Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education

Promoting life in all its fullness through education across Essex and East London

---

HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT PACK

Version: September 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Board of a Church of England School has the privilege and responsibility for appointing leadership roles: Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Heads of School. This process carries both privilege and responsibility, shaping the future leadership and Christian ethos of the school.

Diocesan Support

The Diocesan Board of Education recognises that these appointments are probably the most vital decisions a Governing Board must make. It is essential that the Diocesan Director of Education or their representative i.e. a member of the Diocese Education Team attend to support and offer advice throughout the whole selection process and as soon as possible following the resignation of an existing Headteacher/Head of School.

Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) – Diocesan Involvement

Schools within a Multi-Academy Trust may follow different recruitment procedures, often involving representatives from the local governance board or similar structures. It is essential that the Diocese is informed from the point of resignation and actively involved in all senior leadership appointments, including Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, and Head of School roles. Diocesan involvement ensures that the process reflects the Church of England's educational vision and values and supports the spiritual and strategic leadership of the school.

Contents

Page 3 Guidance
Page 4 Preparing for an appointment process
Page 5 Prayers and Reflective Questions for Governors
Page 6 Leadership qualifications
Page 7 Resignation dates
Page 8 Recommended timeline
Page 9 An outline step-by-step guide
Page 12 Outline of meetings to be convened
Page 13 The advertisement
Page 15 Person specification/selection criteria
Page 16 Shortlisting meeting
Page 17 Planning and preparation meeting
Page 18 Venues
Page 19 Hospitality
Page 20 Programme for interviews
Page 21 References
Page 22 Safer recruitment
Page 23 Salary
Page 24 Withdrawal
Page 25 Disclosure of personal information
Page 26 Visits to the school
Page 27 Appendix 1 - Recruitment Pack welcome letter from the Chair of Governors.
Page 28 Appendix 2 - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Checklist for Recruitment Panel
Page 29 Headteacher Recruitment Summary Sheet for Governors

GUIDANCE

This guidance is provided to help you through the process of recruitment and appointment based upon the experience and good practice developed by church schools in the eight local authorities covering the Diocese of Chelmsford. All model documents provided should be adapted to suit the needs of the school by the governance board. Advice and guidance of the Local Authority should also be sought and welcomed but always be interpreted in the light of this document and the nature of being a Church of England school.

Role of the Diocese

• All Headteacher recruitment is led by the Assistant Director of Education.
• If the Assistant Director is unavailable, a designated alternative from the Diocesan Education Team will be assigned.
• Diocesan involvement should begin as soon as possible following a resignation or the creation of a new leadership post.
• The Diocese ensures the process reflects the school's Christian foundation and values.

A Diocesan Education Team member will be able to attend all relevant meetings of the Governing Board and its Panel at which the job description, person specification and job advertisements are agreed, as well as the interviews. They will not be making any decisions but will support the Panel throughout the process. Such appointments must be approached with care, discernment and utmost professionalism in accordance with HR law and good practice, so the guidance of your Diocesan Adviser, and also the Local Authority representative (VA and VC schools), is vital.

The Diocesan Board of Education seeks to encourage Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided (VA) schools to exercise their right to appoint practising Christians to leadership posts whenever possible. They recognise the frequent difficulty in doing so and the need for governors to decide how and whether they will use this right in their own particular circumstances and to ensure the best person for the role is appointed. **For all appointments, governors must satisfy themselves that the Head and Deputy can provide Christian Leadership within the school.**

In a Voluntary Aided (VA) school, the Governing Board is the employer of staff. In a stand-alone academy or an academy that is part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), the Trust is the employer. All contracts of employment should be issued by the Governing Board or Academy Trust, rather than the Local Authority, and must always reflect the Church of England foundation of the school. In a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, staff are employed by the Governing Board on behalf of the Local Authority, and their contracts should also acknowledge the Church of England foundation of the school.

Governance Responsibility in Maintained Schools

The Governing Board of a Church of England maintained school holds the formal responsibility for appointing senior leaders. This decision must be approached with discernment, care, and strategic foresight, as it directly impacts the school's theologically rooted Christian vision, culture, and outcomes. It is vital that the appointed leader not only demonstrates strong professional competencies but also supports, upholds, and furthers the Church school's Christian vision and foundations. The **Church of England Vision for Education** of being 'deeply Christian, serving the common good' provides the guiding vision and purpose of all its schools and therefore needs to be at the heart of any appointment process. It follows that engaging in such a process would involve prayer and suggestions are included.

