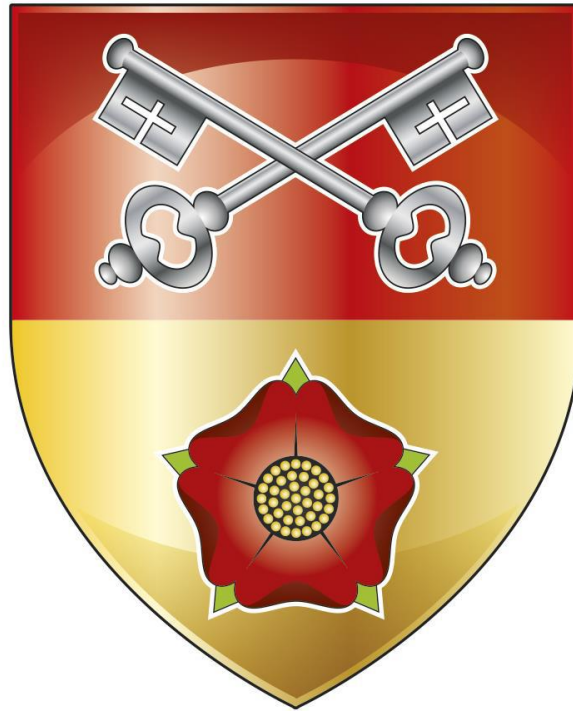


THE BLACKBURN
DIOCESAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION



Governance Handbook

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Welcome

Thank you for making the commitment to become a foundation governor in one of our Church of England schools, you join a group of around 1,100 other foundation governors, for which we are extremely grateful.

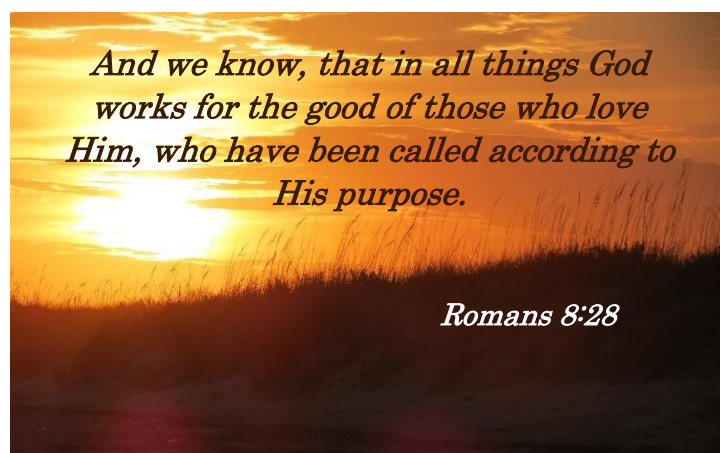
We recognise that being a foundation governor is a calling and a way of serving God in our local communities. It is to be undertaken with prayer and dedication, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are key and influential roles that can help bring the kingdom of God more fully into our world, sitting as they do at the heart of a network of relationships which includes children and young people, parents, staff, clergy, the Diocese, local authorities, DfE and agencies and organisations within the wider community.

A governor is a responsible position, and requires commitment, dedication and skill. You have joined a team of governors that have a significant role in helping to drive up standards and ensure that schools and their pupils are performing to the very best of their ability. Furthermore, as a foundation governor you have agreed to play a vital role in ensuring that the Christian principles on which our schools were founded are upheld in times of change and are lived daily in the life of the school. This begins by establishing good working relationships within the governing body and with the senior leadership of the school. These are relationships that need to be based on trust, respect and aspirations for all our pupils.

We hope this handbook gives the key information to support you in your role. We also recommend that you review the supporting documentation in the [Appendices](#) and engage with the training as outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Thank you for your commitment as you work towards providing strong governance and ensuring that the love, joy, and light of Jesus Christ shines in our schools and our pupils.

Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education



Our Diocesan Prayer

Heavenly Father, we embrace Your call for us to make disciples, to be witnesses and to grow leaders.

Give us the eyes to see Your vision, ears to hear the prompting of your Spirit and courage to follow in the footsteps of your Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Diocese of Blackburn Board of Education

The Role of the Board of Education

The Board of Education is a statutory body that exists to comply with the [DBE Measure 2021](#). The membership of the Board is set down within this measure and consists of a number of elected and ex-officio members. Elected members are both lay and ordained Diocesan Synod members and are elected for a three-year term of office. Ex-officio members include the Bishop's representative and two Archdeacons.

The Board of Education has a number of committees that oversee the areas of work within which the board operates. These include The Children's Committee, Youth Committee, Schools Committee and an Executive Committee. The Children and Youth Committees deal primarily with parish work with some school cross over, however, the Schools Committee covers areas such as curriculum, buildings, RE, Worship and school standards. The executive committee deal with staffing and finance of the Board of Education and acts as a steering group for the main Board meetings.

Christian Distinctiveness

The Board of Education has statutory responsibility for the Christian distinctiveness of Church Schools, including the worship life and ethos. In addition, the Board has responsibility for the RE curriculum in Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, with Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools following the locally agreed syllabus prescribed by Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Core Services and the Service Level Agreement

More recently, the DfE has been holding Dioceses to account on how it is supporting schools and improving standards. In response to this, the Board of Education seeks to engage with partner organisations to assist schools in improving standards. As a result, the Board offers a number of core services, free of charge, and a number of paid service level agreements to assist schools in these areas. The core services offered by the Board of Education include:

- Support with school admissions, appeals and exclusions.
- Support regarding the Christian Distinctiveness of schools.
- Liaison with Local Authorities (LA) regarding documentation to ensure that the distinctiveness of Church Schools is protected.
- Support and advice to Governors with the appointment of Headteachers, Principals, Deputy Headteachers, Vice Principals, Assistant Headteachers, and Heads of RE Departments.
- Oversight and co-ordination of paperwork with regard to the appointment of Foundation Governors. This will include: - validating and approving their appointment, checking DBS requirements are met, issuing letters of appointment, informing the LA of Foundation Governor appointments.
- Advice and support with Academy options and procedures.
- Preparing for, monitoring and evaluating Section 48 Inspection reports.

