

## Chairs of Governors Forum

### Meeting notes – 6 July 2020

	<p><b>In attendance</b></p> <p>Bibury -</p> <p>Clearwater (Quedgeley) - Apologies</p> <p>Coaley –</p> <p>Dursley -</p> <p>Field Court Infant (Quedgeley) - Carl Curtis</p> <p>Hardwicke – Sarah Nicholson</p> <p>Lakefield (Frampton-on-Severn) - Keith Withers</p> <p>Longney - Diane Bainbridge</p> <p>Minchinhampton -</p> <p>North Cerney – Rev David Minns</p> <p>Primrose Hill – Katherine Clamp</p> <p>St John's (Coleford) – Bishop David Jennings</p> <p>St James (Cheltenham) – Bob Lloyd Smith</p> <p>St Matthews' (Cainscross) – Jacqui Powell</p> <p>St Lawrence (Lechlade) - Susan Holmes</p> <p>Whiteshill -</p> <p>Winchcombe – Tony Mason</p> <p>Trustees – Tim Brock</p> <p>Central Team - Rachel Howie and Nicki Wadley</p>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Opening prayer, introduction and apologies</b></p> <p>The meeting opened in prayer and RH introduced and welcomed Tony Mason representing Winchcombe Abbey Primary.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Jo Grills.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Goodbyes and thank-you.</b></p> <p>RH shared that Jackie Hall would be standing down from her role as Chair at Field Court Infants at the end of the academic year, succession planning and a handover has taken place to support Carl Curtis to take the role from September. Bob Lloyd-Smith will also be standing down as chair from St James Primary at the end of the academic year – discussions are taking place to identify a new Chair. RH thanked both for their dedicated service and support to each school and the Trust and wished them well for their future endeavors.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Actions from last meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RH to write to parents in all schools and explain the current learning provision for all children – <b>RH confirmed this action was completed.</b></li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>DGAT central updates including:</b></p> <p><b>School's opening to more pupils</b> – RH explained that current provision was going well, some schools are starting to say goodbye to some pupils from Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 for the Summer break and to some Year 6s who were leaving early so that school's could invite other year groups into school before the end of the year. RH explained that each school had been supported to make decisions based on its own context. RH asked Chairs how local decisions had been received by the parent community – it was confirmed that there had been a positive response. RH confirmed that she had received one complaint from a parent.</p> <p>RH is meeting with Headteachers once a week and shared that unsurprisingly they are tired and ready for a break but remain committed and diligent in planning for the return of all</p>

	<p>pupil in September. RH asked Chairs to sensitively but clearly encourage their Headteachers to take a proper break over the Summer.</p> <p><b>Summer catch-up and plans for September 2020</b> – the DfE has published guidance to open schools to all pupils from September. RH is meeting with Headteachers prior to the Trust Board meeting to seek their views on fully re-opening in September so these can be shared with Trustees.</p> <p>RH confirmed that there is no requirement for schools to be open to any pupils over the Summer and that the schools will use the allocated catch-up funding in the new academic year and that this will be part of the school's recovery curriculum.</p> <p>It has been confirmed that Ofsted visits will not take place until January 2021.</p> <p><b>Annual budget approval update</b> – RH thanked Chairs and all involved for preparing and submitting their draft budgets. These will go to the Trust Board for approval and RH will write to each school and local governing board to confirm approval.</p> <p><b>Central team staffing</b> – Nick Patten, Head of Finance is retiring at the end of August, he will be a huge loss to the organisation. Recruitment has commenced. There will be a short gap between Nick leaving and the new starter joining the team, but this will be over the Summer break and should not impact on schools.</p> <p><b>Trust staff wellbeing survey</b> – RH shared that she had been considering sending out a whole Trust wellbeing survey to all staff. Results would be collated for each school and shared with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors and also analysed for trends for the whole Trust. RH invited views on the timing of the survey, noting that she did not want to add stress or worry to Headteachers who are already tired and who have worked so hard. A range of views were shared. <b>RH agreed to also seek the views of headteachers before making a final decision.</b></p> <p><b>Optional school parent survey</b> – a school has requested an example parent survey, so NW has written one that can be used by all schools should they wish to. This is entirely optional and will be sent to all schools this week.</p> <p><b>School condition fund allocation</b> – RH hoped to have an update to share but the audit and finance meeting was rescheduled to 7 July. RH will update Chairs following the meeting.</p>
5	<p><b>Local governing board meetings</b></p> <p><b>Planning for 2020/21</b> – NW has arranged to host two DGAT Coronavirus Governance Reflection meetings and anyone involved in DGAT governance is invited. The intention is to provide an opportunity for all local governors to engage with the Trust and share their reflections on any successes from recent months, challenges and ideas for governance and the support needed from the central team moving forward. Not all chairs had seen the invitation email. <b>NW to send out the meeting invitation to all Chairs following this meeting.</b> DfE guidance for holding governing board meetings remotely where possible to maintain social distancing has not changed and further guidance will be shared in August. It was noted that governors are keen to return to face-to-face meetings, but we need to ensure we balance that with minimising the risks in schools.</p> <p><b>Local governing board annual schedule of work</b> – NW thanked everyone for the feedback received so far and explained the updates that would be made following the feedback received. The framework is intended as an optional framework for LGBs to use to plan their agendas. Clerks have seen the draft schedule and have responded to it very positively. There was no further feedback. <b>NW to publish the final copy on the Trust website.</b></p>
6	<p><b>Statutory updates</b></p> <p><b>Keeping Children Safe in Education</b> – September 2020 update published and will be implemented in September.</p> <p><b>Academies Financial Handbook</b> – September 2020 update and will be implemented in September.</p> <p>All relevant Trust policies will be updated in line with the new guidance ready to be implemented in September. <b>NW will include a summary of changes to the updated guidance in the DGAT Governance Briefing.</b></p>
7	<b>Policies</b>

