Truro and Penwith **Academy Trust**

Trust Board - Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Trustees held on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at 9:30am at Academy House.

Trustees: Mrs A Firth (Chair), Mr J Dunn (Vice Chair), Mrs A George, Ms A-M Sim, Mr M Tucker, Ms A Hutchinson, Mr S Spry and The Reverend Canon Perran Gay

Also Present: Dr J Blunden (Chief Executive), Mr S Davis (Chief Financial Officer), Mrs B Couch (Head of Corporate Governance), Mr C Gould (Director of Education), Mrs J Harvey (item 4), Mr R Trafford (prospective Trustee).

Apologies: Mr J Green, Mrs A Bull.

No Attendance: Mr C Waldie, Mr D Austin, Mr A Milliner.

Item	Decision	Action
1.	**Governance Business**	
1.1	**Apologies and Election of Vice Chair** Apologies were **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** from Mr J Green and Mrs A Bull. There was no attendance from Mr C Waldie, Mr D Austin and Mr A Milliner. Trustees were **INFORMED** that Mr J Dunn has stepped down as Vice Chair. A replacement is needed for the remainder of the year. The Chair nominated Mrs A George for the position and invited any additional expressions of interest. No further nominations were received, and the appointment of Mrs A George as Vice Chair was **APPROVED.** ***Mrs A George joined the meeting at this point.***	
1.2	**Declaration of business and pecuniary interests and approval of register** Trustees **APPROVED** the previously circulated register of interests.	
1.3	**Public and confidential minutes of the meeting of 10th December 2025** The public and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2025 were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record of proceedings.	
1.4	**Matters arising (not otherwise covered in the agenda)** None.	
1.5	**Chair's Business** The Chair **INTRODUCED** The Reverend Canon Perran Gay a new Trustee to the Board and Mr R Trafford, observing the meeting as a prospective Trustee.	

	The Chair **THANKED** Trustees who attend the Board Development Day.	
1.6	**Corporate Governance report** Trustees **RECEIVED** and **DISCUSSED** the previously circulated report with the following highlighted: Trustees **NOTED** that following circulation via email, the 2027–28 admissions arrangements were formally approved by the Trustees. The Leading Edge Trustees had previously approved the 2027–28 arrangements for the schools that were previously part of their Trust. Following the skills audits Trustees **NOTED** previous attempts to recruit an accountant to the board have been unsuccessful. Given the ongoing need for stronger financial expertise, it is recommended that a more focused and targeted recruitment campaign to attract a suitably qualified accountant is undertaken. Trustees **NOTED** that Schools across the Trust are experiencing an increasing number of incidents involving inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour from a small minority of parents. The Head of Corporate Governance is working closely with the Trust's Head of Community, Communications and Engagement to focus on areas where concerning behaviour is most prevalent. Trustees were **ASSURED** of the complaints process and the support and ongoing work with Headteachers. Trustees **APPROVED** the previously circulated whistleblowing and capability policies. Trustees **THANKED** the Head of Corporate Governance for her continued hard work.	Head of CG Admin Manager
1.7	**Report from Finance and Resources Committee (28th January 2026)** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated minutes with the following issues **HIGHLIGHTED**: • The committee approved the Asset Management Plan (Estate & IT) format to guide the Trust's long-term estate and ICT planning. • The significant estate-wide damage caused by Storm Goretti. All non-essential maintenance has been paused until the end of February to prioritise storm recovery, insurance claims are underway with some concerns about whether some fence damaged is excluded; this is currently being challenged robustly. • The **APPROVED** position for the period ending 31st December 2025 **CONFIRMED** the Trust is a going concern based on the projections provided. • The **APPROVAL** of the Gender Pay Gap report and agreement for it to be published in accordance with the 2017 Gender Pay Gap regulations. Trustees **THANKED** the committee for their work.	
1.8	**Report from Education Committee (16th January 2026)** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated minutes with the following issues **HIGHLIGHTED**: The committee are involving tier 3 Headteachers in meetings, giving them the opportunity to outline their current challenges. Primary Predictions: Primary predictions are positive with a combined result for children in primary achieving expected grade is 73%.	

	Primary Attendance: Primary attendance has improved and is sitting above national average. Secondary Outcomes: Secondary outcomes are showing improvement needs specifically in maths. The root causes of secondary maths underperformance being staffing shortages, historic non-specialist teaching, curriculum sequencing gaps, small-cohort volatility, and on occasions lack of earlier intervention. Trustees **THANKED** the committee for their work.	
2.	**Chief Executive report to also include risk management** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated report and **DISCUSSED** the following highlights: Trustees **NOTED** the White Paper and the summary of the SEND reforms, recognising the opportunities presented. The key proposals were acknowledged as important work which the Trust fully supports and endorses, with a shared understanding that the reforms aim to strengthen the system around children. Trustees **NOTED** that the SEND reforms aim to strengthen the 0–25 system by identifying needs earlier and introducing clearer, more consistent support through new *Targeted* and *Targeted Plus* tiers intended to reduce delays and prevent escalation. Trustees were also **INFORMED** of parental concerns regarding the reforms. Trustees **DISCUSSED** LA maintained schools moving towards academisation. While there is currently no definitive timescale, the emphasis and importance of forward planning for TPAT's future growth and aspirations remains key. Trustees **NOTED** the inclusion of Cornwall Research School within the Trust, following its integration through Mounts Bay Academy. Trustees **NOTED** the updated Risk Register and the implementation of the professional services operating model and Health and Safety compliance.	
3.	**Director of Education Report** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated report. The Trustees **NOTED** the appointment of 3 Assistant Directors of Education in the Primary phase starting in September 2026. *Mr J Dunn left the meeting at 11:23am.* <u>Primary</u> A key achievement highlighted was the strong results across primary schools. While there is still room for improvement, the Trust were tasked with reaching the national average, and this year are on track to achieve this in all but four schools. Overall, the projected outcomes are positive. The falling roll in several schools has led to restructuring and reducing the number of classes from the start of the next Academic year. Trustees **NOTED** the schools identified as requiring additional support, along with the specific areas of focus for each.	

