

The logo of the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education, featuring a stylized cross with four arrows pointing outwards (up, down, left, right) from its center. The cross is white and set against a pink circular background. The word 'COVENTRY' is written vertically in a light pink font to the right of the cross.

**Coventry Diocesan Board of Education**  
**Guidance for the Appointment of**  
**Foundation Governors**

*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*

## Introduction

School governors are the largest voluntary body in the country providing a valuable service to the community by supporting the work of schools. There are approximately 5,000 Church of England schools across the country and at the heart of the Church's vision for education are the words spoken by Jesus:

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

Church of England schools have their foundation in the Christian Gospel and are linked to one or more worshipping communities. Through its ethos and curriculum, the day to day life of a Church of England school should educate through wisdom, hope, community and dignity as set out in the Church of England Vision for Education.

Headteachers of Church of England schools, their leadership team and governors are responsible for providing an education underpinned by Christian distinctiveness.



## What are the responsibilities of a school governor?

- To have strategic oversight of the school, including monitoring pupil achievement and attainment, overseeing the quality of teaching and learning, reviewing staffing patterns and to overseeing finances.
- To challenge and support the school and its staff in its pursuit of excellence and continual improvement.
- To develop a detailed knowledge of the school community as a whole through focused visits.
- To be supportive of the school, its headteacher and staff.
- To attend meetings of the Governing Body and its committees (as appropriate).

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

- Preserving the links between church, school and diocese.
- Taking an active role in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) process.
- Participating in the Performance Management of the headteacher.
- Ensure that collective worship and religious education within school follow the appropriate syllabus and are effectively monitored.
- Ensure that the Christian ethos of the school is encouraged throughout its community and is reflected in its policies and protocols, the curriculum and activities.
- Report formally or informally to the PCC/deanery once a year about the church school.
- Ensure that their own attitudes and behavior in relation to the school reflect the school's Christian ethos.

## What are the personal qualities required of a Foundation Governor?

- Integrity and good interpersonal skills.
- A genuine interest in and enthusiasm for education.
- A willingness and capacity to serve for four years.
- A willingness and capacity to learn.
- Transferrable skills (eg finance, HR, legal) to complement the skills of other governors.

## Who should Foundation Governors be?

Foundation Governors represent the Church of England. Whilst it is not essential that they are all communicant Anglicans, **it is important that they have Christian commitment** and are members of a Trinitarian Christian Church.

## Who nominates Foundation Governors?

In most cases Foundation Governors are nominated by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and appointed by the DBE. The school's Instrument of Government (maintained schools) or Articles of Association (academies) will identify how many Foundation Governors are required and how they should be appointed.

In a CofE school usually one Foundation Governor vacancy, the Ex-officio Foundation Governor, will be for the incumbent of the school's parish/benefice. This role is by virtue of office. The appointment process for Ex-officio Foundation Governors is explained in Appendix A.

## **What happens when a Foundation Governor vacancy arises?**

The PCC will be asked to identify nominees. The PCC may wish to advertise (Appendix B). Potential candidates are required to complete an Application Form (Appendix C) – this includes questions about the candidate's church involvement. The PCC should confirm this information before completing a Nomination Form (Appendix D). Within the application form candidates are asked to reflect upon the responsibilities of a Foundation Governor and how they feel they are suited to the role. Applicants are asked to complete a personal skills audit to enable the Chair of Governors to consider how the new governor fits into the skill set of the governing body and plan appropriately for governor CPD.

## **What is the PCC's responsibility when nominating a Foundation Governor?**

The PCC should be satisfied the person they are nominating:

- has the required Christian commitment;
- has the relevant skills and experience that will give breadth and strength to the governing body for the benefit of the school;
- has the time and commitment to undertake the role;
- will be committed to supporting the school;
- will ensure that the governing body is inclusive;
- is over 18;
- is not disqualified from serving as a school governor;
- has been supported by an appropriate referee.