This is all part of the Service Level Agreement which also assigns a Diocesan Advisor to each school, and allows for two specific interventions and support per year as identified by the school.

Building Support

The Board of Education has statutory responsibility for buildings on behalf of site trustees, therefore through its Building Support service, a comprehensive arrangement for the development of building projects, the payment of accounts and the reclaiming of grant aid from the DfE. This is designed to

ensure that the Governing Board meets its statutory responsibilities, especially Governing Boards of Voluntary Aided schools who have responsibility for the school buildings. The Board of Education also provides a pooling system for Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) funding for those who wish to join. This service offers Governors comprehensive support with almost all of the bureaucracy associated with building work. The fact that most governing bodies have bought into this service has allowed us to ensure that “slippage” is minimized, thus maximising the amount of money available for work in schools. Governors are increasingly being asked to prepare building development plans which sit alongside the educational development plan.

The Board of Education acts on behalf of all Church Schools and any bid for maintenance or capital projects must be assessed, evaluated, prioritised, and approved by the Board. Under the Diocesan Board of Education Measure 2021, Voluntary Aided Schools cannot carry out any work on the building without the permission of the DBE. The legal costs alone for our work in supporting Governors are substantial.

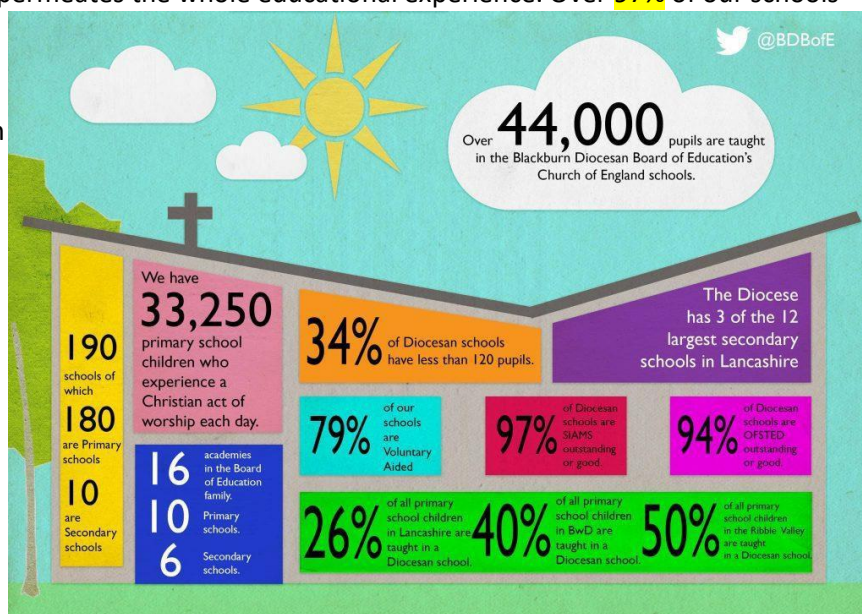
Our Family of Schools

The Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education supports a large, diverse, and high-performing family of church schools. Over 44,000 children and young people are taught in Church of England schools across our Diocese, each led by headteachers with a faith commitment. Our 180 primary schools and 10 secondary schools are wonderful communities of faith, each with the spirit of Christ shaping the learning, teaching and activities of the school, and helping them to be significant and transforming places for children and young people across our Diocese. Pupils are encouraged to engage seriously with and develop an understanding of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, and each school recognises that every child should be enabled to flourish in their potential as a child of God.

The high-quality, supportive, and encouraging learning and teaching which takes place in our schools has been recognised by external quality inspectors. Over 94% of our schools are currently rated either Outstanding or Good by OFSTED. Our schools are also subject to Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) to assess the Christian distinctiveness which must include a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum, and how the Christian ethos permeates the whole educational experience. Over 97% of our schools are currently rated as SIAMS Outstanding or Good.

In addition to our 190 Church of England and Joint Church of England/Methodist Schools, the Board of Education also has a ‘watching brief’ on 10 Methodist Primary Schools.

Of our 190 schools, 150 are Voluntary Aided, 24 are Voluntary Controlled and 16 are Academies



Introduction to Church Schools

The Distinctive Nature of Church of England Schools

There are fundamental reasons, rooted in the Bible, which have motivated centuries of Christian involvement in schooling in this country and around the world. The God of all creation is concerned with everything related to education.

Many diocesan church schools were established in the 18th and 19th century under trusts to provide education for the 'poor of the parish' with teaching according to the Church of England. 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) [website](#).

In 2016, the Church of England published a fresh articulation of its vision for education. The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. It recognises the Church of England's involvement in education over many centuries and seeks to promote educational excellence everywhere, for everyone. In Church schools within the Blackburn Diocese, the distinctly Christian foundation for this vision will be seen in leadership and governance, explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum, and also in the authentically Christian worship and ethos of those schools.

The vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people, and 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 permeates throughout:

- Wisdom
- Hope
- Community
- Dignity

The vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole community and its environment, whether national, regional or local. It is hospitable to diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. It invites collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences, and the forming of new settlements in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society and democracy, together with a healthily plural educational system. We recommend you read the whole document available [here](#).