PREPARING FOR AN APPOINTMENT PROCESS

It is good practice for Governing Boards/MAT Leaders to regularly review their current staffing arrangements and consider if they, as well as providing the best teachers and staff, are also preparing for the future leadership of the school as a church school. This may be through performance management, CPD, policies and governance training.

Before embarking upon the recruitment process, the Governing Board/MAT through its succession planning, may wish to give consideration to other options which might be suitable and available as alternative models for school leadership. These may include a formal strategic partnership or federation with another school (or schools), joining an established multi-academy trust (maintained schools) or leadership arrangements with an Executive Headteacher. The Diocese will provide support on exploring the alternatives through the Diocesan Director of Education. Contact details: Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education team

Governing Boards/MATs usually find that the school leadership recruitment appointment process provides a useful opportunity to refocus on the aims, values and performance of the school. The Diocese can offer training for Governing Boards, Trustees and staff teams about a school's vision and values. Helping the school rediscover its confidence, identity, purpose and distinctiveness as a church school within the context of the Church of England's Vision for Education, "Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good".

The whole recruitment process can typically last 8-12 weeks. Several meetings will be necessary, involving appropriate advisers at each stage. The formal interview process usually involves one, or more occasionally, two days of activities and those on the recruitment panel should be prepared to commit to these full days.

A representative from the Diocesan Education team is present throughout the recruitment process to support governors/MAT leaders in their deliberations and decision; to guard against inaccurate judgement or inappropriate comment; to ensure compliance with statutory procedures and equality of opportunity; and to offer professional advice about a candidates' performance, evidence and general suitability for leadership within a Church School.

The Diocese and Local Authority have no veto over a Governing Boards/MATs decision, but **the Governing Board and/or MAT is required by law to take into full and proper account any advice given by the Diocesan representative present**. If a Governing Board/MAT makes an appointment contrary to advice offered, correspondence may follow from the Diocese requiring governors/trustees to explain their reasons.

Prayer

As a Church School the Governing Board/MAT and in particular the ex-officio Incumbent and Foundation Governors/Trustees may consider it important to encourage others to be praying for the process. However, everything about the process, apart from perhaps the fact and date of the interviews, is **CONFIDENTIAL** and should not be shared with any group.

Regular Prayer might be sought from:

- A prayer group that exists to pray for the school,
- The church community
- A specially formed group for the purpose
- Other governors

It is unlikely to be appropriate to share this with the whole parent body or indeed the children, though a suggested prayer for Collective Worship is included in model prayers.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNORS/MATs

These are some suggested reflective questions for governors/MAT Leaders before starting recruitment:

- What kind of Christian leadership does our school need?
- How does our school's vision align with the Church of England's Vision for Education?
- Are we clear on the spiritual and educational priorities for the next phase?

Our Assistant Director of Education will be happy to help you to explore these questions.

LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

The NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headteachers) is not compulsory and middle leaders may choose different professional development to support them in preparing for senior leadership. We particularly encourage applicants that have completed the following:

- Diocese of Chelmsford Church School Leadership Course,
- The Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship (including NPQH) - Visit the Foundation for Educational Leadership website. This is the main portal for the Church of England's NPQ programmes.

These courses are optional, and applicants may not therefore be discounted on the strength of that factor alone. However, governors might form a view in their consideration of an applicant as to whether they have pursued or are intentional about gaining a qualification in preparation for their first headship.

It is important to focus on the person specification and job description so see if a candidate meets the criteria rather than assuming that an accreditation ensures that they will. This also means consideration of whether a qualification is essential, or desirable is necessary.

RESIGNATION DATES

The Governing Board/MAT should be aware of resignation dates for successful candidates. These will need to be considered when planning a timetable for the process.

A current Deputy Head or other teachers resign by	To recruit a Headteacher for	A current Headteacher must resign by
31 May	September	30 April
31 October	January	30 September
28/29 February	April	31 January

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

The Governing Board/MAT will need to have a clear timeline in place to ensure that the recruitment process falls within the deadlines for resignation where possible. Below is a recommended timeline for recruitment (some of these actions can and will run concurrently).

