Trust Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday 9th July 2026

Venue: TCAT Professional Development Centre

Chair: Phil McEwan

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

Trustee Board Members			**End of Term**	**In attendance**
LB	Linda Boys	Trustee (Foundation - Diocese of Chester)	31/08/2028	✓
JC	John Cartwright	Trustee (Member appointed)	23/06/2029	✓
MG	Matthew Grant	Trustee (Member appointed)	20/06/2028	✓
MK	Martin Kerridge	Trustee (Member appointed)	08/07/2030	✓
PM	Phil McEwan	**Chair,** Trustee (Member appointed) (Chair, GSP)	14/07/2029	✓
AM	Andrew Moorcroft	**CEO**, Trustee		✓
HP	Howard Platt	Trustee (Member appointed)	01/07/2029	X
JW	John Warren	Trustee (Member appointed)	11/01/2028	✓
SW	Stephen Whatmore	**Vice Chair**, Trustee (Member appointed) (Chair, BCA)	01/07/2029	✓
PW	Peter Winter	Trustee (Member appointed)	11/01/2028	✓
SY	Sheila Yates	Trustee (Chair, PRI)	01/03/2028	✓
Also Invited to Attend				
PC	Phil Calrow	Chair of Governors, Meadowside Primary		
CO	Carole Owen	Chair of Governors, Padgate Academy		
FL	Fergus Laing	Chair of Governors, Broomfields Junior School		

PO	Paul Otter	Chair of Governors, Appleton Thorn Primary	
AP	Anita Pailing	Chair of Governors, Bridgewater High School	
MB	Moira Bryan	Chair of Governors, Penketh High School	
CW	Carolyn Williams	Chair of Governors, Penketh South Community Primary	
GW	Geraint Williams	Chair of Governors, Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England Community High School	
AO	Ashlea O'Rourke	Chair of Governors, Dallam Community Primary School	
VB	Vicky Briggs	Director of Education, TCAT	✓
AL	Adrienne Laing	Operations Director, TCAT	✓
BL	Ben Logan	Head of HR, TCAT	✓
TL	Tim Long	School Improvement Lead, TCAT	✓
DH	David Halsall	CFO, TCAT	✓

Documents Shared Prior to the Trust Board Meeting:

Item 7. CEO Report
Item 8. Strategic Action Plan
Item 9. Ofsted Presentation
Item 10. Sherdley Primary School Due Diligence
Item 11a. Business Plan
Item 11b. Tender Approvals
Item 12a. Safeguarding Panel Minutes: 19/05/2026
Item 12b. Quality & Standards Committee Minutes: 11/06/2026
Item 12c. Audit & Risk Committee Minutes: 25/06/2026
Item 12d. Finance, HR & Operations Committee Minutes: 25/06/2026
Item 13. TCAT Governance Strategy
Item 14. Policy Schedule

	Agenda Item	
1.	**Welcome** MS welcomed Trustees to the final meeting of the academic year.	**MS**
2.	**Absence / Apologies / Non-Attendance** HP shared apologies in advance of the meeting and these apologies were accepted. The meeting was quorate.	**MS**
3.	**Register of Interests** No Register of Interests were shared. MS reminded Trustees that they are required to update their Register of Interests on their GovernorHub profiles if there had been any changes to their interests. **Action: For all Trustees to review their Register of Interests and update where required.**	**MS**
4.	**Declaration of pecuniary interests in relation to agenda items** There were no declarations of pecuniary interests in relation to agenda items noted.	**MS**
5.	**Membership and Organisation** Members Appointment: Martin Kerridge MS formally introduced MK to Trustees, noting that MK had been appointed by TCAT Members on 19th June under article xx of the Articles of Association. Chair of Trustees Election and Appointment: MS shared that there had been one self-nomination received by PM prior to the meeting. ***MS asked*** if there were any further self-nominations from Trustees for the position of Chair. ***No further self-nominations were received.*** **Action: MS to update TCAT Constitution to reflect PM's appointment as Chair of Trustees.** MS requested that PM left the room to allow Trustees to engage in a formal vote. ***MS asked*** Trustees to raise their hands to indicate their vote for PM. ***All Trustees unanimously gave their vote*** for PM as Chair of Trustees. **DECISION: PM was invited back into the room and MS confirmed that PM had been formally elected as Chair of Trustees.** Terms of Reference for Trust Board: MS confirmed that Trustees had approved the request for the Safeguarding Panel to become a Committee at the previous Trust Board meeting on 26th March 2026. MS confirmed that a review of the Terms	**MS/ AL**

