members			End of Term	Attendance
MG	Matthew Grant	Trustee	20/06/2028	✓
JW	John Warren	Trustee	11.01.2028	✓
PW	Peter Winter	Trustee	11.01.2028	✓
SY	Sheila Yates	**Chair of Committee,** Trustee	01.04.2027	✓
Also In Attendance				
KB	Karen Burns	Committee Member		✓
VB	Vicky Briggs	Director of Education, TCAT		✓
JL	Jo Dommett	Committee Member		x
CL	Claire Lawton	Observer, Headteacher, Penketh South Primary School		✓
TL	Tim Long	School Improvement Lead, TCAT		✓
KP	Keiron Powell	Observer, Principal, Bridgewater High School		x
CW	Carolyn Williams	Committee Associate		x

Documents Shared Prior to the meeting

Item 6. Quality and Standards Draft Minutes 12.06.2025
Item 7, 8 & 10. Quality and Standards Report
Item 9a. TCAT Trends 2025
Item 9b. Outcomes Headline Data 2025
Item 11a. Safeguarding Panel 20.05.2025 Minutes
Item 11b. Safeguarding Panel Committee Meeting 04.11.2025 Draft Minutes
Item 12a. Draft LADO and Low-Level Concern Policy
Item 12b. Draft TCAT Safeguarding Policy
Item 12c. Draft Safeguarding Investigation Proforma
Item 12d. Draft TCAT Prevent Risk Assessment
Item 12e. Draft TCAT Prevent Statement 2025
Item 12f. Draft TCAT Supporting Young Carers
Item 12g. Draft Ty'n-Y-Felin Safeguarding Addendum

	Agenda Item	
1.	**Welcome / Items for AOB / Items for Confidential Part Two** MS welcomed the Quality and Standards Committee to the first meeting of the academic year.	**MS**
2.	**Absence / Apologies / Non-Attendance** MS confirmed that apologies were shared in advance by JD and KP. The committee accepted these apologies. CW did not attend the meeting or send apologies. MS confirmed that contact would be made with CW to confirm meeting dates for 25/26.	**MS**
3.	**Register of Interests** There were no Registers of Interests declared.	**MS**
4.	**Declaration of pecuniary interests in relation to agenda items** There were no Pecuniary Interests declared.	**MS**
5.	**Membership and Organisation** MS shared with the Committee that a self-nomination for Chair of the Committee had been received from SY prior to the meeting. MS asked the Committee if anyone else wished to make a self-nomination for the role as Chair. There were no additional self-nominations declared. ***SY was unanimously voted to remain as Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee.*** MS provided a verbal update to the Committee regarding membership and organisation. MS shared that Claire Roper has stepped down as Committee Associate. MS explained that a discussion took place regarding phase representation for the Quality and Standards Committee. MS added that Heads and Principals have been provided with the opportunity to put themselves forward to join the committee, and the following have offered to join the committee: Claire Lawton, Headteacher at Penketh South Primary School. Keiron Powell, Headteacher at Bridgewater High School. MS confirmed that Post 16 representation is to be confirmed.	**MS**

	The Committee welcomed representation from all phases. A formal introduction was made for CL and CL provided a brief introduction to the Committee.	
6.	**Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee meeting held on Thursday 12th June 2025** a) Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by the Committee. b) Matters arising: c) Action log: SY reviewed the actions from the previous meeting. MS, TL and VB provided the following verbal updates: • MS reported that the Committee's terms of reference were updated and approved at the Trust Board in July, with clarifications on the committee's responsibilities for ratifying policies. • MS and VB confirmed the policy schedule was revised over the summer, establishing a clear process for ratification and updating, with Dawn Golden responsible for maintaining the schedule and all governors and trustees having access via Governor Hub. • VB confirmed that all policies had been approved and circulated with all Heads and Principals. • TL confirmed that an iPad update would be provided during the committee meeting. **Action Log:**	**SY**

Minute Ref.	Action to be taken	By Whom	Completion date
6.	MA to carry over the Terms of Reference: Page 12, Point 14. Clarification of what policies the Committee are required to ratify. A generic statement is required linked to the remit of the group. Page 12. Monitoring of the LGB/ remove Point 17.	MA	ASAP This will be brought to the next meeting.
6.	VB to reword Behaviour Principles to Behaviour Policy	VB	ASAP
6.	VB add a note Teaching and Learning to cover Priestley College caveat	VB	ASAP

