



Roles and Responsibilities of Foundation Governors

This document is issued by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) to advise people who are considering nomination as *either* Foundation Governors on the Full Governing Body (FGB) of a maintained (VA or VC Church School) or a full Governing Body of a Single Academy Trust or the Local Governing Body (LGB) of an Academy within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). All nominations are scrutinised by the DBE's Supporting Church Schools Committee. Foundation Governors are expected to act in the best interests of the school, following the guidance given below. Members of LGBs in MATs are answerable to the Directors/Trustees for their actions.

The role of the Foundation Governor includes the same duties as other Governing Body members. These can be summarised as a general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement, by setting the strategic direction of the school, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluating school performance – in essence to:

- be a regularly attending member of the FGB/LGB, and willing to serve on committees
- conduct all school related business in a professional manner and in line with the school, academy trust and DBE codes of conduct
- act as a “critical friend” offering support and appropriate challenge to the Head Teacher and school leaders
- support the work of the school
- adopt policies to achieve aims and objectives of the school
- have time to visit the school and get to know staff and children
- preserve, develop and safeguard the Christian Ethos and religious character of the school and uphold the principles of the Trust Deed
- understand and consider the issues facing the school without bias
- observe confidentiality

The FGB/LGB may identify specific skills, (such as financial or personnel management ability) which they are currently lacking and need to address through new appointments. A skills audit is helpful in showing any additional knowledge, skills and experience that would be beneficial.

Governance is about more than attending meetings – governors need to be able to dedicate enough time to get to know the school/academy and its staff. Many are asked to take an overview of a specific curriculum area, year group or key stage and make reports to the FGB/LGB.

The responsibility of the FGB/LGB is collective. Governors do not have the authority to act individually, unless instructed by the whole governing body. All governors have equal rights and responsibilities, and are not expected to be ‘experts’. However, each governor will bring to bear their own skills and experience of life on the many issues presented to them.

In addition to their generic role as governors, foundation governors should undertake the following activities:

- Report back to the Parish Church Council regularly on the work of the school with particular regard to the development of its Christian foundation
- ensure that the School Development Plan includes strategy for the development areas in respect of the school’s church school status
- be prepared to offer challenge and support to the school and parish as they strengthen their links
- ensure the school is regularly promoted in the parish magazine/newsletter
- undertake appropriate training e.g. Diocesan training for foundation governors

Foundation Governors should play an active part in supporting the Head Teacher in evaluating the school as a Church school. When SIAMS inspections take place foundation governors will be interviewed to ensure that they are fulfilling their role as a ‘critical friend’, committed to safeguarding the Christian Ethos of the school.