What Does This Mean for Our School?

With the Church of England vision for education in mind, we believe that Church of England schools should:

- Embody a vision shaped by the personal faith and commitment of its leaders
- Employ a staff that understands and is committed to the school's vision
- Work towards a set of aims and objectives to ensure that this vision is achieved in the reality of the day-to-day life of the school
- Support a praying and worshipping community where distinctly Christian celebrations are integral to the learning experiences of all within the school community
- Place Religious Education at the heart of the curriculum

- Recognise the presence of God in the uniqueness of everyone and in each person's specific talents and gifts
- Encourage everyone to make a unique and valued contribution
- Develop a community open to the world in which we live and seeking the power to change it for the better
- Celebrate success and treat failure with compassion.

A good Church School will therefore offer pupils the opportunity to:

- Reflect on the importance of a system of personal belief
- Recognise the place a Christian faith has in the lives of people
- Develop a sense of wonder, awe, curiosity and mystery
- Be creative, questioning and imaginative within a broad Christian framework that recognizes the importance of experience, personal values and respect for the beliefs of others
- Recognise, respect, and celebrate cultural diversity.

Our *every*
vision for *Child*
Life in *all its fullness;*
 Our prayer for
every heart,
 The **will** to
 make it
so.

Differences Between Categories of Church Schools and Academies

	Voluntary Aided (VA)	Voluntary Controlled (VC)	Academies
Building owned by	Trustees	Trustees	Trustees
Building work Information HERE including two videos explaining key processes. See Appendix 4	New building and repairs are the responsibility of the governors (supported by grant from the Education Funding Agency up to 90% of approval expenditure). Permission is needed from the Board of Education for any capital work.	All replacement, repairs and other building costs fall on the LA. Permission is needed from the Board of Education for any capital work.	All building costs and repairs are the responsibility of the Academy Trust.
Playing fields	Playing fields are usually provided by the LA.	Playing fields are usually provided by the LA.	Playing fields are in long-leasehold ownership for the Academy Trust
Composition of governing body	Foundation governors must be in the majority by two.	Foundation governors are in the minority.	In academies, the structure of the Governing Board will be decided by the academy trust and depend on agreements made with the Secretary of State.
Staff	Employed by the Governing Body, usually paid by the LA. Governors may seek evidence of Christian commitment from applications for teaching posts.	Appointed by the Governing Body, employed and usually paid by the LA.	The Academy Trust is the employer of all staff and paid by payroll provider which may be the LA. (If previously a VA school before converting to an academy the Trust may seek evidence of Christian commitment from applications for teaching posts.)
Collective Worship Information HERE	Distinctively Christian; reflects the Anglican tradition and can include worship in the parish church.	Distinctively Christian; reflects the Anglican tradition and can include worship in the parish church.	Distinctively Christian; reflects the Anglican tradition and can include worship in the parish church.
Admissions Admissions Code	The Governing Body determines the policy and make the decisions in accordance with the	The LA is responsible for admissions.	The Academy Trust is the admission authority. The policy is determined and

	requirements of the Admissions Code.		implemented by the Governors (directors).
Ofsted Inspections Details HERE	School is inspected under framework. Ofsted are NOT responsible for RE therefore cannot carry out a 'deep dive' in RE.	School is inspected under framework.	School is inspected under framework. (If previously a VA school before converting to an academy Ofsted are NOT responsible for inspecting RE and therefore cannot conduct a 'deep dive' in RE.)
SIAMS (Section 48 Inspection) Details HERE	School is inspected regarding Church School distinctiveness. RE is inspected and a separate grade given.	School is inspected regarding Church School distinctiveness.	School is inspected regarding Church School distinctiveness. Schools are inspected on the basis of their categorisation before converting to an academy e.g., VA or VC.

Composition and Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Board includes representative governors made up of elected parents, local authority (LA) representatives, staff representatives, foundation governors and (if desired) members co-opted by the Governing Board for their skills and/or experience. Schools may also have associate members of the Governing Board.

Individual governors have no power or right to act on behalf of the Governing Board except where the whole Governing Board has delegated a specific function to that individual, or where regulations specify that a function is to be exercised in a particular way. The Governing Board is legally liable for all actions taken in its name by individuals or committees to which it has delegated functions. The Governing Board should therefore ensure that decisions to delegate specific responsibilities are properly minuted and recorded.

Each LA maintained school's Governing Board's constitution is written up in a legal document called the Instrument of Government. This sets out the number of members in each category and in a church school contains an ethos statement which confirms that the school has a Christian foundation. A governing body has strategic oversight of a school, with the headteacher responsible for the operational elements of school life. In their professional capacity the headteacher will offer the governing body advice on the implementation of the governing body's strategic plan. Headteachers will formulate aims and objectives, policies and targets for the governing body to consider adopting; and to report to the governing body on progress.

The Department for Education (DfE) has a comprehensive handbook which outlines the responsibilities of school governing bodies. They define effective governance as:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction

- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

All governors are strongly recommended to read this handbook which is available [HERE](#).

All governors must abide by a Code of Conduct, which incorporates the Nolan Principles of Public Life, (available [HERE](#))/ School may adopt the code developed by the DBE (available [HERE](#)) the National Governance Association (available [HERE](#))

Foundation Governors

The Governing Board includes foundation governors, some of which are nominated by local PCCs, and some by Parish Priests, and appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education.. In a few instances, foundation governors are also appointed by charitable boards connected with the original foundation of the school. Incumbents of parishes with a church school may serve as an ex-officio foundation governor, or they may nominate someone else to serve in their place. The usual term of office is four years. All new foundation governors must complete the online induction training with the information provided in their appointment letter.