of Reference for the Trust Board had been completed, with the incorporation of a Trustee's recommendations, to outline the roles and responsibilities for the Safeguarding Committee.
MS asked for approval for the updated Terms of Reference for Trust Board.
Trustees unanimously approved the revised Terms of Reference for Trust Board.
Action: MS to log updated Terms of Reference with Dawn Golden and update TCAT website.

A Trustee asked if there was a separate Terms of Reference for Trust Board that outlines the Board's responsibilities.
AL confirmed that the responsibilities of TCAT's Trust Board is outlined in the Articles of Association.

DBS & DBS Update Service:
MS confirmed that Lisa Gannon, Operations Manager, has organised for all Trustees to have an updated DBS check and explained that Trustees should expect an email from DBS before the end of term.
AL confirmed that all Trustees are required to be added to the DBS Update Service and explained that the application for the Update Service has to be completed by Trustees themselves.

Action: Lisa Gannon to organise new DBS forms and DBS Update Service for all TCAT Trustees. For all Trustees to complete required actions.

6. **Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on Thursday 26th March 2026** — **Chair**

a) Approval of the Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate depiction of the meeting that took place.
b) Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.
c) Action log: The Chair reviewed each action to ensure all had been completed. The assigned individuals provided brief updates and confirmed that all actions had been completed.

Action Log:

Minute Ref.	Action to be taken	By Whom	Completion date
6.	Share communications that the Safeguarding Panel was approved to become a committee and review and update	**MS**	**July**

		the Trust Board Terms of Reference.		
	8.	Log the typo on the Annual Impact Report to ensure the correct date appears on the front page. Reprint page 1 for all handouts.	**MS**	**ASAP**
	8.	Consider expanding the mention of Turing and international trips to include primary schools.	**VB**	**When compiling information for 25-26 report.**
7.	**CEO Report:** The CEO noted that the CEO Report had been taken as read and highlighted the following elements of the report: <u>Ofsted:</u> The CEO confirmed that three academies have been Ofsted inspected under the new framework, reporting that all three academies have received positive reports. ***The Chair asked*** if there could be more than one Ofsted inspection within the Trust at one time. ***The CEO reported*** that there shouldn't be more than one academy inspected at one time. ***The Chair asked*** if the Trust have a list of priority academies who are expecting Ofsted. ***The CEO confirmed*** that the Trust have prepared a list of academies who are expecting an Ofsted inspection. <u>Ty'n-y-felin Outdoor Education Centre:</u> The CEO explained that a thorough inspection took place at the centre in June which resulted in the outcome of the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Award and Adventure Mark. The CEO highlighted that both awards are recognised quality marks for the provision of outdoor education and celebrated the Central Team's commitment and care in achieving both awards. <u>Digital Update:</u> The CEO confirmed that all teachers across TCAT have been provided with an iPad, adding that all required training had been completed. The CEO commended TL for the work that has gone into achieving this and emphasised the significant positive impact iPad investment would have on both students and staff. ***The Vice Chair queried*** what the training would entail as of September 2026. *The CEO confirmed* that Sync, the provider, would lead on all training for TCAT staff in line with contract agreements.			**AM** **20 mins**

