



**Coventry Diocesan Board of Education**

**Foundation Governors**  
**Your Role in a Church of England School**

*The DBE empowers others to be courageous, equipping them to deliver excellent Christian education so that all will flourish to achieve their full human potential*

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### Welcome from the Diocesan Director of Education

Coventry Diocesan Board of Education is delighted that you have agreed to take on the role of Foundation Governor. The team greatly appreciates your decision and welcomes you to our diocesan family. We look forward to working with you to support the staff, children and young people and their families in our 75 Church of England Schools.



Canon Linda Wainscot



## In the beginning...

In 1811 Joshua Watson and his peers committed to establishing a school in every parish in England believing all members of society deserved an education. Leading Christians at the time claimed there was a moral imperative that all children should be given an opportunity to flourish: God made us in his image, and as humans we should all aspire to reflect this.

All Church of England Schools must have Foundation Governors. Foundation Governors are appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education following nomination by the Parochial Church Council for the parish in which the school is situated. One Foundation Governor position is Ex-officio and the Incumbent usually holds this position. A substitute can be nominated by the Archdeacon Pastor and the Diocesan Director of Education if necessary.

### **Typical Trust Deed 1834**

*'Recognising its historic foundations, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.'*

## Why have Foundation Governors?

It is a requirement of the Trust under which Church of England Schools were established.

## Just so you know...

Your school will have a Trust Deed somewhere in the school, church or with the diocesan solicitors. The purpose of church schools hasn't really changed and your school's Instrument of Government (for VA/VC/Foundation schools) will reflect a similar statement of religious ethos to the example shown.

## What are the particular responsibilities of a Foundation Governor?

- ➔ to ensure the guiding principles of the founding church are embedded within all aspects of school life;
- ➔ to ensure the terms of the trust deed governing the school are adhered to;
- ➔ to understand policies on RE, collective worship, spiritual development;
- ➔ to understand the importance of the school's foundation and ethos;
- ➔ to understand the purpose of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection and what it is looking at and for.

### **A few interesting facts....**

- † There are 4,844 Church of England schools nationally and 500 independent schools
- † A quarter of primary schools and over 200 secondary schools are Church of England
- † The church is the biggest sponsor of academies in England

## What types of church school are there?

- ➔ Church or Foundation Governors are in the absolute majority
- ➔ Governors appoint and employ staff
- ➔ Governors are responsible for the admissions arrangements, approved by the religious authority as defined in the Admissions Code
- ➔ The LA and the DDE (Diocesan Director of Education) have similar rights to attend governors meetings to advise
- ➔ Governors determine the RE syllabus which should reflect Anglican tradition and worship should also reflect the Anglican tradition



**Voluntary  
Aided**



**Voluntary  
Controlled**

- ➔ No one group of governors in the majority. Church or Foundation Governors are in the minority
- ➔ The LA employs the staff but governors should be involved in recruitment
- ➔ The LA is responsible for admission arrangements
- ➔ The LA can advise the governors (the DDE may be given the same opportunity)
- ➔ The LA agreed syllabus is used to teach RE and worship reflects Anglican tradition

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- ➔ The LA agreed syllabus is used to teach RE and worship reflects Anglican tradition



**Foundation  
Schools**



**Academies**

- ➔ State funded independent schools with considerable autonomy.
- ➔ Religious designation and other key characteristics are kept.
- ➔ Church schools wishing to convert must have the approval of the trustees – usually the Diocesan Board of Education.
- ➔ Powers are delegated to a local governing body. This is similar to a governing body but has less strategic responsibility.

### **A few interesting facts....**

- † Over 1 million pupils are educated in approximately 4,800 Church of England schools and academies in England
- † Coventry Diocese has 75 schools and academies with over 18,000 pupils

## How does a governing body work?



**VC and VA schools** have an Instrument of Government (IoG) that determines the constitution of the governing body, stating how many of each type of governor there should be and outlining the legalities of the governing body and its constitution.

