



**ODBE**

Oxford Diocesan  
Board of Education



**Governance  
Handbook  
2021**

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# Welcome from the Director of Education

Dear Colleague

Welcome to the family of church schools Diocese of Oxford. Whether you are taking on governor role for the first time or are a more experienced governor joining a Church of England school in our diocese, you will be getting to know your new school and understanding the priorities for action. This booklet is intended to assist you, by letting you know who we are and what support we can offer you, as well as providing an overview of some of the technical aspects of being a governor in a Church of England school.

The Diocesan Board of Education has a team of experienced advisers (one of whom will be allocated to your school) whose services are available to all church school leaders and governors. In addition, we have a skilled premises team who support church schools and academies with building needs. We can also provide your governing board with support on admissions and appeals. All of our schools can make use of our RE and Collective Worship resources alongside advice and support for chaplaincy and engagement with your local church. As a team, we are well aware of the demands and challenges of being a school governor and are here to support you in this valuable work.

We hope you will find this a helpful summary of the role of the diocese and its team in your school and we look forward to working in partnership with you in the coming months and years.

With every blessing

Tony Wilson  
Diocesan Director of Education

## Church School Governance – A guide to the key expectations of the role of a governor in a church school.

*'In order to enable the continued development of successful schools, high-quality governance is essential ...The governance of our schools cannot be left to chance; schools need governors with the right skills and gifts to provide strategic oversight and direction.'*

([The DBE of the Future](#) para 32)

Governing boards have three core functions; these are to ensure clarity of vision and strategic direction for the school, to hold the headteacher to account for pupil outcomes and quality of teaching and learning, and to ensure financial probity.



A governor operates as part of the governing board team, with corporate responsibility; their work is strategic rather than operational. For example, governors ensure that all statutory and necessary school policies are in place but do not write them.

All the governors of a church school must work collectively to ensure the effectiveness of the school as a place of learning, where the Christian vision enables the whole community to flourish.

**So why do we have Foundation Governors?** - It is a requirement of the Trust under which Church of England Schools were established and endowed with a Church of England foundation. They are full governors just like any other and must be effective in supporting the strategic vision, financial management and in holding leadership to account.

They also have a special responsibility to ensure:

- ❖ that the guiding principles of the founding church are incorporated into all aspects of the governance of the school; and
- ❖ that the terms of the trust deed governing the school are adhered to.

Maintained schools can have different categories of governor, these being:

- Foundation Governors
- Parent Governors
- Co-opted Governors
- Staff Governors
- Local Authority Governors

Governing boards can also choose to appoint associate governors (non-voting).

Your school's Instrument of Government (IoG) will make it clear how your governing board is constituted. Academies have differing arrangements and your Scheme of Delegation will clarify this.

All Church of England schools must have foundation governors. In *Voluntary Aided* schools they should outnumber all other categories of governor put together by a majority of at least two. *Voluntary Controlled* schools have a minority of foundation governors, usually 25%. In the Diocese of Oxford, we have different types of foundation governor:

- those appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education often from the local church community;
- those appointed directly by the Parochial Church Council (PCC);
- those appointed by a trust and approved by the Diocesan Board of Education; and
- the ex-officio governor – normally the incumbent (local vicar) unless a substitute has been nominated and agreed by the Archdeacon.

The term of office for all diocesan foundation governors is usually four years. A diocesan foundation governor can resign at any time during those four years. The clerk to the governors should inform the Schools Support Officer, Tracy Makin, of any changes to the governing body, including change of non-foundation governors, eg parent election. Recommendation forms are available to download from [our webpages](#).

## Introduction to Church Schools

Many diocesan church schools were established in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century under trusts to provide education for the 'poor of the parish' with teaching according to the Church of England. At that stage the school managers (now governors) were responsible for all costs relating to running the school. However, from 1833 the state provided an increasing amount of financial assistance, mainly for the payment of teachers. The first Local Authority run schools were only allowed from 1870, with the establishment of board schools to provide free education. In 1811 the 'National Society for Promoting Religious Education' was established to support Church of England Schools. The provision of extensive resources and support for schools, dioceses and parishes continues, more details can be found on the Church of England Education Office's (formerly National Society) own [website](#).

The national need for the significant expansion of education was beyond the means of many governing bodies of church schools so the Education Act 1944 was passed, which enabled church schools to become either:

- ❖ **Controlled** by the local authority (LA), which would meet the entire cost of the running the school, including school expansions. However, the church foundation governors would reduce to a

minority, although the church trustees continued to hold the school site and buildings under educational trusts, or

- ❖ **Aided**, by the local authority who would meet most of the running costs, including teachers' pay, but the governors, of whom a majority remained as church foundation governors, retained responsibility for a significant part of the premises, remained the employer of staff, responsible for collective worship & RE. By continuing to contribute for building works the foundation governors had a greater say in the running of the school.