Action	Time
Hold preliminary meeting of the Recruitment Panel	2 weeks
Recruitment pack prepared	2 weeks
Place advertisement (nationally and locally)	2 weeks
Closing date	2 weeks from publication
Shortlisting	Within 1 – 2 weeks of closing date
Call for interview, request references	1-2 weeks from shortlisting
Interviews	1-2 weeks from shortlisting
Ratification of appointment	Immediately following interviews

If the services of LA/HR are used, they will help co-ordinate the exact times and tasks. Any timeline needs to include:

⇒ Date of intended advertisements
⇒ Closing date for applications
⇒ Date(s) for long-listing and/or short-listing meetings
⇒ Date for planning and preparation meeting
⇒ Dates for interviewing (normally 1 or 2 days)

Sufficient time must be allowed within the timetable for:

⇒ Drawing up and placement of the advertisement
⇒ Preparation of documentation
⇒ Distribution of applications to Recruitment Panel and advisers (usually by e-mail)
⇒ Time for visits to the school for prospective applicants (generally advised).
⇒ Calling for, and receipt of, references (giving referees adequate notice)
⇒ Training for governors/panel members (at least one member of the recruitment panel **must** have Safer Recruitment Training).
⇒ Notice for those invited for interview

Interviews are not held during school holidays.

AN OUTLINE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Please note that brief records should be kept of all meetings and any decisions made. It is not necessary to employ a clerk for this purpose.

1. **Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / Head of School:** Announces their resignation or retirement. Informs Governing Board (Chair of Governors)/MAT leaders. Copy of letter sent to Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) via Diocesan Director of Education. [NB: The process should not proceed until written confirmation received]

2. **Chair of Governing Board/MAT Leader** Diocesan Education team representative and, where applicable, LA Adviser to arrange an initial meeting with Governing Board or MAT leaders.

3. **Governing Board/MAT Leaders:** Meeting to agree the members of the Headteacher Recruitment Panel and elect a chair, Salary Range (ISR) agreed and possible timelines. Consideration of the school's vision and any process to develop or amend should be discussed and any process planned before proceeding.

4. **Recruitment Panel:** When agreeing the panel, the Governing Board of a maintained school is delegating the responsibility for the appointment process to those identified. Ideally its membership should be representative of the make-up and gender of the full Governing Board and include at least one Foundation Governor or Trustee. Please refer to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Checklist for Recruitment Panel (Appendix 2 – pg29).

   Although eligible to do so, it is not good practice for the Deputy Headteacher or other staff members to be on the Recruitment Panel. It may however be appropriate for an Executive Headteacher to be on the Recruitment Panel for a Head of School position.

   The recommended number on the Panel is three but could be as many as five. This excludes the Diocesan Adviser. As an example, a panel of five might consist of:

   - one or two foundation governors/trustees including the Priest-in-Charge,
   - a parent or community governor,
   - the chair of governors
   - a member of the personnel committee
   - Member of MAT leadership and/or Trust board

   At least one member (preferably more) of the recruitment panel must have completed Safer Recruitment training (provided by Juniper Education).

   Governors/trustees who wish to serve on the Recruitment Panel should be available for each step of the process:

   ⇒ initial meeting

⇒ short-listing meeting
⇒ planning and preparation meeting
⇒ interview day(s)

This is considered 'best practice'. It secures consistency and continuity throughout the process, which helps events to flow smoothly and expediently; it delivers a fair, balanced and measured approach; and it ensures compliance with equal opportunity requirements.

5. **Initial Meeting:** Recruitment Panel meets with advisers and/or officers from the Diocese. Timelines finalised, dates and advert agreed, job description and person specification agreed. This meeting could be held virtually if appropriate, and a decision made about which of the forthcoming meetings are held in person or virtually. The interviews would normally be held in-person.

6. **Recruitment Pack:** Prepared and sent to LA (if using their services) or HR services. We recommend including a welcome letter from the Chair of Governors/MAT CEO which highlights the Christian distinctiveness of your school – Appendix 1

7. **Advert:** Published in agreed publication and format. Applications awaited. On closing date, copies sent securely to members of the Recruitment Panel.

