

Short Guide for New Chairs of Governors in Church Schools in the Diocese of Hereford

Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a Chair of Governors! We thank you for taking on this key role to support our schools.

This short guide is designed to give you an introductory overview of the Hereford Diocese Board of Education (DBE) and aspects of governance specific to Church of England schools.

For more information on governance, your role as Chair and the Hereford DBE, we recommend the following websites/organisations:

- Department for Education, [Governance Handbook](#) and [Governance Competency Framework](#)
- Schools support from [Hereford Diocese](#)

The Hereford Diocesan Board of Education (Hereford DBE)

Church of England schools are part of the Hereford DBE. Our HDBE vision is to serve and support schools. Read more about the Hereford DBE's [vision and strategy here](#).

The Diocesan Education Team should be your first point of contact and they will be able to direct you to other members of the team as necessary, our staff contact details are available [here](#).

Please see our Schools page on the Hereford Diocese website for guidance and support. Our Core services available to all church schools are set out in the [Annual Partnership Agreement](#) document available on our website. In addition to these standard services, each school has the opportunity to work with the team through an enhanced [Partnership Agreement](#) which offers a wide variety of training and extended support services for a minimal annual charge. Please see our [Training and Events Schedule](#) for details of forthcoming training opportunities for clergy, governors, school leaders and staff. For those schools with a Partnership Agreement, training and support can be 'tailor-made' to suit the context and requirements of individual situations.

The Hereford DBE is a subcommittee of the Hereford Board of Finance, made up of representatives from across the Diocese to include the Bishop, serving headteachers, clergy and is chaired by the Archdeacon of Ludlow. Our board oversees the work of all Education directors and officers. The board structure is defined by the Diocesan Board of Education 2021 which applies to dioceses across the country; this measure has been recently updated.

Hereford DBE statutory rights and obligations (as set out in the DBE Measure 2021)

Hereford DBE must advise on and agree any new Instrument of Government for a Church of England school in the Hereford Diocese; for example, the instrument of government must be amended if a governing body wants to make changes to its composition or constitution.

Hereford DBE must also give approval to school organisation changes, such as closures, federations, amalgamation or academy conversion. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Society (Church of England Education Office) contains more information.

Hereford DBE approves the appointment and reappointment of all foundation appointments in Church of England Academy Trusts. If your governing body has Foundation Governor vacancies, please contact our Diocesan Education Team at education@hereford.anglican.org

Hereford DBE support for you and your governing body

- **Governor training**
 - Free access to 'Being a Governor in a Church School/Academy' online training sessions for all new governors or those who have not attended training in the past four years
 - Free access to termly leadership and governance online briefing sessions
 - A further comprehensive programme of training sessions is included in our Annual Partnership Agreement. The Training and Events Schedule for 2021-2022 is [available here](#)
- **Headteacher recruitment support**
 - Appointing a new Headteacher is one of the most important tasks for a governing body, led by the Chair. It is usual for the Hereford DBE to have full advisory rights
 - The Hereford DBE must be consulted upon receipt of the current Headteacher's resignation and in advance of a recruitment plan being devised.
 - A Headteacher Recruitment Handbook is available from the Diocesan Education Team who will be available (alongside the LA) to support you throughout the recruitment process.
- **Up to date governance advice and resources**
 - our Diocesan Deputy Director of Education and Business and Governance Officer are available to provide telephone and email advice.
 - On the Hereford Diocese Schools website page, you can find all our latest information and resources to support schools.
 - Make sure you are subscribed to our weekly E bulletin mailing list to stay up to date.

Headteacher/Chair working relationship

This is one of the most important relationships in ensuring the success of your school. It is crucial to establish from the start patterns of communication and meeting which work for you both and which recognise the strategic role of the chair (and other governors) compared to the day-to-day operational role of the headteacher.

The governing body must ensure that suitable arrangements are made for the headteacher's performance management, including the use of an external adviser for an annual appraisal.

The Governing Body as Employer

In a voluntary aided (VA) school, the governing body is the employer of all school staff. In a Church of England academy, staff are employed by the academy trust.

The Role of the Clerk

Effective governance requires professional clerking, and your clerk should be your governing body's governance professional. A skilled clerk will make your role as Chair much more straightforward, as she or he will be your go-to source of statutory and administrative advice. Some schools have a service level agreement with an external organisation, others use a local authority clerking service or employ an independent clerk. Clerk forums delivered by the Diocesan Education Team are available to all church

school clerks on a termly basis. We strongly recommend all Chairs urge their Clerk to attend to ensure they are up to date with the latest church school governance guidance.

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

In addition to inspections by OFSTED, all schools designated with a religious character are subject to inspections organised by the relevant faith body. SIAMS inspections of Church of England Schools occur every five years. The 2018 SIAMS schedule asks the overarching 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?*” It is based around the key strands of the Church of England Vision for Education. You can read more about this on the SIAMS pages of our website.

Church School vision and SIAMS training and support are available from the Diocesan Education Team. Please see our Training and Events Schedule for 2021-2022 ([available here](#)).

Buildings

All church schools are held on the original founding Trust some dating back to the 1800’s and are still relevant today. Permission to undertake any capital work must be sought in advance from the Education Team (who act for all site trustees). Different status of Church schools have differing responsibilities in terms of the building in terms of governance for example: the governing body of a voluntary aided (VA) school is responsible for meeting 10% of the cost of any capital work. Please refer to your Education Team and Governor training for more detailed information on School Estate Management for your school buildings and site.

Insurance

The governing body must ensure that the school is adequately insured. VA Schools should cover the Trustees within their policy.

Admissions

In Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) and academies they are their own admissions authorities (i.e.), the governing body is responsible for the school’s admissions policy. The policy must be reviewed annually and displayed on school website. Governing boards must have regard to Hereford DBE guidance on admissions and have a statutory duty to consult Hereford DBE first on any changes. All governing bodies are strongly advised to review the recent changes made to the Schools Admission Code from September 2021 ([available here](#)). You should consult on your policy every 7 years, even if there are no changes.

Statutory framework and Department for Education guidance for governors

As Chair, you need to stay up to date with the statutory framework applicable to the leadership of schools. All governing bodies function within the framework of the School Governance Regulations:

- [School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [School Governance \(Federations\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) – if your school is part of a federation
- [School Governance \(Collaboration\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#) – if your school otherwise collaborates with another school

- [School Staffing \(England\) Regulations](#) 2009 – in respect of the governing body’s obligations as an employer

In addition to the Governance Handbook referred to above, the Department for Education maintains collections of the applicable regulatory documents and other governance guidance:

- For voluntary aided/maintained schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-maintained-schools-governance>
- For academies: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/academy-trusts-governance>
- Capital funding for voluntary aided (VA) schools in England - blue book guidance

We will keep you informed of any changes to regulations or Departmental guidance via our bulletin.

Hereford DBE, September 2021