The Education Reform Act 1988 considerably increased the responsibilities of governors and headteachers in all schools, particularly regarding the introduction of local management of schools and the requirement that collective worship and the curriculum, including religious education, (a) 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society', and (b) 'prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life'.

Since the Academies Act 2010 schools have had the option to convert into an academy and become independent schools, separate from the local authority. The ODBE has adopted a neutral stance in respect of schools converting to academies and approximately a third of our schools have now converted. In addition, if a school receives the lowest Ofsted grading following an inspection it is required to become an academy and will be sponsored by a strong multi-academy trust (MAT). All school which are academies are encouraged to join MATs. The ODBE encourages maintained schools to form positive collaborations and partnerships, which could be joining a MAT. This is to ensure that sufficient strong partnerships of church schools will be formed, so that schools can work together to share good and outstanding practice, and thereby support one another to improve and help address the economic sustainability issues of, particularly, small schools.

To help provide choice for schools there are two Diocesan MATs. The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), established in 2012 with, as of February 2021, 38 schools and is available for schools across Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) was established in September 2017 and has 12 schools to date. We also work with a further 18 MATs across the Diocese which church schools could join. The number of schools choosing to join a MAT has significantly declined over the last two years as the financial advantages to do so have been removed.

## The Distinctiveness of the Church School

In recent years, the Church of England has increasingly recognised the especially significant role of the headteacher in the development of the distinctive character of church schools. **The Way Ahead** report noted that:

*'Church school headteachers are spiritual and academic leaders of the school. Excellence in headship requires visionary, inspired leadership and management centred on the school as a worshipping community, where educational and academic excellence for all pupils is pursued in a Christian context.'*  
(8.1)

So ... what is a distinctively Christian vision for a church school? [The Vision for Education](#) has this to say:

*'The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart ... Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic*



*rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate our vision for education:*

- *Wisdom*
- *Hope*
- *Community*
- *Dignity*

Headteachers, along with governors, drive the leadership and management of the school. This partnership is vital to the quality of distinctiveness which the school will demonstrate. Governors have vital roles to carry out: they hold the school to account, and they play a major part in setting the strategic direction of the school. The church school is also recognised as a major contributor to social cohesion and should not be a cause of social division. The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Chelmsford reminds us in 'The Scandalous Inclusivity of God' that:

*'...a [Church] school is able to be both particular (clear about its own Christian faith) and inclusive (welcoming of all **because** of the Christian understanding of God). It is not a problem for us that people do not share the specific beliefs of Christianity for one of the best ways that we will witness to the reality of our faith is by the way we love and honour God in our neighbour. Indeed, we believe we are better able to be inclusive than other schools because our inclusivity flows from our belief in God. This puts us in a better position to welcome, understand and include people of other faiths.'*

It is the quality of distinctiveness created by the church school's staff, leaders and community which enables this vision to be realised.

The following traits from **The Church School of the Future** summarise the distinctiveness anticipated in church schools:

- *'the religious education curriculum will include other major world faiths but will ensure that the teaching of Christianity is given appropriate priority;*
- *the life of the school is developed around an explicit commitment to Christian values and ethos;*
- *the learning environment, including premises and grounds, will reflect the Church of England foundation and the centrality of spiritual development; and*
- *close working relationships with the church community, through parish or deanery, will be fostered.*

(3.6)

**The Parish and the School** - the majority of Church of England schools are set within the worshipping community of the parish family. The implications of this setting vary, especially between primary and secondary schools, but in all cases, there should be a commitment to partnership between parish and school which is built upon a common quest for the outworking of shared vision and values alongside spiritual growth. This partnership sees the church school working with the parish to engage parents (and indeed the whole community) in education and the broader life of the child. Foundation governors have a responsibility to support this important relationship.

**Appointment of Staff** - the appointment of members of staff is one of the most important tasks your headteacher will undertake. Not only is the quality of potential professionalism central to the success of such appointments but equally the commitment of these staff to the ethos and Christian foundation of the school.

These are important factors in deciding your new appointments. Local Authorities provide publications relating to the appointment of senior staff. These factors mainly centre on the mechanical process and professional skills governing boards should consider in appointing staff. The chart below will help you identify differences in the appointment process between *Voluntary Controlled* and *Voluntary Aided* schools.