8. **Shortlisting meeting** *(Recruitment Panel and advisers)***:** Candidates selected (against person specification criteria) and invited for interview. References sought. Unsuccessful applicants informed. **This meeting is often combined with Step 9.**

9. **Planning and Preparation meeting:** Finalising activities and questions e.g. presentation topic; written task; scheduling of events; in-school arrangements and activities (e.g. school/student council interview, practical activity and assembly); one-to-one interview; venues, hospitality and catering. Programme finalised, typed up and sent to all Recruitment Panel members, advisers, candidates and out-going Head.

10. **Interview day(s):** At the venue previously decided (school and/or off-site). After all tasks and the formal interviews have been completed the Recruitment Panel meets with the advisers to consider its decision. At least an hour and a half should be allocated for this. Scrutiny and completion of mandatory paperwork and eligibility checks (D.B.S. & Asylum and Immigration Act etc.) will also be undertaken.

    In the event of a split decision the chair of the panel may exercise their right to have the casting vote. However, the panel should seek to reach a unanimous decision. Otherwise, they might decide to re-advertise.

11. **Maintained Governing Board Formal meeting:** At the end of the interview day(s), there has to be a formal meeting of the <u>whole</u> Governing Board in a maintained schools with a two-item agenda. The Recruitment Panel makes a recommendation which the Governing Board ratifies:

- The appointment (or not – in which case, alternative arrangements should be agreed e.g. readvertising, seek an interim or acting head/deputy etc.)
- The salary agreed.

Nobody has a casting vote. There should be no discussion at this meeting of a particular candidate's performance throughout the day although the activities given may be discussed. Informal observations from staff or other governors should not be considered.

The split of a decision must always remain confidential. The best decision is one which is unanimous – although a simple majority will suffice.

However, in the event of a vote which results in a narrowly split decision, and potentially where the Diocesan Adviser advises against the appointment then it would be a less-than-ideal circumstance in which a new Headteacher would start, both for the Headteacher and for the Governing Board/MAT and re-advertising would normally be a better option.

12. **Successful candidate:** To be notified, usually by telephone by the Chair of the Panel. Appointment confirmed and contract issued. Co-ordination of arrangements for resignation from current post and for notifying governors/trustees not present, out-going Head, staff, parents, LA and DBE and public. Unsuccessful candidates notified and feedback offered.

<u>Confidentiality</u> remains paramount throughout the process. Nothing discussed in Governing Board or Recruitment Panel meetings must be shared or discussed with others, including staff and the outgoing Headteacher.

OUTLINE OF MEETINGS TO BE CONVENED

Meeting 1: The Initial Meeting
The Governing Board/MAT Leaders meet to appoint Recruitment Panel (if it does not already have one) and set any priorities for the appointments including possibly reviewing the school vision. Remind participants of the need to invite a Diocesan officer from the Education team.

Meeting 2: The Recruitment Panel
The first item to agree is the timetable for the process and interview dates.
The meeting sets:

⇒ Selection criteria (job and person specification)

⇒ Salary range

⇒ Drafts an advertisement *(Any advert ought to be checked by the Diocese to ensure that there is a clear statement regarding the post being to lead a Church School and what this requires)*

Selection criteria are based upon the National Standards for Headteachers (the standard, non-negotiable job description).

The Chair of the Recruitment Panel organises (with the school) the contents of the information pack that is sent out to all prospective candidates. If the Governing Board are using the services of the Local Authority they will send this out, but the content must be prepared.

The Panel must decide if they will reimburse travel and overnight accommodation if needed to candidates who are called to interview.

Meeting 3: The Shortlisting Meeting
The Panel (with advice from Diocesan adviser and/or officers present) decide who they wish to invite for interview and who to decline. This exercise needs to be undertaken, even if there are a small number of applicants.

The Panel will need to record valid reasons for applications they have declined. The information may be needed if an applicant wishes to pursue feedback from officers about why their application was unsuccessful.

Meeting 4: Planning and Preparation
The business of this meeting is sometimes subsumed into the previous one, if time and progress permit. However, it is advisable to set a date in advance for it in case it is needed.

The Panel and advisers agree the programme, arrangements and venues for the interview days. This will include designating membership of the interview panels, other roles to be performed by governors/trustees (e.g., hosting candidates) and confirming interview tasks.

