

### Welcome back to the second half of the autumn term!



Here at CWGA we have a couple of role changes and two new starters! Simon Livingstone and Debbie Tomkinson are new to the role of Co-Chairs of the association, and we welcome new members of the executive; Moira Griffiths-Parr and Chris



Hampshire who joined in the last few months and are both valuable additions to our team. We are looking forward to working with you all to develop governance across our area, and beyond in some cases, and are here if you need us for support or a chat! We hope you enjoy the newsletter, there are some interesting articles for you to digest.

### **Safeguarding, everyone's responsibility...***by Debbie Tomkinson, Co-Chair—CWGA*

Governors and trustees have a wide range of responsibilities. At the top of the list of priorities has to be the safeguarding of children.

The new Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance has been updated for 2022 and recognises the important strategic role that governors and trustees play in safeguarding matters.

Whilst it is a requirement for all those involved in school governance to have a named 'lead' safeguarding governor it is important to remember that the responsibility for safeguarding remains with the Board. One of the main changes to the guidance that governors and trustees need to be aware of is the statutory requirement for all governors and trustees to undertake appropriate training:

"Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated"

As the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance recognises, the board's role in safeguarding is a strategic one. It is a key part of effective safeguarding arrangements including ensuring that there are effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place and encouraging a culture of safeguarding across the entire organisation. As we are at the start of a new academic year it is important that boards discuss and agree a package of appropriate training and that this is monitored to ensure that everyone completes it. Safeguarding is, of course, all of our responsibility.



# Event News.....

## **CWGA - New Governors/Trustees' Networking Event.... Thurs 1st Dec 7pm**

...would you like the opportunity to network with other new governors/trustees and discuss your responsibilities?....

Visit Eventbrite to secure your place ... <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/450533597117>

## **BIG NEWS....BIG NEWS....WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?....**

**Our Virtual Conference is Fri 3rd Feb 2023 at 9am-12pm with guest speakers;**



◀Emma Nights OBE, Chief Executive, National Governance Association

Professor Mick Waters, Director, The Curriculum Foundation▶



◀Kate Richardson-Lewis, Motivational Speaker & Olympic Gold Medalist

Eventbrite booking details will be issued shortly via email!!



### **CWGA were delighted to award Stephanie Davies from Weaverham High School with the Clerk of the Year Award 2022 at our AGM in June. Here is what Stephanie**

*had to say about the award.....What can I say. I attended the CWGA AGM and to my complete astonishment was awarded "Clerk of the Year" award (my initial response was "Wow"). I would like to say thank you for this award, we have an amazing*

*governing body at Weaverham High School and the fact that my work has been recognised inspires me to continue to work to the best of my abilities for the interest of both the Governing Body and the school. It is essential to have the support of the school and with Senior Leaders who are committed to providing the best education and support to our children and whom take constructive challenge on board willingly, and this is evident throughout the ethos of the school and Governing Body.*

*It has not been an easy couple of years for anyone in the education sector and this has really brought into focus the need for supportive governance, which I believe our Governing Body provides. Anyway, thank you once for my nomination and to the decision panel for the Award. I look forward to attending future CWGA events and hope to see more Clerks joining in too!*



### ***Do you know how your Senior Leader really is? ....*** *Simon Livingstone, Co-Chair—CWGA*

As Chairs of Governing Bodies or Trustees of Boards I'm sure that we are acutely aware of the challenges that our CEO's, Headteachers and Executive Leaders have faced over the last few years, whether it's the unforeseen challenges of COVID-19, home schooling, CAG's and TAG's or the already existing day-to-day challenges of pupil and staff wellbeing, pupil outcomes, attendance, et al. We have a responsibility to our leaders to be there in a supportive way to ensure their continued wellbeing from both a physical and mental perspective, if we have built up a relationship with them based on mutual trust then they should be able to "open up" to you about any concerns, worries or insecurities they may be feeling. I imagine that most of our senior leaders are driven individuals with an unrelenting focus on improvement of their particular setting but please try and make sure that they take time for themselves – whether this is family, hobbies, sports or exercise, spirituality, mindfulness or meditation.