<b><i>Voluntary Controlled</i></b>	<b><i>Voluntary Aided</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority (LA) is the employer</li> <li>LA is entitled to attend all proceedings related to the appointment of staff</li> <li>Appointment of deputy head:</li> <li>In VC schools 'the governing body may take into account any candidate's suitability and ability to preserve and develop the religious character of the school'</li> <li>The governing body may extend advisory rights to the diocesan authority (strongly recommended)</li> <li>The governing body may appoint 'reserved teachers' (for the purpose of 'religious instruction')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governing body is the employer</li> <li>The governing body may accord advisory rights to the LA (strongly recommended)</li> <li>The diocesan authority should have the same advisory rights as the LA</li> <li>Appointment of deputy head: 'the governing body may give preference to any candidate whose religious opinions and worship are in accordance with the tenets of the religious denomination of the school' (Also applies to other teaching appointments)</li> </ul>

Some further important notes on appointments:

- Detailed advice on appointments is available in the Governance Handbook (which has replaced the guide to the law) which can be downloaded from the [Gov.uk website](#)
- To ensure that headteachers and governors meet the requirements of employment law in the appointment of staff selection processes and appointment procedures should comply with LA human resources advice.
- Headteachers and governors will probably use local authority application forms and contracts of employment. These have limited reference to the distinctiveness of Church school appointments. Appropriate reference can be made within the advert and person specification for such distinctiveness. Advice can be sought from your School Link Adviser on this. **Colleagues working in Aided schools should consult the [Church of England Education Office website](#) where application forms and contracts for C of E schools may be found** Headteachers and governors of Controlled schools may also wish to look at these forms.

**The Ethos of the School** - While the whole governing body has agreed to uphold the Christian ethos of the school, it is the foundation governors who have the particular responsibility to ensure that the Christian foundation is reflected in all aspects of school governance and life.

## **Governance in Academies**

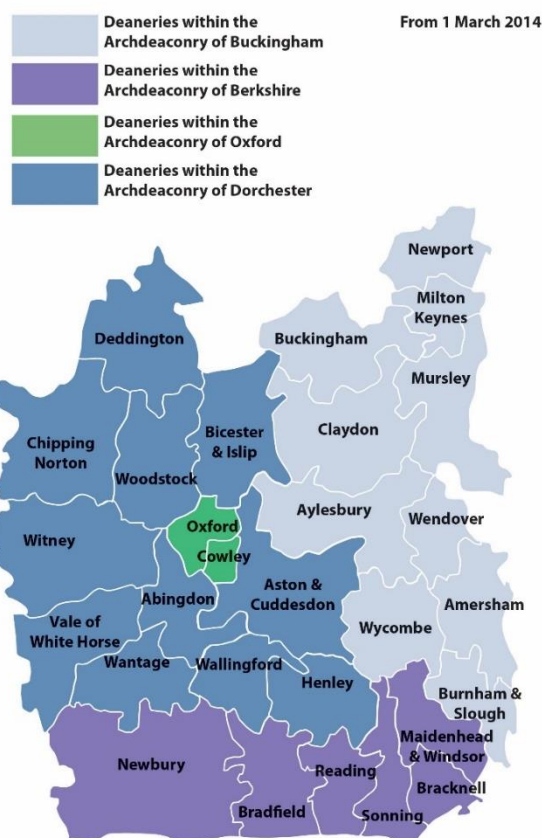
Church academies are charitable companies with the Diocesan Board of Education always acting as a member of the trust. We, therefore, appoint directors (trustees) to our academy companies. In stand-alone academies those directors are also the governors; in a multi-academy trust, the school will have a local governing body in addition to the Board of Directors which will have governors appointed by the Diocese.

The academy agenda has been responded to very positively by the Church of England, which has become the single largest provider of sponsored academies. Since 2010, ODBE has worked hard to provide support for the growing number of academy conversions and sponsorships through advice and especially through the establishment of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust. There are two diocesan multi-academy trusts and 20 school-led multi-academy trusts set up across the diocese catering for a mixture of church and community schools.



## The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) – some background information about us and how we can help you in your role as a governor

The Diocese of Oxford is the largest in England and covers the nine local authorities (LAs): Bracknell, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, and Wokingham. There are 271 schools educating the primary phase; eight schools the secondary phase; two are all through; and a further two are middle schools serving some 60,000 pupils. There are 815 churches grouped into deaneries for administration purposes, the deaneries are grouped into four archdeaconries.



The ODBE, like other diocesan boards of education in England, has the following main responsibilities:

- to promote education which is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England
- to promote the development of Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools of the diocese
- to support church schools and to advise the governors, trustees of church educational endowments and others concerned with matters affecting these church schools; and
- to promote co-operation and partnership between the Board and bodies or persons concerned in any respect with education in the diocese.

The ODBE is committed to the education of the whole person to their fullest potential, to the development of moral and spiritual understanding, to the uniqueness of the individual and to the education of all within the maintained system. It works within statutory education on behalf of the Diocese of Oxford in developing a Christian vision of education. It fulfils this commitment to all schools through the provision of a range of advice and support.

Through its advisory services ODBE promotes RE, Collective Worship and the spiritual development of pupils. The work of the advisory team also focuses on school improvement to support schools in dealing with the requirements of Ofsted inspection and (where appropriate) relationships with HMI. It ensures that church schools are provided with specialist support for building development and legal matters. Among the churches of the diocese, the Board promotes church-related education and provides advice for clergy, governors and parishes in support of their schools.