THE ADVERTISEMENT

Placing the Advert

⇒ The Panel, on behalf of the Governing Board/MAT, must advertise any such post in such manner as it considers reasonable. The Panel should decide the best way of reaching its target audience, taking into consideration the type of media to be used and the level of exposure the advert will receive. The Panel may consider additional means for advertising the post, including local publications and the internet, but all applicants should be considered in the same way.

⇒ Schools will often choose to advertise on Local Authority websites e.g. Essex Schools Jobs. Other local authorities may have similar or alternative opportunities.

⇒ Vacancies can be published on the free job-listing service from the Department of Education: Teaching Vacancies.

⇒ If the advert is to be in print, then this is usually in *Times Education Supplement* (TES), or Schools Week, both published each Friday and the Local Authority's Job Advert publication, (if it has one) e.g. Essex Schools Jobs. A number of schools choose to use The Church Times and other national publications. It may also be worth considering an announcement in the local and surrounding parishes.

⇒ Advertising costs are borne by the school/MAT.

⇒ A combination of print and web-based advertising is used by most schools. Some schools/MATs choose to use Recruitment Agency companies to assist with recruitment, particularly for harder to fill posts. It is important that the terms and conditions of the contract are fully understood by all parties before anything is signed, as costs can be considerable.

⇒ Ultimately the responsibility for the placement of an appropriate advertisement rests with the Recruitment Panel.

Composition of the Advert

It is useful to look at examples of advertisements in current publications/websites, however it is important to bear in mind the context of your school and the budget you have available. Appointing a Headteacher is the most important decision that a Governing Board/MAT Leaders will make, and it is worth ensuring that the advert is noticed by as wide a field of potential candidates as possible.

The advertisement should include the following:

⇒ School name, type (i.e., Church of England VA or VC or Academy including the MAT it is part of) and contact details.

⇒ School website (ensure it is up-to-date and compliant – it is the first place that potential candidates will look) and it needs to 'sell' your school.

⇒ Seven-point ISR (individual School Range) salary, including starting-range.

⇒ Number on roll (NOR).

⇒ Group size of school.

⇒ Start date.

⇒ The situation vacant and, if appropriate, why.

⇒ Brief description of the school's setting: remember – it's a *national* advert, not just local.

⇒ Brief description of person sought (drawn from the selection criteria).

⇒ Arrangements for visits, closing date, short-listing date, interview dates.

⇒ School (and MAT) logo, Diocesan logo and County Council logo. Extra costs may be incurred if other logos are added (e.g. Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Charity Marks, Well-Being, curriculum awards, environmental accreditations etc.)

⇒ Check that details of how to apply will be added automatically by the service provider, as will standard phrases relating to safeguarding matters (e.g., enhanced DBS checks) and equal opportunities regulations.

The following is a standard statement used in most advertisements

'We are committed to equal opportunities, safer recruitment practices, to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.'

⇒ If the LA services or a specialist recruitment service is engaged, many of these matters above will be attended to by them – in consultation with the Recruitment Panel and conjunction with the lead or support officers.

PERSON SPECIFICATION/SELECTION CRITERIA

All Person Specifications should:

⇒ be based on the National Standards for Headteachers and the upholding of the school's Christian foundation as based on its Trust Deeds.

⇒ be customised to suit the needs, circumstances or characteristics of individual schools.

⇒ consider the fact that the post is to provide leadership of a Church of England school which has the overarching vision to be 'deeply Christian, serving the common good'. The aim is also to recruit an inspirational and professionally competent leader, and someone who is right for the headship of this school.

The selection criteria are crucial to the appointment of the right person for the school. It is these alone, which will be used when the Recruitment Panel meet to shortlist applicants to invite for interview. Click here for Model Advertisements.

SHORTLISTING MEETING

Below are guidelines which will support the shortlisting process:

⇒ Start by considering the response in general – quantity *and quality* – before examining individual applications.

⇒ Only that which appears on paper may be considered when deciding who to invite for interview. Prior knowledge, perceived reputation, hearsay or impressions formed from visits to the school **must** be disregarded.

⇒ Also consider the quality of attention to detail (i.e., spelling, grammar, school name).