14.	MA to share policies via email: Behaviour policy (TBC)/ Careers policy once these have been finalised.	MA	September 2025
10.	VB to organise a termly meeting with Debbie at Warrington Borough Council to obtain a trust overview of attendance and referrals to the attendance team.	VB	Ongoing
12.	TL to finalise the decision on whether to lease or purchase iPads for teachers and implement the one-to-one device strategy.	TL	ASAP
16.	MA to share the next date of the meeting which will be rescheduled to Thursday 6th November.	MA	ASAP

7.	**Quality and Standards Presentation:** (for information and discussion) SY praised Executive Leaders for their precision in the development of the Quality and Standards Report, noting that the information is digestible and insightful. **Trust Priorities:** VB provided the Committee with a verbal update relating to Trust priorities for 2024-2026 in line with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) strategies. VB highlighted Trust priorities continue to focus on the 'three Ps' on pupils, people and performance and made reference to attendance, attainment, curriculum, iTeach, SEND, sustainability and Ty'n-Y-Felin, ensuring this that each priority listed is accessible for all students. VB presented the Trust's key Educational Excellence priorities which covered: - Rasing attainments - Improving attendance - Curriculum reform - iTeach Key Policies and Changes:	**20 mins** **VB/ TL**

VB provided the Committee with external policy and changes which covered the following:

- Best start in life strategy
- Skills White Paper
- Child Poverty Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review
- New Inspection Framework

SY questioned if the best start in life 'dips' are due to the range of demographics within the Trust.
VB confirmed that this is correct, add that the starting point for some TCAT students is lower than national providing the example of extremely limited vocabulary which are significant challenges.
SY commented that the committee benefit from having this data to make comparisons and support with the identification of trends.
VB highlighted the significance of the Committee taking context into consideration.
JW added that in line with a national picture, academies such as Dallam Community Primary School and Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School will be compared to similar schools.

SY highlighted the significance of the Committee unpacking the key data and trends, adding the Committee's role is to unpack the factors that make a positive impact on students learning.
KB raised that attainment strength takes time and measurement of performance takes time. KB agreed with VB's earlier point that context must be considered.
VB explained that context is key, but a strong provision is key to provide the best service for students.
VB asked the committee for their consent to deliver a SEND case study at the next committee meeting.
The committee agreed for a SEND case study to be delivered at the next meeting.

<u>TCAT Strategies Update:</u>

TCAT Learns:
VB provided a brief overview of TCAT Learns, which focuses on education. VB added that there have been a range of policies implemented to assist with the implementation of this strategy. VB highlighted the Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Policies that have been developed to strengthen the quality of education and 'Educational Excellence' across the Trust. VB added that the implementation of the TCAT Learns Strategy is led by Lead Practitioners and Hub Leads, noting that there are over thirty Trust-wide hubs in place, covering a range of phases, subjects and cross-phases.

TCAT Thrives:

	VB explained that TCAT Thrives is TCAT's disadvantaged strategy which is currently under review. VB explained the policies that sit behind this strategy are Safeguarding Policy (and related policies), Attendance Policy, Behaviour Policy, Permanent Exclusion and Special Educational Needs Policy. VB shared that capacity has been built to provide a strengthened support network to support with the implementation of TCAT Thrives foci and accompanying resources. VB added that Duncan Morrison is leading on behaviour and attendance and Rebecca Leatherbarrow and Tracey Hatton, are leading on Safeguarding. Lead Practitioners have developed a range of templates and guidance to offer wider support for TCAT Heads, Principals and Senior Leaders. **TCAT Leads:** VB shared that the TCAT People Strategy sits behind TCAT Leads, explaining that this strategy is people and HR driven, adding that there are a large range of policies that sit behind this strategy. VB referred to the collaborative work with Liverpool John Moores, and the success of the Executive Coaching Programme for Heads and Principals with further training and development opportunities throughout 25/26 linking with Trust priorities. **Education Update:** VB included an executive summary of education updates, including the key foci for Primary Executive Team and Secondary Executive Team meetings, new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, Department for Education 'Best Start in Life' strategy and TCAT engagements with other MATs. ***VB queried*** if there were any questions from the committee. ***No questions*** were raised. VB added that a challenge has been set to all leaders this year on raising academic attainment by 10%. ***SY commented that the 10% increase would be particularly challenging at Priestley due to the high level of grades achieved this academic year. SY added that spotlighting specific subjects would be more sensible.*** VB accepted SY's challenge, explaining that this ambitious target has been set, with understanding that this may not be viable for all but adding that it is important for the Trust to remain committed to improving attainment. VB added that the target for Priestley College would be to maintain the success of the academic year 24/25. ***CL commented*** that the target has been positively received. VB emphasised that the Trust are not exam factories and student experiences are at the forefront of everything the Trust does adding that individual academy areas of focus have been requested to identify explicit areas for focus. **Scorecard and academy Education updates:**	