	Finance Update: The CEO commended the work of the CFO and the significant contributions to managing Trust finances since his appointment in Spring 2025. The CEO added that the Trust had asked the internal auditors to review financial processes to identify key areas for development. The CEO notified Trustees that the internal audit judgement for this area was deemed Strong, with enhanced systems and processes to effectively manage Trust finances. Centralisation: The CEO reported that the IT consultation has been completed with final interviews scheduled W/C 13/07/2026. In addition, the Trust has made successful appointments to support with the expansion of the Governance Offer which will cover 10 out of 14 academies as of September 2026. Solar Update: The CEO reported that solar installation led by Great British Energy has been completed across six TCAT academies. The CEO highlighted the significance of the solar projects linked to the Trust's commitment to sustainability and noted the significant financial savings per annum across all six academies. Internal Audit Update: The CEO confirmed that internal audit outcomes have been strong and reported that assurance had been provided to Trustees at the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting held in June. Turing Update: The CEO reported the continued success of TCAT in securing Turing Scheme funding to enhance international learning opportunities for students. Following the significant Turing award received last year, 45 sixth form students have started their week-long educational visit to Uganda, providing valuable overseas learning and cultural experiences. Challenge Award: The CEO reported that the TAT Challenge Award event was spread across three waves this academic year due to the volume of students who have received awards in recognition for their commitment to demonstrating and developing key aspects of character, including intellectual, moral, community and personal growth. The CEO celebrated the achievements of students across all fourteen academies and noted that a review meeting had taken place in preparation for next year's event. Risks and Challenges: The CEO confirmed that HP, previous Chair of Trustees has stepped down as Chair of Trustees and thanked HP for his dedication and support. The CEO thanked Stephen Whatmore for stepping over recent months and for all of his support. The CEO noted that the new Ofsted framework is more demanding, noting the additional expectations in relation to governance.	

	Alternative Provision Update: The CEO confirmed that the Trust have submitted the application for The Empower Academy and are awaiting a formal pre-opening Ofsted inspection within the next six months. ***The CEO asked*** Trustees if they had any questions regarding the CEO Report. ***No questions were asked*** but Trustees complimented the detail that had covered in the report.	
8.	**Strategic Action Plan:** The CEO reported that the current Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2024–2026 is due for renewal in line with the Trust's review cycle. As part of the review process, the Central Executive Team held a strategic planning day at Ty'n-y-felin to evaluate progress against the Plan's priorities and consider future direction. Trustees were reminded that the Trust's overarching priority remains securing equity of provision across all TCAT academies. The CEO provided an update on progress against the Trust's three core strategic priorities: **Pupils** • Maintaining Ofsted outcomes at good or better across all academies. • Roll out of Olex AI. • Development of Alternative Provision. • Ongoing curriculum developments. **People** • Implementation of the iTeach strategy. • Strengthening of the Finance Team. • Supporting Trust growth through robust due diligence processes and a structured first 100 days programme. • Sector engagement and work relating to RISE. • Development of the support staff offer. **Performance** • Progress towards live performance scorecards. • Establishment of Operational Excellence. • Dynamic investment planning. • Sustainability initiatives. • Enhanced stakeholder engagement. • Delivery of a website alignment project across all TCAT academies. The CEO explained that a detailed evaluation of the 2024–2026 SAP had been undertaken to assess progress made over the previous two years and to identify areas requiring further development.	**AM** **15 mins**

	Trustees received an update on key challenges associated with organisational growth, including: • Communication breakdowns. • Leadership scaling. • Technology debt. The CEO advised that there are 102 reforms identified within the Government White Paper and highlighted the importance of ensuring staff are fully prepared for the implementation of these requirements from the autumn term. Consequently, the Trust's immediate priority will be a period of consolidation to ensure existing priorities are embedded effectively before further changes are introduced. To support this approach, the CEO outlined the following core priorities for continued embedding: • Digital Strategy and implementation of iTeach. • Scorecard automation. • Contract management. • Procurement. The CEO assured Trustees that a rigorous and self-critical review process had been undertaken to ensure that future strategic priorities remain realistic, manageable and achievable. Trustees were reminded of the important role of the Trust as a protective structure for academies, particularly in supporting change management and responding to sector reforms. Trustees were also presented with a visual overview of the Trust's longer-term ambitions aligned to the TCAT 2040 Strategic Objectives. The Executive Team has benchmarked its current position against these objectives by considering: 1. The Trust's current position against each 2040 objective. 2. The definition, challenges and success criteria associated with each objective. 3. Key priorities to be achieved over the next two years to support long-term progress. The CEO concluded by advising that the draft 2026–2028 Strategic Action Plan is currently being developed and will be presented to Trustees for consideration in September. ***A Trustee challenged*** that several areas within the current SAP remain rated red, particularly in relation to FFT performance measures and attendance. ***The CEO acknowledged*** this observation and commented that, whilst the SAP could be presented more favourably, its purpose is to provide	