⇒ Scored – against Person Specification and Job Description – download Model Grid document.

When considering each application, you would also look for:

⇒ Church of England School criterion – is explicit reference made to this?

⇒ Assertion statements versus evidence-based statements.

⇒ Evidence of impact versus merely descriptive.

⇒ Fluency and coherence.

⇒ Personalised to this school? Or just a general application?

⇒ Responsive to criteria set? Or narrative life-story?

⇒ Have the Governing Board's/MATs questions been answered?

⇒ *Why **here?** Why **now?*** Is it clear why they actually want the job?

⇒ Relevant experience? (range and diversity: size, location and context of schools; age-ranges, roles, responsibilities; wider interests).

⇒ Longevity versus briefness.

⇒ Apparent or unexplained gaps in employment record (safeguarding considerations).

Evidence or impressions from visits made in person are not admissible and must not be commented upon.

PLANNING and PREPARATION MEETING

This is a separate meeting although sometimes, if time permits, it is possible to incorporate it into the short-listing meeting. It needs to cover final details of arrangements for the interview days.

⇒ **Presentation Topic.** See Interviews tasks and activities.

⇒ **Tasks:** Identify who will take part in observing and carry responsibility for arranging them.

⇒ **Panels:** different governors/trustees/MAT leaders might be on specific panels during the day e.g., a lesson observation. Anyone who is a fully appointed governor of the school at the time may participate. This includes staff members (with their specialist role and contributions) but again if possible, it is preferable not to use them. Their 'report' verbally or in writing can be provided to the Panel. The out-going Headteacher may not participate (by law) in any part of the interview or selection proceedings.

⇒ **Pupils**
Will a group of pupils have an opportunity to meet with and ask pre-prepared questions of the candidates? They would usually feedback to a member of the Panel who can input their views, normally after the interviews are complete.

⇒ **Collective Worship**
Arrangements for each candidate to conduct an Act of Collective Worship, in line with Church of England Guidance, monitored by some of the Panel. See monitoring form provided. It can be decided if the theme is to be left to the candidate or a theme set by the Panel.

⇒ **Venues:** Spaces for interview panels and other activities - go to Venues (Page 18).

⇒ **Other governors:** How to include other governors and staff not participating in the interviews – an occasion within the timetable should be sought for the governors and staff to meet the candidates. Usually, a social event, i.e. buffet lunch. Impressions can be shared with the Chair of the Panel but usually not until after the interviews are complete.

⇒ **Hospitality:** For both the candidates and Recruitment Panel – go to Hospitality (Page 19)

⇒ **Information:** The interview arrangements should be shared with the current Headteacher (copy of timetable for the day) but not the detail. It is also worth considering whether it would be easier for everyone if the Headteacher was able to be off-site during the process.

⇒ **Questions:** The range of questions to be planned at interview and allotted to panel members (questions from governors not taking part may be suggested to colleagues who are involved in the process). Any scoring system should be agreed. All candidates will need to be asked the same questions, though follow up questions on the day may vary.

⇒ **Salary:** Consider the scope available to be offered and who will discuss this with the candidates.

VENUES

⇒ The venue for the actual interviews needs to be comfortable, accessible and private, ensuring complete confidentiality, and avoiding interruption, distraction, disturbance or over-hearing. Space is also needed for candidates to wait their turn.

⇒ They can be at the school if space permits and does not disrupt the regular daily routine of school.

⇒ They can be off-site, but this will need to be funded by school (from the budget for Recruitment or Governance Hospitality). Consideration must be given on how to include the full range of interview tasks including the engagement of pupils. Possible options include: a local hotel or hostelry, conference centre, village or church hall, the Diocesan Office in Chelmsford, other local public building or a neighbouring school; (but probably not a church or vestry unless adapted).

⇒ The timescale must allow for travel time for both the candidates and interviewers.

⇒ Ensure that everyone has transport, directions and a comfortable waiting area, especially candidates.

Remember: the impression gained by candidates about how they are treated, and how much is invested in the process by the Governing Board/MAT Leaders, may affect how they feel about the school/trust and the position offered.

HOSPITALITY

As a church school the way in which candidates are shown hospitality is really important and a demonstration of the Governing Boards commitment to the wellbeing of staff.