	VB confirmed that Education Scorecard meetings are in the process of taking place. **SLT Seminar Reflections:** VB shared the first SLT Seminar for this academic year focused on the TCAT 2040 Vision, educational priorities and launch of the Attendance Toolkit. VB added that key discussions related to attendance, belonging, inclusion, engagement and understanding barriers. VB explained that Duncan Morrison led on part of this seminar and provides guidance relating to the launch of the new toolkit to support colleagues across the Trust. VB confirmed that improving attendance remains a key priority for all academies and the Trust. SY commented that during the recent Ofsted seminar, the Senior HMI Inspector, spoke about inclusion and disadvantaged in great detail with other areas not covered in the same level of depth. ***VB explained*** that inclusion is a new 'tab' within the Ofsted Framework as a direct result of the increase of disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged students, thus becoming a key area of focus for inspectors. VB assured that other key aspects remain within the framework, adding that Inclusion is one 'tab' of the framework. **Monitoring Updates:** VB confirmed that there will be no peer reviews this academic year, due to these taking place every other year. VB added that TCAT Thrives Reviews will be scheduled throughout the academic year, led by TCAT Deputy Heads, with the key threads being behaviour, SEND, attendance and transition. VB confirmed that Safeguarding Reviews will remain annual. There were no questions posed by the Committee. **Lead Practitioner priorities 2025-2026:** VB confirmed that Lead Practitioners have engaged in a planning day to determine their key priorities for 2025-2026 and will continue to lead on reviews/ provide support to TCAT academies across the Trust. **ITT Update:** VB shared that applications are open for the 26/27 cohort, with seven submissions received. ***SY queried*** if this is a strong number of applicants. ***VB confirmed*** that this is a high volume of applicants. ***SY stated*** that data comparisons would be beneficial for the Committee to gain improved understanding of the context. VB explained to the Committee that there is a thorough recruitment process, where all applicants engage in a face-to-face interview and deliver a lesson to ensure the highest calibre of trainees are enrolled onto the course.	

	VB added that there is a TCAT Train to Teach Recruitment Event scheduled to take place on Thursday 13th November at TCAT Professional Development Centre to showcase the offer. **ECT Update:** VB explained TCAT continues to serve as the lead local delivery partner on behalf of Generate Teaching School Hub, which is managed by Chris Hillidge, who leads on the training. VB added that ECT seminars have been revised to provide enhanced flexibility for ECTS, whereby half day and twilight sessions are now offered to support with attendance. ***SY queried*** Chris Hillidge's role. ***VB confirmed*** that Chris Hillidge continues to lead on Science, STEM and AI for the Trust. **NPQ Update:** VB explained that despite limited funding, the Trust continues to host and lead on the delivery of a range of NPQs. VB added that a number of TCAT staff are leading on the facilitation of sessions which supports with CPD. **Education Connect:** VB that the Trust are proud of the Education Connect Offer, which has developed over the course of the last two years. A range of training and CPD led by MS has been made available to teaching staff to support with Trust priorities. MS is working in collaboration with Lead Practitioners to widen TCAT's training offer and is sharing CPD and events with key stakeholders and external clients, providing opportunities for local schools to engage with TCAT's events and offers. TCAT have widened the offer and now have Education Services and Safeguarding Services to external clients and MS has shared offers with the wider network. ***SY commented*** that the agenda for the Safeguarding Link Conference agenda is impressive. VB added that TCAT have officially launched the Support Staff Offer, comprising of a range of training and apprenticeship routes to provide growth and development opportunities for support staff in a range of functions. **Trust External School Improvement work:** TL explained that one of the key aims for TCAT was to provide external 'School-to-School' support that is sustainable. TL added that RISE work is based on a six-term fixture, which has enabled the Trust to use the money received to expand the group of Lead Practitioners who lead on the external support work. TL confirmed that TCAT are supporting St. Mary's and Prescott High, adding that review meetings have taken place and are going well.	