### Types of Governor

- ➔ **Headteacher** - ex-officio role – if the Headteacher decides not to take up the role it has to remain vacant
- ➔ **Incumbent** - ex-officio role – Church of England schools only - if the Incumbent decides not to take up the role a substitute can be appointed by the DBE
- ➔ **Staff Governor** – elected by staff
- ➔ **LA Governor** – a representative put forward by the local authority
- ➔ **Parent Governor** – elected by parents
- ➔ **Foundation Governor** – nominated by the Parochial Church Council of the foundation parish and appointed by the DBE
- ➔ **Co-opted Governor** – a representative from the local community elected by the governing body because of specific skills they can offer
- ➔ **Associate Governor** – elected by the governing body because of specific skills they can offer but has NO voting rights

**Academies** have a number of key documents that underpin the workings of the academy governance. These include:

- ➔ **Funding Agreement** – signed by the Secretary of State for Education and the academy trust when the academy is first established.
- ➔ **Memorandum and Articles of Association** – setting out the purpose of the academy trust and the composition of the board of trustees.
- ➔ **Scheme of Delegation** – describing the role of a local governing body and responsibility delegated to them by the Board of Trustees.

These documents are specific to academy trusts and the provisions within them vary between different academy trusts. Coventry Diocese currently has a range of academy trusts.

#### A few interesting facts....

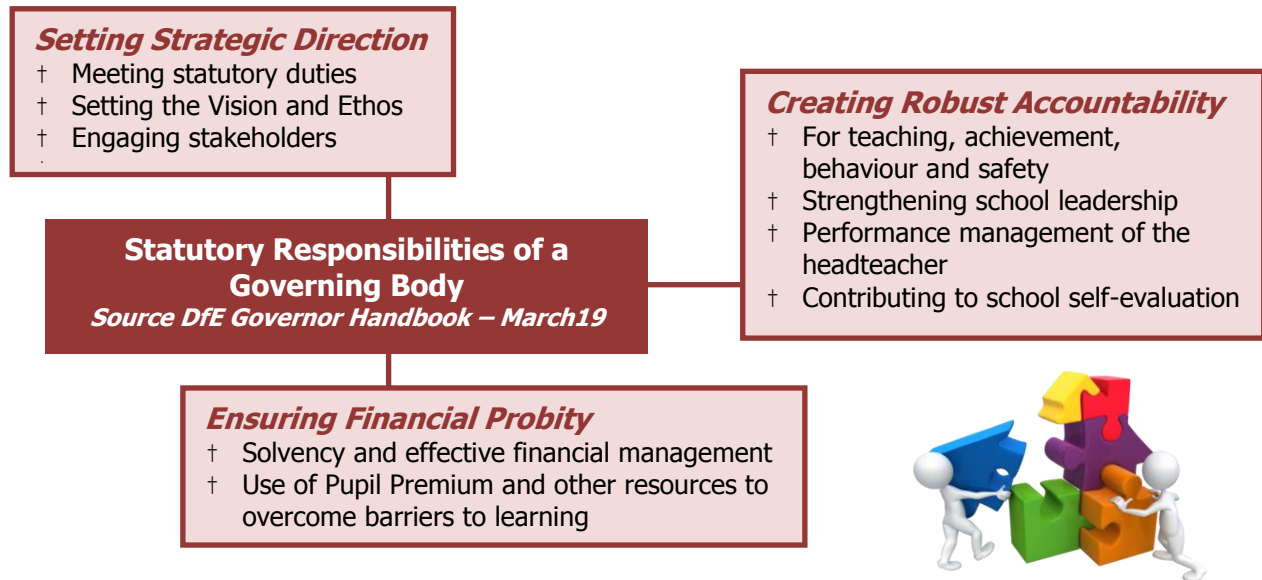
- † Voluntary Controlled schools have no more than three Foundation Governors
- † Within Voluntary Aided schools, Foundation Governors outnumber all other categories of governor put together by two



## What does good governance look like?



**Good governance within a Church of England school requires corporate understanding and support for the Christian ethos and how this underpins and informs every area of school life.**



### **The governing body should work with the Headteacher to:**

- ➔ ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- ➔ ensure long-term sustainability of the school within the current educational landscape at national and local level;
- ➔ hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- ➔ oversee the financial performance of the school ensuring money is well spent.

