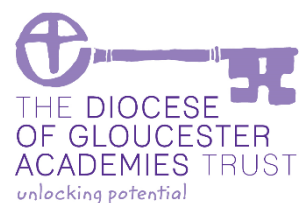


Chairs of Governors Forum

Meeting notes – 2nd March 2021



	<p>In attendance</p> <p>Bibury – Did not attend Clearwater – Jo Grills Coaley – Carole O’Donnell Dursley – Neil Grecian Field Court Infant – Did not attend Hardwicke – Apologies Lakefield – Keith Withers Longney – Diane Bainbridge Minchinhampton – Stephen Draper North Cerney – Rev’d David Minns Primrose Hill – Katherine Clamp St John’s– Tony Griffiths St James – Kelley Sutton St Matthews’– Carole O’Donnell St Lawrence - Susan Holmes Whiteshill – Ian Wills Winchcombe – Anna Hay</p> <p>Central Team - Nicki Wadley (NW), Helen Springett (HS) Trust Board – The Venerable Hilary Dawson (HD), Rob Jones</p>
1	<p>Opening prayer, introduction and apologies</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Rachel Howie (RH) and Jacqui Powell (represented at the meeting by Carole O’Donnell). Apologies were received during the meeting from Sarah Nicholson due to unforeseen work commitments.</p> <p>NW warmly welcomed Rob Jones to the meeting and reminded everyone that Rob has recently been appointed to the Trust Board. NW asked that everyone introduce themselves.</p> <p>HS opened the meeting in prayer.</p>
2	<p>Actions from last meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Chairs to speak to clerks and their LGBs and contact NW if they have an interest in GovernorHub or would like more information – ongoing.- RH to write to all parents to reassure them of the Trust’s understanding of the challenges faced and reiterate expectations – RH to discuss with HT’s if this is still required given the return to school for all pupils from 8/3/2021.- NW to share DGAT Policy arrangements and provision guidance with the forum meeting notes – done.- RH and HD to share request and feedback from RSC with the Trust Board and feedback at the next Chairs’ Forum – HD shared that a response had not been received from the RSC office. C/F- Chairs to contact RH outside of the meeting to share their thoughts on the proposed Sickness Policy Covid addendum ahead of the Trust Board meeting on 2/2/2021 – NW thanked everyone who had contacted RH and

referred Chairs to the email update sent with the notes of the last meeting.

3

Feedback from LGBs

- **What would you like to have known as a new DGAT Chair of Governors?**
NW explained that she was in the process of creating a DGAT LGB Chair of Governors Handbook and invited feedback on what information or support would have been useful for Chairs to have received when they joined DGAT. Feedback and ideas shared included:
 - A list of who's who and their roles and responsibilities. NW asked if a short description of how each person may interact with Chairs/LGBs would be useful and it was agreed this would be. NW signposted Chairs to the DGAT website for further information on 'who's who' within the Trust.
 - Case studies to share some of the less usual situations Chairs have been involved in. NW explained that confidentiality would have to be maintained and any case study anonymised.
 - A buddy system for new Chairs, linking them with a more experienced Chair for support and to have an informal sounding board.
 - Building confidence for new Chairs by sharing contact details of the group and encouraging supportive conversations.
 - Consideration of how relationships between the group of Chairs can be nurtured. A WhatsApp group for DGAT Chairs was suggested.
 - Include the annual schedule of work for LGBs as it is such a helpful document.
 - Not necessarily for the handbook but a session would be useful for LGBs joining DGAT looking at the differences between maintained school governance and governing on a LGB in an academy trust.

NW thanked everyone for their helpful suggestions and explained that she will give each consideration.

- **The use of acronyms in DGAT documents**
NW explained that she has received feedback recently regarding the use of acronyms in DGAT resources – specifically training sessions and policies and that these create a barrier for some governors. NW asked the group if this was a consistent concern within LGBs. It was shared by a Chair that the LA had produced a useful acronyms list and maybe DGAT could do the same. NW confirmed that there is a DGAT Acronym Buster in the Members' area of the DGAT website that provides the long form word, acronym and a description of the word for context – this is academy trust focused. NW suggested that LGBs ask Clerks to add a acronyms list at the beginning of minutes to support governors to become familiar with common acronyms.
It was acknowledged that within the education sector there are many acronyms and some of these develop and change over time as we become more educated as a society regarding issues such as diversity and inclusion. It was agreed that acronyms used in training sessions could often distract from the information being shared. NW explained that in governance training this year, a short acronyms list had been included at the start of each session. Chairs felt this would have been helpful to attendees. NW thanked everyone for their thoughts and feedback and will discuss this with RH and the central team – **action NW.**
- **CPD for LGBs**
NW is reviewing the governance training offer and invited feedback on the sessions provided this year and asked if there was anything in addition LGBs would like to see offered. NW explained that Monitoring the Budget in an Academy Trust and Pay Panel Role and Responsibilities training would be being offered this calendar year. There were no suggestions of any additional training sessions required and no comments on the training sessions provided this year. It was noted that moving

