GUIDANCE FOR
RECRUITING EFFECTIVE
FOUNDATION
GOVERNORS

PROMOTING
Distinctiveness
Transformation
Excellence
Governors make a difference

There can be few more rewarding ways of serving the community and making a difference to the lives of young people than by being a school or academy governor. It is a dynamic and challenging ministry that helps to transform young lives and provides exciting opportunities for putting professional skills and experience to work in a voluntary context where they are much needed and valued. Being a governor can also be personally enriching, offering training and opportunities to broaden professional horizons and acquire new skills and experience.

Our church schools and academies only thrive and achieve the best for the young people in their care if they have effective governing bodies/boards, made up of people with the necessary skills, time, commitment and vision for Christian education who will provide the strategic leadership that makes for success. We need to find these people!

This guidance is intended to help schools, parishes and clerks understand the importance of identifying excellent foundation governors for church schools, the role they will play and the process for making appointments. There is separate guidance for academies, although many aspects of the governor role are the same in both contexts and it is likely that many maintained schools will become academies during the term of office of many of the governors who are appointed now.

Role of Governing Bodies

All governing bodies, whether of maintained schools or academies, have three core functions. These are:

- to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- to hold the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils as well as for the performance management of staff;
- to oversee the financial performance of the school, making sure its money is well spent.

It is the responsibility of all governors to carry out these functions. Governing bodies of Church of England schools and academies, and foundation governors in particular, have a special responsibility for ensuring that the Christian character of the school is secured and developed and that the school is run in accordance with its trust deed and the ethos statement which appears on its Instrument of Government (see Appendix A). In a voluntary aided school or academy, the governing body is also the employer of the school staff and has additional responsibilities for land and buildings and pupil admissions.

It is essential, therefore, that governing bodies include members with the skills and experience needed to carry out these functions. It is good practice for governing bodies to conduct regular skills audits and to put in place training programmes to meet needs. Governors should also use these skills audits when vacancies occur and take the opportunity to address any skills gaps through the appointment of new governors.
Constitution of a Church School Governing Body

The composition of the governing bodies of all maintained schools follow the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 or, in the case of a federation, the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, and The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and local authorities in England (August 2015). These documents recommend small, skills based boards, comprising no fewer than 7 governors. They also set out the categories of governor in a maintained school, the minimum number of governors in each category and the number of foundation governors as a proportion of the full board. They state that:

*Foundation governors have a particular purpose to safeguard the character of the school and ensure it is conducted in accordance with any founding documents, but otherwise every governor’s role is to govern the school in the best interest of pupils, not to represent the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.*

Individual schools have an Instrument of Government, which sets out the composition of the governing body and how governors will be appointed. This is a legal document that also includes, in the case of a church school, the ethos statement and records the existence or otherwise of a trust deed.

The School Governance Regulations 2012 state that the membership of a governing body should include no fewer than 7 governors in the following categories:

- Parents (minimum of 2)
- Head Teacher (Ex Officio)
- Staff governor (1)
- Local Authority governor (1)
- Co-optees (appointed by the governing body)

**N.B.** There is a separate requirement for the number of parent governors for a federated governing body.

In the case of a Church of England school, the diocese, parish or relevant trust will also appoint foundation governors onto the governing body. The number of foundation governors depends on the category of the school:

- In a voluntary aided school there will always be a majority of foundation governors who will outnumber all the other governors by two;
- A voluntary controlled school or a foundation school will have at least two foundation governors (not to exceed 25% of the total membership).

Usually one of the foundation governor positions is held by the Incumbent of the parish in which the school is located, who is a member of the governing body by virtue of his or her office (ex-officio). Where the Incumbent is unable or unwilling to act in this capacity, the Archdeacon (as set out in the Instrument of Government and usually acting through the Diocesan Board of Education) is responsible for appointing a substitute. All foundation governors, however they are appointed, provide a vital link between the parish community and the school and are an active Christian presence in the daily life of the school.
Criteria for the Appointment of Foundation Governors

When considering potential candidates to take up the role of foundation governor, nominating/appointing bodies need to feel confident that the person they are putting forward will:

- be committed to developing the Christian character of the school;
- be an advocate for the views of the Diocese;
- be committed to high standards and the provision of a rich educational experience, within a distinctive Christian context, for all children in the school community;
- have the relevant skills and expertise to support the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities effectively;
- be willing to undertake training to ensure that they understand their role and responsibilities, are familiar with school performance indicators and make a positive contribution to the work of the governing body;
- attend governing body and committee meetings regularly;
- abide by the 7 principles of public life.

Further information on the role of foundation governors can be found at Appendix B.

Process for Appointing Foundation Governors
(see also the flow chart at Appendix C)

The body/bodies responsible for the appointment of foundation governors are named in the school’s Instrument of Government. They will usually be:

a) the Leeds Diocesan Board of Education (DBE);
b) the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the parish in which the school is located (appointment to be confirmed by the DBE);
c) a trust which has a formal interest in the school (appointment to be confirmed by the DBE).

The Clerk to the governing body will be responsible for notifying the appointing body of a potential vacancy 3 months before the term of the existing governor is due to expire. This is to allow time for the appointment of a new governor or the re-appointment of the existing governor to be agreed at a regular meeting of the relevant body.

