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DGAT Governance Briefing

Volume 7: April 2021

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Contents

- Welcome from Rachel Howie
- Important sector updates
- DGAT update
- Recommended Resources
- Clerking Matters
- DGAT Governance Training 2020/21

Welcome from Rachel Howie

Welcome back to the Summer Term. I hope you had an enjoyable Easter.

While we are no means completely back to business as usual it is really good to be able to start doing some of the things that feel a bit more normal. We have all almost our children back in school and we are incrementally and cautiously gaining some freedoms as a nation. While I know we do not necessarily want to go back to exactly what went before, and there is still a need to be cautious, it is good to have some of the restrictions lifted.

This means that some aspects of governance can return to normal and Nicki has outlined these for you in this edition of the newsletter.

In my first Herald, which I continue to copy Chairs of Governors into, I outlined the main focus of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in the coming term. For your convenience, I am adding it again here.

The term ahead

Helen will be visiting or co-ordinating visits to all schools as usual and the focus will be on safeguarding and the end-of-year summary report. We are making some adjustments to the summary and will discuss these with you when we have this ready to present. Helen is also working on the Early Career Framework expectation, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) changes for September, end of year assessment processes and the next steps with Target Tracker. In addition, she is leading on the Trust's partnership with the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership who have been awarded the contract for delivering the new National Professional Qualifications (NPQs).

Rob is currently organising visits to all schools to look at the potential School Condition Allocation (SCA) projects and identify which ones will proceed. He is also looking at increased central procurement for some of our suppliers to gain economies of scale and save each school money. In addition he is working on the next stage of the utilisation of PS Assets. I have also asked him to do a piece of work on the lettings across the Trust.

Keren will be rolling out some improvements to the efficiency of PSF (the Trust's finance system) for reporting and processes that will support your School Business Managers (SBMs) to get more out of the system. The Finance and Business (FAB) Leads will begin to visit schools in person again. Keren is working on ensuring our finance systems are integrated and are as efficient as possible.

Keren and Rob are working on the roles of the FAB leads to have closer links with the Business and Operations aspect of each school. They will become your first point of

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Along with the Trust Board and the ELT, I will be focussing on the Trust's strategic growth plan including the integration of secondary schools and small schools, a planned programme of bidding for new schools, and our marketing. The Trust's internal scrutiny (which is done by an external organisation appointed by the Trust Board and is required by the Academies Financial Handbook) will focus on the ICT strategy and this will also be a focus. Another focus for me is looking at how we share information across the Trust. I am also working starting to think about an environment policy for the Trust. Finally, I will be looking at developing new income streams for the Trust.

I hope you find this and the rest of the newsletter useful.

With my thanks, as ever, for the role you play in the Trust



Every blessing

Rachel

Important sector updates



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Following recent consultations on the proposed reform of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, the **Department for Education (DfE)** has now published the changes which are being made in 'Changes to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework'. The guidance explains that changes are being made to:

- Improve outcomes at age 5, particularly in language and literacy.
- Reduce workload, such as unnecessary paperwork.

All schools and early years providers in England must follow the new [EYFS framework](#) from September 2021.

Local governing boards can read more about the changes to the EYFS framework [here](#). Local governors should ensure they receive an update from school leaders on actions being taken to ensure compliance with the new EYFS framework.

It is a statutory requirement for Primary schools to have an EYFS policy in place, DGAT **does not** provide a model EYFS Policy and delegates the ratification of each school's local policy to the local governing board. Local governing boards should seek to ratify EYFS policies updated in line with the new framework prior to implementation in September 2021.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

There have been no significant changes to the guidance for schools regarding Coronavirus and schools are continuing to operate within their risk assessments.

Local governing boards should continue to monitor the implementation of the school Coronavirus risk assessment and any changes required.

OFSTED

Ofsted has confirmed that it will inspect schools in the summer term. The inspection programme will be delivered as follows:

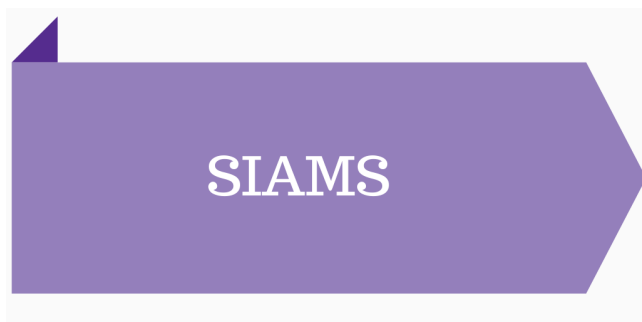
- Inspections will be 'light-touch', focussing on how schools are educating learners and keeping them safe.
- Inspections will take place on-site – inspectors will agree safety measures with school leaders prior to the inspection and will take a lateral flow test before arriving at the school.
- Inspections will not result in an inspection grade.
- Where evidence suggests a school's current grade no longer fairly reflects current provision, inspectors will be able to convert the inspection to a full inspection either immediately or later in the term. This full inspection will result in an inspection grade.
- Secondary schools will not be inspected until the second half of the Summer term unless a significant concern is raised. This is to enable teaching staff to focus on centre assessed grades.
- Ofsted will also inspect some 'outstanding' schools that request an inspection, prioritising those that have gone the longest without an inspection.

Ofsted has published updates to the following inspection handbooks:

- [Early years inspection handbook](#)
- [School inspection handbook](#)
- [School inspection handbook: section 8](#)
- [Education inspection framework](#)

The changes mainly relate to how inspections will be conducted during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. There have also been other changes to reflect announcements that

You can read the full inspection update [here](#).



Following the announcement by the government on 29th March that routine Ofsted graded inspections will remain suspended until the Autumn term the Church of England Education Office has confirmed that Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Inspections will not resume until the Autumn term of 2021.

The Church of England Education Office has stated that it will be working with the DfE and the other section 48 providers to consider the most effective way of resuming SIAMS inspection and will release more details when the new nationally integrated system for SIAMS is introduced.

A new national system for SIAMS inspections has been agreed upon with every Diocesan Board of Education. Whilst the final system is yet to be published, the Church of England Education Office has published the following explanation of the roles of Dioceses and the new national team:

Dioceses will be responsible for:

- Advice on developing Christian character and ethos
- Training for schools
- School reviews and support for schools

The national team will be responsible for:

- Scheduling, including allocation of inspectors to school and notification of school (and diocese) when an inspection is to take place, the collation of reports and the payment of inspectors.
- Initial training of inspectors and the ongoing inspector training.
- A national 'Duty desk' to provide support for inspectors during inspections.
- A new system of quality assurance of inspections with targeted shadowing and feedback, and the quality assurance of reports which will be done with a centralised critical reading service.
- A revised Appeals and Complaints process which will be managed centrally.
- The publication of a SIAMS Annual Report - including thematic and quantitative trends.

DFE GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The DfE published a School Governance update in March, which includes:

- Updated links to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance pages for schools.
- Information on how to nominate your board or governance professional for an Outstanding Governance Award – and the good news is there is still time, the deadline for entries is 9 am on 26th April.
- Updated school land and guidance forms.
- An update on the submission date for the School Financial Value Standard (SFVS) for Schools – this has been extended to Friday 28th May to take account of the pressures schools and local authorities are facing.
- Details of a new wellbeing webinar 'Every Interaction Matters' and resources to supplement the resources already available from the DfE to schools and governing boards.

You can read the full update [here](#).

A further update was published in April and includes:

- Updated links to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance pages for schools.
- Guidance for Governing and Trust Board meetings and visits to schools – please note, there is no change in guidance from the DfE or DGAT.
- Information on the National Tutoring Programme.
- An update on the Early Career Framework and guidance on changes to statutory guidance for induction.
- Details of how to nominate someone who works or volunteers in governance for a national honour.
- Details of governance recruitment support available to maintained schools and academy trustees.
- A video demonstrating what information is required and how to record governance contacts on the Get information about schools (GIAS) service.

You can read the full update [here](#).

SAFEGUARDING

An update from Helen Springett, Deputy CEO

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allegations of rape culture, this is now to be the focus of a review by Ofsted. Whilst much of this is within the secondary arena, we obviously must take every step to ensure that within our Trust, the processes to protect our pupils are robust and are fully understood and implemented in all our schools. Therefore to assure ourselves of this, we will:

1. Review the policy again to ensure that there is total clarity in the steps and expectations for our pupils.
2. Ensure that all Headteachers within the first week back in school have this as a key action with their staff teams to review and remind staff of processes to safeguard pupils in this aspect.
3. Ensure that the RSHE/PSHE (Relationship Sex and Health Education/Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) teaching for this term, reinforces the importance of respect and consensual relationships in line with our policy, as well as the Church of England guidance. Jackie Buckland will reinforce this with lead teachers at their meetings this term. All of our schools use the Coram Life materials, which have specific age-appropriate planning and resources around relationships.
4. Conduct Safeguarding Audits this term, led by the School Improvement Team, which will have a focus on this aspect of the school's provision, through questioning and discussions with pupils and staff.
5. Maintain focus on this area, with School Improvement Team visits this term ensuring that this remains a high priority within schools.

