

Chairs of Governors Forum

Meeting notes – 22nd October 2020

	<p>In attendance</p> <p>Bibury – Clearwater – John Coles Coaley – Carole O’Donnell Dursley – Neil Grecian Field Court Infant – Carl Curtis Hardwicke – Apologies Lakefield – Longney - Minchinhampton – Stephen Draper North Cerney – Primrose Hill – Katherine Clamp St John’s– Bishop David Jennings St James – Kelley Sutton St Matthews’– Jacqui Powell St Lawrence - Susan Holmes Whiteshill – Apologies Winchcombe – Anna Hay</p> <p>Central Team - Rachel Howie and Nicki Wadley</p>
1	<p>Opening prayer, introduction and apologies</p> <p>RH introduced and welcomed John Coles representing Clearwater Academy</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Jo Grills, Ian Wills and Sarah Nicholson.</p>
2	<p>Actions from last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scheme of Delegation – The Trust Board meeting was postponed and rescheduled for 3/11. RH to provide feedback on the SoD at the next CoG Forum meeting – carried forward.- NW to set up a meeting between her, RH and SD to further discuss the Scheme of Delegation – done.- NW to share Coaley’s example governor visits risk assessment when distributing the meeting notes – done.- NW to advise Chairs if the Governance Database for their LGB has not been completed and the Chair will follow up with the Clerk – done.- The Trust Annual Plan to be added to the next Chairs’ Forum Agenda – done.
3	<p>Local Governing Board Meetings</p> <p>NW invited feedback from Chairs on LGB meetings in the Autumn term. One LGB represented at the meeting had held a meeting face to face whilst following the required safety control measures. All others reported to have held meetings remotely. It was reported that remote meetings whilst a safe option for many LGBs were presenting challenges for Clerks to follow discussions and for Chairs to engage some of the less confident governors. Large LGB meetings held remotely were reported to sometimes stifle conversation, whereas smaller committee meetings worked better.</p> <p>RH encouraged LGBs to reflect and consider what Headteachers are asked to prepare for governors and maybe consider a mix of verbal and written reports. One Chair shared that they had been encouraging light agendas and gently pushing back on unnecessary policies etc. being brought to governor meetings. Another Chair shared that they had encouraged</p>

	<p>questions to be submitted to the Headteacher prior to the meeting which allowed a better flow to the meeting – the Clerk captured all the questions which were responded to within the meeting.</p>
4	<p>LGB Skills Audit</p> <p>NW asked Chairs to ensure an LGB Skills Audit was completed annually. Clerks have shared that it is an ongoing challenge to get governors to complete the skills audit, which is a Trust requirement. NW asked that Chair's share the importance of this with governors and set the expectation that this is completed. NW acknowledged that there were some known barriers for governors completing the audit which including not recognising the opportunities to identify transferable skills, time to complete the audit and accessibility of the form used – NW will look at each of these areas. In the meantime, please use the NGA skills audit which is available on the Trust website.</p> <p>It was also noted that there is a need for Headteachers to have an opportunity to talk outside of meetings for pastoral and wellbeing support.</p>
5	<p>Teachers' Pay Award</p> <p>RH shared that she had sent out the LA pay award proposal to Chairs ahead of the meeting. RH apologized for the lateness of this document but explained that it was sent out as soon as it was received from the LA. RH explained that as an Academy Trust DGAT is permitted to set its own pay structure but that the Trust Board choose to follow the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document to ensure teaching staff are not disadvantaged by working for a Trust.</p> <p>RH confirmed that the budget estimated for a 2.75% increase, which is considered as the fairest option for all, including TLRs.</p> <p>GQ: Isn't option one the fairest? RH – Option one does not include a .7 which we have in DGAT and doesn't cover UPS or SEND allowances. Action – RH to check the differentials between option one and option two to ensure no one is disadvantaged.</p> <p>GQ: Are you seeking a response from Chairs and Headteachers? RH – both. RH confirmed she had engaged with Headteachers separately.</p> <p>GQ: Will a single decision be made for all academies across the Trust? RH – yes, the same pay award will be implemented in all DGAT academies.</p> <p>It was noted that the timescale for a response was inadequate and did not allow enough time for the information to be shared and a response collated. RH acknowledged this and explained that the timescales were determined by external organisations.</p> <p>RH explained that whilst the final decision lies with the Trust Board, Directors are keen to hear the views and rationale form all schools to support their discussions and decision making. Action – Chairs to provide feedback on the pay award to RH in time for the board meeting on 3/11.</p>
6	<p>DGAT central updates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual audit: RH shared that this is going well and extended thanks to those schools and SBMs who has provided information for the audit. - Howie's Herald: Still published weekly, and Chairs are included in the distribution list. Please share any pertinent information with your governors and Clerks. - Coronavirus strategic planning: RH is meeting with executive leaders from the LA and other system leaders twice a week, these meetings include representatives from GAPH and GASH and there is a collaborative approach. - DGAT Head of Finance: Keren Bass is working one day a week until she starts her substantive post in November and will be in touch to introduce herself in the coming weeks. - Finance lead maternity cover: Interviews being held Friday 30/11 and subject to successful recruitment should allow for a six-week handover.
7	<p>DfE Governance Updates</p>

	NW gave a brief overview of the latest updates from the DfE, including an updated version of the Governance Handbook which should be shared with all governors. Copies of all updates were included in the meeting pack for this meeting.
8	Policies The DGAT Complaints Policy has been updated with a Coronavirus (COVID-19) update to include the complaints procedure in the event of a tier 4 lockdown in schools. This updated policy must be adopted by all academies and published on the academy website.
9	DGAT Annual Plan The key Trust priorities were sent out in advance of the meeting and are being shared for transparency and with the intention of ensuring consistent governance across the Trust. RH explained that some of the priorities filter down to academy development plans and governors should ensure the link is recognised and reflected in local governance. RH explained that the Trust Board remain committed to improving relationships and communication with LGBs but want this to be purposeful and meaningful. Trustees are planning an external review of Trust governance this academic year, to include the Trust being prepared for supporting secondary education.
10	Chair of governors' Forum 2020/21 Tuesday 24 th November 2020 – *please note this is the confirmed date for our next meeting* Thursday 28 th January 2021 - *please note this is an additional date* Tuesday 2 nd March 2021 Tuesday 8 th June 2021
11	AOB RH extended thanks to Bishop David Jennings who is standing down from his role as Chair of Governors and St John's CofE Primary School. RH recognised Bishop David's strength of leadership and governance throughout his time as Chair.