	SY queried that previously TCAT has declined to offer further external support to prevent stretching staff within the Trust and sought clarification. TL confirmed that one of the schools that TCAT are supporting has been given support for the last three years. TL explained that no further SLE support can be provided for subject specialist support due to lack of capacity, however, leadership support can be provided, adding TCAT Heads and Principals have demonstrated their desire to be involved and support with External Support work. ***SY asked*** if the Trust are being selective with the schools who they support. ***TL confirmed*** that the Trust have been selective with the external support work that is being provided, ensuring that capacity is carefully managed.	
8.	**Attendance, Suspensions and PEX:** VB confirmed that the attendance analysis for 2024-2025 can be found within the TCAT Trends booklet. VB went on to provide the Committee with a verbal update, with a focus on high level data. <u>Attendance Update:</u> ***SY queried*** which data represents TCAT and which data represents national. ***VB confirmed*** the pink line within the graph represents TCAT. ***SY raised concerns*** regarding attendance dropping both across TCAT academies and nationally. VB added that DfE dashboards are extremely useful to identify trends and target specific students for additional support ***JW asked*** if attendance is poor prior to half term breaks. VB confirmed that some attendance is impacted prior to half term breaks for holidays. VB added that there was also a significant attendance dip prior to half term due to Covid and genuine illness. ***JW questioned*** how data for students who have completed their GCSEs is logged. ***VB confirmed*** that there is a different attendance log for students who have completed their GCSEs, explaining that different codes are used. VB confirmed that the high-level data presented to the Committee is then carefully assessed to determine trends and prevent attendance drops. **Primary Attendance:** The attendance for the first half-term was presented to the Committee.	**15 mins VB**

	VB highlighted that attendance for Dallam Community Primary School and Meadowside Community Primary and Nursery School are the key priorities for TCAT. Further data was presented covering different categories of pupils. **Secondary Attendance:** VB shared that secondary attendance is broadly in line with national data. VB highlighted that attendance at South Wirral High School's attendance is a key priority, and stands out in comparison to other TCAT academies, with additional support in place to improve attendance. ***SY challenged*** that attendance for The Sutton Academy is disappointing. PW and VB explained that significant efforts are being made to encourage attendance. VB referred to the different pupil categories, highlighting that this data is informing specific support, discussed in Education Scorecard meetings for individual academies: VB added that attendance trends are also assessed by year group as well as groups. Persistent Absence: VB explained that TCAT Persistent Absence data is inline with national average. VB shared that the Trust continues focused work to improve student attendance. Suspensions & PEX 2023-24: VB presented a visual covering the three-year trends, with reference to year groups and individual academies. ***SY queried*** if exclusions feed into absences for students who experience suspensions. TL confirmed that this does contribute to attendance. ***KB commented*** that the trajectory is positive. VB explained that a huge amount of work has taken place to implement common problem solving to prevent suspensions and permanent exclusions across the Trust. The higher number of suspensions at The Sutton Academy were highlighted by the committee. PW commented that there is a zero tolerance for certain behaviour at The Sutton Academy which has had an impact on permanent exclusion data. VB confirmed that she is supporting Paul Willerton with academy attendance and the management of suspensions. Permanent Exclusions:	

	VB stated that the trust has seen a reduction in suspensions and permanent exclusions, attributed to enhanced behaviour policies, de-escalation training, and the Alternative Provision. VB explained that the policies are being thoroughly to reduce the risk of students being permanently excluded. MG highlighted that trends have improved. VB added that staff go above and beyond to avoid permanent exclusions and suspensions until it is required. ***JW questioned*** if students who are permanent excluded be sent to another school. TL explained that there is a Fair Access Panel which has a relatively strict rota in place which is reasonably equitable to ensure there is provision for students who have been permanently excluded. VB added that the Trust engage with the Local Authority/ Authorities to prevent Permanent Exclusions. ***JW asked*** if there is data being recorded for the intervention of permanently excluded students. VB confirmed that this information is captured but not recorded in the overall data. VB explained that this information forms a key part of the Alternative Provision Impact Report.	
9.	**Assessment and Outcomes:** (for information and discussion) VB explained that the Outcome Summary Report provides a more detailed analysis of examination results, and referred to the headline data graphs that were included in the Quality and Standards Report <u>Early Years:</u> VB shared that across the Trust, TCAT are broadly in line with national statistics at 68%, with 70% excluding Resources Provisions. VB explained to the committee that there has been an improvement to the percentage of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at EYFS, however, this remains a priority to ensure alignment with national averages. ***SY queried*** if Early Years outcomes were below national. ***VB confirmed*** that Early Years outcomes are broadly in line with national. <u>Primary:</u> VB explained to the Committee that Trust-wide primary data presents a mixed picture. VB presented data graphs to the committee and verbal discussions took place relating the data that was presented. VB	**30 mins VB**

