

## **GOVERNANCE GUIDANCE**

### **ROLE OF A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR**

#### **Introduction - The importance of governors**

Our vision is to promote educational excellence everywhere for everyone, reflecting and delivering the key messages described in the *Church of England Vision for Education; Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (GS 2039)*; July 2016.

The school vision has life in all its fullness (John 10:10) at its heart, embracing the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people equipping pupils and teachers with the capacity to wrestle with the big questions of meaning such as ‘Who am I?’, ‘Why am I here?’, ‘What do I desire?’ and ‘How then shall I live?’. It is about ‘educating the whole person’ - what the 1988 Education Reform Act sees as physical and intellectual development united with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

In short, our aim is to secure transformational outcomes for young people by combining academic rigour with a rounded approach to personal development.

The governing body is a vital part of the leadership of any school and Ofsted is increasing its focus on inspecting the quality of governance in schools. The governing body role in developing diocesan schools as church schools is also scrutinised during the Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) process.

One of the key strands of a SIAMS inspection is Vision and Leadership, which feeds into the single inspection question of “How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? Hence, governors should have a detailed, strategic knowledge of their school and how its distinctive Christian vision permeates the operational functions, led by the headteacher.

It follows that governors, the headteacher and staff should work together to realise the shared Christian vision for the school community.

## **I - Principles of public life**

All governors should follow the [7 principles of public life](#) published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and based upon the 'Nolan' principles (gov.uk 31 May 1995)

### **1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## 2 - The role of a governor and the role of a foundation governor

The role of a governor<sup>1</sup> is to contribute to the work of the governing board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

As part of the governing board team, **all governors** are expected to:

1) Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board meetings which determine:

- the vision and ethos of the school;
- clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
- that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
- the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
- the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies.

2) Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:

- agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
- considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
- asking challenging questions of school leaders;
- ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
- ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
- acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority;
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/e1d09ad8-281b-40f9-bbb4-576ea4aa475a/Governor-RD.pdf> Governor Role Description - NGA – Welcome to Governance 10<sup>th</sup> Edition

3) Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (continuing professional development), suitable premises, and that the way in which the resources are used has a positive impact.

4) When required, serve on panels of governors to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;
- appraise the headteacher;
- set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff;
- hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;
- hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

In order to perform the role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events;
- attend meetings (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting;
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school;
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

**Foundation governors** also play a core role in ensuring that a church school's deeply Christian character, serving those of all faiths and none, is well understood and promoted. This responsibility is carried by all governors in a church school and includes:

- preserving the links between church, school and diocese;
- ensuring that diocesan education policy is upheld and promoted;
- ensuring that suitable training for foundation governors is accessed on a regular basis;
- ensuring that collective worship and religious education (RE) at the school are appropriately monitored;
- ensuring that collective worship and religious education at the school follow the appropriate guidelines and/or syllabus;
- keeping abreast of changes to the RE Statement for Entitlement or the Agreed Syllabus for RE in the Local Authority in which the school is situated;
- bringing to the attention of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) any matters requiring external support regarding the school;
- ensuring that the deeply Christian vision of the school is embedded and promoted throughout its community and is reflected in its policies and protocols, curriculum, activities and relationships;
- ensuring that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school, its staff and the wider community reflect distinctive Christian values;
- taking an active role in the SIAMS process.

The responsibility of the Governing Body is collective and foundation governors have the same general responsibilities as other governors:

- to have strategic oversight of the school;
- to monitor pupils' achievement and attainment;
- to oversee teaching and learning;
- to review staffing patterns;
- to oversee finances;
- to develop a detailed knowledge of the school's educational vision;
- to be supportive of the school, its headteacher and staff;
- to develop a knowledge of key data and information;
- to carry out focussed visits;
- to attend meetings of the Governing Body and any committees to which they are appointed.

Should you have any further questions or queries regarding the appointment of foundation governors, then please do not hesitate to contact the Diocese of Ely Education Team on [education@elydiocese.org](mailto:education@elydiocese.org)