	an honest assessment of performance and identify the Trust's priority areas for improvement. ***A Trustee further observed*** that there appeared to be limited reference to the quality of education within the presentation. ***In response, the CEO reaffirmed*** that the Central Executive Team's fundamental priority is to ensure that every student achieves strong outcomes. The CEO explained that much of the work undertaken by the Central Team is designed to enable academy leaders to focus on curriculum development, teaching and learning, and educational quality. A Trustee commented that, whilst policies are designed to be comprehensive and thorough, their application in practice presents challenges. The Trustee noted that policies are often only referenced when a specific situation arises and, in some cases, the number of steps and level of detail can create a disconnect between the written policy and its practical implementation. The same Trustee observed that, whilst policies can provide valuable guidance and assurance, they can also introduce unnecessary bureaucracy if they become overly complex. ***The Trustee recommended*** that policies should remain sufficiently detailed to provide clear direction whilst also being accessible and practical for staff to use. ***The CEO explained*** that the Trust actively seeks feedback from colleagues who have used policies in practice and uses this feedback to inform ongoing review and refinement. ***A Trustee reminded*** the Board that policies exist to provide guidance and protection for all parties and highlighted that specialist advice and support are available through the Trust's HR team and external legal advisers, Stone King, where required. ***The CEO acknowledged*** the importance of ensuring policies are user-friendly and practical. The CEO advised that the Trust has reviewed its policy development processes and recognises the value of involving a range of stakeholders in policy creation and review to ensure policies are both fit for purpose and effective in practice. ***A Trustee asked*** if an addendum could be created to accompany policies to make it more user friendly. ***The CEO stated*** that policies go through to JCNC which regularly come back with notes but acknowledged this request. A Trustee complimented the work of TCAT protecting academies and the level aspirational targets linked to People. ***The Trustee asked*** if talent management would be weaved across all TCAT academies. ***The CEO confirmed*** that there is no firm strategy that knits all staff, to ensure this is systematic but thanked the Trustee for this question, noting that this is an area of development for the Trust.	
9.	**Ofsted:**	**VB**

	VB provided Trustees with an overview of the significant changes introduced through the new Ofsted inspection framework and assured Trustees that appropriate support would be available during inspections. VB outlined the rationale behind the revised framework, noting Ofsted's intention to establish a fairer inspection system under the leadership of His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver. Trustees were introduced to the key areas within the Ofsted Toolkit, which focuses on: • Safeguarding • Inclusion • Curriculum and Teaching • Achievement • Attendance and Behaviour • Governance VB delivered an overview of the Toolkit and emphasised the importance of academy leaders becoming familiar with both the framework and the evidence requirements associated with each judgement area. VB highlighted the challenges faced by schools serving higher levels of deprivation and noted that inspectors are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the context in which schools are operating. ***The Chair asked*** for clarification on Ofsted's concept of the sufficiency of evidence required to support judgements. ***VB explained*** that evidence requirements vary across different inspection areas and that leaders must be able to demonstrate the impact of their work through a range of evidence sources. ***A Trustee asked*** how academies could best demonstrate their effectiveness under the new framework. ***The CEO responded*** that it was important for leaders to undertake honest and accurate self-evaluation against the Toolkit criteria. VB added that the Trust's robust accountability systems help ensure academies are well prepared for inspection. VB advised Trustees that schools will now be judged across multiple aspects and may achieve expected or strong outcomes overall whilst receiving a lower judgement in an individual area. The CEO further explained the distinction between an "exact fit" and a "secure fit" against the inspection criteria. Trustees received reflections from recent inspections at: • Great Sankey Primary School (December 2025) • Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School (February 2026) • The Sutton Academy (June 2026) VB advised that the Trust had learned valuable lessons from each inspection and outlined a number of emerging challenges:	**15 mins**

