

## Chairs of Governors Forum

### Meeting notes – 25 November 2020

	<p><b>In attendance</b></p> <p>Bibury – Did not attend Clearwater – Jo Grills Coaley – Carole O’Donnell Dursley – Neil Grecian Field Court Infant – Carl Curtis Hardwicke – Sarah Nicholson Lakefield – Keith Withers Longney – Diane Bainbridge Minchinhampton – Stephen Draper North Cerney – Rev’d David Minns Primrose Hill – Katherine Clamp St John’s– Bishop David Jennings St James – Kelley Sutton St Matthews’– Jacqui Powell St Lawrence - Susan Holmes Whiteshill – Ian Wills Winchcombe – Anna Hay</p> <p>Central Team - Rachel Howie (RH), Nicki Wadley, Keren Bass.</p>
1	<p><b>Opening prayer, introduction and apologies</b></p> <p>RH introduced and welcomed Tracey Johnson, representing Primrose Hill CoE Primary Academy, Anthony Griffiths Chair designate at St John’s Primary Academy and Keren Bass, newly appointed Head of Finance at the DGAT central office.</p> <p>Apologies: There were no apologies to note.</p>
2	<p><b>Actions from last meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Scheme of Delegation:</b> The Trust Board meeting was postponed and rescheduled for 3/11. RH to provide feedback on the SoD at the next CoG Forum meeting – <b>action completed, see agenda item 4.</b></li><li>- <b>Teachers’ Pay Award:</b> RH to check the differentials between option one and option two to ensure no one is disadvantaged – <b>action completed.</b></li><li>- Chairs to provide feedback on the pay award to RH in time for the board meeting on 3/11 – <b>action completed.</b></li></ul>
3	<p><b>Feedback from LGBs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Staff wellbeing:</b> RH noted once again that Headteacher’s are looking tired and that the impact of managing Covid related issues and the normal running of a school is an ongoing challenge. RH confirmed that the planned Trust INSET day in January would be gifted to all as a wellbeing day. RH explained that it was a small gesture but one that was possible. RH shared that an early Christmas closure for our schools had been discussed but that the ESFA had stated that DGAT would be in breach of its funding agreement. Staff should not be working at all over the Christmas break. There is a member of DGAT staff on duty for emergency support, but the expectation and hope is that school staff take a full break.</li></ul> <p>Chairs asked if DGAT central team visits were necessary as these were impacting on Headteachers time. It was acknowledged that DGAT has a responsibility to ensure that standards and the quality of education remain high but felt that visits in person were adding an unnecessary strain. RH explained that visits were always conducted within the school’s own risk assessment and Headteachers had been asked to share their</p>

	<p>honest views about visits to the central team. RH agreed to take the feedback back to the central team.</p> <p>An increase in the need for family support has been noted a trend in schools and it is anticipated this will continue to grow and Chairs are mindful of the impact on the staff who lead this work. RH shared there needed be clear parameters around what can and cannot be done by schools.</p> <p>Chairs shared examples of practical wellbeing support in schools such as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead leaving notes of thanks and motivation around the school, Open the Book team sending cards, governors writing personal thank you cards and small gifts. RH suggested a small amount could likely be found in school budgets for a small gift of thanks for staff at the end of term but that gifts of alcohol or containing alcohol could not be purchased from school funds.</p> <p>It was reported that staff are sharing that they are missing being together as a team and are feeling the loss of this support and interaction.</p> <p>It was also noted that a thank you and celebrating successes can go a long way to supporting wellbeing.</p> <p>RH invited Chairs to send in short articles for the DGAT newsletter celebrating the work in their schools – articles can be sent to NW or direct to Emma Anderson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>GovernorHub</b> – NW asked for feedback from Chairs following the recent GovernorHub demo but noted that representation from LGBs at the meeting had been disappointing. It was shared that not all Chairs had seen the information sent about the event. Following a discussion about the service, RH invited any LGBs with an interest in exploring GovernorHub further to contact NW directly. <b>Action: Chairs to speak to clerks and their LGBs and contact NW if they have an interest in GovernorHub or would like more information.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Scheme of Delegation (SoD)</b></p> <p>RH confirmed that the Trust Board agreed the revised SoD at their recent meeting and noted that one addition had been made to include a paragraph explaining what an LGB should do if they were dissatisfied with the support being offered by the Trust. RH thanked SD for his comments regarding the SoD and everyone else who contributed feedback. NW confirmed that each LGB's SoD has been updated to reflect its constitution etc and have been sent out to Chairs and Clerks for inclusion on the next LGB meeting agenda and are available on the DGAT website.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>LGB Annual Schedule of Work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Performance Management and Pay Panel:</b> A reminder from NW that the performance management process and Pay Panels take place at this time of year. RH reminded all that the performance management process should recognise the challenges of Covid. Local governors have identified a training need around being a member of the Pay Panel. <b>Action: NW and KB to arrange Pay Panel training/guidance.</b></li> <li>- <b>Publishing information for Covid-19 catch-up funding:</b> The DfE have confirmed a requirement for schools to publish details of how they intend to spend the Covid catch-up funding received. Governors should monitor this plan. The first tranche of funding has been received by schools. A further two payments will be made.</li> <li>- <b>Annual LA safeguarding audit (section 175 audit):</b> The LA have not yet sent the audit to schools to complete, it is expected in early December. The audit is a useful monitoring tool for LGBs, particularly for identifying strong safeguarding practice and actions for improvement.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>DGAT central updates including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Trust finance audit:</b> RH confirmed that the audit is completed and that the Trust received a clean bill of health. Thanks once again to the SBMs who supported the audit process.</li> <li>- <b>Maternity cover:</b> Susannah Hogan has joined the team to cover Claire Morgan's maternity leave and a handover has commenced. Claire finishes for her maternity leave on 17/12.</li> </ul>