	<p><b>DGAT Conflicts of Interest Policy</b> – This policy will be considered by the Trust Board for approval next week. To note the proposed changes, include:</p> <p>2.1 A new definition for a business and pecuniary interest and also a conflict of interest.</p> <p>4: Updated and new information to provide guidance for recording a conflict of interest.</p> <p>9: New section to cover the process for Related Party Transactions.</p> <p>10. New section to cover non-compliance with the policy.</p> <p>The policy has been reviewed against the Academies financial handbook 2020 and is compliant in preparation for September.</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Clerks forum – 23<sup>rd</sup> June</b></p> <p>NW provided an overview of the recent Clerks' forum. Clerks have shared that they welcome the increase in support and feedback from the forum has shown that Clerks are using their new knowledge to improve governance processes and practice. RH asked if this was been reflected at LGB meetings and it was confirmed it is.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Trust board update</b></p> <p>RH provided an update from the Trust Board and confirmed Trustees continue to meet on a monthly basis through the coronavirus pandemic. RH and TB confirmed that Trustees have engaged in robust discussion and debate when considering the wider opening of schools which led to a strong level of challenge but collective decision-making. <b>RH agreed to send out the minutes of the Trust Board meeting.</b> RH confirmed she had shared the Trust's decisions with the Regional Schools Commissioner.</p> <p>The next Trust Board meeting will consider the safe opening of schools to all pupils from September, the views of Headteachers will be fully shard with Trustees. Trustees will also be considering the Trust's plans for the recovery curriculum and how the organisation can balance shared principles with school's having the opportunity to implement a recovery curriculum that meets local need. Decisions will be made in consideration of school's infection control policies.</p> <p>Trustees have been focusing on the wellbeing of staff and a Mental Health Champion will be available in every school. The Trust is consolidating the good practice already in place into a wellbeing strategy.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Chair of governors' Forum 2020/21</b></p> <p><b>Provisional dates</b></p> <p>Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020  Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021  Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021</p> <p>A discussion took place in response to the suggestion to increase the number of meetings to continue the positive engagement and collaboration gained during the last few months. It was suggested by increasing the number of meetings the format could also be adapted to include a mixture of face-to-face and remote meetings. It was also suggested that some Chairs may also choose to attend meetings remotely should they have a long distance to travel. The environmental impact of avoiding unnecessary travel was noted. <b>NW and RH will consider and share a meeting dates/format proposal in August.</b></p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Thanks were shared from those present for the incredible support and guidance from the Trust and central team over the lockdown period.</p> <p>Confirmation was sought as to when clergy can return to visit schools to lead collective worship and offer support to schools. RH confirmed that under the current guidance large gatherings for collective worship and assemblies were prohibited and that this was to be organised in classrooms. DGAT will provide further clarity before the start of the Autumn term and in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the DfE.</p> <p>It was suggested that the Trust board engage with local MPs on a more regular basis to express the challenges that have been experienced by schools.</p>

RH thanked Chairs for their wisdom and support over the last year and wished everyone a restful Summer.