The vision and priorities of the diocese and the pastoral role of the church underpin all the work of the ODBE. More about this vision can be found on the Diocese of Oxford website: [www.oxford.anglican.org](http://www.oxford.anglican.org)

## The ODBE Team

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education values each of its schools and offers the services of a professional and supportive team which includes:

- Director and Deputy Directors
- School Link Advisers
- RE Adviser
- SIAMS Adviser
- Chaplaincy Adviser
- Church/School Relationships Adviser
- Premises Officer and Building Surveyors
- Admissions/Appeals Officer
- Schools Support Officer and Training & Events Officer

Each school has a named School Link Adviser. Support offered to schools is managed by Services for Schools (S4S). The diocesan team also offers regular training and visits for headteachers, governors and staff. The work of the team is supported by a strong administrative group, the members of which also act as advisers to schools on some matters such as the appointment of foundation governors.

- The work of the ODBE team centres on the following tasks:
- improving and developing the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools
- supporting schools in developing and confidently communicating their distinctive vision
- offering an excellent school improvement service, working in partnership with local authorities and their external agencies as appropriate
- providing SIAMS training for headteachers and governors to equip them to monitor and evaluate their school as a distinctive church school
- fulfilling a strategic plan for succession and leadership within the diocese
- supporting governors in their nurture of the Christian foundation of their schools
- offering pastoral support for headteachers and staff
- advising on religious education and its contribution to a school's distinctive vision and character
- advising on acts and patterns of worship
- supporting governors in the appointment of headteachers
- supporting the headteacher appraisal process
- assisting with the maintenance and improvement of *Aided* school buildings
- representing the interests of church schools and liaising with local authorities
- ensuring the continuing development, status and position of RE through engagement in SACREs throughout the diocese and involvement in national initiatives
- managing the process and inspectorate of the statutory inspection of church schools (SIAMS);
- supporting and advising on academy conversion and working with academies and multi-academy trusts post-conversion.

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Foundation governors need to know their particular responsibilities and the support available from ODBE in areas of church school life including: SIAMS, collective worship, RE, spirituality, admissions premises and considering academisation

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

In addition to Ofsted inspections, church schools also have SIAMS inspections (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools/S48 Education Act 2005) to determine the effectiveness of their distinctive Christian vision. The inspection itself, usually lasting one day in primary schools and two days in secondary schools, considers the context of each school and how leaders at all levels ensure pupils and adults flourish.

SIAMS inspections lead to an overarching judgement in answer to the question, **‘How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?’**

To do this the inspection gathers evidence through seven strands:

1. Vision and Leadership
2. Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
3. Character Development: Hope, Aspiration and Courageous Advocacy
4. Community and Living Well Together
5. Dignity and Respect
6. The impact of collective worship (Graded)
7. The effectiveness of religious education  
VA schools have an additional judgment for the teaching and learning in RE (Graded)

Schools are expected to undertake regular and ongoing auditing to capture the impact of their vision and provision as church schools. In order to support schools with such self-evaluation, the Church of England Education Office (CEEO) offers templates, although schools may offer self-evaluation summaries (maximum two sides) in any format they choose. Templates are available on the [diocesan website](#).

**The Report** - the SIAMS inspection is predicated on the school being ‘good’. The report will contain clear judgement statements, using the grades of good, requires improvement or ineffective as a church school. Schools which are very securely good on all aspects of the seven strands may wish to make a case for overall excellence, or excellence in worship and RE.

**Timing** - the SIAMS inspection schedule is based on the date and overall judgement of a school’s last section 48 inspection. Schools will usually be inspected five years after their last inspection. Schools with a previous overall judgement of less than good will be inspected in the third year after the last SIAMS. Inspections may be in any term of an academic year.

## Outline of the SIAMS process

**In the Diocese of Oxford schools are contacted by the diocese one week before the inspection date. The date is set by the diocese in conjunction with the Church of England Education Office protocol and an inspector engaged.**



**Contract is sent to school by the inspector**

Contract should be signed by the chair of governors and inspector prior to the inspection



**Inspector and school liaise on the timetable or the day and which documents sent from school to inspector**

The inspector will request a limited range of information – eg SIAMS self-evaluation, school development plan, IDSR. The inspector will scrutinise the school's website and publicly available data *before* the inspection day. Based on this information, the inspector will write a pre-inspection plan (PIP) which will identify lines of enquiry for the inspection.



**Inspector sends the PIP to the diocesan adviser for quality assurance, then to the school**

This ensures that everyone involved will be aware of and understand the lines of inquiry the inspector wants to follow, the people the inspector wants to meet and other activities to be undertaken.