	emphasised that phonics outcomes continue to be stable but remain below national standards, highlighting the need for this to be an ongoing area of improvement across academies. VB added that combined outcomes in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage Two are broadly in line with national figures, with a slight decline being identified over the last two years. VB highlighted that the key areas of priority for primary academies are reading and writing. <u>Secondary:</u> VB explained that combined data for pupils achieving the Basics measure (Grade 4 in English and Maths) shows a three-year declining trend. VB added that outcomes for Basics a Grades 9-5 and 7-9 have shown improvement and remain above national averages. ***SY stated*** that TCAT has identified the key areas of improvement for secondary. SY queried whether the 9-5 grades have shown improvement. VB stated that the 9-5 and 7-9 results have improved. A discussion took place relating to the way in which data is presented and ***SY commented*** that it is essential the committee thoroughly understand the way in which data is being presented. VB noted SY's feedback and confirmed that the way in which data is presented will be reviewed to ensure greater clarity for the Committee. SY highlighted that the Committee need to feel confident when assessing the data that is presented to them. This was agreed by the committee. VB emphasised that addressing the decline in Grade 4 Basics remains a key Trust priority. <u>College:</u> VB celebrated the success of Priestley College's results which were as follows: • A Level: 99.3% pass rate • High Grades: 59.2% • Vocational: 99.3%/ 71.5% High Grades ***SY*** wondered if the exceptional GCSE results in English and Maths resits at Priestley might have any lessons for KS4 staff. ***SY challenged*** if the detail contained on page 25 is TCAT data or national. VB confirmed these figures are national. VB concluded this agenda item, explaining that the Executive Team is broadly satisfied with the outcomes, noting key priorities have been	

	identified to support academies in moving forward to further improve results.	
10.	**TCAT Strategic Priorities:** (for information and discussion) VB explained that the Trust are in the 'Delivery Phase' of the Trust Strategic Action Plan (SAP). VB added that last year, colleagues 'explored' key elements within the SAP in line with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) implementation, and that the focus for 2025-2026 is the delivery and implementation. <u>TCAT Oracy Strategy: TCAT Talks</u> VB outlined the development of the TCAT Oracy Strategy, designed to establish a strong baseline across the Trust. The strategy has and is being led by Martine Molyneux, MFL Lead Practitioner, who conducted visits to external schools to capture best practice as part of the 'Explore Phase' for this particular strategy. An Oracy Working Party was formed to shape and refine the approach to ensure TCAT colleagues had the opportunity to collaborate. VB confirmed that the strategy has been presented to Primary and Secondary Heads at the Central Executive Team (CET) meeting and shared across hubs to support smooth implementation. VB confirmed that implementation will begin in Early Years and is structured around three interconnected strands: • Learning Through Talk • Learning How to Talk • Learning About Talk VB concluded that each strand is supported by bespoke training packages, ensuring a comprehensive approach to oracy development. ***SY queried*** if there is any scope for 'cross-fertilisation' for BTEC Priestley College students to complete placements at primary TCAT academies, whereby students could work through a package as a pilot study. VB commented that this is an excellent recommendation and confirmed that this would be discussed with Chris Peacock. VB provided a verbal summary for the next steps of the Oracy Strategy which included modelling to staff using evidence informed frameworks to support with the implementation in the classroom. VB added there will be a selection of "Oracy Champions" within each academy to promote and support with the strong embedding of this particular strategy who will lead on strategies to carry out a research project over the coming months. <u>Critical Digital and Media Literacy:</u> VB shared that critical digital and media literacy is an area of development for TCAT. VB shared that the Trust have carried out research to strengthen this area, whereby 'Lytfa' has been trialled. VB confirmed that	**15 mins VB**

central licences have been purchased for year 5, year 10 and year 12 students which covers a 12-session course that cover the following themes:

Documentary, Literacy & Critical Thinking, Social Media, Truth and Echo Chambers, Stereotypes & Representation, AI & Algorithmic Bias, Deepfakes & Mis/Disinformation, Digital Kindness & Belonging.