Foundation governors should also seek to maintain and develop the links with the local church. Being a foundation governor in a Church School is a vital Christian ministry. It involves time, energy and a willingness to become involved in the life of the school on a regular basis. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Governing Board the duties to promote the well-being of pupils at the school, promote community cohesion and have regard to any relevant children and young people's plan.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

Foundation governors should have a particular concern for the religious education and collective worship in the school, and in making financial decisions should recognise that religious education deserves full resourcing support. They should ensure that RE and Collective Worship is regularly discussed at governing body meetings (or at an appropriate sub-committee meeting) and should ensure they are monitoring both of these areas of school life in order to triangulate information received from school leader to ensure a robust discussion on these crucial areas of Church School life.



School Ethos

Foundation governors have a special responsibility for securing that the character of the school as a Church of England voluntary school is preserved and developed and that the school is led in accordance with the provisions of the school's ethos statement. For maintained schools, this is contained in the Instrument of Government and all schools have access to this through their local authority. It relates to the school's Christian foundation and for church schools sets the context in which governors carry out their responsibilities. In short, foundation governors must ensure that:

- the Christian ethos of the school is preserved and developed.
- the school provides an act of collective worship for all children every day, and that it is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England.
- the school uses an appropriate Religious Education syllabus.
- the School Development Plan includes strategy for the development of areas reflected in the SIAMS inspection schedule.
- the DBE (and, where appropriate, the District Schools Officer) is informed when head, deputy and assistant headteacher posts become available.
- the school and church work together appropriately.

The ethos statement which has been adopted by most Church of England schools is:

"Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils."

The above statement serves a specific purpose as part of a legal document rooting the school in its Christian foundation; it is only found in those schools which have a religious character. All schools will, however, develop their own ethos and in broader terms it may be defined as the prevailing character, tone, and spirit of an institution.

Schools exist in a changing society and are required to respond appropriately to its needs and expectations. The response of church schools will reflect their Christian foundation, but at the same time they will be mindful of the diversity of culture and faith which exists in society. All schools, urban and rural, primary, and secondary should draw upon this diversity creatively and take the opportunity to celebrate the richness that it brings. The principles which govern the school's response to society's changing face are those which make for a loving, caring, accepting community that acknowledges the unique value of everyone both within the school community and society at large. Church schools do not have the monopoly on loving and caring relationships; nevertheless, the church school is institutionally rooted in the Christian faith and is thus different from any other school. In seeking to preserve the character of their schools, foundation governors will want to contribute to sustaining, developing, and nurturing the school's Christian ethos.

Governors of VA schools, through their legal right to appoint Christian staff and set the RE and worship policy, may create an institution in which the Christian faith manifests through every aspect of school life. Other types of church schools also aim to develop a corporate life which attempts to glorify God in developing the full human potential of each person, whether pupil, member of staff, parent, or governor. Then the school's ethos of love and care will be the foundation of its aims in educating its pupils to make their proper contribution to society.

Church School Distinctiveness

SIAMS Inspections

Foundation governors are responsible for appointing a person to undertake Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) - Section 48 inspections. However, in practice and to minimise the workload for schools, the inspection is organised by officers of the Church of England Education Office. Foundation governors should:

- ensure they understand the current SIAMS requirements through DBE and national training
- read the relevant documents, available [HERE](#) in relation to SIAMS
- read their schools' most recent SIAMS report which should be published on the school's website.

SIAMS reports provide a different but complementary perspective on Church of England schools in relation to Ofsted's findings.

The date of the SIAMS inspection is based on the outcome of the previous inspection. For schools previously graded 'good' or higher it will be at least every 5 years and for schools previously graded less than good, it will be between 3 and 5 years. The Church of England Education Office publishes a list each summer term with the schools that are likely to be inspected in the following academic year (available [HERE](#)).

The purposes of the inspection are:

- to provide an evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Church of England school for the Governing Board, the school, the parents, the diocese, the Church of England Education Office and the wider public.
- to meet the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools which have a religious character.
- to verify the outcome of the Church of England school's self-evaluation.
- to make a significant contribution to improvement in Church of England schools.

Governors will be involved in:

- the school's self - evaluation as a church school.
- supporting the headteacher and staff in developing the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- the development of a Christian based mission statement.
- the development of a collective worship policy.
- ensuring that RE is viewed as a central focus in school.
- ensuring that all policies take into account the school's Church foundation and that parents are made visibly aware of the school's church school status (e.g. external signage, prospectus).
- the inspection day through support of the school and in discussions with the inspector.

Christian Ethos Groups and Committees

The Diocese of Blackburn recommends that an Ethos committee is established as part of the governing body sub- committee structure. However, as the diocese serves a variety of schools and academies some models will work better than others, depending on the context of the school or academy.

An Ethos Group is not necessarily a committee of the governing body, with delegated authority, as there may be members who are not governors. Membership includes a local church representative, the member of staff responsible for Religious Education and collective worship, a parent governor, and a foundation governor. The group reports back to full governors through minutes and feedback from one of the governor members.

It is also possible for this group to be a committee, with delegated powers from the full governing body, with a slightly different make up. In this case, the members would all be governors, or associate members of the governing body, with a similar make up to the group above. This committee can represent all church schools in a federation and would need to ensure that there is representation from each Church school (and possibly other schools) in a federation.