	<p>RH introduced KB to everyone and shared that she has asked that KB asks lots of questions of everyone within the Trust to support her to identify where we can improve financial processes. KB shared that she is keen to streamline processes for efficiency and lighten the burden for school leaders. KB invited Chairs to send her minutes of their Finance and Resources Committee meetings to enable her to get to know how LGBs work and where challenges may be for LGBs. KB also offered to meet with any Chair or local governor who would like to discuss financial processes and the role of LGBs with her. This can be arranged via NW or KB.</p>
7	<p><b>Clerks' Forum Update:</b> NW explained that the focus of the last Clerks' forum was Policy Management and again was well attended by Clerks. NW further explained that she is creating a DGAT policy crib sheet for all schools to explain what policies are in place, which DGAT policies must be adopted, which can be changed etc.</p> <p><b>Governance Training:</b> It has been a busy term for DGAT governance training and we have provided training for The Role of the Safeguarding Governor, The Role of the Pupil Premium Governor, Effective Monitoring and Challenge, An Introduction to Governance and Welcome to DGAT: Roles and Responsibilities of a DGAT Local Governor. Feedback has been positive, and all training is DGAT focused and based around the Trust vision and SoD. If any attendee would like a certificate of attendance, please contact NW.</p>
8	<p><b>Policies</b></p> <p>The following policies have been approved by the Trust board and are available on the Trust website. Emma will be sending them out to schools directly in the coming days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Whistleblowing</li> <li>- Performance Management</li> <li>- NQT (New)</li> <li>- Child Protection and Safeguarding</li> <li>- Pay Policy</li> </ul> <p>NW advised that all these policies should be shared with the LGB as they either cover a delegated responsibility or include processes and responsibilities for the LGB. NW explained that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy had not been changed but the Trust Board had ratified the draft policy which schools have in place are working to. Schools need to ensure if they have published a draft Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy it is now updated and published as a final version.</p>
9	<p><b>Trust Board</b></p> <p><b>Update from meeting 03/11/2020:</b> RH shared that HS reported to Trustees on pupils return to school since September. There is a Trust-wide gap in writing with school leaders observing a loss of skills in writing. Bishop Fleming presented to the Trust Board on risk management, which will feed into work the Executive Leadership Team who are reviewing the Trust risk management processes. This was welcomed by Chairs. RH reported that Dursley Nursery closed as planned and commended the exceptional professionalism of the staff and thanked NG for his professional leadership as Chair, especially given his other role within the community.</p> <p><b>Trust board membership:</b> RH reported that Doug Cowper is standing down as Chair of the Trust Board at the end of December and a new Chair and Vice Chair will be elected at the Trust Board December meeting. There are three vacancies on the Trust Board which will be advertised to ensure suitably skilled Trustees are appointed. A Chair asked if a member of this forum could be appointed to one of the Trust Board vacancies. RH agreed to take the request to the board but noted that the RSC do not support representative governance at Trust level. <b>Action: RH to share request for LGB Chair representation at the next Trust Board meeting.</b></p> <p>RH shared that she is robustly lobbying government via the Trust Board, her role as CEO, role as DDE and via the Schools Forum for adequate funding for schools in relation to</p>

	<p>increasing costs due to Covid. Supply costs are rising significantly and are unavoidable due to staff shielding because they are clinically extremely vulnerable or staff having to self-isolate. Schools cannot continue to spend if they have no reserves and those schools with reserves have plans for the money they have worked hard to save. RH confirmed that the government are reimbursing some cleaning costs but the parameters for claiming are very narrow and do not reflect the actual costs schools are facing. RH has invited Headteachers to sign a petition for government and invites Chairs to sign if they wish to. <b>Action: RH to share funding for schools petition with Chairs.</b></p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Chair of governors' Forum 2020/21</b>          Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 – <b>*please note this is the confirmed date for our next meeting*</b>          Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 - <b>*please note this is an additional date*</b>          Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021          Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>A question was asked regarding responsibility to close a school. RH confirmed that if school was closed due to lack of adequate staffing, this was a decision for Headteachers and that they would inform DGAT central team. If a decision to close a school needs to be taken due to Covid and the rate of infection in a school, this decision would be made by PHE.</p> <p>Thanks were shared around the forum for the support shown to each other over the last term and wishes for a safe, joyous and restful Christmas break.</p>