⇒ Plan who and how the candidates are welcomed to the school, provided with what they need for the tasks and interview. Ensure they know where the toilets are and who their person to contact for support is and where they can be found. It might be helpful and possible to involve eloquent children in this important part of the day.

⇒ Ensure that the waiting area for candidates has water, the facility to make a hot drink plus some forms of snacks are available and arrange for someone to check that it is kept replenished.

⇒ Aim to provide an opportunity for staff, other governors and candidates to meet at some point during the interview process. It is usually easier to do this over a lunch time.

⇒ Generally, it is easier to provide a buffet lunch as this allows for flexibility for staff on duty, running clubs etc. and for the Recruitment Panel to meet to discuss outcomes from activities.

PROGRAMME FOR INTERVIEWS

⇒ Accessibility needs must be considered when devising both the visit to the school for candidates and the recruitment programme. Ensure that the current Headteacher is aware of the programme so that arrangements can be made if rooms need to be reorganised etc.

⇒ Also ensure that if members of staff are involved (e.g. being observed as a part of the process) that they have ample time to prepare.

⇒ Allow for travel time if any activities like the interviews are to be conducted off-site, away from the school.

Download examples of timetables.

REFERENCES

⇒ Ideally, ten days minimum (before the interviews) should be allowed to obtain these.

⇒ The expectation is that the Local Authority provides one for serving Headteachers of maintained schools.

⇒ For a candidate who is not currently a serving Headteacher, it should be the candidate's current/most recent employer.

⇒ References for a deputy headteacher should be from their current headteacher, Executive Headteacher or CEO (in MAT)

⇒ A third reference should vouch for applicant's suitability to be the Headteacher or deputy headteacher of a church school **if** a practising Christian forms part of the person specification.

⇒ References will need to include, or be scrutinised for, evidence or suggestions relating to safeguarding issues. DBE Officers present will advise or intervene if necessary if a candidate's eligibility appears compromised on such grounds.

⇒ References are now permitted to be seen by the Panel before they decide on the appointment usually after the interview.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The prospective safety of children remains paramount throughout the selection process.

The Panel must address such consideration by:

⇒ Ensuring that, at least one member of the Recruitment Panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment training and it is current. Preferably more than one.

⇒ Ensuring that there is a full and proper scrutiny of all applications by examining and investigating apparent gaps in an applicant's employment history (and asking relevant questions of candidates, if necessary, to seek clarity and reassurance).

SALARY

The salary to be offered must be set in accordance with the current legislation, set out in the Teachers Pay and Conditions document. It is strongly recommended that the Recruitment Panel take advice from its HR provider, especially where Executive Headteachers are being appointed, when determining a salary range.

Financial Sustainability Check
We advise a financial review before recruitment.

- Governors to assess long-term affordability.
- Consider using a checklist for budget planning and salary range decisions.

It is good practice to have a supplementary question/statement at interview that confirms that the candidate is aware of the salary range.

WITHDRAWAL

⇒ A candidate may withdraw from the interviews and process at any time – without penalty, prejudice or adverse reaction.

⇒ The process for withdrawal involves the Panel as they are the hosts, and the candidate is their guest. Ideally, a decision to withdraw should be conveyed by the candidate to the Chair of the Panel– although sometimes that decision is relayed via one of the advisers present.

⇒ It is not uncommon for a candidate to withdraw. Remember: the interviews are a two-way process. Just as governors/MAT Leaders are assessing a candidate's suitability for the post, so is the candidate getting a feel for the school. It may be that it is not until the time of interview that a candidate feels or can see that this is not the right school for them after all.

⇒ Like all information and facts associated with the recruitment process, a candidate's decision to withdraw (and their reason for doing so, if stated) remains completely confidential. Remember: the candidate may live locally or come from a school or organisation within close proximity or in the county. The privacy of their attendance, performance and reasons for withdrawing or being unsuccessful must always be respected and preserved.

DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

⇒ Applicants sometimes have personal information (i.e., DBS-related) which they wish or are obliged to disclose. This should be sent securely with their application.

⇒ Each recruitment panel member will not be sent a copy of the disclosed information. It will be retained separately and presented by officers or the Chair of the Panel if it is deemed appropriate and necessary to do so.