In [Appendix 7](#) there are some suggested models for an Ethos Committee and an Ethos Group. Statements from each of the models could be selected and adapted to form the basis of the terms of reference for your school(s).

Appendices

1. Training and Governance Skills Audit

Training

All new foundation governors must complete the online induction training with the information provided in their appointment letter. Foundation governors should also engage with relevant training provided by the school's local authority, this will support governors to understand the broad range of responsibilities they have.

The Board of Education is committed to the on-going training and development of our foundation governors. We offer initial induction training as well as continued training courses, with additional support for Chairs and Vice Chairs of governing bodies. Many of our courses are run in the early evening from our central offices in Blackburn, although we will come and deliver training to a full Governing Board on specific issues. There is a small charge for these courses.

All our courses are available to view and book [HERE](#).

Governance Skills Audit

It is good practice for every member of the school governing body to complete a skills audit every autumn term. This can provide information on the development and training individual governors need as well as give the Chair an overview of the strengths and development areas of the governing body.

There are different skills audit available from NGA and other providers, we recommend using the DBE version as it encompasses Church school distinctiveness which does not always feature in other audits.

You can access the audit on our website [HERE](#)

2. Useful Links

Below is a list of documents and websites that governors will find useful in supporting them in their role:

Church of England Education Office:

- [SIAMS documentation](#)
- [Church of England Vision for Education](#)
- [Unlocking Gifts Report](#)
- [Valuing All God's Children](#)
- [Fruit of the Spirit – Character education](#)

[DfE: Competency Framework for Governance](#)

[DfE: Governance Handbook](#)

[DfE: Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools](#)

[DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#)

[DfE: Pupil Premium](#)

[DfE: Statutory Policies for Schools and Academy Trusts](#)

[DfE: Schools Financial Benchmarking Compare your school's income and expenditure with other schools in England.](#)

[DfE: School Resource Management - Information, tools, training, and guidance to help with schools' financial planning and resource management.](#)

[DfE: What schools must publish online](#)

[NGA: Tools focused on evaluating racial diversity](#)

[NGA: What governing bodies and school leaders should expect from each other](#)

[Ofsted Inspection Handbook](#)

3. Chair, Governance Professional and Link Governors

Chair

The DfE Governance Handbook 4.3 outlines the role of the chair as being responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the board and has a vital role in setting the highest expectations for professional standards of governance. It is the chair's role to give the board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core strategic functions. A chair should encourage the board to work together as an effective team, building their skills, knowledge and experience. They need to ensure that everyone is actively contributing relevant skills and experience, participating constructively in meetings, and actively involved in the work of any committees. It is their role to make sure everyone understands what is expected of them and receives appropriate induction, training and development. It is for the chair to have honest conversations, as necessary, if anyone appears not to be committed or is ineffective in their role.

The document 'Leading governors: The role of chair of governors in schools and academies' which details the requirements of the role in more detail. Available [HERE](#). The 'Competency framework for governance' also gives information on the responsibilities of the chair, it is available [HERE](#).

Governance Professional or Clerk to Governors

All academy trusts and maintained schools must appoint a clerk to their governing board as set out in their articles of association or in regulations, as appropriate. These legal documents define a specific set of functions and duties for the clerk, but do not provide a full description of professional clerking which is about ensuring the efficient functioning of the board by providing:

- administrative and organisational support
- guidance to ensure that the board works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences for noncompliance
- and advice on procedural matters relating to the operation of the board.

Professional clerking may also involve designing structures and procedures for the sound governance of the organisation - particularly in larger and more complex organisations. Professional clerks to governing boards should carry out their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles). They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion, and should understand the impact of effective governance on the quality of education and on outcomes for all children and young people.

The DfE have produced a document titled 'Clerking competency framework', available [HERE](#)

Link Governors

Statutory guidance for all schools states that schools should have link governors for:

- Safeguarding, including the Prevent duty, information [HERE](#)
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), information [HERE](#)
- Careers education and guidance (secondary schools), information [HERE](#)

Governors appointed to these roles **must** attend relevant training from appropriate bodies e.g., Local Authority, Governors for Schools, The Key, National Governors Association.

The DBE also recommends link governors for

- Pupil Premium
- Specific elements of the school development plan
- Collective worship (a Foundation Governor would usually take this role)
- RE (a Foundation Governor would usually take this role)
- Wellbeing, information [HERE](#)
- Training, information [HERE](#)

4. Buildings and Their Upkeep – VA Schools

There are certain statutory requirements of Voluntary Aided School Governing Boards with regards to buildings. These include:

Securing permission for any works undertaken on the school building involving governor liability.

The 2021 Diocesan Board of Education Measure made Governors of Voluntary Aided schools responsible for all aspects of the buildings. Governors are therefore required to consult the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education, and seek its written permission, for any work on the school building which involves governor liability. This permission must be in place before any work is undertaken.

Effective Management of the Devolved Formula Capital

Governing Boards need to confirm annually that their Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) has been spent in accordance with the legal framework for such funds. This includes ensuring there is Diocesan approval for any works as stipulated under the 1991 DBE Measure. Schools may be asked to provide receipts and proof that Governors have contributed the 10% and that the relevant VAT has been paid and it has not been recovered by the LA. The EFA requests an annual return and an audit sample each April.

In order to help schools with the administration of DFC, the Diocesan Board of Education operates a system whereby schools can lodge their DFC with the Board which will then make the necessary arrangements for approvals under the 1991 Measure, pay all invoices, check that all regulations have been satisfied, and annually prepare all the documentation required by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The Board of Education also has the ability to pool DFC so that there is a degree of protection from loss of DFC under the 3-year rule.