	• Variability in inspector expectations. • Increased workload for school leaders. • Greater emphasis on classroom-based and first-hand evidence gathering. • Perceptions that achieving a "secure fit" can become a checklist-driven process. ***A Trustee asked*** what role Executive Leaders play in supporting academies during inspections. ***VB explained*** that the Central Team attends the academy site immediately following notification of an inspection. VB added that this support enables Headteachers and Principals to focus on leading the inspection process and managing operational arrangements. ***A Trustee sought clarification*** on the meaning of "secure fit". ***VB explained*** that schools must first evidence all expected standards before they can demonstrate the characteristics required to achieve a strong judgement. VB stressed the importance of leaders having a secure understanding of the Toolkit and its expectations. VB emphasised that the new framework should not be compared directly with the previous inspection model, as expectations and methodologies have changed significantly. As a result, leaders' expectations must be carefully managed. ***A Trustee raised*** concerns regarding the impact of the framework on schools serving disadvantaged communities and questioned whether Ofsted may review the Toolkit to address fairness concerns. ***VB advised*** that Ofsted remains committed to the current framework and is continuing to implement the Toolkit as designed. VB highlighted that inclusion and wellbeing are embedded throughout all inspection areas rather than being assessed as standalone categories. Trustees were informed that dedicated Ofsted updates have featured at all Central Executive Team meetings to ensure Headteachers and Principals continue to develop their understanding of the framework. The implications for the Trust were discussed, with attendance identified as one of the most significant challenges both locally and nationally. VB outlined the Trust's focus on strong attendance systems, effective pastoral support and robust strategic procedures to support academies in this area. VB concluded by presenting the Trust's Ofsted Scorecard, which provides an overview of each academy's last inspection date, grading and published report. Trustees were advised that all Headteachers and Principals have completed self-evaluation assessments, identifying areas of high, medium and low confidence against the Toolkit criteria.	

	A Trustee commented on the value of the "needs attention" category within the process and asked whether this information was being used to guide improvement activity. ***VB confirmed*** that areas identified as needing attention are reviewed carefully by the Trust and inform support and challenge arrangements. The CEO added that where a school receives a "needs attention" judgement, the academy may request a return inspection to review progress. TL further advised that such a review can take place within approximately twenty months and would result in a published outcome. VB informed Trustees that Ofsted receives a briefing prior to inspections and assured the Board that Trustees would be provided with executive summaries and inspection briefings where appropriate. ***The Chair highlighted*** the importance of Trustees and Governors maintaining a strong understanding of the Trust's Scheme of Delegation in preparation for inspection activity. VB shared an infographic with Trustees illustrating that Ofsted inspection should be viewed not as a destination, but as part of a continuous school improvement journey. VB reassured Trustees that the Executive Team maintains a strong understanding of the priorities, strengths and areas for development across each academy and is therefore well positioned to provide targeted support and challenge. A Trustee complimented the infographic, noting that it effectively communicated the Trust's approach to inspection readiness and continuous improvement.	
10.	**Growth:** Trustees were advised that Sherdley Primary School is a key feeder school for The Sutton Academy and that a strong and positive relationship has been established between the school and TCAT. The CEO highlighted the close working relationship with the Headteacher, including the provision of executive coaching and leadership support. The CEO reported that the Headteacher had expressed an interest in joining a multi-academy trust and, following consideration of several options, had formally indicated the school's preference to join TCAT. Trustees were further informed that the school had recently undertaken a formal consultation process regarding the proposal, and that the CEO had attended a consultation event on 6 July 2026. AL presented the due diligence findings, drawing attention to the executive summary and the detailed assessment of key operational areas, which had been subject to RAG-rating. Trustees noted that the principal area requiring further development relates to budget management and financial processes.	**AM/ AL** **15 mins**