### **The governing body is accountable to all stakeholders for effective education of children and young people. Stakeholders include:**

- ➔ Children and Young People
- ➔ School Staff
- ➔ Parents /Carers
- ➔ Local Community/Diocese
- ➔ Local, Regional and National Government

### **Personal qualities of a Governor:**

- ➔ integrity and good interpersonal skills;
- ➔ a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for education;
- ➔ a willingness and capacity to serve for four years ;
- ➔ a passion to learn;
- ➔ transferrable skills such as finance, HR, legal skills or health and safety expertise to complement the skills of other governors.

## How to **SUPPORT** and **CHALLENGE** as a 'Critical Friend'

Governing bodies that provide the best strategic leadership combine a high degree of challenge with a high degree of support. They act as a 'critical friend' to the headteacher and senior management team.

**Governance is largely a 'thinking and questioning' role not a 'doing' role**



It can be difficult to get the balance right!

The Headteacher's responsibilities include:

- ➔ internal organisation, management and control of the school;
- ➔ educational performance of the school;
- ➔ formulating aims and objectives, policies and targets for the governing body to consider adopting;
- ➔ advising on and implementing the governing body's strategic framework;
- ➔ giving governors the information they need to help the school raise its standards;
- ➔ reporting on progress at least once every academic year.

Governors should never seek to question the professional judgement of the head or staff on matters of teaching and learning. They are responsible for the effectiveness of the school in achieving the targets identified in the school development plan.

Governors should understand and respect the difference between strategic decisions and operational decisions.

### **STRATEGIC DECISIONS** a few examples....

- ✓ Agreeing policies (not writing them!)
- ✓ Set the strategic vision for the school
- ✓ Promoting high standards
- ✓ Appointing the Headteacher

### **OPERATIONAL DECISIONS** a few examples....

- ✗ Ensuring equal opportunities for pupils (governors oversee but Headteacher is responsible)
- ✗ Checking performance of pupils with SEND (governors monitor but HT is responsible)
- ✗ Making health and safety checks (governors monitor but HT is responsible)

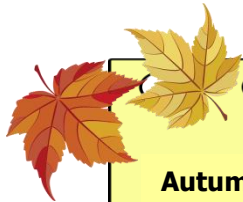
## What makes a governing body meeting effective?

In order to ensure meetings are effective and the governing body fulfils its function, all governors should....

- Prepare well, reading papers distributed;
- Make a note of anything about which they are uncertain or that they feel needs clarification;
- Listen carefully and make relevant contributions;
- Note action points and ensure these are completed;
- Accept and support collective decisions.



## Meetings – what should I expect to find on the agenda?



### Autumn Term Meeting 1

- Elect Chair and Vice Chair
- Review Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct
- Review of SIAMS SEF
- Agree roles and committees
- Agree dates and visits

### Autumn Term Meeting 2

- Review Headteacher and staff pay
- Review summer term results
- Update school improvement plan
- Establish monitoring processes
- Set targets
- Headteacher Report



### Examples are of typical agenda items

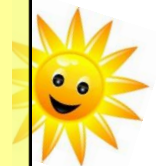
### Spring Term

- Set the budget
- Review progress to date
- Review the effectiveness of the school's Christian distinctiveness
- Monitoring visits
- Headteacher Report



### Summer Term

- Review the year, including Headteacher and school performance
- Headteacher report
- Receive a report from the Foundation Governors on the Parish School relationship



Effective governing bodies are supported by efficient clerks who are well informed about the DBE and the procedures and protocols regarding the appointment and role of Foundation Governors



## What's special about the Foundation Governor role?



*As a Foundation Governor you are responsible for ensuring Christian distinctiveness is embedded and upheld within every aspect of school life.*

You need to have some knowledge of.....



### **Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)**

In addition to Ofsted inspections, all Church of England schools are inspected using the Church of England Education Office's framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) (Section 48 of the Education Act 2005). SIAMS focuses on the impact the school's Christian vision has on pupils and adults. This involves looking at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of this vision and how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish.