VB explained the purpose of this course is to enhance student digital literacy knowledge and skills.

JW questioned if TCAT's Critical Digital and Media Literacy will be in a strong position in two years' time.
VB confirmed that the Lyfta course is a starting point, which will identify clear gaps and provide a basis. VB added that intel will be collected across the phases to assist the Trust with the identification of digital training and curriculum planning that will have a long-term significant plan. The Digital Curriculum is in the process of being developed.

SY raised queries on how challenging digital literacy will be to teach.
VB confirmed that the Lyfta sessions take away the pressure from teachers, adding this is a strong model to use.
VB added that a clear training model is in the process of being developed to fit the offer that is put into place.

<u>Digital Strategy: iTeach</u>

TL introduced the iTeach Strategy, noting that the Trust have committed to the implementation of this strategy to remove the risk of becoming paralysed with the volume of options available when purchasing devices for the Trust. TL highlighted that this specific strategy the importance of moving forward with the implementation.

TL introduced the iTeach Strategy, describing it as a significant opportunity for the Trust to advance its Digital Strategy. TL emphasised the Trust's commitment to moving forward with implementation, adding a huge amount of research has been completed to ensure the Trust are well-informed prior to any decision making.

TL noted a variation in readiness across phases, with primary academies leading the way in integrating technology into daily practice. As a result, primary academies will be the first to receive iPads.

The strategy includes:
- 1:1 device allocation for all teaching staff across the Trust (approximately 750 iPads).
- A tender process currently underway, closing on 14/11/2025, with a rollout programme in place. TL added that the rollout programme

	will consist of the assignment of 120 iPads by Christmas 2025 and further distribution across each half term. • During each rollout phase, sufficient training will be provided to ensure Teaching Staff are well informed and equipped to use the devices in the most effective manner. • Centralised device management, with all applications added by TCAT. • Selection of a supplier who can deliver specialist, high-quality training, prioritising a shoulder-to-shoulder support model. TL confirmed that each rollout phase will include an update on the iPad strategy, adding that this is an evolving strategy that will significantly improve teaching and learning. TL explained 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning' is explicitly indexed to things that can be done with an iPad, explaining that a 1-to-1 device will revolutionise pedagogical practice. TL referred to AI tools such as Olex.AI, explaining that such AI tools will not only enhance teaching practices, but support with teacher workload and wellbeing. ***PW queried*** if the Trust are missing an opportunity to not embed the Digital Strategy on a school-by-school basis. TL acknowledged that this may be the case. TL also commented that this may also spark more appetite for students to implement iPads as part of their everyday practice. TL stated that there is no question that within the next five years, classrooms will be fully digitalised. TL stated that in the immediate, the iTeach priority is to ensure all teaching staff have an iPad and will work towards the development of a 1-to-1 student device strategy. In the long term, home learning will be digital to maximise the use of devices. ***SY questioned*** how the Digital Strategy is being funded. TL responded that this is a decision for finance. ***SY queried*** if all Heads and Principals have committed to the implementation of the Digital Strategy. TL stated that all Heads and Principals have signed up to the Digital Strategy and are keen to start with the implementation. SY commented that she was unsure how widely this includes Priestley College. TL confirmed that there have been numerous discussions at CET meetings where all Heads and Principals have expressed their desire, including the Principal of Priestley College. TL acknowledged that the starting point for this strategy is equity of provision. ***SY stated*** that there is a crossover with funding issues and educational issues, adding that her understanding is that this initiative would be funded by 'top-slicing' TCAT academies in proportion to the size of academies. ***SY raised concern*** that Priestley College would be	

