



18th September 2017

Dear Chair of Governors

Thank you for all the hard work and effort you continue to give to ensure that our Church Schools are wonderful places of learning, and where their founding Christian principles are upheld and are lived daily in the life of the school.

I wanted to write to you at the beginning of the new year to thank you, to welcome you back, and to outline some of the work of the Board of Education this coming year.

Our Vision

First, we are looking throughout this year to engage more fully with the Church of England Vision for Education 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' and to interpret and refine it for our own particular context. The full document can be found at on the Church of England website. The Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education think it is particularly important to do this for three reasons:

- First, we also have a unique Church School portfolio of 190 schools, with a large number of Voluntary Aided Schools (149) and currently only a small number of Academies (17).
- Second, there is a strong tradition within the Board of Education to ensure effective Christian Leadership within all our schools and academies. This is demonstrated by the fact that 98% of our schools are at least SIAMS Good.
- Third, Blackburn Diocese has adopted Vision 2026 which seeks to build healthy churches that transform communities, with a priority given to working among children, young people and schools to raise up a new generation for Christ.

We want to build on the strong foundations established by the Church of England Vision for Education, but also want to embrace the tradition and diversity of schools in the Diocese. This is done in order to present a distinctly Christian vision for education, that is positive, ambitious and transformative for our schools, our children and young people, and our communities.

Annual Governor Conference

Second, I am pleased to confirm the Annual Governors Conference will be held on the morning of **Saturday 24th February 2018** at St Cuthbert's in Fulwood, Preston. I am delighted that Bishop Julian, Bishop of Blackburn, has agreed to speak as has Mark Craig the creator of 'Thinking Governance' (thinkinggovernance.org) as part of an exciting line-up of speakers designed to challenge, engage and inform you as Governors in our schools. I can recommend this Conference to you where we will pick up on our Vision theme, and it would be wonderful if you could attend. The cost is £50 per Governing Board and booking can be done through our website www.bdeducation.org.uk

New to Governor Training

I know that membership of Governing Boards is a moveable feast, with Governors joining and leaving quite regularly. We are keen to ensure that as far as possible new Governors are able to understand their roles and responsibilities and be confident to make a meaningful contribution as quickly as possible. To that end we provide training for £25 to new Governors. Training takes place in an evening at Clayton House, and I would encourage you to point new Governors towards the session. They can be booked through our website and are currently scheduled for:

- 9th November 2017
- 13th March 2018
- 19th June 2018

Additional dates, or alternative locations may be able to be accommodated based on demand.

Website

In addition, we have revamped our Governor Website over the past few months, and hopefully it is now more user-friendly, intuitive and informative.

<http://www.bdeducation.org.uk/schools/i-am-a-governor-home>

All the forms and processes you need to nominate Foundation Governors are on the website. Also, the refreshed **Governors' Handbook** is on the site which I would recommend as a good reference point for all Governors. It also has information on buildings, Admissions and Appeals, and other areas of Governor responsibility. The website also provides a link to the full range of Governor Training Courses that we offer, including training on Admissions and Appeals, and Preparing for Inspection.

Board of Education Committees

The Board of Education has had a review of its committee structure, and has created a number of subcommittees to help support and scrutinise the work of the Board. In determining the membership of these committees we felt it would be good to have input from Chairs of Governors. Therefore, we have two vacancies for Chairs of Governors on our new School Strategy Committee. The committee will meet three times a year and cover issues such as Advisors, Service Level Agreements and School Support, Governance (recruitment, training, issues), Academisation and Strategic Developments eg Free Schools, Admissions and Appeals, School Funding and Schools within Vision 2026. If this is something you would like to consider, then please contact me for more details.

Finally, I have enclosed a couple of cards of our new Governor Prayer which was written by one of our local Clergy for their local church school. We hope that you and your Governing Board find it useful in both personally and in your corporate capacity. Please feel free to use as appropriate.

Again, thank you for your continued support and if there is anything that we can do in the Board of Education to help and assist then please do let us know.

Kind regards

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