



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 can't be found from the linked parish, volunteers should be sought from nearby Anglican parishes or other Christian denominations.

If a parish is unable to fill a Foundation Governor vacancy within a reasonable time period (minimum three months), non-Christian volunteers can be sought from the wider community. They should highlight on the application form their local connections together with their skills and experience. 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 support the school's Christian vision;
- 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 offering 'life in all its fullness'. The DBE 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 (vicar or priest in charge) 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 Parochial Church Council (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?

Ex-officio Foundation Governors

The Ex-officio Foundation Governor is normally the incumbent (Vicar or Priest-in-Charge) of the relevant parish church or churches. For maintained schools, the relevant parish church will be identified in the school's Instrument of Government. For academies, this information can be obtained from the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). The incumbent does not require formal appointment by the DBE. They become an Ex-officio Foundation Governor automatically by virtue of their appointment as incumbent. The DBE and Clerk to Governors will assume that a new vicar 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 an incumbent is unable to serve as Ex-officio Foundation Governor, or is due to leave their post, it is their responsibility to identify a suitable individual to serve as Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor. A nominee for the Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor role will often have the confidence and support of the incumbent and/or the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

A candidate proposed for appointment must complete a Foundation Governor Application Form. Once two satisfactory references have been received, the application will be considered by the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon of Warwick, who will determine whether the appointment should be approved. Where the incumbent and PCC or deanery are unable to recommend a suitable individual, the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon of Warwick may appoint a candidate of their choosing.

Where a current Vicar or Priest-in-Charge appointed by the Diocese of Coventry is nominated for a Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor role, they are not required to complete a Foundation Governor Application Form. However, their appointment must still be approved by the Diocesan Director of Education and the Archdeacon of Warwick.

The appointment of a Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor will be confirmed in writing to the successful candidate, with copies sent to the PCC Secretary, the Chair of Governors and the Clerk to Governors. The term of office will end either upon the licensing of a new incumbent or after four years, whichever occurs sooner.

Qualities required of an Ex-officio/Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor

The same qualities, responsibilities and expectations apply to both Ex-officio and Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governors as to all Foundation Governors. They work alongside the governing board to uphold and promote the school's Christian vision and distinctiveness. In addition, the Ex-officio or Substitute Ex-officio Foundation Governor serves as the lead Foundation Governor, helping to strengthen the relationship between the church and the school. They also act as the primary point of contact between the school and the DBE on matters relating to church school governance and distinctiveness.



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**DIOCESE OF
COVENTRY**

BOARD OF EDUCATION

***Inspiring schools to demonstrate the love of Christ as they
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