Effective Insurance arrangements

School Governing Boards are responsible for having effective and comprehensive insurance in place for their school buildings.

5. Key Partners in Church Schools

Exceptional Church of England Schools work in partnership. They belong and are integral members of a number of different communities and families, and governors are called to help create, build, and strengthen partnership working. These partners include:

Pupils

Schools exist for children and young people. Although this may appear to be an obvious statement, governing bodies could lose sight of this amid their myriad of duties and responsibilities.

Jesus took a little child whom he set by his side and then he said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me: and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me.'

(Luke 9:47-48)

In law, a governing body has general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. In Church of England schools, governing bodies have a responsibility to see that children are supported and helped in developing their faith. To do this, governors need to understand the nature of the school's population, its diversity and its challenges and, in their monitoring role, observe the quality of relationships and opportunities for prayer and worship.

Governing bodies are now required to seek the views of pupils in the development and management of the school.

Department for Education (DfE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

This is the current title for the government department with responsibility for education in England. The Secretary of State, who has extensive powers in relation to all schools, including voluntary aided and voluntary controlled Church schools and academies, heads the department.

The Secretary of State is responsible for the promotion of education through the introduction of Acts of Parliament (Primary Legislation). These Acts govern the Secretary of State's powers to make regulations relating to various aspects of education (Secondary Legislation).

The regulations determine to a large extent how schools are governed; they include the National Curriculum and assessment, target setting, and the requirement for governors and head teachers to make information available on the educational provision and standards in the school.

The DfE supports governors in the application of regulations through issuing guidance documents and Codes of Practice, for example, guidance documents on Pupil Inclusion, Safeguarding Children, Extended Schools, Admissions to Schools, Appeals and Special Education Needs. Their guidance documents are available [HERE](#). The DfE is responsible for some grants to support building projects in voluntary aided schools. It is responsible for all capital grants to academies.

The Secretary of State has power to intervene to prevent governors of voluntary aided schools and academies acting unreasonably, to settle disputes between voluntary aided schools and a local authority and to act as the last stage in complaints made about Governing Boards.

The DfE has a special relationship with the governors of academies as funding for these comes direct from the government.

Local Authority (LA, formerly known as the local education authority)

The local authority (LA) is responsible for organising education and overseeing the provision of school places suitable to the age and aptitude of all children within the area. The LA controls the overall budget for education and allocates budgets to maintained schools through a fair funding formula implemented following consultation with schools and other parties. The Diocese of Blackburn has schools in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Wigan local authorities.

The LA has a duty to support schools to achieve continuous improvement and the relationship between schools and the local authority is based upon intervention in inverse proportion to success and maximum delegation of funding and responsibility to schools.

The LA is required to monitor school performance and the governing body of a voluntary aided and voluntary controlled school is accountable to the local authority for the way the school is run. If a local authority feels a school is demonstrating cause for concern it has a duty to inform the governing body, headteacher, the Diocese and other stakeholders. The LA should offer appropriate support and has the power to intervene to ensure the school can raise standards, through such measures as issuing a formal notice of concern, withdrawing the delegated budget, appointing additional governors to the governing body or dismissing the governing body. Local authorities also have responsibility for other aspects of children's welfare such as special educational needs, school attendance, school transport, educational psychology, and inclusion.

The local authority can notify the sponsors or the trust of an academy if it judges there are concerns regarding the performance of the academy.

The role of the local authority is changing and whilst most of the statutory duties required of them remain the same, most local authorities will commission the services required, rather than provide them directly.

Staff

The governing body of a voluntary aided school, academy or Multi-Academy Trust is the employer of staff and must have regard to employment law in the recruitment, appointment, appraisal and, if applicable, dismissal of a member of staff. The Local Authority is the employer at a Voluntary Controlled school.

In Church of England Schools in the Diocese, governors may give preference to headteachers and senior leaders whose religious opinions and practice are in accordance with the teachings of the Church of England and can provide an active faith reference. In a voluntary aided school, the Diocesan authority should have the same advisory rights as the local authority with respect to teacher appointments and dismissals. Diocesan policy requires Governing Boards to liaise with the Diocese prior to advertising the posts of headteacher and deputy headteacher

Parents and Carers

Church of England schools should support parents and carers in their role as the first educators of their children. It must be welcoming to them and encourage them to participate in the life of the

school. It should guard against judging those who, for whatever reason, find this difficult. Sensitive encouragement is essential in giving Christian witness.

It is important that when relationships between the parent or carer and the school are impaired or break down, all efforts are made towards reconciliation. The partnership between the home, school and parish should be a recognised strength of the Church school.

Parishes

The partnership of home, school and parish is central to the Church of England school, and it should be that the school is seen as an integral part of parish ministry. There has been a long tradition in the Diocese of co-operation between schools and parishes.

The quality of relationship between the school and parish priest is very important and governing bodies should ensure that the parish priest is appropriately involved in the life of the school.

The Wider Community

The mission of the Church of England school takes its mission from that of the Church as a whole: it is to reach out and be a witness to Christ and the Church. Governing bodies will need to ensure the school is promoted within the wider community and a good reputation is established. There is an increasing demand on schools to develop links with business, the voluntary sector and other organisations. Often governors have personal contacts and experience to contribute. It is important that when links are made there is an understanding of the aims and mission of the school.

The wider community also includes any part of the world in which our actions can make a difference. Church of England schools should be encouraged to continue supporting the work of the Church especially in poorer parts of the world.