	AL explained that, as a maintained school, Sherdley Primary School currently operates under Local Authority financial arrangements, which differ from the budget-setting, monitoring and reporting requirements within a multi-academy trust. As a result, financial management arrangements had been assigned a yellow rating within the due diligence assessment. The CFO advised Trustees that a prudent financial approach is currently in place and that the school has historically operated with balanced budgets. The CFO clarified that the yellow rating contained within the due diligence report reflected the differing financial processes associated with maintained schools rather than any material concerns regarding the school's financial position. VB added that the Headteacher has a clear understanding of the need to strengthen budget management arrangements and is committed to working closely with the Trust to ensure that appropriate financial planning, monitoring and control processes are fully embedded as part of any transition to TCAT. ***A Trustee asked*** if pupil numbers were full. ***VB confirmed*** that the classes were almost full and added that the Local Authority was keen for the school to increase pupil numbers. ***A Trustee asked*** if the Trust are expecting turmoil in relation to falling student numbers. ***The CEO confirmed*** that the Trust are working on insulating this and stated that there is no simple answer to this challenge. The CEO noted that falling numbers are based on birthrate and noted that this does not provide the full picture. AL shared that the Local Authority provide predictions but noting that it is impossible to accurately predict. ***A Trustee asked*** if the health and safety incidents at Sherdley Primary School had been linked to the fabric of the site. ***AL confirmed*** that there is an issue relating to condition and estates. AL explained that the school paid for a third-party assessment through Compliance Education and shared with Trustees that a volume of the concerns were linked to reporting. AL added that the Trust will not know the condition of the estate until a full survey is completed. The CEO assured Trustees that Sherdley Primary School would not formally join the Trust until the application to the DfE has been submitted, all legal documentation has been prepared and approved and the Academy Order issued by the DfE. Trustees were advised that, while this process continued, the due diligence process would continue to ensure that the Trust has a full understanding of all relevant operational, financial and organisational matters associated with the school.	

	The CEO emphasised that particular focus would be given to estates and IT infrastructure, alongside other key areas of risk and compliance, to ensure that the Trust is fully informed and appropriately prepared for the transfer. This will provide assurance that any identified risks, liabilities or investment requirements are understood and addressed before the school joins TCAT. ***A Trustee asked*** if there are any issues with the Condition Survey. ***AL confirmed*** that a Condition Survey has not yet been completed. The Chair confirmed that the Board are being asked to formally approve. ***The Chair asked*** Trustees if they formally approved the Trust's recommendation for Sherdley to join the Trust. ***All Trustees approved*** the Trust's recommendation for growth and gave their endorsement for Sherdley Primary Schoolto apply to join the Trust. Completion of the final due diligence checks are ongoing and will take place during the application and conversion process.	
11.	**Finance:** The CFO confirmed that the budget was taken to Finance, HR and Operations Committee on 25/06/2026 and presented highlight details from the report to the full Trust Board. The CFO reported that the Trust remains in a strong and sustainable financial position, with healthy forecasts for both the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years. Trustees were advised that all academies are currently projected to achieve either a balanced budget or a surplus position. Collectively, academy reserves are forecast to remain positive, equating to approximately 1% of the Trust's annual income. The CFO further reported that the Trust is forecasting a gradual increase in overall surplus levels despite the challenges presented by declining pupil numbers. Trustees were assured that proactive and strategic planning has been undertaken across the Trust to mitigate the financial impact of demographic changes and to maintain long-term financial sustainability. Trustees were advised that, once the Trust's reserves reach the target level of 6%, any additional surplus funds would be strategically reinvested across the Trust to support key priorities, improve educational provision and enhance operational effectiveness. The CFO explained that the Trust's financial forecasts had been prepared on the basis of a 2.5% unfunded assumption. Trustees were informed that the national funding calculator had been released on 8 July 2026, the evening prior to the Board meeting, and therefore only an initial assessment of its impact had been possible. Based on this preliminary analysis, the CFO reported that the revised	**DH** **15 mins**

