

The Role of Foundation Governors In Canterbury Diocesan Church of England Schools

Context

The inclusion of foundation governors on the governing bodies of both VA and VC church schools is one of the distinguishing characteristics of church school education. Foundation governors represent the historic link with the original church establishment (the ‘founding’ establishment, hence the term ‘foundation’) of the school. As such, they are the custodians of its distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos.

In most ways, foundation governors have the same objectives as other governors. Along with their fellow governors, they are entrusted with responsibility for the core roles of governors, set out in the Department for Education’s ‘Governance Handbook’ namely:

- setting vision, ethos and strategic direction along with the Headteacher
- holding the head teacher to account for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety ... and challenging and strengthening their leadership
- ensuring finances are managed well leading to probity, solvency and effective use of resources

In addition, as representatives of the church’s role in the school, foundation governors must:

- fully support, cherish, preserve and develop the distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos of the school, ensuring that the school has a distinctive Christian vision and values which lead to effective practice and outcomes for all.
- preserve and strengthen the links between church, school and Diocese.
- take an active role in the school’s self-evaluations of progress against the ‘Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools’ (SIAMS) schedule.
- ensure that collective worship and religious education at the school follow the appropriate guidelines and/or syllabus and meets statutory duty.
- ensure that collective worship at the school is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England and meets statutory duty.
- encourage, support and challenge the school towards aspirations that are transformational.
- ensure that collective worship and religious education at the school are appropriately monitored.
- ensure that the distinctive Christian vision of the school is encouraged and supported throughout its local community and is reflected in its policies and protocols, its curriculum and activities.
- ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school reflect its distinctive Anglican and Christian ethos.

- make sure that the school improvement plan includes strategy for the development of areas reflected in the school's SIAMS self-evaluation document.
- inform the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education when the school leader's post becomes vacant and, in partnership with the Chair of Governors, invite a representative of the Diocesan Director of Education to advise and attend throughout the appointment procedure.
- to support and challenge the leadership within the school in their links with the wider parish(es) and community and to promote support for school activities and initiatives relating to its Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness.
- attend regular Diocesan training to keep in touch with the expectations and responsibilities of being a foundation governor in a Church of England school.

→ Foundation governors must sign to declare they will follow these expectations before they can be appointed by the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education.

Where foundation governors do not follow or meet these expectations, the Chair of Governors can advise the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education that they may need to be removed from office.

(The Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education Removal of Foundation Governor policy can be requested from governance@diocant.org)