6. School Monitoring Visits

It is vital that governors get to know their school in order that decisions made at governors' meetings can be earthed in first-hand knowledge of the school at work. It is helpful to read the school website and other documentation about the school but there is no substitute for a school visit.

However, any visit must be carefully planned in consultation with the headteacher and any member of staff whose class you are to visit. Governors must be clear that their role is not that of an inspector: ask questions, of course, at appropriate times, but remember that visits should be viewed as an opportunity for getting alongside the head, staff and pupils as well as an opportunity to fulfil the governor's role in monitoring.

Some governors find it difficult to take time off work to visit their school. Under employment law, employees are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to carry out their duties as a governor. There needs to be agreement between the employee and employer as to what 'reasonable time off' means in practice. It will be necessary to consider the amount of time needed to carry out the duties; the effects of an employee's absence on the employer's business; and whether time off is given to the employee for other activities. An employer is not obliged to give time off with pay.

There are four main rules for an effective school visit:

Clear Agreed Aims	Clear Channels of Communication
Governing Boards should be clear about why governors need to visit and draw up a planned programme of visits; individual governors must know why they are visiting the school.	Visits must be arranged in consultation with the headteacher and other staff. Feedback is an important part of any visit. Any concerns must always be discussed with the headteacher in the first instance.
Careful Planning	Empathy
Governors should be as fully prepared as possible; read relevant policy documents and talk to more experienced governors and the headteacher.	If you are visiting a classroom, try to put yourself in the place of the teacher, remember that you are not there as an inspector, sharing your anxieties beforehand may help to improve the partnership.

Governors planning their first visit should consider the following:

- going with an experienced governor who is used to visiting, or at least talking to other governors who have visited the school
- accepting any offer from the headteacher, staff or pupils of a guided tour of the school
- finding out what material is available and reading it before your visit, e.g., school prospectus, previous governors' annual reports, school policies on more general aspects of school life, e.g., behaviour policy
- if you are new to "education" your headteacher may be able to supply you with information on the particular stage of education which concerns you, whether nursery, infant, junior, or secondary.

When arranging a visit, always make an appointment with the headteacher or a member of their SLT if this has been agreed in advance, and plan with him/her what you will do during your visit. You cannot expect to learn everything about the school in one visit, concentrating on one aspect, which interests you, is a good starting point.

If you are visiting a class, make sure you liaise closely with the teacher, you will need to be flexible and respond to situations in the classroom as they arise. Make sure that the teacher is happy for you to sit with the children and to talk to them before you do so.

Depending on the type of visit, you may wish to answer some questions for yourself, below are some examples:

- How many pupils are there in a class and are they overcrowded?
- Are the pupils working alone or in groups?
- Are there enough equipment/books to go round?
- Are all pupils occupied on the same task?
- What is the atmosphere like in class and corridors - is it quiet/calm or noisy?
- Is there an adequate, comfortable staff room?
- Are there attractive displays on the walls?
- Is the library well stocked, with a diverse range of genres and authors, is it well used?
- Is the Christian distinctives of the school apparent when you walk around?

After your visit, always thank the headteacher, staff and pupils for their time, it is not always easy to cope with visitors on a busy day. If you visited a particular class, you may wish to write to the pupils and class teacher. In addition:

- Before you leave the school (or shortly afterwards) have a conversation with the headteacher around your general impressions
- Write a brief report, sharing with the headteacher / appropriate staff member before it is circulated for inclusion in governor meeting papers.
- If you have any serious misgivings or questions you must discuss these first with the headteacher and chair of governors.
- If you are presenting a report based on a class or departmental visit, the class teacher or head of department should be invited to the meeting when the report is discussed. Always inform an individual if they have been named in a report before the report is circulated.

7. Models for Christian Ethos Groups and Committees

Recognising their historic foundation, Church schools will preserve and develop their Christian character and distinctiveness in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. The Diocese of Blackburn recommends that an Ethos committee is established to ensure this.

There are several models which can be employed to do this. Governors can establish an Ethos group which could include a local church representative, the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship, a parent governor and a foundation governor. This group is not necessarily a committee of the governing body, with delegated authority, as there are members which are not governors. However, they do report back to full governors through minutes and feedback from one of the governor members. This model may work better in a federation with several church schools where each school needs a local group to support its ethos and Christian distinctiveness.

Suggested below are models for an ethos committee and a group. Statements from each of the two models could be selected and adapted to form the basis of the terms of reference for your school(s).

An Example an Ethos Committee

Terms of Reference

The main purposes of this committee are:

- to preserve and develop the Christian character and distinctiveness of the school
- to ensure the pastoral care of the children and staff including how the school meets the needs of learners through its distinctive Christian character and teaching
- to promote Community Cohesion including the relationship between the Church and the school(s)
- to review and develop Collective Worship
- to review and develop Religious Education
- to monitor and take forward the SIAMS action plan

Suggested Membership:

There shall be no fewer than (suggested minimum of 4) members including:

- the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship,

- a foundation governor
- the executive head (or heads in co-headship model)
- a parent governor
- an associate member may be included, e.g., a local church representative.

Meetings

The committee will meet at least once per term and at other times as required.

The committee will have the same procedural arrangements for the scheduling of meetings and circulation of agendas and papers as the full governing body.

Reporting

The committee shall present a report on its activity to the full governing body meeting each term to include:

- all decisions taken under delegated powers
- a monitoring report on progress in addressing the SIAMS action plan

The terms of reference and membership of the committee will be reviewed annually by the full governing body at its first meeting of the school year.

An Example of an Ethos Group

Terms of Reference

The Group shall make such recommendations as required to ensure the maintenance and development of the Christian Ethos of (name of school or schools).