	funding allocations could result in an estimated additional funding benefit of approximately £350,000 for the Trust. Trustees were informed that further detailed modelling would be undertaken to confirm the full financial implications and to determine how any additional funding could support the Trust's strategic objectives and long-term financial sustainability. ***The CFO recommended*** that himself, the CEO, the Chair, and PW as Chair of the Finance, HR and Operations Committee meet to discuss the final budget. ***The Chair asked*** if all Trustees were happy to delegate this authority to the selected individuals on behalf of the Trust Board. ***All Trustees gave their approval*** for this action. **Action: The CFO to organise meeting to finalise budget.**	
12.	**Sub-committee minutes and updates:** **a) Safeguarding Panel: 19 May 2026** • The Chair of the Safeguarding Panel provided Trustees with an update on the Panel's recent activity and key areas of focus. Trustees were advised that safeguarding visits had been completed across academies, with a clear set of lines of enquiry informing the visits. The outcomes had provided valuable assurance and insight into safeguarding practice across the Trust. • The Chair also noted the implementation of safeguarding supervision training to support academies in strengthening safeguarding supervision arrangements and ensuring consistency of practice. • A review of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals had been undertaken. The Board was assured that academies are reporting referrals appropriately and that safeguarding processes are being followed consistently. • Trustees were informed that the latest version of *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* had been published on 8 July 2026. The Chair confirmed that the Trust's Safeguarding Lead, Rebecca Leatherbarrow, is currently reviewing the updated guidance and revising Trust policies accordingly prior to submission to the Panel for consideration. **b) Quality and Standards Committee: 11 June 2026** • The Chair provided an update from the Quality and Standards Committee. The Chair noted the continued success of the Trust's teacher training provision, with 100% of trainees securing teaching posts. A significant proportion of these appointments have been made within TCAT academies, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Trust's recruitment and retention strategy.	**Chairs 15 mins**

	• The Committee received an update regarding Meadowside Primary School and noted that additional support and intervention continue to be provided to support improvement priorities. • The Committee also considered the increasing number of students requiring examination access arrangements. It was reported that, in one academy, 44% of students had approved access arrangements, with 62% of those students receiving additional examination time. Trustees noted both the operational and financial challenges associated with the growing demand for access arrangements. • The Committee reviewed and approved a substantial number of Trust policies, which have subsequently been ratified. **c) Audit and Risk Committee: 25 June 2026** • The Chair reported that a revised structure for the Trust's Risk Register had been implemented to strengthen oversight and risk management processes. • Trustees received assurance regarding the effectiveness of the Trust's internal audit programme. Auditors commented positively on the robustness of the Trust's internal controls and reported that the number of actions identified was lower than that typically seen in comparable multi-academy trusts. • The Committee also received the outcomes of the external audit, which concluded that the Trust remains in a strong financial position and continues to operate in full compliance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook. **d) Finance, HR and Operations Committee: 25 June 2026** • The Chair provided an update on the key matters considered by the Committee. The Chair reported that the Trust Budget was reviewed and presented to the Committee, providing assurance regarding the Trust's financial planning and sustainability. • Trustees noted the positive progress being made against the People Strategy and the impact of a range of workforce development initiatives across the Trust. • The Committee also considered estates maintenance priorities, including the implementation of solar panel projects across the estate. Trustees noted the environmental benefits and the anticipated long-term financial savings associated with these investments. • Finally, the Committee reviewed the Trust's capital programme and noted that a clear and prioritised schedule of capital improvement projects had been established to support strategic estate development across the Trust.	
13.	**Governance Strategy:**	**MS** **10 mins**

	MS introduced the Governance Strategy and outlined the rationale for its development. Trustees were advised that the Strategy has been designed to support the Trust's commitment to equity of provision and to strengthen governance arrangements consistently across all TCAT academies. MS reminded Trustees that governance remains the ultimate responsibility of the Trust and highlighted the significant progress made over the previous twelve months in strengthening strategic governance arrangements. Trustees noted that this development has been supported through: • A comprehensive review of the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. • The introduction of well-structured and strategically focused meeting agendas. • Improvements to reporting mechanisms to strengthen oversight, assurance and accountability across the Trust. MS emphasised that these developments have supported a continued shift towards a more effective strategic governance model, enabling Trustees and Governors to focus on their specific roles and responsibilities. ***A Trustee challenged*** that there is a gap in communications between Trustees and Governors. ***MS acknowledged*** this challenge and agreed that there has been a gap when bringing the voices of governors to Trust Board. ***MS explained*** that a system is under development whereby the chair would be asked to collect and share feedback via a Teams form on behalf of the Board. MS confirmed that this aims to ensure two-way communication and capture local priorities and concerns. ***A Trustee challenged*** empowerment and raised concern that the guidance contained within the strategy may result in highly skilled Governors feeling disempowered. ***MS explained*** that the Trust have a Central Executive Team in place to monitor academy's finances, operations and quality of education, and highlighted the significance of Governor's trusting leaders to effectively monitor and report to Governors as appropriate in line with the Scheme of Delegation. ***The CEO added*** that Business Support meetings take place twice a year whereby the Chair of Governors and governors are invited to attend to discuss financial and operational matters in further depth should they wish to do so. ***MS concluded*** by sharing that the Governance Strategy has been developed to ensure strategic governance is consistently applied across the Trust, as well as being a supportive tool for any individuals who are considering becoming a Governor or Trustee.	