## **What is the process for appointment?**

The PCC should:

- assess applications and carry out an informal interviews - sample interview questions are included in Appendix E;
- request a reference either in writing (Appendix F), or verbally (using information from Appendix F to guide the conversation);
- select the most appropriate candidate in consultation with the Chair of Governors and taking into consideration the needs of the governing body;
- complete the nomination form (Appendix D), signing to confirm that an informal interview has taken place and a satisfactory reference has been obtained (in accordance with safer recruitment practices);
- send the completed nomination form and candidate application form to the DBE for approval.

## Summary of the Nomination and Appointment Process for Foundation Governors

1

Clerk to the Governing Body identifies Foundation Governor/Ex-officio Foundation Governor vacancy and notifies the PCC/DBE providing an up to date skills audit of current governors.

2

Clerk sends the DBE Guidance to the PCC with a recommendation for any specific skills that would strengthen the governing body.

3

The PCC advertise the vacancy providing potential nominees with the role description and application form.

4

The PCC interview applicants and take up references.

5

The PCC select the most suitable applicant and complete a nomination form. The nomination form and the nominee's application forms are sent to the DBE.

6

DBE Officers review the nomination and application to ensure the candidate is suitable for the role.

7

The nominee's name and supporting paperwork is circulated to DBE Board Members via the DBE Weekly Bulletin.

8

DBE Board Members are asked to respond with questions within 5 working days. Queries are followed up and resolved or a new nomination is sought.

9

The DBE sends a letter to the nominee, copied to the PCC Secretary and the Clerk, to confirm the appointment providing details of the term of office, expectations of the role and training available.

## **How are Ex-Officio Foundation Governors and Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governors Appointed?**

An Ex-officio Foundation Governor is normally the incumbent or priest in charge of the church(es) specified in the school's Instrument of Government. Incumbents or priests in charge of the relevant church(es) do not need to be appointed by the DBE as they have a legal right to take up this position and automatically serve for the duration of their tenure.

In situations where the incumbent or priest in charge is not able, for whatever reason, to serve as Ex-officio Foundation Governor, the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon, acting jointly, can appoint a Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor for a period of up to four years. PCC/deanery involvement in the appointment is preferable but not absolutely necessary.

A Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor may or may not have some official standing in the local church. Such a nominee will usually, of course, enjoy a considerable measure of the incumbent's and/or the PCC's confidence, and must secure the confidence of the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon. The same personal qualities are required for Ex-officio Foundation Governors and Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governors as for other Foundation Governors. Their role and responsibilities are essentially the same, too. However, the Diocesan Board of Education will regard the Ex-officio, or Substitute, as the 'lead' Foundation Governor and will liaise with them with regard to church school matters.

### **The Appointment/Reappointment Process: *Ex-officio Foundation Governors***

The DBE and clerk to governors will assume that a new incumbent or priest in charge will take up their Ex-officio role following their licensing. Their term of office commences immediately and lasts until they leave their post. On leaving their post the Ex-officio foundation governor should write a letter of resignation to the clerk with a copy to the DBE.

### **The Appointment/Reappointment Process: *Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governors***

Where the incumbent or priest in charge does not wish to take up their Ex-officio role they should write to the DBE and/or the Archdeacon setting out the reasons. The DBE will then ask the PCC/deanery to identify a suitable individual to be appointed as substitute. The normal Foundation Governor application form should be completed and returned to the DBE and it should be made clear that this is for a Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor. The information will then be put before the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon who will decide whether they wish to make the appointment. In situations where a PCC/deanery is unable to recommend a suitable individual, the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon may bring forward their own nominee.

The appointment of a substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor will be communicated in writing to nominee with a copy to the PCC Secretary and Clerk to the Governing Body. The term office will terminate at the licensing of the new incumbent or at the end of four years.



## Advert for Foundation Governors



**YOUR LOCAL Church of England School  
NEEDS**

### Foundation Governors

Could **YOU** help serve **GOD** in this way?

**WHAT IS IMPORTANT** is a willingness to commit to the role and an ability to ask questions whilst working with others to ensure the best outcomes for children by challenging and supporting school leaders in equal measure.