**Inspection**

Activities are completed, meetings with a number of groups held. A conversation with the school link adviser and, where relevant, a representative from the MAT, form part of the process. Verbal feedback and provisional grades are given at the end of the day to the headteacher and chair of governors or foundation governors. A representative from the MAT or School Link Adviser may also attend feedback. Note that feedback and provisional grades must be kept confidential as they are subject to amendment as a result of the critical read process undertaken by the diocesan critical reader.



**Draft report sent to the critical reader within five working days of the inspection**



**Draft report returned to inspector with any comments within three working days. This process may then be repeated if amendments are made**



**Draft report sent to school for factual accuracy check and returned within 24 hours/1 working day**



**Final report sent to school within 15 working days of completion of the inspection**



**Inspection report published by the Church of England Education Office, diocesan website and school website. The school sends copies to families/parents**

The diocese publishes the [full protocol](#) for SIAMS on its website.



## Religious Education

***If our society is to nurture fuller and wiser understanding of religions and beliefs in the contemporary world, it is vital that the available academically-informed understanding be drawn upon.***

***Church of England Vision for Education (2016) (note p15)***

We understand church schools to be places in which faith is taken seriously, therefore special importance is given to religious education. The **Church of England Vision for Education** (2016) bears this out, *'In Church schools the deeply Christian foundation for this vision will be seen explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum...'* (p3)

Whilst a greater emphasis will be placed upon the Christian faith in RE, it is important for young people to learn about a wide range of faiths as well. As noted previously the vision document points out that education should be *'hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings.'* (p3)

**The Church School of the Future** (2012) sets out an even more ambitious and clear vision ...

***'in the long term, there needs to be an explicit expectation that religious education is a priority and must be made a focus of both initial teacher education and professional development. The Church should not be satisfied until every Church school is outstanding in this subject.'*** (3.10)

The ODBE is concerned to support schools in planning, teaching, monitoring and assessment of RE. For this reason, a specialist RE Adviser, Anne Andrews, is retained. Her role is to organise courses, produce support materials and be available to individual schools and clusters of schools for training and support. The ODBE has also produced a scheme of work for RE, which meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabi and those of the more recent Statement of Entitlement produced by the Church of England Education Office. A wide range of support materials is available on the [RE pages of the diocesan website](#).

### RE in different schools

- ❖ RE in *Voluntary Controlled* schools must be planned in accordance with the requirements of the local authority's agreed syllabus for RE (LAS) – as in community schools
- ❖ RE in *Voluntary Aided* schools and academies is the responsibility of the governors in accordance with the school's trust deed or funding agreement. It is the strong recommendation of the Diocesan Board of Education that VA schools plan RE courses based upon their local authority's RE syllabus. A diocesan scheme of work is available free of charge to all schools in the service level agreement.

The agreed syllabi in our diocese are the responsibility of Local Authority Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs). The diocese has played a significant role in the development of Locally Agreed Syllabi through the RE Adviser who works closely with the SACREs in the diocese.

The following are some of the positive dimensions of learning which are directly promoted by RE.

- RE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

- RE develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views. This enables them to understand the ways in which faiths and life-stances have answered these challenging questions.
- RE enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.
- RE offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.
- RE encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning.
- RE challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.
- RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging.
- RE enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.
- RE has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.
- RE enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, especially those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.
- RE promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

The key recommendations of the ODBE with respect to RE include the following:

- that governors in *Voluntary Aided* schools adopt their local agreed syllabus for RE;
- that the standards of teaching, learning and achievement in RE in Church of England schools are at the highest level;
- that at least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE; **this is in addition to the requirement for collective worship.**
- that Christianity occupies at least 50% of the RE curriculum;
- that appropriate teaching about a range of faiths and world views is given in all church schools;
- RE should be taught using an enquiry-based model and it should aim to promote religious and theological literacy;
- that all pupils are entered for an accredited qualification in Religious Studies at the end of Key Stage 4;
- that all students in the 16 – 19 age groups follow a suitable course in RE and A Level Religious Studies is offered to all; and
- that staff are supported and given access to high-quality CPD.

## Collective Worship

All schools must provide an act of worship for pupils every day. Arrangements for the act of collective worship in both VA and VC schools are made by the governors after consulting the headteacher, taking account of the Trust Deed.

The **Vision for Education** stresses the importance of collective worship:

*The Church of England is (along with many others) a liturgical tradition, and encountering its worship is essential to understanding it and the God in whom we believe. The seasons of the church year rehearse the drama of Jesus Christ in the context of the larger biblical narrative, and they offer a means through which that narrative can be grasped and inhabited. Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this. (p10)*

Collective worship should be central to the life of the school and thus needs:

- to be coherent with the school's vision and associated values;
- to be well organised and planned;
- opportunities for everyone (including staff) to participate as well as just attend; and
- an environment conducive to worship.

