

Chair of Governors' Forum

Meeting notes – 28th September 2021

	<p>In attendance Bibury – Anthony Godwin Clearwater – Dr 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 – Piers Ormerod Primrose Hill – Sara Sleeman St John's – Anthony Griffiths St James – Kelley Sutton St Matthews' – Ali Spencer St Lawrence – Mike Baker Whiteshill – Dr Katie Blaney Winchcombe – Anna Hay</p> <p>Central Team - Rachel Howie (RH), Nicki Wadley (NW), Helen Springett (HS) Trust Board – Tim Brock, Vice Chair</p>
1	<p>Opening prayer, introduction and apologies</p> <p>NW welcomed all present, particularly, Ali Spencer, Piers Ormerod and Dr Katie Blaney who are all chairs newly elected to the role this year. NW also welcomed Anthony Godwin representing Bibury Church of England Primary School, Sara Sleeman representing Primrose Hill Church of England Primary School and Mike Baker representing St Lawrence Church of England Primary School.</p> <p>Apologies were noted and accepted from Katherine Clamp from Primrose Hill Church of England Primary School and Susan Holmes from St Lawrence Church of England Primary School.</p> <p>Tim Brock, Vice Chair of the Trust Board and Helen Springett, Deputy CEO were welcomed and introduced to the meeting.</p> <p>RH opened the meeting in prayer.</p>
2	<p>Actions from last meeting</p> <p>RH to raise secondary place planning issue with the LA during her weekly meeting and feedback to the forum. RH explained that she has raised the issue with the LA but has made little progress in securing a solution. RH has requested a meeting with Clare Medland and invited Keith Withers to join the meeting to represent the concerns raised by the LGB at Lakefield.</p> <p>Chairs to discuss GovernorHub pilot with their Clerk and HT and those interested let NW know by Monday 21st June NW shared that eight LGBs are accessing the pilot. All clerks involved in the pilot have now received training from GovernorHub and a list of 'must do's' has been shared with clerks. Those chairs present who are piloting GovernorHub shared that initial indications and experiences of using the platform are positive but noted that information sharing would need managing to protect against overwhelm. There is free training available for LGBs if this is required, clerks can request this from GovernorHub.</p>

	<p>NW asked that chairs set an expectation around GovernorHub implementation and its consistent use to ensure we gain the best opportunity to review the impact of the pilot. NW and RH agreed to create flow charts for DGAT HR policies over the summer break. Completed and shared with all schools and LGBs.</p> <p>Chairs to share draft scheme of delegation and LGB terms of reference with all members of their LGB and encourage them to review and feedback to NW by 16th July 2021. NW shared that feedback received was positive and the draft scheme of delegation and LGB terms of reference will be considered by the Trust Board at its next meeting in October.</p> <p>Chairs to ensure a check if the school SCR is completed before the end of term. No indication was given that this action has not been completed.</p> <p>Chairs to ask their Headteacher to share any implications and considerations for their school related to the Early Careers Framework. A chair shared that their HT had expressed concern about the workload involved in the ECF on early careers teachers and their mentors and commented that it is an intense programme. HS shared the support available from the Trust school improvement team to support schools to deliver the DfE prescribed framework. This support includes Trust staff being part of the ECF delivery team and providing feedback directly to the Teaching School Hubs.</p>
3	<p>Trust Board Update</p> <p>Update from Trust strategy day part I on 13/07/2021 RH shared that the first Trust Board Strategy day took place in July and will be followed up with a second day in October. RH explained that Trustees are considering a range of strategic priorities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Trust growth strategy, including secondary schools ▪ The potential for developing centralised services ▪ Central procurement ▪ The support and impact of small schools joining the Trust ▪ The Trust's IT infrastructure <p>RH shared the Trust Board's desire and commitment to seek the views of LGBs in developing its future strategic priorities. This was reiterated by TB. RH shared that similar discussions were also taking place with HTs to seek their input and views on these issues and initial conversations had been positive.</p> <p>RH proposed that the next Chairs' Forum be held in person for all with a focus on the Trust's strategic plans. All present agreed this would be a welcomed opportunity. Action: RH to prepare a paper in advance of the next meeting which will be shared further in advance than for usual meetings. NW to plan for the next meeting to be held in person.</p> <p>Feedback from Chairs in response to strategy day update: Chairs shared some initial observations but agreed that further discussions in a focused meeting will enable LGBs to have a positive contribution.</p>
4	<p>Active Listening - Feedback from Headteacher and Chairs 1:1 calls and next steps</p> <p>RH shared key highlights from the summer term active listening exercise with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors. RH explained that there were many positive comments shared but that the focus has been on what we can do better as a Trust. Conversations were honest and valuable. Action: NW will share the active listening report with the meeting notes. RH asked that these are shared with all members of LGBs.</p> <p>A discussion took place about how to develop the DGAT chairs' network further and peer-to-peer support. It was agreed that sharing practice and knowledge was key to developing local governance and effective chairing. Action: RH asked that anyone interested in piloting a peer-to-peer network to contact NW. NW will also discuss with new chairs at the DGAT New Chairs Network on 2nd November.</p> <p>RH explained that the active listening exercise will be repeated annually.</p>
5	<p>DGAT central team updates</p> <p>Buildings and Operations Project Lead: RH shared that feedback from the active learning exercise consistently identified an issue with capacity in the central team buildings and operations provision. In response to this a Project Lead, Clare Morgan, has been</p>