As governors, especially if you are a safeguarding governor, when you are meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or in a Full Governing Body meeting you can ask about peer-on-peer abuse and RSHE teaching through some suggested questions below.

1. How is the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy being implemented in school?
2. Are incidents of peer-on-peer abuse recorded and dealt with appropriately according to KCSIE and our Trust Policy?
3. How do you know?
4. What is the impact of multi-agency support in helping to support the safeguarding of pupils?
5. How are staff ensuring that pupils are protected through teaching and through the culture that is created in school?
6. If you have the opportunity to talk to pupils, or if there are pupil questionnaire results, how safe do they feel in school and online?
7. What is the impact of the e-safety and RSHE/PSHE teaching?
8. Do pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they are concerned about something someone says or asks them to do?

The safety and wellbeing of all our pupils must continue to remain the highest of priorities for all of us. Thank you for all you do to ensure that this remains the case in our schools.

DGAT Update



Visits to LGB meetings

Thank you to those governing boards who have warmly welcomed Nicki to their meetings over the past term. It has been useful to gain an insight into the work of the Trust's local governing boards and to continue to develop strong relationships with our local governors.

Nicki will be in touch in the coming weeks with those governing boards she has not yet (remotely) visited to arrange to attend your next LGB meeting as an observer.

DGAT Scheme of Delegation

In response to feedback from the Chair of Governors' Forum, we are continuing our review of the Trust Scheme of Delegation. Nicki is undertaking a review of the format of the scheme of delegation - delegations will not be reviewed on this occasion. We understand that the format of the Scheme of Delegation in its current form was inaccessible, overly wordy and a challenge to engage with. As always, any review of the scheme of delegation will be shared with LGBs for consultation.

If you have any feedback regarding the Scheme of Delegation that you would like Nicki to consider, please get in touch with her.

Resources for Local Governor Recruitment

Nicki has recently created staff and parent governor recruitment flyers for one of our schools. If you would like a copy or if Nicki can support with any other aspect of governor recruitment, please get in touch with her.

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We have recently published a document outlining the arrangements for policy approval within the Trust. This guidance document also details clearly the policies which DGAT provides and which schools are able to create for their own context, there is also - as requested - details of which policies should be noted by local governing boards or where a local decision can be made and which policies must be published on the school website.

This document has been shared with Headteachers, Chairs of Governors, and Clerks to Governors and should be used to plan policy management at local level. The document is available on the DGAT website but can also be accessed [here](#).

Governing Board Meetings and Visits to School

As lockdown restrictions begin to ease we continue to advocate a pragmatic and risk-managed approach to governing board meetings and visits to schools - where visits and meetings can be undertaken remotely they should continue to do so.

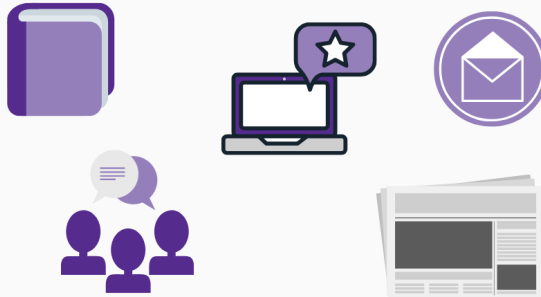
It is expected that local governing boards will continue to move towards increasing monitoring and challenge and we strongly recommend revisiting the DGAT [Annual Schedule of Work](#) to plan key agenda items for the coming term and to identify any aspects of governance that may have been missed during the change in priorities due to lockdown and provision of remote education.

Local governors must ensure that monitoring is linked to the school's strategic development priorities and reflect the delegated responsibilities in the LGBs scheme of delegation. Governors should be using the school development plan and actions included on the school improvement team's notes of visit to inform decisions for monitoring activity. Monitoring should not take place for the sake of monitoring - governors must be able to identify and be able to discuss how a monitoring activity links to the school's strategic priorities.

There are a number of resources on the DGAT website to support with monitoring and governors are welcome to contact Nicki to discuss governor monitoring in your school.

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Recommended Resources



Do you enjoy listening to podcasts ?

If you do, you may enjoy the following podcasts which focus on all things governance.

