



The Church of England
in Essex and East London

Diocese of Chelmsford

Guidelines for the Nomination of Foundation Governors

The importance of Foundation Governors

The Church of England is uniquely blessed by its continuing engagement with the education of our nation. The Chair of the Church's Education Division/National Society, Bishop John Pritchard, wrote in September 2013, "With nearly 5,000 Church of England schools, there is, naturally, an incredible mix of children who receive their education at our infant, junior, primary, middle, secondary schools and academies. Whatever their background, Church of England schools are there to provide a first class education, based on a commitment to draw out the full potential of each child."

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. Their role in developing the school as a Church school is also scrutinised during the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) process. One of the key questions asked by SIAMS inspectors is "How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school"? This means that governors should have a detailed and strategic knowledge of their school and it follows that governors, Headteacher and staff should work as a united team, dedicated to realising a shared Christian vision for the school.

Foundation Governors play a specific role in ensuring the school's Christian character and their responsibilities will include

- Preserving the links between Church, School and Diocese
- Taking an active role in the SIAMS process
- Ensuring that collective worship and religious education at the school are appropriately monitored
- Ensuring that collective worship and religious education at the school follow the appropriate guidelines and/or syllabus
- Bringing to the attention of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) any matters requiring their attention regarding the school
- Ensuring that the Christian ethos of the school is encouraged throughout its community and is reflected in its policies and protocols, the curriculum and activities.
- Ensuring that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school reflect its Christian ethos.

Who nominates Foundation Governors?

In most cases one of the Foundation Governors will be the incumbent of the school's parish/benefice by virtue of his/her office. This is called the Ex-officio Foundation Governor.

The school's Instrument of Government (or in the case of stand-alone academies the relevant section of their Articles of Association) will set out which organisation has the responsibility of appointing the remaining Foundation Governors. In this Diocese, appointments may be made either by the PCC(s), by the DBE or, in the case of academies the Chelmsford Diocese Educational Trust (CDET).

Nominations for PCC Foundation Governor appointments should be ratified at a PCC meeting before the nomination is submitted and the Nomination form completed by the PCC Secretary.

Nominations for the appointment of DBE or CDET Foundation governors should be made by the Incumbent often in consultation with the PCC, Headteacher, staff and Chair of Governors. The Nomination form should be completed by the Incumbent. When there is an interregnum, this task can be discharged by the PCC Secretary or a Churchwarden.

Who should they be?

Foundation Governors represent the Church of England (see above) and so, whilst it is not essential that all are communicant Anglicans, it is preferred that they have Christian commitment and are members of a Trinitarian Christian Church.

Nominees are asked about their church attendance and involvement on the Nomination Form, which nominators are also required to confirm. They are also given the opportunity to reflect on the special role of the Foundation Governor and indicate how they feel they are suited to it.

It is important that nominators are confident of the nominee's commitment to upholding the Christian ethos of the school. If the nominee is someone who is not a church member, this role may be particularly challenging for them and the nominator should explore with the prospective governor how they feel about the responsibilities required of them and their commitment to maintaining the school's Christian character. Confirmation that this step has been undertaken is part of the Nomination Form and appointing bodies will not be able to confirm the appointment unless it has been carried out.

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

- To have strategic oversight of the school, to monitor its pupils' achievement and attainment, to oversee the teaching and learning, to review its staffing patterns and to oversee finances.
- To develop a detailed knowledge of the school and its educational task as well as the school community as a whole.
- To be supportive of the school, its Headteacher and staff,
- To get to know the school through developing knowledge of key data and information and through focussed visits.
- To attend meetings of the Governing Body and such committees as they are appointed to.

The work of the school governor has become increasingly demanding and nominators will need to be satisfied that the person they are nominating

- Has the relevant skills and experience which will give breadth and strength to the Governing Body for the benefit of the school.
- Has the stamina and time to undertake such a demanding role.
- Will be committed to the support and wellbeing of the school.

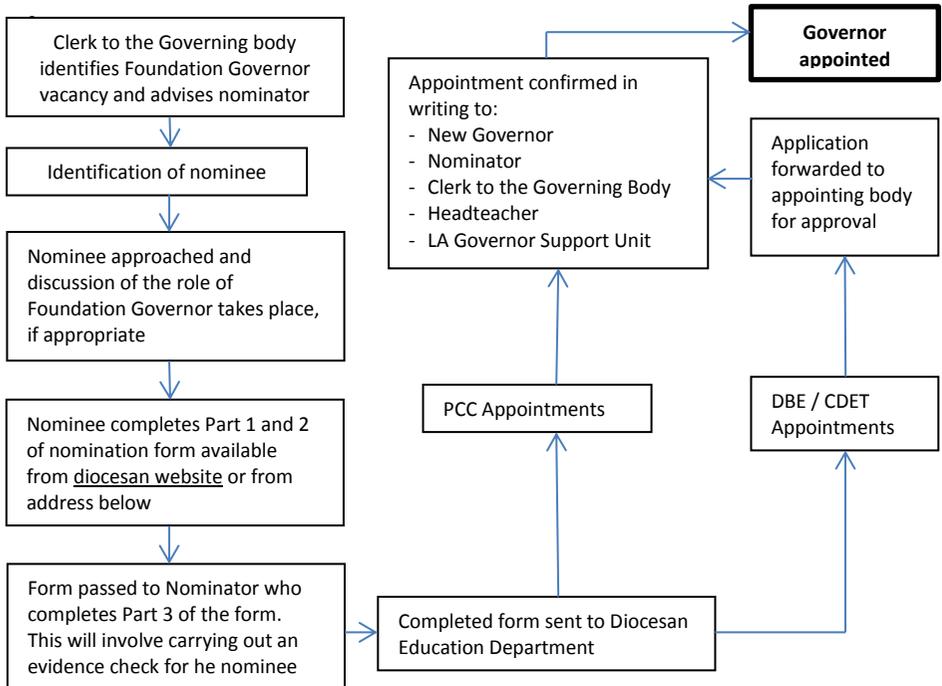
Other Considerations

Governing Bodies comprise a mix of people of different backgrounds, ages, aptitudes and abilities. When selecting new governors it worthwhile to consider the following:

- Are there any significant skills shortages within the Governing Body?
- Are there any gender or age imbalances within the Governing Body as a whole, or within the group of Foundation Governors?
- Does the potential governor work at the school? Whilst there is no specific legislation which precludes staff becoming Foundation Governors, it should be borne in mind that as members of staff they will not be able to influence or vote on any matters where they may have an interest (e.g. staff appointments). They may not be able, therefore, to play such a full governor role as other potential nominees. For Foundation Governor representation, this may be particularly important for small Governing Bodies or in Voluntary Controlled schools where the Foundation is in a minority.
- Is the potential governor over 18? This is a legal requirement. There is no upper age limit, although the increasingly demanding nature of the role should be borne in mind when nominating older members of the community.

The Appointment Process

This process should be followed for new appointments *and* reappointments



Completed forms should be returned to – The Education Department, Diocese of Chelmsford, 53 New Street, Chelmsford CM1 1AT