	appointed to support Rob Jones and his growing workload. Clare will commence her post in November.
6	<p>NW attendance at LGB meetings Trends and key learning and next steps: NW shared some key aspects from governance observed during her recent attendance at LGB meetings. NW explained that she has written a report identifying features of effective governance in practice and where governance required strengthening, with some clear recommendations for development provided. NW acknowledged that the visits provided a snapshot of local governance and that the challenges of remote governance were still impacting on LGBs. This report will be shared with chairs with the meeting notes. Action: NW to share DGAT Local Governance Meeting Observations Report with forum meeting notes. Chairs to include the report as an agenda item at their next LGB meeting and reflect with governors where the LGBs own governance is reflected within the report and whether any of the recommendations can be implemented in their own governance practice.</p>
7	<p>DGAT website A brief tour of updates to the DGAT website was shared, including new branding and a new layout.</p>
8	<p>Helen Springett Deputy CEO/School Improvement Lead update School Improvement Policy and RSHE: 2021/22. HS shared a presentation which included the school effectiveness cycle and changes implemented this academic year. HS highlighted the new EYFS framework and identified key points for LGBs to consider within their meetings and monitoring visits. HS also highlighted changes to pupil premium, the recovery premium and tutoring programme. Action: Chairs to share HS's presentation with all members of their LGB and implement the governor actions and considerations highlighted.</p> <p>Ofsted document and meeting 5/10/2021: HS shared that many schools have requested support to better understand what to expect from Ofsted inspections which have recommenced. The Trust has identified schools which fall within the inspection window but that there is no guarantee which schools will be expected when. To respond to the request from schools an LGBs for information on what to expect from an inspection, HS and Catherine Leahy are facilitating an information session at Clearwater Church of England Academy on 5/10/2022 which can also be accessed in person or remotely. Governors are welcome to attend. Joining details have been shared with Headteachers or can be requested from NW.</p>
9	<p>Safeguarding update HS shared a detailed presentation update on the key changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and identified key actions for LGBs. HS identified that it is crucial for governors to explore whether the school has a culture of 'it could happen here', particularly in relation to sexual violence and sexual harassment – it can and does occur in Primary settings and all children involved, including perpetrators, are victims and need safeguarding. HS also highlighted the importance of consistent application of policies related to safeguarding and the role of the LGB in monitoring this. Action: Chairs to share HS's presentation with all members of their LGB and implement the governor actions and considerations highlighted.</p>
10	<p>Policies NW reminded chairs of the policy reviewed by the central team over the summer and drew attention to the new flow charts for processes detailed in the Staff Sickness, Staff Absence and Complaints policy. Feedback on these flowcharts is welcomed.</p>
11	<p>DGAT Governance Training 2021/22 RH provided an overview of the training available this academic year and highlighted that several courses have been cancelled due to lack of bookings. RH explained that training provision is decided following feedback and requests from LGBs and clerks. NW asked that chairs support by being proactive in sharing training opportunities with governors and directing local governors to training that will support individuals and LGBs development.</p>

10	Chair of governors' Forum 2020/21 23 Nov 2021 - in person. Venue TBC 1 March 2022 26 April 2022 7 June 2022
11	AOB KB asked how LGBs are holding meetings this year e.g., remotely or in person. KB highlighted that the DGAT remote meeting policy says that meetings may be held remotely in the event of a circumstance that makes meeting in person unsafe. NW and RH will review the policy and advise further. Whilst a prevalence of Covid infections remains LGBs may continue to meet remotely.