

## Hereford Diocesan Board of Education

### Ex Officio Foundation Governor

## Overview guidance for clergy on their role as a governor in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled church schools

### Context

There are over 12,000 children and young people in the 78 Church of England schools within the Diocese of Hereford. These schools are oases in the local community and are at the heart of the Church's mission to the nation, as well as being key to our diocesan strategy and vision. Our Church schools shine out the hope and love that Christ offers, being *deeply Christian* whilst *serving the common good* as part of the [Vision for Education](#). The recent [Faith in the Nexus](#) project has revealed the strength of belonging to the local church felt by families through the local church partnering with their children's school.

As a local parish priest, you have an amazing opportunity and an open invitation to minister and partner with your local church schools not only through a pastoral role and leading worship, but also through taking an active part as an ex officio governor, supporting and strengthening the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the church schools in your parish.

### Background

All maintained Church schools have Foundation Governors who are appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) and in some cases nominated by the relevant PCC. This information is found in the school's **Instrument of Government**, a legal document setting out the arrangements for the constitution of all governing bodies.

The governing board (previously known as the 'governing body') of each Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled Church of England School in the Diocese continues to include the post of Ex Officio Foundation Governor. Formally the 'Principal Officiating Minister' of the parish in which the school is situated holds that post. The term 'Principal Officiating Minister' covers the roles of Incumbent, Vicar, Rector, Priest-in-charge or Lead Minister. Sometimes where there is a federation of more than one school there may be more than one Ex Officio Foundation Governor.

The role of Ex Officio governor fulfils three roles like everyone else on the board.

### Your Role as a Governor

Governors are the strategic leaders of our schools and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school.

School governor responsibilities are laid out in some detail in the '[Governor's Handbook](#)' but in essence governors hold an overview of the life and work of the school. Governors are strategic not operational. Governors have no individual power as all responsibilities and decisions are shared collectively, the governors are a corporate body.

## Your Role as Foundation Governor

Foundation governors are an important part of the wider team of governors. As such their main role is to work with other members of the governing board as detailed above. However, a foundation governor has a specific role which is to ensure that the full governing board nurtures, encourages and challenges the school in living out its Christian foundation by:

- Developing the distinctive Christian vision and character of the school, ensuring development as a church school is embedded in the school improvement plan and is regularly evaluated
- Ensuring high-quality Collective Worship and Religious Education
- Securing positive links between the school, the parish and the DBE
- Promoting Christian values in the way in which the governing board conducts its business
- Ensuring that points for development following Section 48 SIAMS inspection are addressed
- Being involved in the recruitment process for a new Headteacher
- Reporting to the Parochial Church Council or the Diocesan Board of Education as appropriate.

These responsibilities are especially monitored through Section 48 SIAMS inspections (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools).

**Note:** It is not the role of foundation governors to solely take on responsibility for the 'church school' aspects of governance, all governors are governors of a church school and take collective responsibility. More detailed guidance on [The Role of Foundation Governor](#) is available on our website.

## Your Role as Ex Officio Governor

In addition to the above roles, by virtue of being the Incumbent, the Ex Officio Foundation Governor has a key part to play in the following areas:

- Developing the framework within which the school and church will work together in the community as a whole, not just on the governing board. They will be responsible for developing the parish's relationship with its school and helping both groups towards a fuller understanding of how church and school can form a powerful Christian partnership.
- Planning a clear pattern of visits, perhaps based around times of leading collective worship, this could also include a conversation with staff/ the Headteacher and classroom visits so this is both pastoral and monitoring from a governance perspective.
- Monitoring and supporting the school's distinctive Christian ethos. Encouraging fellow foundation governors to also visit and involve themselves with the school.
- Opening each meeting of the Governing Board with prayer, this sets the tone for the meeting and reminds others of the Christian ethos of the school as a whole.
- Endeavouring to build a positive relationship with the Headteacher. This is vital to the school's development as a Christian community and supporting the Headteacher in leading a Church of England school.
- Staff appointments, the appointment of a new Headteacher will be a time of particular importance for the future of the school and the links between school and parish. The Diocesan Education Team are consulted and involved in Headteacher appointments in all church schools
- Areas where pastoral support is unexpectedly required in school e.g. bereavement; personal crisis; controversy; accident; celebration.
- Ensuring that the Headteacher and fellow governors understand the importance of the priest's pastoral role as part of the parish commitment to the school.
- Engaging other members of the ministry team, and of other denominations, with school whilst retaining the unique identity of the parish and the school.

- Maintaining a link with the Diocesan Education Team to ensure maximum support for you and school.

Note: that for some of these areas the Incumbent will utilise the support and involvement of other members of the parish community.

### Next Steps...

The Diocesan Education Team are able to offer support for all clergy in embarking on, continuing or developing their role as a governor of a Church school in this Diocese. In addition to this, a wide variety of support is also available for school based Collective Worship, spiritual and pastoral activities.

### Education Team:

Diocesan Director of Education	Canon Andrew Teale	<a href="mailto:education@hereford.anglican.org">education@hereford.anglican.org</a> TEL: 07539 372748 <a href="#">Schools Website Pages</a>
Deputy Director	Sian Lines	
Education Development Officer	Mark Harrington	
Business and Governance Officer	Toni Enefer	

The Education Team will be in contact to discuss the support available to you. However, if in the meantime you have been approached by your local church school, Rural Dean or parish regarding your involvement in school life, in the first instance please get in touch with the Education Team for further details and discussion on the support available.