Do you speak to your leaders and ask "are you ok", do they always just say "yes, I'm fine". During a recent Mental Health First Aid course I received a great piece of advice around supporting individuals, which was ask more than once if somebody is ok, the conversation could go something like the below.

Q. "Are you ok / How are you?" A. "I'm fine thanks."

Q. "No, really, are you ok/how are you?" A. "Well actually, I have been a bit concerned about/worried about "

This is a great way of showing that you genuinely care about their wellbeing and are there to support, even if that is just someone to listen. Next time you are meeting with your leader try this out and see what the reaction is. Tell them about this and ask whether this is something that they can try with their own staff members and middle leaders or subject leads. Obviously, this doesn't only apply to your governance role and is a great piece of advice for life generally!



Thank you to all that entered our competition to win a year's free membership for their school/trust....we are delighted to announce the winner was [Wharton C of E Primary School!](#) Thanks to Sue Tomlinson for taking part and nominating your school!



Susan Tomlinson  
@SusanTomlinson3

Replying to @your\_CWGA

Thank you! We are delighted and look forward to another year of partnership working!

1:10 PM · Aug 5, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone



## Welcome to our new Executive Member

### Dr Chris Hampshire MBA (Dist.) PhD

I am Chair of Frank Field Education Trust as well as a Trustee at Weaver Trust

I joined the Executive Committee of the CWGA with limited knowledge of what was expected. However, I hoped that joining CWGA would provide opportunities for sharing with the CWGA's members my substantial experience as a Local authority school governor, as a Trustee in a multi-academy trust, along with Chairing an Interim Executive Board (IEB) for a local Council.



The government's plan to have all schools joining a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) by 2030 shows the direction of travel that will need to be adopted by CWGA and the membership in the coming years.

I joined CWGA as a committee member to support school governors and MAT Trustees in our local authority area and there is a very broad and varying level of understanding and experience within the CWGA membership. In addition, the local Cheshire-based networking opportunities provided by membership of CWGA is to be encouraged and developed further. It is through sharing experiences and ideas amongst like-minded volunteers that will help every school and Trust to be more successful. Our ultimate aim has to be providing our schools and Trusts with timely and effective support and challenge, so that every child has the best possible education in life.

However, CWGA can only be successful with the active participation of all members, and everyone needs to feel as though they benefit, in whatever shape or form, if CWGA is going to continue to be successful in supporting school governors and MAT Trustees in future.

### CWGA Annual Award Categories 2022/23

Watch our for details dropping into your inbox very soon!!

**CWGA Governing Body of the Year** - Celebrating a Governing Body who have shown great commitment and made a significant impact on the school. This award will go to the Governing Body that can demonstrate exceptional performance.

**CWGA Chair of the Year** - Celebrating a Chair who has demonstrated exceptional leadership .

**CWGA Clerk or Governance Professional of the Year** - Recognising an individual who has shown dedication and commitment as Clerk to Governors or Governance Professional.

### By Dr Chris Hampshire MBA (Dist.) PhD, CWGA

The current education policy landscape as set out in the Schools White Paper Briefing 2022 clearly shows that MAT growth is planned through the integration of further local authority maintained schools into MATs. The proposed legislation will allow the Regional Schools Director to issue mandatory conversion notices to those schools with consecutive Requires Improvement OFSTED classifications to join a MAT, but what is in it for other schools? Regardless of any moral or legal obligations for a school joining a MAT, the most important, and number one reason, should always be that an improved quality of education will be provided, as this drives improved pupil outcomes. Unfortunately, parochial factors are likely to come into play from the various school stakeholders, including the Headteacher, as they may feel that their autonomy and self-determination may well be eroded when the school joins a MAT.