*You don't have to be an educational expert - training is available in all aspects of school governance*

School governance needs the experience of people from many walks of life

#### YOUR ROLE ON THE GOVERNING BODY WOULD BE TO....

- † ensure that the children in our diocesan family of schools develop both academically and spiritually within a distinctive Christian ethos;
- † support our schools in understanding and developing the Christian aspects of their work;
- † commit time and effort to supporting the educational development of the children in our schools.

*Please consider if God is calling you to this work*

**CHRISTIAN MINISTRY** takes many forms and church school governance is an important part of the church's mission. Coventry Diocese has a total of 75 CofE schools and academies, educating approximately 18,000 children and young people from pre-school to 18. Through strong partnerships within the local community and the local church, the diocese aims to secure transformational educational provision for pupils.

*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.*



If you are interested and would like to know more please contact  
Coventry DBE on 01788 422800

*If you would like to edit the advert to make it personal to your school please email [helen.gibson@covcofe.org](mailto:helen.gibson@covcofe.org) to request a Word version*

## Foundation Governor Application Form

*This form will be shared internally within the Diocesan Board of Education as part of the process for approval of Foundation Governor appointments. It will not be shared externally without your consent. Details of our privacy policy are available upon request.*

Name of School/Academy			
Name (in capitals)			Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other
Previous name(s)			
Address			
Postcode			
Phone No			
Email			
Occupation <i>If retired occupation before retirement</i>			
DBS Check Number		New DBS Needed <i>school to arrange</i>	
Are you the parent of a child at the school?	<b>Yes / No</b>		
Is this your first term of office as a governor?	<b>Yes / No</b>		
Are you related to any other member of the governing body or employee of the school?	<b>Yes / No</b>		
If yes, please provide name and relationship			
Are you or have you been a governor at any other school?			
If yes please give name of school and dates			
Name or Referee			
Email Address	Phone No		



What is your experience of schools / education?

In what church activities are you involved? What is your pattern of worship?

Why do you feel you would make a good foundation governor?

## Skills Audit

Please complete the skills audit below to give an indication of how your skills will complement the skill set of the governing body.

Knowledge, experience, skills and behaviours	Level rating				
	No	→	→	→	Yes
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>					
I am committed to improving education and welfare for all pupils.					
I understand current national education policy and the local education context.					
I have previous experience of being a board member in another sector or in another school.					
I have experience of chairing a board/governance board or committee.					
I am committed to the school's vision and ethos.					
Working as part of a team, I am able to question and challenge in order to identify viable options through collective decision making.					
I am able to work in a professional manner, avoiding conflicts, acting with transparency and integrity.					
I am confident I can identify when to seek independent/professional advice.					
I have experience of stakeholder management and engagement including communicating with and taking account of the views of parents and pupils.					
I have experience of promoting community cohesion.					
I am proficient in prioritising, assessing and mitigating risk.					
I have experience of school sector risk management, including managing conflicts of interest/loyalty.					
<b>Accountability</b>					
I understand the importance of collecting high quality data and have expertise using data to interpret/evaluate performance and identify trends to target improvement.					
I have experience in curriculum development, school assessment and progress/attainment.					
I have experience of working with leaders to establish expectations for improvement and outcomes.					
I have experience of agreeing the range and format of information and data needed in order to hold leaders to account.					
I have experience of providing challenge to leaders on strategies for monitoring and improving behaviour and safety.					
I have an understanding of the board's duties in relation to safeguarding including Prevent.					
I have an understanding of special needs and disabilities (SEND).					
I have financial management expertise, with experience of funding allocation/budget monitoring and contributing to financial self-evaluation and efficiency drives.					
I have experience of basing funding decisions on organisational priorities and the ability to interpret financial data and question financial performance against strategic priorities.					
I have experience of procurement/purchasing.					
I have experience of property and estate management.					
I have experience of HR policy and processes, including employment legislation, recruitment, performance management and pay.					
I have experience of school sector HR policy and processes.					
I have experience of change management (merger or organisation restructure).					
I have experience of preparing for and responding to external oversight.					