⇒ This should be done if it becomes relevant to consideration of an applicant. If this is at the listing stage, a judgement will be reached by officers in consultation with the Chair of the Panel as to whether the information is of direct material relevance to the panels' consideration of an applicant's credibility and eligibility, though applicants are obliged to disclose it.

⇒ However, if such information is judged to be of sufficient seriousness and relevance, the Panel will of course be informed and invited to reach a judgement about whether they wish to proceed with considering that applicant.

VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

⇒ Visits are strongly recommended, expected and should be encouraged.

⇒ However, not all applicants visit the school.

- Some may live too far away.
- Others may not be able to get away from their own school during the school day, so cannot see their new prospective school in action with pupils.
- Some prefer to visit only after they know they have been invited for interview.
- Some visit the school's locality privately at a weekend or during an evening.

⇒ It is advisable for a member of the panel, rather than the current Headteacher, should undertake candidate visits. This avoids any feelings of discomfort and also to ensure that the key messages agreed by the governors/MAT leaders are given.

⇒ It is also a matter of courtesy to introduce the visitor to the outgoing Headteacher and there may be questions that the visitor needs to ask that the headteacher is in a better place to answer.

⇒ Impressions given or gained during informal visits to the school are not admissible as part of the selection criteria. It may risk creating an unfair advantage to those who have (or have not) visited. Only that which appears on paper may be considered when the panel meet to list and decide who to invite for interview.

WELCOME LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS/MAT CEO

Dear Prospective Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Headteacher position at our Church of England school. As Chair of Governors/MAT CEO, I am delighted to welcome you to consider joining our school community.

Our school is deeply rooted in the Christian faith and guided by the Church of England's Vision for Education: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'. We believe that every child is uniquely made in the image of God and deserves the opportunity to flourish academically, socially, and spiritually.

We are seeking a leader who will embrace and promote our Christian ethos, lead with integrity and compassion, and inspire both staff and pupils to reach their full potential. The successful candidate will be someone who understands the importance of spiritual development alongside academic excellence and who can nurture a culture of inclusion, respect, and service.

We look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how your vision and values align with ours.

With every blessing,

[Name]
Chair of Governors/MAT CEO

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) CHECKLIST FOR RECRUITMENT PANEL

This checklist should be completed and reviewed by the panel before shortlisting and interviews begin.

Question for Governing Body	Noted answers and reflections
Have all panel members completed EDI awareness training?	
Is the job advertisement free from biased language and inclusive to all candidates?	
Are reasonable adjustments available for candidates with disabilities?	
Are interview questions structured to avoid unconscious bias?	
Is the shortlisting process based solely on the person specification and job description?	
Are diverse perspectives represented on the recruitment panel?	
Have we considered how our school's Christian ethos supports inclusion and respect for all?	
Are we prepared to offer feedback to unsuccessful candidates in a fair and constructive manner?	
Have we ensured that all candidates are treated with dignity and respect throughout the process?	

HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT SUMMARY SHEET FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOL GOVERNORS

📌 Key Responsibilities:

- Begin recruitment upon resignation of Headteacher.

- Notify Diocese and Local Authority immediately.

- Form a Recruitment Panel (3–5 members, including at least one Foundation Governor/Trustee).

- Ensure Safer Recruitment training for panel members.

- Include the Diocese representative throughout the process.

🗓️ Key Steps:

- Initial Meeting: Set timeline, salary range, and review school vision.

- Recruitment Panel Meeting: Finalize job description, advert, and pack.

- Shortlisting Meeting: Select candidates based on person specification.

- Planning Meeting: Organise interview tasks, venues, and hospitality.

- Interview Days: Conduct interviews and make recommendations.

- Formal Governing Body Meeting (Maintained School): Ratify appointment and salary.

✨ New Additions (2025):

- Welcome Letter from Chair of Governors/MAT CEO (Appendix 1): Highlights Christian ethos.

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Checklist (Appendix 2): Ensures fair and inclusive recruitment.

- Reflective Questions for Governors/MAT Leaders: Align recruitment with Church of England Vision for Education.

- Financial Sustainability Check: Assess affordability before recruitment.

📎 Notes:

- All discussions are confidential.

- Diocese and LA provide advice but do not have veto rights.

- Visits to school encouraged but impressions must not influence shortlisting