As an educational *experience* worship should:

- take account of the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils;
- extend the learning opportunities offered to pupils;
- reflect what goes on across the curriculum – not just RE
- be **inclusive**, open to everyone.

Worship in church schools, is *collective* worship as distinct from *corporate* worship. In worship The school community is engaged in an activity which, no matter how valuable, is a legal obligation. It is not a faith community - people sharing one faith who have chosen to gather together for worship. The organisation and language of this *collective* worship should allow for different levels of response. Church school worship should **invite** not coerce. All schools have pupils with widely differing experiences of worship, some will go to church regularly, others will have no such experiences beyond school and still others will belong to and worship according to the precepts of another faith. It is our task to provide pupils with a secure context in which to experience **inspiring** Christian worship and reflect upon the impact of worship in their own lives and the lives of the people around them.

Collective worship can include material from faiths other than Christianity; for instance, many schools mark the major festivals of other faiths. Recognising them is part of the general religious and cultural education of pupils and is important in recognising and valuing members of other faiths in the school. The inclusion of such experiences does not mean the worship itself becomes, for example, Muslim or Hindu worship.

Collective worship is a powerful opportunity to provide for pupils' spiritual development and includes potential for furtherance of moral, social and cultural development. For this to be successful worship should:

- be concerned with the worship of God
- have a sense of occasion
- encourage participation and leadership from pupils
- create opportunities for participants to explore their inner feelings
- provide opportunities for individuals and the community to share matters of importance
- encourage exploration of beliefs, values and ideals
- respect the integrity of all individuals, valuing everyone as a child of God
- enable participants to engage in a range of experiences
- promote the values of the school and explore the rationale for them
- foster a sense of community and belonging
- be varied in style and include different forms of expression eg art, music, story, dance
- celebrate pupils' gifts, talents and achievements
- make use of symbols and imagery.

Worship should also give opportunities to explore the traditions of the church, especially the Anglican heritage - all Anglican schools should reflect some of these essential features.

These features include:

- using the Bible as a source book
- reflecting upon Christian symbols and their use in worship
- observing the cycle of the Anglican year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost
- the centrality of prayer -
  - using collects and other formal varieties of prayer,
  - identifying a collection of prayers for regular use – including children’s own prayers,
  - learning traditional responses and prayers which express the essential beliefs of Christians throughout the ages
- providing opportunities to discover the value of contemplation, meditation and silence within the context of Christian worship
- experiencing the bond of community which encompasses gender, age, race and religious opinion, for example through the range of visitors invited to lead or attend school worship
- sharing in a commitment to dialogue with other faiths, shown in the welcome we offer to all pupils and the celebration of shared values and beliefs

There is a range of materials to support [collective worship](#) on the ODBE website including a monitoring suite, a developmental prayer resource and project an extensive resource - the Bible in Worship project which provides readings, reflections, prayers and other ideas throughout the school year.

## Spirituality

While collective worship provides opportunity for spiritual exploration, spirituality itself has a much broader compass than this. Our lives are shot through with spiritual experiences which range from (for example) reflection on art or the feel of wind on the cheek to religious reflection on creation through prayer.

SIAMS refers to ‘Progressively deeper’ opportunities for spiritual experience or development. Both curriculum and school environment have the potential for promoting spiritual development. The ways in which we both appreciate and express our spiritual nature is very varied and so we should encourage reflective approaches from pupils in as many ways as possible. This may require some allowance within planning and, crucially, provision which matches pupils’ spiritual aptitudes.

As with worship, the ways in which spirituality is presented and explored will be driven by the vision of the school. This takes spirituality beyond the suggestions given in the Ofsted handbook. This will include a wide range of experiences which will include a stronger faith dimension including specifically Christian elements. Recent research found pupils’ own understanding of spirituality to include:

- the development of self
- community: a connection with other people
- a deepening understanding of faith
- a relationship with God

There is a host of other ideas and materials and it is probably helpful to gather a range of ideas before making any final decisions or choices about what approaches to take.

The [ODBE webpages](#) offer materials in support of spirituality and your Link Adviser will be very happy to discuss them with you. In addition, the [DTS programme](#) includes a course specifically dedicated to collective worship and spirituality.

## Admission and Appeals – VA Schools and Academies

In accordance with the legal framework of school admissions, we formally review and advise on VA schools and academies admissions policies. Admission policies must go out to full consultation, as a minimum (if there are no changes) every seven years; however, if there are changes, these remain subject to the usual full consultation. However, regardless of whether there are any changes there is still a requirement for policies to be determined annually. We provide advice and support to governing bodies and headteachers on all aspects of admissions and offer regular admission briefings to keep schools up to date with any changes to the code. A great deal of helpful material is held on the [ODBE webpages](#). The 'for governors' section requires a password which can be obtained from your Link Adviser.

We respond to the Schools' Adjudicator and will assist schools where necessary.