	contributing significantly more from the college's reserves than any other academy. PW confirmed that the cap is £1 million. ***SY questioned*** if considerations have been made by the Finance, HR and Operations Committee, and raised concerns that the financial impact on Priestley College would be significant. PW added that the Finance Committee have discussed this at depth. ***SY raised concern*** that the Digital Strategy has been agreed prior to having funding formally agreed. TL responded that SY's concern, noting that he has not been made privy to the documentation that was shared at the HR, Finance and Operations Committee. TL added that SY has legitimate concerns that will need to be raised. The committee engaged in a robust discussion about the funding model for the Digital Strategy, particularly the use of academy reserves and the implications for equity, with concerns raised about the impact on individual academies who have larger reserves. It was agreed that the funding for the Digital Strategy should go to the full Trust Board for approval. ***SY challenged*** that when TCAT was formed, a basic foundation of the Trust was that academy reserves remained with the academy that generated them. SY added that Priestley College governors would be uncomfortable that a large proportion of reserves are being spent without prior discussion or access to finance papers. KB stated that there is a large shift towards GAG pooling and reserves and this is being reviewed nationally. KB added the national picture is that Trusts have to pool to justify the way in which spending is allocated. ***JW commented*** that the focus of the Quality and Standards Committee is education, adding the Digital Strategy would enhance this. ***KB queried*** if there is a way in which TCAT Heads have oversight of the way in which academy projects are funded. VB confirmed that this information is explicitly presented in relation to the different amounts of funding ***TL asked*** the Committee if they had any further queries in relation to the Digital Strategy. PW stated that the Committee need to consider the way in which this investment will benefit. KB commented that technology is constantly developing, highlighting that it is a difficult time to make firm decisions, however, the most sensible thing to do is move forward. TL stated that there is no hesitation that this is the right step forward to equip students with the skills they need to move forward. TL added that this is a complex strategy and will be continuously developed.	

	SY requested a review on the impact of the first roll-out. The Committee agreed that this is sensible and should be a standard agenda item for all Quality and Standards Committee meetings. ***MG challenged*** that the Digital Strategy must come together with a holistic picture to Trust Board. TL responded that digital needs to be viewed as a utility, rather than a question of 'can we afford'? VB added that this strategy is wider, supporting wider savings when academies are investing in desktops and IT equipment. SY concluded this agenda item, noting it is imperative that caution is considered and a wider presentation is delivered to Trust Board.	
11.	**Safeguarding Update:** (for information and discussion) - Minutes from meeting 20.05.2025 - Verbal Update from meeting 05.11.2025 SY confirmed that the minutes from the meeting that took place had been uploaded onto GovernorHub by MS on 06.11.2025 for the Committee to view, whilst acknowledging that the Committee will not have had the opportunity to review these minutes prior to the Quality and Standards Committee meeting. SY requested JW's support with providing an overview of the Safeguarding Panel meeting on 04/11/2025. JW provided the following verbal updates: • Phil McEwan was elected as Chair of the Committee • A Plethora of safeguarding policies were discussed at length with robust discussions for all which resulted in some recommendations • Greater clarity has been included for the use of the word 'bi-annually' within TCAT policies • Young Carers Protocol has been implemented to support Young Carers across the Trust and significant work is taking place to help young carers across TCAT • - JW concluded that the Panel were satisfied with the policies following recommended changes.	**10 mins VB**
12.	**Policies:** (for approval) VB confirmed that the following policies were brought the Safeguarding Panel on 04/11/2025: • Safeguarding Policy • LADO Policy • Ty'n-Y-Felin Safeguarding Addendum • Supporting Young Carers Protocol • Prevent Risk Assessment	**15 mins**

	• Prevent Statement SY confirmed that the recommended policies had been discussed in depth at the Safeguarding Panel meeting, with all recommendations being applied by Rebecca Leatherbarrow. ***SY queried*** if any colleagues had comments regarding the titles of the policies. No queries were raised by the committee. ***SY asked*** the committee if they had any comments or queries to raise. No comments or queries were raised by the committee. **SY asked the committee for their approval for each of the policies.** **Each policy was ratified by the Committee.**	
13.	**AOB:** There was no other business discussed during this meeting.	
13.	**Date and time of next meeting** Thursday 12th February 2026	
14.	**Part Two – Confidential** There were no Part Two confidential items discussed during this meeting.	

This meeting ended at 18:49.

Minute Ref.	Action to be taken	By Whom	Completion date
2	Contact CW to confirm meeting dates have been received.	MS	ASAP
5	Follow up with post-16 representatives to ensure there is representation for all phases.	MS	ASAP
7	VB present a SEND case study at the next Committee meeting.	All	06/02/2026
7	Provide update on TCAT Thrives Reviews at the next Committee meeting	VB	06/02/2026
8	Review the keys included in attendance graphs to enhance analysis of data.	VB	In preparation for next meeting.
12	Liaise with Compliance and Information Manager to confirm policies have been ratified in preparation for circulation to TCAT staff via IAmCompliant.	MS	07/11/2025