Moreover, it is the MAT governance hierarchy that determines the operating framework with Trust Members at the top of the tree. Trustees then follow, whilst schools, through their Headteacher report into the Board of Trustees. This reporting structure applies regardless of any devolved authority to individual schools and a Headteacher under a Scheme of Delegation, as it is the Board of Trustees who are ultimately responsible for the MAT, both as Company Directors and Charity Trustees.

As a result of this MAT governance framework, it is no surprise that Headteachers may have a number of concerns about joining a MAT and their level of autonomy in the MAT. On the positive side of the equation is the level of support available from the MAT, including the provision of a range of central services that can spread fixed costs across an increased number of schools that will be more cost-effective. Saving a few thousand pounds is hardly likely to be sufficient attraction for a Headteacher and the school to join a MAT. There are additional positive aspects that support a school joining a MAT. For example, the MAT can provide the school with a range of school improvement services covering school curriculum, improved policies such as behaviour and attendance,

etc. However, Headteachers of schools rated Good or Outstanding are much less likely to need these school improvement services, and if they do, it is unlikely to be at the expense of losing control by joining a MAT. More likely, Headteachers with schools in these Ofsted categories would look to buy-in any such services as needed, whilst keeping their school independent.

Furthermore, the disparate stakeholder positions in schools and in MATs doesn't really support a school joining a MAT out of their own choice and volition without an incentive. So how to incentivise a school and Headteacher to join a MAT? One option is where the current MAT's CEO is looking to retire and the Headteacher may be appointed to the role of CEO on the basis that the school joins the MAT. Whether the Headteacher has the right skills and experience for the CEO role is another matter of course. A similar scenario would be where the school agrees to join the MAT with the Headteacher being appointed Deputy CEO, with a view to becoming CEO at a future date.

Regardless of individual circumstances, successful integration of a maintained school into a MAT is more likely to occur when there is a clear alignment of the mission, vision, ethos and values of the school and MAT, as demonstrated by the CEO of the MAT and the Headteacher and staff at the school. However, the meaning of the words mission, vision, ethos and values is vague, and falls to individual interpretation. Unfortunately, determining the full meaning is not as easy as it may sound. Whilst schools usually publish their ethos and vision on their website, these statements can be broad and therefore open to interpretation. It is vital to actually get under the skin in any assessment although how this is done in practice is a moot question!

There are no easy or simple choices to be made when deciding whether a school, as led by the Headteacher, should join a MAT although the importance of making the right decision for the children at the school should be paramount and should not be clouded by any personal Headteacher perspectives. [First published in Schools Week of 22nd May 2022]

# Recruiting for new Executive Members



CWGA is run by volunteers, supported by our paid administrator. We are looking for serving governors, trustees, governance professionals and clerks to join us to help with the running of our association. The role is for a three-year term of office.

The association has been very successful in recent years so you would be joining a thriving and financially stable organization!

- 128 schools/trust boards in Cheshire West and Chester are currently members of CWGA.
- We host at least three free annual events for members that include a Chairs/Vice Chairs event and a New Governors/Trustees Networking event.
- Feedback from events continues to be positive. At the last virtual networking event, 100% of attendees agreed that they had found the event useful and would attend a future event.
- The association will be holding its third virtual conference in February 2023. The previous two conferences were a resounding success and well attended.

## **We are looking for:**

- Enthusiastic governors, trustees, governance professionals and clerks from any type of school and with any level of experience who will innovate and increase engagement with governing bodies and trust boards.
- Volunteers who are willing to take or share responsibility for an area of work, e.g. social media engagement, articles for newsletter, assist with event/conference organisation

## **We can offer:**

- A financially stable organisation with a strong membership
- A successful but flexible programme of events
- A place at the heart of CW&C governance and system leadership
- A chance to shape and improve governance in CW&C
- Free conference attendance in exchange for helping with the event

**Interested? Want to find out more? Or do you just want to go ahead and receive a self nomination form!**

**Then please contact us via email on [cwga@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk](mailto:cwga@cwgovernanceassoc.co.uk)**