We maintain an overview for VA schools and academies on LA admission committees, school place planning forums and other relevant bodies, both locally and nationally, including attendance and membership of the National Diocesan Admission Group and South West Admissions and Appeals Group.

The diocese has run a successful appeals service for over 35 years and we have a team of 30 panel members and experienced independent clerks. We provide support to headteachers and governors and provide updates on the law in relation to appeals. We send regular reminders to ensure admission authorities are adhering to the timeframes given in the Appeals Code. As with admissions, we run training sessions for headteachers, governors and admission staff to ensure schools are able to process appeals in an uncomplicated and timely manner.

We will, of course, respond to the Local Government Ombudsman and the Education & Skills Funding Agency as necessary. We offer training on both admissions and appeals.

Updates and changes to both the admissions code and appeals code will be circulated widely.

## Premises Support

The Premises Team is happy to provide support and advice to schools on a range of development, improvement and capital refurbishment matters.

The team benefits from in-house building surveying and project management expertise, working alongside consultants and other experts. We liaise with the Department for Education to secure grants and funding, providing administrative and financial support. We also meet with local authorities and other agencies on behalf of schools.

VA schools should visit resources on managing premises and capital projects available via the [ODBE website](#). These pages provide a range of advice for schools including information on premises responsibilities, planning, managing and funding capital projects and investigating solar programmes. Guidance is also issued on the principles of church land trusteeship.

ODST and ODBST member schools requiring support for condition/development projects should contact Tom Fry. Other academy schools should contact their MAT and follow appropriate guidance.

VC schools should contact their relevant local authority with respect to condition issues as they have responsibility for such matters. VC schools looking for ODBE surveyor /project management support for a school-funded project should contact Jane Maharry – details above - in the first instance.

## Academies

It is our key aim that the values of Christian collaboration, co-operation and respect be embodied in any prospective academy and that these principles should govern both policy and process right from the start.

We want to work alongside schools to find a structure to enable you to move forward, given the continued stance of the Government to use academies as the basis for all future school provision. We are committed to the sustaining of a clear Christian ethos in our schools and endeavour to work collaboratively to ensure that any move to academy status retains that ethos.

We are aware of the need for schools to work increasingly collaboratively with other local schools regardless of status or category and seek to enable appropriate mechanisms for this. There are now 19 multi-academy trusts (MATs) across the diocese with the ability to accommodate church schools, each with their own characteristics. The MATs are made up of a range of schools secondary and primary, church and community and there are also regional MATs which have adapted their governance model to accommodate church schools.

There are two multi-academy trusts which have been specifically set up by the Diocese: the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) and the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST). Both are open to schools across the diocese (ODST for schools in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and ODBST for schools across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes).

We expect the number of MATs to rise in the future and we are always in discussion with local groups who wish to move forward in this way. Any school considering establishing a MAT as an option should speak to a member of the diocesan team at the earliest opportunity for guidance on diocesan requirements as well as to explore support services for your group on this journey.



# Guidance for induction and training opportunities to support you in your role

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education vision for education is founded on flourishing. We aim to walk alongside you as you develop your school's effectiveness and live out your vision of service to families, staff and community. This [Development, Training and Support \(DTS\) offer](#) enhances our [S4S](#) (Services for Schools) service level agreement which heavily subsidises the courses and networks we run.

The programme is grouped into four areas:

- DTS for schools – CPD to support work in schools, including SIAMS
- DTS Leadership – for serving headteachers and aspirant leaders at all levels
- DTS Leadership: Governance – including an online introduction to our new three module governance programme
- DTS Essentials – a series of shorter overviews of key areas for church schools for staff, leaders and governors

Following the challenges of 2020, the ODBE team has increased the use of virtual means of contact and we have taken the decision to deliver the DTS programme almost entirely virtually. All our bookings are through 'Eventbrite' using the live links for each course or event. Where an event has a link to Teams or Zoom, please do not share this with others so that we can manage the numbers logging in and ensure that we have the correct details for payment. The majority of the training is costed as 'per school'. These new ways of working will continue into the longer term, both as we move into the post-pandemic world and respond to the [climate emergency](#), which remains a major challenge for us all., We hope to be running face to face opportunities from summer 2021.

The DTS Leadership: Governance programme replaces EiG but contains the same themes and content within three longer sessions. These will be introduced virtually in the coming year; the intention being that each module becomes a network event for governing boards who wish to complete the series from September 2021.

DTS Essentials introduce staff, leaders and governors to key aspects of a church school and may prove particularly useful to those new to a church school.

As well as the central dates offered here, advisers can provide *Essentials* for your school using S4S credit in: Vision, Church Schools in Modern Britain, Worship, Spirituality, SIAMS, RE, Chaplaincy, and Church School Relationships. Please speak to your Link Adviser to arrange this.

If you have DTS queries, please contact Donna Finlay [donna.finlay@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:donna.finlay@oxford.anglican.org) or your Link Adviser who will do their best to help you.