Knowledge, experience, skills and behaviours	Level rating				
	No	→	→	→	Yes
I have experience of inspection and oversight in the school sector.					
I am used to thinking and discussing about the interface of faith and social issues such as education.					
I bring strong links with a local church and/or the Diocese.					
I am able to sign the declaration on the application form with integrity.					
I will be committed to upholding the Christian ethos and values at all times.					
<b>People</b>					
I am willing to devote time, enthusiasm and effort to the duties and responsibilities of a governor/trustee.					
I am a strong communicator and committed to building strong collaborative relationships.					
I could be described as a listener, and have patience when dealing with people.					
I am able to discuss sensitive issues with experience of conflict resolution and influencing consensus.					
I am able to demonstrate a commitment to ethical behaviour and values, honesty, independence of thought and sound judgement. <i>See Nolan Principles below.</i>					
I am committed to equal opportunities and the promotion of diversity.					
I am willing to reflect, listen and learn from a diversity of views, to receive and provide feedback and accept impartial advice.					
I am more of an activist – preferring to do rather than wait.					
I can always be depended upon to fulfil any promise or duty even at a cost to myself.					
I am known as someone who is able to keep a confidence and recognise the importance of confidentiality in this role.					
<b>Structures</b>					
I am familiar with the strategic nature of the board's functions and how this differs from and works with others including senior leaders.					
I have experience of reviewing governance structures.					
I am committed to personal and profession development and have a record of attending relevant training for the roles I have undertaken.					
<b>Compliance</b>					
I have experience of complying with legal, regulatory and financial frameworks and statutory guidance.					
I understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities of a school/academy board member.					
The board will be responsible for ensuring the school/academy complies with a whole range of legal responsibilities. I have experience of ensuring legal compliance in this way and a commitment to understanding the full range of legal responsibilities.					
I understand the importance of adhering to organisation policies, eg on parental complaints or staff discipline issues.					
I have the confidence and ability to speak up when concerned about non-compliance.					
<b>Evaluation</b>					
I am aware of my own strengths and weaknesses and committed to personal development.					
I have experience of evaluating board decisions and am willing to contribute to board self-review.					

## Nolan 7 Principles of Public Life

### 1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### 2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### 3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### 4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### 5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### 6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### 7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

I am willing to serve as a Foundation Governor for a term of four years from the date of my appointment, if approved by the Diocesan Board of Education.

- I agree to support and maintain the Christian Foundation and Voluntary Status of this school and to support the principles underlying the school's Trust Deed, by ensuring the school is distinctively Christian, and that Christian values, principles and beliefs are central to its ethos, curriculum, relationships and work.
- I agree to do all I can to familiarise myself with my duties as a Foundation Governor, and with the whole life and work of the school.
- I confirm that I am willing to attend Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses arranged by the Diocesan Board of Education and the Local Authority in support of and for the development of my role and duties as a Foundation Governor.
- I declare that, under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007, I am eligible for, and not disqualified from, appointment as a Governor see 'Qualifications and Disqualifications for Role of Governor' (*see information supplied on the next page*)
- If at any time I consider I can no longer be bound by the terms of this declaration, I confirm that I will immediately submit my resignation.
- I agree to work within the Nolan Principles.
- I agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service check being carried out by the school.
- I agree that Coventry Diocesan Board of Education may make the details on this form available to others involved in governor matters within the Diocese of Coventry.
- I am eighteen years of age or above.

Signed.....Date.....

## Qualifications and Disqualifications for Role of Governor

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his or her election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governor role at the same school. A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- fails to attend the governing body meetings – without the consent of the governing body – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim order, a debt relief restrictions order, or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his or her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
  - i) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
  - ii) a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
  - iii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
  - iv) an order made under Section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under Section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of anybody;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day-care;
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State;
- has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in any school year. In addition a person may not be **appointed** as a parent governor unless they are:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or
- a parent of a former pupil of the school\*, or
- a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age\*, (Special Schools only - and with special educational needs for which the school is approved ), or
- a parent with experience of educating a child with special education needs - Special Schools only