The main purposes of this group are:

- to preserve and develop the Christian character and distinctiveness of the school
- to nurture the spiritual dimension of children and staff in accordance with the Mission Statement and Aims
- to review and develop Collective Worship
- to review and develop Religious Education
- to advise the governing body on establishing, maintaining and developing a high quality of communication between the school and the parents, the church and the wider community to oversee pastoral care of children, staff, governors and the wider community.

Membership:

There shall be no fewer than (suggested 6) members including

- a local church representative
- the head of teaching and learning (or head in a co-headship model)
- the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship
- a parent governor
- a foundation governor

The lead governor/chair will provide a report of recommendations to the Full Governing Body at each meeting.

8. Acronyms

A level Advanced level examinations
ACPC Area Child Protection Committee
AST Advanced Skills Teacher
AT Attainment Target (in National Curriculum)
ATL Association of Teachers and Lecturers
AWPU Age Weighted Pupil Unit (Number)
BME Black and Minority Ethnic
BSA Basic Skills Agency
BSP Behaviour Support Plan
BSS Behaviour Support Service
BTEC Business and Technology Education Council
CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CAP Common Application Process
CAT Curriculum Attainment Target
CDT Craft, Design and Technology
CP Child protection
CPD Continuing Professional Development
CPS Classroom Teachers Pay Spine
DBE Diocesan Board of Education
DBE Design & Built Environment
DBS Disclosure and Barring Service
D&T Design and Technology
DEI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DfE Department for Education
EAL English as an Additional Language
EBacc English Baccalaureate, a particular set of GCSE
EBD Emotional and Behavioural Difficulty
ECT Early Career Teacher (a teacher who are in the first 2 years of their career)
ECF Early Career Framework (a framework to support ECTs)
EEF Education Endowment Foundation
EFL English as a Foreign Language
EO Equal Opportunities
EP Educational Psychologist
ESOL English for Speakers of Other Languages
EWO Education Welfare Officer
EYFS Early Years Foundation Stage
FAP Fair Access Protocol
FE Further Education
FFT Fischer Family Trust (a charity that provides estimates of pupil performance)
FMS Financial Management System
FOI Freedom of Information (Act)
FS Foundation Stage
FSA Financial Services Authority
FSM Free School Meals
FTE Full Time Equivalent
G&T Gifted and Talented
GCE A General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
GCE AS General Certificate of Education Advanced Supplementary
GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education
GLD Good level of development (an Early Years judgement)
GNVQ General National Vocational Qualification

GTC General Teaching Council
H&S Health and Safety
HE Higher Education
HEFC Higher Education Funding Council
HMCI Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HMI Her Majesty's Inspector(ate)
HSE Health and Safety Executive
HT Headteacher
ICT Information and Communications Technology
IIP Investors in People
INSET In-service Education and Training
IT Information Technology
ITT Initial Teacher Training
KS1 Key Stage 1 Years 1 -2 (5 - 7-year-olds)
KS2 Key Stage 2 Years 3-6 (8- 11 year olds)
KS3 Key Stage 3 Years 7-9 (12–14-year-olds)
KS4 Key Stage 4 Years 10-11 (15- 16 year olds)
LA Local Authority
LADO Local Authority Designated Officer
LAC Looked After Children
LAP Local Area Partnership
LLDD Learner with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities
MAT Multi Academy Trust
MFL Modern Foreign Languages
MIND National Association for Mental Health
MIS Management Information System MLD Moderate Learning Difficulty
NAHT National Association of Headteachers
NC National Curriculum
NCPTA National Conference of Parent Teacher Associations
NCT Non-contact time
NCT National Curriculum Tests
NCVQ National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEET Not in Education, Employment or Training
NFER National Federation for Educational Research
NGA National Governors Association
NoR Number on Roll
NPQH National Professional Qualification for Headship
NPQSL National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders
NPQLTD National Professional Qualification for Leaders of Teacher Development
NPQLBC National Professional Qualification for Leaders of Behaviour and Culture
NPQLT National Professional Qualification for Leaders of Teaching
NQT Newly Qualified Teacher (Now referred to as ECT)
NVQ National Vocational Qualifications
OCR Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
OFSTED Office for Standards in Education
PAN Planned Admission Number
PE Physical Education
PEX Permanent Exclusion from school
PGCE Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PIP Performance Improvement Plan
PRC Pupil Referral Centre
PRP Performance Related Pay

PRU Pupil Referral Unit
PSHE Personal, Social and Health Education
PTA Parent Teacher Association
PTR Pupil Teacher Ratio
QA Quality Assurance
QAA Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QTPS Qualified Teachers Pay Spine
QTS Qualified Teacher Status
RE Religious Education
SACRE Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SATs Standard Assessment Task/Test
SCR Single Central Record
SDP School Development Plan
SEF School self-evaluation form
SEN Special Educational Needs
SENCO Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SIAMS Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools
SIMS Schools Information Management System
SIP School Improvement Partner or School Improvement Plan
SLA Service Level Agreement
SLD Severe Learning Difficulty
SM Special Measures
SMSC Spiritual Moral Social Cultural
SMT Senior Management Team
SoD Scheme of Delegation
SoW Scheme of Work
STRB School Teachers' Review Body
TEFL Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TES Times Educational Supplement
TP Teachers' Pensions
UCAS University and Colleges Admissions Service
ULN Unique Learner Number
UPN Unique Pupil Number
URN Unique reference Number
VA Voluntary Aided
VC Voluntary Controlled
Y1, Y2 etc Year 1, Year 2 etc