A further date for your diary is the Annual Service to be held at Dorchester Abbey on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

## Induction Process

Induction is an important process which ensures that all new members of the school's governing board have an opportunity to clarify expectations, ask questions, gather information and become familiar with the role; this supports the development of a shared understanding of the processes and protocols which will enable them to effectively carry out their core function.

### Aims of the Induction Process

- To welcome new governors to the governing board and enable them to meet other members.
- To encourage new governors to visit the school to enable them to understand their character and ethos.
- To meet the head teacher, staff and pupils.
- To explain the partnership between the head teacher, school and governing board.
- To clarify the role and responsibility of a governor.
- To provide information about the school and its key priorities.
- To allow new governors to ask questions about their role and the school.
- To explain how the governing board and its committees operate.
- To match personal skills and experience to appropriate committee membership.

### Induction

- When your appointment is confirmed, the clerk will send an appointment letter and welcome pack with key items of interest.
- The clerk will request that you complete a declaration of eligibility form, verification of identity form and register of business interest form.
- A tour of the school, including meeting staff and children, should be arranged.
- We would advise that you receive an informal briefing on the school, explaining procedures, current issues, strengths and areas for development. Information about number on roll, catchment, school organisation, curriculum and staffing should also be shared.
- You should request a copy of the school prospectus, if applicable, (including: term dates, SATs information, attendance, etc).
- You should receive copies of key school effectiveness documents including the school development plan, self- evaluation form and SIAMS self evaluation. The school may also provide additional documentation.
- You should meet with the chair of governors to confirm the specific responsibilities expected of governors, including information on committee structures and training courses available to assist you in your role. This conversation should also cover terms of reference.
- There should be an opportunity to discuss governance within a Church of England school setting and how this impacts upon policy, procedure, relationships and approach.
- The school's code of conduct for governors must be discussed and signed.
- Governors should consider appointing an experienced governor as a mentor to support you in your new role.

## Governor Induction Checklist

### Meetings

Action	Date	Notes
Meet the chair of governors		
Complete a tour of the school		
Meet the headteacher		
Attend first full governing board meeting		

### Training and documentation

Action	Date	Notes
Induction training		
ODBE Effective Governor modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision</li> <li>• Accountability</li> </ul>		
Skills audit		
Complete paperwork which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor declaration form</li> <li>• DBS/barred list check</li> <li>• Declaration of interests form</li> <li>• Governors' code of conduct</li> </ul>		
Access school information which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• composition of the governing body</li> <li>• school staff list</li> <li>• terms of reference for the governing body</li> <li>• terms of reference for each committee</li> <li>• future meeting dates</li> <li>• information on governor visits</li> <li>• school policies</li> <li>• school improvement plan, SEF and SIAMS toolkit</li> <li>• minutes from the last governors' meeting</li> </ul>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a list of current governors and their contact details</li> <li>• the clerk's contact details</li> <li>• [for academy governors only: memorandum and articles of association]</li> </ul>		
<p>Information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of pupils at the school</li> <li>• Number of boys and girls</li> <li>• Percentage of children eligible for the pupil premium</li> <li>• Number of children with English as an additional language (EAL)</li> <li>• Breakdown of pupil groups (eg ethnicity, prior attainment, summer born, PPG)</li> <li>• Number of children on the special educational needs (SEN) register</li> <li>• Number of children with statements of SEN or education, health and care (EHC) plan</li> <li>• Number of looked after children</li> </ul>		
<b>Actions for the new governor</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Ask your workplace about time off for governor duties (if applicable)		
Read the Governance Handbook from the Department for Education (DfE)		
Read the school's latest Ofsted report and Ofsted action plan (if appropriate)		
Look at the school website		
Research recent news items on school governance/education		
<b>Other actions [for school to add]</b>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Notes</b>

## Further Sources of Information and Support

- the DfE website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>
- the ODBE website at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/schools/governance/>
- The National Governance Association at <https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>
- Governor Hub <https://governorhub.com/#home>
- The Key for Governors <https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/>
- Governors for Schools: <https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/>
- Modern Governor <https://www.moderngovernor.com/#about>
- Local Authority links:
  - Oxfordshire: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/school-governors>
  - West Berkshire: <http://www.westberkseducation.co.uk/Services/Details/1164>
  - Buckinghamshire: <http://www.learningtrust.net/service/governor-services/>
  - Reading: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/ourschools>
  - Wokingham: <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-information-and-services/school-governors/>
  - Slough: <http://www.slough.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/governors.aspx>
  - Windsor and Maidenhead: [https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200282/school\\_governors/747/school\\_governors/5](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200282/school_governors/747/school_governors/5)
  - Bracknell Forest: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/school-governors/what-school-governors-do>
  - Milton Keynes: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/leadership-and-governance>