*\*For academies, appointments will only be made if the parent has a child registered at the school/academy.*

Full details of the Regulations covering the disqualification criteria can be found in [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) or [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

## Foundation Governor Nomination Form

*This form will be shared internally within the Diocesan Board of Education as part of the process for approval of Foundation Governor appointments. It will not be shared externally without your consent. Details of our privacy policy are available upon request.*

Coventry Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) wishes to work in partnership with Parochial Church Councils, Deaneries, Christian Churches and other organisations who have knowledge of their local community and the needs of local schools, and who already work in partnership with the church schools in their area. The DBE invites the nomination of prospective Foundation Governors for consideration.

**The Incumbent, PCC Secretary or other person representative of a Christian Church or other Christian organisation (eg Trust) making the nomination should complete this form and the person nominated should complete the application form.**

The completed forms should be returned to:  
Coventry Diocesan Board of Education, The Benn Education Centre, Craven Road, Rugby, CV21 3JZ

At a meeting of the ..... *(name of PCC, church deanery or organisation eg Trust)* on ..... *(date)*

it was agreed to nominate ..... *(name of nominee)*

for appointment at ..... *(school name)* as a

**Foundation Governor**       **Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor**

*Please tick as appropriate*

to replace ..... *(name of Foundation Governor)*

for a further term of office

**The PCC confirms that in the case of a new appointment an interview has been carried out and references received for the nominee.**

**Signed**..... **Date**.....

**Name in Block Capitals** .....

**Position** *(please delete as appropriate)*

Incumbent / PCC or Deanery Secretary / Churchwarden / Church Elder / Trust Representative



## **Suggested Questions for a Foundation Governor Interview**

1. Why do you think education is important?
2. Why do you think the Church of England should be involved in education?
3. What do you know about the ethos of our school?
4. Why would you like to become a governor at this school?
5. Are you able to attend regular governing body meetings?
6. Would you be comfortable deciphering statistical data?
7. Do you have experience of budget-holding?
8. Can you provide examples of your effective communication with stakeholders?
9. Do you have experience of working in a team?
10. Would you be willing to take part in governor-related training?

## Suggested Letter for a Foundation Governor Reference

Dear

### Reference Request for a Foundation Governor for a Church of England School

We have received an application from *(name of applicant)* to become a Foundation Governor at *(name of school)*. We require a reference for this appointment and you have been nominated as a referee for the post.

Governors play a key role in ensuring that the children of our community develop both academically and spiritually within a distinctive Christian ethos. We are looking for people who are able to support the school in its understanding and development of the Christian aspects of its work and are willing to commit time and effort to supporting the educational development of the children in the school. Foundation governors do not have to be educational experts as training is available on all aspects of school governance. What is important is a willingness to commit to the role and an ability to ask questions whilst working with others to ensure the best outcomes for the children by challenging and supporting school leaders in equal measure. School governance uses the experience of people from many walks of life to make a valuable contribution to the work of the school. An interest in education is important.

I should be grateful if you would let me have your candid assessment of the applicant's suitability to become a school governor using the enclosed form. I would also appreciate it if you could indicate if you have any reservations about their ability to undertake the role of school governor.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

## Foundation Governor Reference Form

Applicant's Name	
Name of school/academy	
Referee's Name	
Referee's Address	
How long have you known the applicant?	
Capacity known	
Your Occupation	

I believe the applicant will make a good school governor                      **YES / NO**

Please make comments on the applicant using the headings below (all must be completed):

Reliability
Confidentiality
Areas of potentially relevant experience

Ability to be an effective and efficient member of a team
Communication skills, both written and oral
Any other comments

Are happy for us to disclose this reference to the applicant if requested?    **YES / NO**

**Signed** ..... **Date**.....

***Note to the PCC***

***There is no need to submit this document with the application form but the PCC should keep the document as evidence that a reference was sought to fulfill safer recruitment guidance. The DBE may request sight of the document.***



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

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No 3663851 and a registered charity No 1091145.

Registered Office: The Benn Education Centre, Craven Road, Rugby, CV21 3JZ