	<u>Secondary</u> Trustees **NOTED** that overall, the data is not yet at the level expected, with particular concerns at Cape and Hayle. Trustees were **INFORMED** of the significant actions now underway to address these issues. The appointment of ADEs should provide the capacity to support more effectively. Schools have also visited other trusts to observe and learn from effective practice elsewhere. Despite this work, there remains some anxiety regarding the forthcoming outcomes. Trustees **QUESTIONED** and **DISCUSSED** the need for Secondary outcomes to improve. Trustees **DISCUSSED** the relationship between primary and secondary education and the challenges currently being addressed and were **ASSURED** that significant work has taken place to improve transition, noting that the introduction of the Connect curriculum is helping to raise expectations and ambition. Trustees **QUESTIONED** the issue of staff turnover and **ACKNOWLEGED** that this does present challenges. Trustees **NOTED** that the Trust work in collaboration across teaching and ITT, involvement with Teach First, and a more strategic approach to subject leadership. Trustees **NOTED** the recent appointment of a Director of Maths however recruitment remains challenging in specific subject areas. Trustees **NOTED** that the secondary support capacity has seen the need to grow. Previously, quality assurance was carried out within individual schools; there is now greater consistency, increased resourcing, and ADEs in place. This has strengthened the Trust's ability to support all schools more effectively. Trustees **NOTED** the rise in exclusions, but were assured that the forecast remains more positive than last year, supported by strengthened systems. The appointment of the Director of Inclusion has been particularly impactful and has been praised by Ofsted. *Mrs A Firth left at 11:50am.*	
4.	**Safeguarding Lead Report** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated report and **NOTED** the safeguarding monitoring and data from December 2025 to March 2026, including progress against the Safeguarding Development Plan and key outcomes from lead development activity. Trustees **NOTED** the focus on the new joining schools looking at processes and understanding functions during the transfer ensuring Trust policies and protocols are followed. Trustees **NOTED** that a transition protocol is being developed to address inconsistent documentation quality and compliance with the statutory five-day transfer requirement. This will be included in the 2026–27 audit schedule. Trustees **NOTED** that recent monitoring shows an increase in recorded incidents compared with last year, with February levels higher than 2024/25 but below 2023/24. Trustees **DISCUSSED** the data and concerning areas including the increase in Neglect. Trustees were **INFORMED** that focussed work around suicide prevention and CPD for staff is being put in place. Trustees **DISCUSSED** how pupils with an offsite direction are monitored and were **ASSURED** that daily attendance monitoring takes place along with alternative provision,	

	parent and school reviews to ensure it is meeting the best outcomes for the pupil. Physical visits to each alternative provision also take place.	
5.	**Chief Financial Officer Report** Trustees **RECEIVED** the previously circulated report. Trustees **NOTED** that the Finance Team have been working at pace to implement the Financial Management methodology across the New Schools and **NOTED** that the new schools will continue to be reported in parallel to the original schools for the remainder of the 2025/26 financial year with full integration of reporting from 2026/27. Trustees **NOTED** the budget was set with a £430,000 in-year savings target, the "budgeted FIR," at Month 6 schemes have been identified to reduce the unidentified component of this to £96,192. Further schemes are being identified to meet this requirement. Trustees **NOTED** that school expenditure variances include insurance claims and staffing costs. Trustees were **INFORMED** of the current difficulty with oil where prices have increased significantly and supply has a longer lead time. Trustees **APPROVED** the position for the period ending 28th February 2026 and confirm the Trust is a going concern based on the projections. Trustees **DISCUSSED** the fall in pupil numbers and how to move forward as a Trust, particularly with smaller schools. Trustees **APPROVED** the Detailed Budget Assumptions for 2026/27 to 2028/29. Trustees **NOTED** the current uncertainties across the school funding landscape. Trustees **NOTED** the submission of the School Resource Management Self- Assessment Tool Checklist. Trustees **APPROVED** the delegation of the 3G Pitch Resurfacing at Mounts Bay Academy to the CFO.	
	Date of next meetings: Education – Monday 27th April 2026 Finance and Resources – Thursday 30th April 2026 Audit and Risk Committee – Wednesday 20th May Full Board – Thursday 9th July Remuneration – TBC	

Pending	In progress	Complete	Outstanding

Number	Action	Who	By When
Minutes 21.03.24			
Number from minutes			
Minutes of 08.07.25			
1.6	A letter of thanks to LMC panel members	BC	

1.6	Amendments to SODA and LMC TORs	BC	
1.6	Succession planning for Chair and Vice Chair	BC	
1.6	Identity Checks for Trustees	BC	
1.6	Policy updates – Behaviour and Executive/ Leadership Pay	EB	
4.0	Report a full evaluation and trust development plan for 25-26 in Autumn Term	JB	
Minutes of 10.12.25			
1.2	Outstanding declaration forms to be followed up	EB	
1.3	Amendment to previous public and confidential minutes	EB	
1.6	Amendment of quorum for Education committee	BC	
1.6	Publication and circulation of complaints policy	EB	
1.6	Follow up outstanding skills and diversity audit responses	BC	
2.0	Implement 2 week October half term for 26-27 and 27228	CG	
Minutes of 17.03.2026			
1.6	Recruitment of suitably qualified accountant to the Board of Trustees.	BC	
1.6	Publish and circulate approved Whistleblowing and Capability policies.		