The latest SIAMS Framework was published in April 2018 and inspectors grade a school based on the following question:

**“ How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? ”**

**Collective Worship** should take place daily and express the school's Christian vision. It is useful for one Foundation Governor to be the governing body link to Collective Worship.



**Religious Education** is taught to a locally agreed syllabus. VA schools have to teach more Christianity to comply. It is useful for one Foundation Governor to link with the school's RE Coordinator.

### **Parochial Church Council (PCC)**

Foundation Governors should help to keep the PCC and clergy up to date. This is particularly important if the incumbent has not taken up the ex-officio role on the governing body. It is good practice for church schools to report to the Annual Parochial Church meeting. In addition Foundation Governors should try to attend meetings to provide school updates during the year.



## Governor Reference and Advisory Group (GRAG)



The DBE runs a GRAG meeting once a term. Membership is by invitation and the purpose of the group is...

- ➔ to reflect on the effectiveness of Church School governance and advise on possible support;
- ➔ to provide Input into and review of the DBE 'Priority & Development Plan';
- ➔ to assist with developing DBE communications to Headteachers, Governors, Deaneries and Clergy;
- ➔ to provide interface with the DBE by attending regular meetings;
- ➔ to reflect upon and offer advice on strategy and initiatives from the National Church of England Education Office;
- ➔ to attend, by invitation, meetings to represent the Diocesan Board of Education.

Contact with the Chair of the GRAG can be made by emailing [helen.gibson@covcofe.org](mailto:helen.gibson@covcofe.org)

## Just so you are aware.... 'Whole Diocese'

The three-fold diocesan mission purpose is 'worshipping God, making new disciples, transforming communities'.

The diocese is a complex entity reaching out to all people in Warwickshire and Coventry in its mission purpose through a number of bodies and organisations. 'Whole diocese' is an integrated strategy for the diocese which, while recognising the individual distinctiveness of each member of the diocesan family, has identified priorities which form the focus for the allocation of diocesan resources including people, money and prayer.

These priorities are:

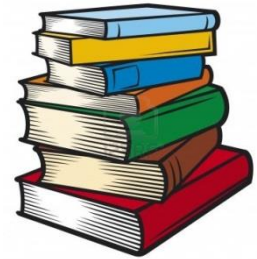
- ➔ Making the gospel known throughout the diocese so people become followers of Christ
- ➔ Strengthening the health of churches and organisations across the diocese
- ➔ Supporting the well-being and flourishing of clergy and lay people across the diocese
- ➔ Equipping the whole diocese for the work of reconciliation
- ➔ Promoting life-long Christian education across the diocese
- ➔ Delivering positive community transformation

### 'Whole Diocese' includes...



## Useful reading....

- ➔ Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good Autumn 2016
- ➔ Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS): An Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors April 2018
- ➔ How to survive as a Governor in a church school – a guide for all governors of Church of England and Church of Wales schools
- ➔ DfE Governor Handbook – March 19: For academies, multi academy trusts and maintained schools



## Further information....

- ➔ Coventry Diocesan Board of Education website – [www.dioceseofcoventry.org/DBE](http://www.dioceseofcoventry.org/DBE)
- ➔ National Church of England Education Office – [www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies](http://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies)



## And finally... the DBE team is here to support you!



If you need general advice and guidance please contact us on 01788 422800 or email [helen.gibson@covcofe.org](mailto:helen.gibson@covcofe.org)

### DBE Board Members

*9 elected by Diocesan Synod / 2 Bishop's nominees / 2 Co-opted*

#### Chair

*Rev'd Elaine Scrivens (elected member)*

**Diocesan Director of Education**  
*Linda Wainscot*

**Deputy Diocesan Director of Education**  
*April Gold*

**Executive Assistant & Governance Officer**  
*Helen Gibson*

**Business Manager**  
*Peter Rigby*



**Services to Schools Officer**  
*Joanne Evans*

**Headteacher Recruitment Admin Service**  
*Helen Gibson*

**Finance & Business Assistant**  
*Natalie Yu*

**Independent Admission Appeals Service**  
*Joanne Evans*

**Services to Schools Assistant**  
*Ruby Tuesday*



*‘I have come that they may have life,  
and have it to the full’ John 10:10*

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