



DIOCESE OF
COVENTRY

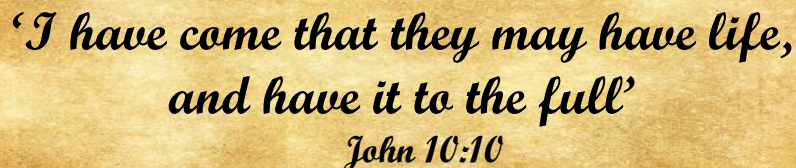
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Guidance for the Appointment of Foundation Governors

*Inspiring schools to demonstrate the love of Christ as they
educate for life in all its fullness*

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 (CofE) schools across the country. At the heart of the [Church of England'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

CofE 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 CofE school should educate through wisdom, hope, community and dignity as set out in the Church of England Vision for Education.

Headteachers of CofE 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; overseeing finances.
- To challenge and support staff in pursuit of excellence and continual improvement.
- To develop a detailed knowledge of the school community 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 governor in a CofE Foundation school?

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

What are the personal qualities required of a governor in a CofE Foundation School?

- 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.
- Transferable skills (eg finance, HR, legal) to complement the skills of other governors.
- A commitment to abide by the Nolan principles of Public Life.

Who should be Foundation Governors?

Foundation Governors represent the Church of England and help maintain the school's Christian foundation. The majority of Foundation Governors on a school governing body should be communicant Anglicans with strong Christian commitment. If candidates are not available from the linked parish, volunteers should be sought from nearby Anglican parishes or other Christian denominations.

Parents choose Church of England schools for many reasons, regardless of faith. If a parish is unable to fill a Foundation Governor vacancy after a period of three months, skilled volunteers can be sought from the wider community. Non-Christian applicants should highlight their skills, experience and local connections on the application form. All governors must explain how they will support the school's Christian foundation.

Candidates should:

- understand and uphold the school's Christian character and Anglican foundation;
- have the skills to understand and develop a Christian vision for the school;
- work collaboratively with the parish and other governors;
- contribute actively to the Section 48 inspection process.

Coventry Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) values the contribution of over 280 volunteers who share our vision for education that offers 'life in all its fullness'. Our goal is to fill all Foundation Governor roles from local churches and communities, working closely with founding parishes. Together, we ensure CofE schools remain 'deeply Christian, serving the common good' for all children and families.

Who nominates Foundation Governors?

In CofE maintained schools Foundation Governors are nominated by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and appointed by the DBE. The school's Instrument of Government will identify how many Foundation Governors are required. In CofE academies, Foundation Governors are nominated by the PCC and consent is given by the DBE for the academy trust to appoint them. The Trust's Articles of Association or Scheme of Delegation will identify how many Foundation Governors are required.

In a CofE school usually one Foundation Governor vacancy, the Ex-officio Foundation Governor role, is reserved for the incumbent of the school's parish/benefice. More information about the role is provided in **Appendix A**.

What happens when a Foundation Governor vacancy arises?

The Chair or Clerk to Governors should notify the PCC of the vacancy. The PCC and school may wish to advertise the vacancy. If the PCC has been unable to identify any potential candidates within a reasonable time period (minimum three months) the school or academy trust may work with the PCC or the DBE to identify potential candidates from outside the local community. Candidates must be able to commit to working with the PCC and local clergy to continue to develop the Christian foundation of the school and the relationship with the parish church.

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, or a clear commitment to upholding the Christian foundation of the school, working in partnership with the Parish;
- 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;

The PCC must carry out safer recruitment checks:

- assess applications and carry out informal interviews;
- ensure applications are supported by two appropriate referees.

Once satisfied the above criteria have been met, a PCC Nomination Form should be completed (in signing the form, the PCC is confirming an informal interview has taken place and satisfactory references have been obtained).

Summary of the Nomination and Appointment Process for Foundation Governors

Forms and template documents for the process are linked below at the appropriate points

1. Clerk to the governing body identifies a Foundation Governor vacancy and determines which Foundation Parish, Endowment Trust etc is eligible to nominate a candidate.*
2. Clerk notifies the relevant PCC, Trust etc and the DBE of the vacancy.
3. If possible, the Chair of Governors or a Foundation Governor attends the PCC or Trust meeting where the vacancy is discussed in order to outline the requirements of the Foundation Governor role.
4. The PCC or Trust advertise the vacancy. Interested parties are provided with a link to the application form.
[Template Advert](#)
[Foundation Governor Application Form](#)**
5. A PCC representative and the Chair of Governors or a Foundation Governor should arrange an informal interview with applicants.
[Template Interview Questions](#)
6. Two references should be sought for the successful applicant.
[Template Reference Form](#)
7. The PCC complete a nomination form for the successful applicant.
[PCC Nomination Form](#)**
8. A sub-committee of the DBE Board reviews the application.
9. The DBE Governance Officer sends an appointment letter, copied to the PCC, the Chair and the Clerk.
10. Appointments are subject to a satisfactory DBS check which will be carried out by the school/academy.

* For advice, please contact helen.gibson@coventrydbe.org

** Provided via Microsoft Forms. Once submitted a copy of the form is received by the DBE

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

An Ex-officio Foundation Governor is usually the incumbent or priest in charge of the parish church(es). For maintained schools this will be specified in the Instrument of Government and for academies this information can be obtained from the DBE. 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 the Ex-officio Foundation Governor position by virtue of their appointment.

In situations where the incumbent or priest in charge is not able 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 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, working with the governing board to support the school's Christian vision. In addition, the Ex-officio or Substitute is the lead Foundation Governor, responsible for fostering strong connections between the church and the school. They are also the key link for the DBE on matters relating to church schools.

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.

Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governors

Where the incumbent or priest in charge is not able to take up their Ex-officio role, they should notify the DBE setting out the reasons. The DBE will then ask the PCC/deanery to identify a suitable individual to be appointed as Substitute Ex-officio. The candidate will need to complete a Foundation Governor Application Form. This 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 the successful candidate, copied to the PCC Secretary, Chair of Governors and Clerk to Governors. The term of office will terminate either at the licensing of the new incumbent or at the end of four years.



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