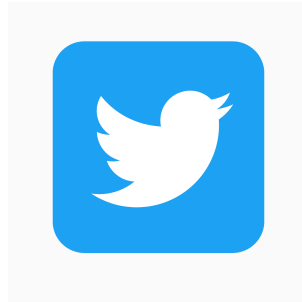
NGA 'Governance Chatters' The Governance Podcast



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resources, governance, SIAMS, RE, and more. It is a useful resource for local governors to remain informed and connected to the Diocese and access additional training and resources.

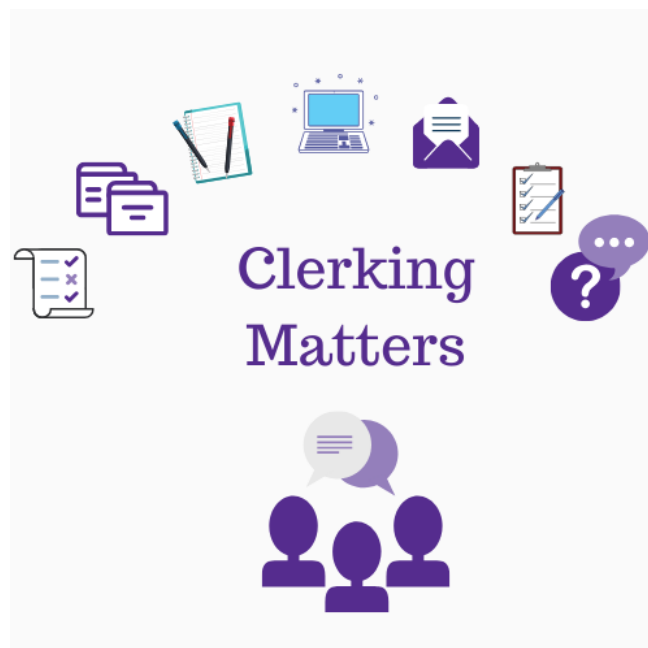
To sign up to receive the DEN, please click on this [link](#), complete the form with your email address and name, and click on the box next to "Diocesan Education News". You must also tick the permissions "Email" box. Finally, click on "Subscribe to list" at the bottom of the page.



To keep up to date with news from across the DGAT family of schools follow us on Twitter at @DGATSchools.

You can also keep up to date with news from across the wider Diocese family of schools at @glosdiocschools

If you know of any useful resources which other local governors would find helpful please send to Nicki at nwadley@glosdioc.org.uk and we will share them in the next edition of the DGAT Governance Briefing #sharingiscaring



a lot in a short space of time!

Ellie and Nicki shared with Clerks the new look clerking section on the DGAT website and the new Clerks' Handbook - thank you to Ellie for all her hard work on this.

A date for Clerks' diaries

Our next Clerks' Forum is on Tuesday 22nd June and we will be focussing on governor recruitment processes and resources. An agenda and meeting details will be sent out at least a week before the forum.

A reminder and plea from Nicki

We have made great progress over the past year in improving our communication with local governing boards but we can only do this if the information we hold centrally is up-to-date.

Please take a few moments on a regular basis to ensure your governance database is accurate. If you need the link to the database again or a copy emailing to you to update, please contact Nicki.

Please also remember to send Nicki the minutes of your governing board meetings, including committee meeting minutes.

DGAT Governance Training 2020/21



Our governance training offer for 2021 is available to view via the DGAT CPD brochure on our [website](#).

We have created a range of training and CPD opportunities based on feedback from local governors and clerks, we will add finance training later in the academic year. Clerks and local governors are welcome to attend any training course available. Coming up this term:

- **An introduction to Clerking in a MAT:** 20th May 2021 9.00 am - 12.00 pm
- **Natter with Nicki (Drop-in):** 9th June 2021 9.30am - 11.30/ 5.30 pm - 7.30 pm
- **An Introduction to Governance:** 15th June 2021: 6.00 pm - 8.00 pm
- **Governing in a MAT:** 18th June 2021 - time TBC, please check with Nicki before booking.

In response to requests from local governing boards, we have added an additional training course this term. Local governors are invited to join Keren Bass, Head of Finance, and Nicki Wadley, Governance Lead to explore the local governing boards' responsibilities for monitoring academy finances, how to implement an effective monitoring schedule, and provide robust question and challenge. This training is provided over two evening sessions; the first session is on Thursday 6th May 2021 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm and the second on Thursday 13th May 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm.

Please book all training via the website booking form.

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