	<p>forward a mixture of face-to-face and remote training sessions would be welcomed. It was also raised that the content of training offered was useful and relevant but early evening session times were a barrier for some. It was suggested that a whole day of related training may be better for Chairs to commit to attending. NW thanked everyone for their feedback and will share this with colleagues when the DGAT training offer is discussed in the coming weeks– action NW.</p> <p>NW took the opportunity to highlight DGAT governance training coming up in the next month and will email further details to all Chairs and Clerks tomorrow – action NW.</p> <p>NW shared that the termly DfE Governance update was published this week, Chairs should receive this direct to their email address recorded on Get information about schools.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Helen Springett</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update on school improvement team priorities: HS shared a presentation detailing the focus and priorities of the school improvement team during lockdown and in preparation for all pupils returning to school on 8/3. HS explained that there has been a focus on leaders and supporting schools through collaborations with external experts and utilising the expertise of colleagues within the Trust. HS explained that she and her team had undertaken Trust-wide monitoring of remote education through professional conversations with school leaders. Compliance with DfE expectations has been a focus of these conversations and HS shared that schools have done an incredible job of reflecting normal provision as far as possible in the current circumstances. HS shared that some schools had been on a journey with their remote education provision and had refined their offer following rigorous evaluation and noted that this was an example of courageous leadership. HS further explained that the wellbeing of Headteachers, leaders, staff and pupils had been explored and a pyramid of wellbeing support provided across the Trust. HS extended her gratitude to all the staff teams within the Trust who have without exception worked incredibly hard. HS shared that feedback from the parent community has largely been positive which is a testament to the commitment of staff in schools. - Safeguarding: Main changes this term to Keeping Children Safe In Education - reflect the changes to checking staff qualifications /prohibitions checks overseas because of Brexit. This was communicated to all Headteachers and senior leaders this term through headteacher huddle and deputy headteacher meetings. - Safeguarding has remained a key foci for all throughout this period. <p>NW recommended that Chairs share HS's update and the remote education note of visit with their LGBs to demonstrate the monitoring that has taken place within schools and the outcomes of that and support provided to schools and leaders by DGAT – action all Chairs.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>DGAT central team updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wider opening of schools from 8th March: HS shared that schools are prepared for children returning and that guidance remains the same as pre-Christmas regarding structures and processes and planning of Bubbles etc. HS highlighted a small change to the guidance for schools which now states that facemasks must be worn in communal areas by adults in Primary schools where social distancing cannot be maintained. This requirement will be in place until Easter, when it will be reviewed. Schools will need to update their risk assessments to reflect this. <p>Staff who have been identified as clinically extremely vulnerable cannot return to work, even if they feel able to do so. The new list of people who must shield may have a wider impact on staffing and use of supply.</p> <p>A Chair shared that a recent survey identified that loneliness was the prevailing challenge and concerns for pupils who have been accessing remote learning during</p>

	<p>lockdown and felt that schools need to be aware of this. HS explained that some Headteachers had requested Tim Perris provide a wellbeing survey for pupils returning to school. A discussion took place about potential changes in behaviour during the weeks following pupils return to school. This is something LGBs can monitor through the Headteachers reports and explore how the impact of lockdown has impacted on pupils.</p>
6	<p>Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback from Chairs and LGBs on DGAT Policy arrangements document: NW invited feedback on the document shared at the previous forum meeting. The document has been well received and has clarified the policy management process within the Trust and made the responsibilities of LGBs clearer.
7	<p>Clerks' forum update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NW shared that the focus of the recent Clerks' Forum was on effective communication, particularly during remote meetings and lockdown where informal conversations have been less prevalent. NW explained that Clerks had been provided with a copy of the new DGAT Clerks Handbook, produced by Ellie Hully and given a tour of the Clerks' area of the DGAT website. The handbook and website are now linked in layout and work together to provide support and information to Clerks.
8	<p>Trust Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update from Trust Board meeting 2/02/2021: HS shared that the Trust Board had discussed exclusions, noting a three-year trend of falling exclusions within the Trust. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past year and the number of fixed term exclusions are linked to a small number of schools. The reduction in exclusions has been achieved by systems and processes being consistently applied as well as a change in cohort also supporting this impact. - Phonics data for Autumn 2020 was presented to the Trust board and discussed. All but two schools are meeting expected attainment standards. Attainment showed a rise in 2020 despite the pandemic. - Keren Bass, Head of Finance, reported to the Board on improvements and efficiencies identified in the Trust's financial systems. - Trustees received a report on safeguarding, wellbeing and lockdown from executive leaders.
9	<p>Trust Board</p> <p>HD confirmed that the agenda for the next Trust Board meeting has not yet been agreed. Feedback from the meeting will be shared at the next Chairs' Forum. NW asked if anyone had anything they would like taken to the Chairs forum – no-one present had anything to ask or be shared with the Trust Board.</p>
10	<p>Chair of governors' Forum 2020/21 Tuesday 8th June 2021 *Please note: if an earlier meeting is planned, NW will ensure all Chairs are made aware at the earliest opportunity*</p>
11	<p>AOB</p> <p>NW encouraged Chairs (and their Clerks) to consider providing a pen portrait for the DGAT newsletter. NW shared that she would be thrilled to see governance and the work of LGBs shared across the Trust. If anyone is interested, please contact Nicki – action all Chairs.</p> <p>A Chair took the time to recognise how positive and exciting it was to be welcoming all pupils back to school on Monday and recognised the continued hard work of those in schools.</p>

	Thanks were offered to the central team for their continued support to schools.
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