Stage 1: notification of a vacancy

1. The Clerk will consult the Chair of Governors on the specific skills and expertise required in a new governor on the basis of the governing body’s most recent skills audit. Acting on behalf of the governing body, the Chair may recommend individuals known to governors who might fill any skills gaps.
2. The Clerk will notify the appropriate appointing body of the governor vacancy by email, providing diocesan guidance on the role and responsibilities of foundation governors, passing on any recommendations and supplying information on the skills and expertise required by the governing body to assist in identifying a suitable person to fill the vacancy. The Clerk will also provide the appointing body with the appropriate nomination/appointment forms*.

[Please note. Where the foundation governor is to be appointed by:

a) the Leeds Diocesan Board of Education (DBE);]
The Clerk should contact the Chair of the DBE (through the Diocesan Education Team who will act on the DBE Chair’s behalf). Contact details below.

b) the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the parish in which the school is located;
The Clerk should contact the PCC Secretary (copying in the Diocesan Education Team). Contact details will be provided where necessary by either the ex officio foundation governor or the Diocesan Education Team.

c) a trust which has a formal interest in the school;
The Clerk should contact the secretary to the trust board (copying in the Diocesan Education Team). Contact details may be provided where necessary by the Diocesan Education Team.

Emails should be copied to the Chair of Governors, the Incumbent and the Head Teacher.

Stage 2: finding the right person

3. The appointing body should consider any recommendations that it receives from the governing body. It may also be helpful for the school and parish, working together, to advertise in the parish bulletin, on the church noticeboard or in the school newsletter inviting recommendations, or to approach local businesses who might be able to offer potential governors with the appropriate skills or expertise.

Whilst many foundation governors are recruited from the local parish, it is not always possible to do this. Where there is a need to address particular skills shortages or where it is difficult to recruit sufficient governors from the local church community, parishes are encouraged to widen the search to neighbouring parishes and other local Christian communities. Parishes should also consider appointing people who may not be active members of the local Church of England community but who uphold the values in which Christian education is rooted.

Stage 3: making the appointment

4. The two-part nomination/appointment form should be completed by the nominee and by the appointing body. Please note that these forms should be completed for re-appointments as well as for the appointment of new governors. It is important that the nomination/appointment is approved at a formally constituted meeting of the nominating/appointing body or that the power to give final approval to a nomination/appointment has been delegated at a formally constituted meeting.

5. All completed forms should be returned to the Diocesan Education Team who will confirm the appointment and inform the Clerk to the governing body. Please note that the DBE reserves the right not to confirm a re-appointment where the governor has not undertaken any training during the previous term of office. However, it is a statutory requirement for all governors to have an enhanced DBS check before they are able to take up the appointment.

It is important that the whole process for the recruitment and appointment of foundation governors should be completed as speedily as possible, to avoid the school governing body operating with a vacancy.

*Nomination/appointment forms are available on the Education website www.leeds.anglican.org/education or by emailing the Diocesan Education Team at info.ed@leeds.anglican.org If you have any queries please email the office at the above address or telephone 0113 3530240.
Appendices

Appendix A: Ethos Statement  
Appendix B: Role of the Foundation Governor  
Appendix C: Flow chart: Process for Appointing Foundation Governors
Appendix A

The Instrument of Government for Church of England schools includes an ethos statement which is taken from the individual school’s trust deed or derived from the following nationally agreed ethos statement:

Recognising its historic foundation 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.

Appendix B

The role of the Foundation Governor is to:

- Work with other members of the governing body to fulfil the functions required of all school governors, undertaking training as required;
- Nurture, encourage and challenge the school in living out its Christian foundation by:
  - Developing the Christian ethos and character of the school;
  - Ensuring high quality Collective Worship and Religious Education;
  - Securing positive links between the school, the parish and the Diocesan Board of Education;
  - Promoting Christian values in the way in which the governing body conducts its business;
  - Ensuring that development as a church school is embedded in the school improvement plan and a regular part of the governing body self-evaluation;
  - Working with other governors to ensure that points for development following Section 48 inspection are addressed;
  - Being involved in the recruitment process for a new Head Teacher;
  - Reporting to the Parochial Church Council or the Diocesan Board of Education as appropriate.
Please use this flow chart in conjunction with the guidance notes “Recruiting Effective Foundation Governors”

**FOUNDATION GOVERNOR VACANCY OCCURS**
End of 4 year term / Resignation

- Clerk emails PCC Secretary or Chair of DBE (via DET) (3 months before term of office ends) notifying of a vacancy and the need to find a replacement or re-appoint. The Incumbent, Chair and Head Teacher copied in.

- Recommendations can be made by GB, Head Teacher, Incumbent etc. to the PCC and/or DBE. If necessary, the vacancy can be advertised and ecumenical partners.

- GB uses skills audit to identify skills gaps on the GB that can be addressed through the vacancy.

- Check that the potential governor is willing to serve.

- PCC approves the appointment at a formally constituted meeting.

**FORMS COMPLETED:**
- Part 1: Completed by the nominee
- Part 2: Completed by the nominating/appointing body using appropriate section.

- For PCC appointments: The PCC Secretary returns the completed form (Parts 1 and 2) to the DET.

- DBE confirms appointment. DET notifies the Clerk, Head Teacher, COG, Incumbent and appointee. Enhanced DBS checks need to be completed before appointee takes up office.

**Amendments to Education Database** – Name and contact details, position and term of office

**ABBREVIATIONS:**
- **DBE**: Diocesan Board of Education
- **DET**: Diocesan Education Team
- **COG**: Chair of Governors
- **GB**: Governing Body
- **PCC**: Parochial Church Council