	A Trustee commented the significance of volunteers having clarity regarding their role and stated the importance of this. ***A Trustee asked*** if the Trust would consider capturing key elements of local governance, such as the impact of Governor Link Roles or local concerns and issues that could then be reported to Trust Board in a structured manner. ***MS thanked*** the Trustee for this recommendation and confirmed that a feedback template would be shared with them for their feedback. **Action: Trustees to share any feedback regarding the Governance Strategy via email to MS.**	
14.	**Policies (AL)** MS informed Trustees that a comprehensive review of the Trust's Policy Schedule is currently underway, led jointly by MS and Dawn Golden, Compliance and Information Manager. Trustees were advised that the review is intended to strengthen governance oversight, ensure policies remain current and compliant, and provide greater clarity regarding policy ownership and review cycles across the Trust. As part of this work, MS confirmed that responsibility for safeguarding-related policies will transfer from the Quality and Standards Committee to the Safeguarding Committee. This change will ensure that safeguarding policies are reviewed and scrutinised by the committee with the most appropriate expertise and oversight responsibilities. MS further advised that policy review cycles are being evaluated to ensure they remain proportionate, effective and aligned with statutory requirements, whilst supporting a coherent and efficient approach to policy management across the Trust. AL advised Trustees that both academies and Trust-wide hubs have expressed a preference for policies to be developed collaboratively. AL emphasised that this approach promotes greater consistency in policy implementation, supports the sharing of expertise and best practice, and reduces duplication of effort across academies. AL further highlighted that a collaborative approach to policy development enables colleagues to contribute to the drafting and review process, helping to ensure that policies are practical, fit for purpose and reflective of operational requirements. There were no questions raised by Trustees. **Action: MS to add the revised Policy Schedule to GovernorHub once all amendments have been made.**	**AL/ MS 10 mins**
15.	**AOB:** There was no other business discussed during the meeting.	
16.	**Date and time of next year's meetings:**	

	The Chair confirmed the dates and times for the meeting scheduled for 26/27 which are as follows: • Thursday 10th September, 4-6pm • Thursday 10th December, 4-6pm • Thursday 25th March, 4-6pm • Thursday 8th July, 4-6pm	
17.	**Part Two – Confidential** Confidential items were captured in a separate Part Two document.	

The Chair thanked Trustees for their time and apologised for the meeting running over. The meeting ended the meeting at 18:32.

Actions:

Minute Ref.	Action to be taken	By Whom	Completion date
3	Trustees to review their Register of Interests and update where required.	All Trustees	Where required
5	Update TCAT's Governance Constitution to reflect PM's appointment as Chair of Trustees.	MS	ASAP
5	Log updated Terms of Reference with Dawn Golden and update TCAT website.	MS	ASAP
5	Lisa Gannon to organise new DBS forms and DBS Update Service for all TCAT Trustees. For all Trustees to complete required actions.	LG/ Trustees	Ongoing
11	Organise a meeting for CFO, CEO, PM and PW to finalise budget.	CFO	ASAP
13	Share any feedback regarding the Governance Strategy via email to MS.	Trustees	ASAP
14	Add the revised Policy Schedule to GovernorHub once all amendments have been made.	MS	September