

WHEN TO GET IN CONTACT WITH US

Whilst this is not at all an exhaustive list, we've set out below a brief checklist of some of the key times when Foundation Directors might get in touch with us.

- ◇ **If a vacancy for a Headteacher/Principal of a Church of England academy arises, or in the case of a vacancy for a trust's Executive Principal/Chief Executive** – so we can assist with advice about the new appointment. We would usually be involved in the preliminary meeting to advise on the job description/advert/timetable; attend the shortlisting meeting to input into shortlisting process; be involved in the planning of the interview process; and attend the interview itself.
- ◇ **If there are plans to alter or extend Church of England academy buildings** – so we can provide support, and help you to ensure that any necessary trustee consents are in place.
- ◇ **If relevant changes are being proposed to a Church of England academy's admissions policy** – so we can provide the necessary guidance as the “diocesan authority.”
- ◇ **If the academy trust/its CE academies are considering entering into structural arrangements with other schools or academies** – so we can ensure that you have obtained our guidance and any necessary DBE/related consents.
- ◇ **If the academy trust would like to make changes to its governance arrangements** (e.g. the composition of the Board of Directors/Local Governing Committee for a Church of England academy) – so we can ensure that you have obtained our guidance and any necessary DBE/related consents.
- ◇ **If a Foundation Director/Local Governor resigns and we have not been notified** – so we can make sure this is picked up and we can seek recommendations for a replacement.
- ◇ **If you have serious concerns about aspects of the academy trust or its governance, or a Church of England academy, which you need to share.**

Thank you, and keep in touch!

York Diocesan Board of Education

FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

(in a multi-academy trust)



Stained glass window at Riston CE VC Primary School

A brief guide to your role



May 2019

An initial note on terminology.....

In Church of England maintained schools, there is one Governing Body, which will include a number of Foundation Governors (the number being linked to the particular status of the school). However, in multi-academy trusts which include Church of England schools, there are Foundation appointments at three different levels:

- (1) **Foundation Member appointments** - *Foundation Members will usually include amongst their number the Diocese of York Educational Trust (in its corporate capacity). The specific composition will depend on the governance model. Members are similar to shareholders, but they act on an unpaid, voluntary basis and have certain oversight powers, for example in relation to amending the multi-academy trust's constitutional documents and appointing and removing Directors.*
- (2) **Foundation Director appointments** - *Foundation Directors sit on the Board of Directors of the multi-academy trust. The Board of Directors has responsibilities in respect of all of the academies in the academy trust (including those which are not Church of England academies). They are also charity trustees.*
- (3) **Foundation Local Governor appointments** – *Foundation Local Governors sit on the Local Governing Committee of a Church of England academy within a multi-academy trust. They, along with the other Local Governors, have responsibilities in respect of their specific academy only, under powers delegated to the Local Governing Committee by the Board of Directors.*

Training and events

Come along to our ***FREE* Effective Governance in a Church of England School training session**. These sessions explore the distinctive nature of Church of England schools and the special responsibilities of those involved in Church of England school Governance. We introduce you to the Anglican school inspection framework (SIAMS) and to effective self-evaluation of Church of England schools.

For those who are ready to learn more, our ***FREE* SIAMS briefings** will guide attendees through the SIAMS framework and inspection process, focusing on the SIAMS schedule and unpacking the core questions and grade descriptors to help you to plan for inspection.

You can find details of all our training and events on our website – see <http://dioceseofyork.org.uk/supporting-schools/events/>.

Service Level Agreement

Each CE academy should have signed up to the Diocesan Board of Education's Service Level Agreement. Many of the services offered under the Service Level Agreement are aimed at helping the academy to develop its Church of England ethos. A copy of the current Service Level Agreement can be found here: <https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/schools-and-youth/schools-education-homepage/what-we-do/sla-2021-23/>

We would advise Foundation Directors to check that the Church of England academies in their academy trust are part of the SLA and to explore what support they might receive under it.

THE DIOCESE ARE HERE TO HELP!



The Education Team

Don't forget that we are here to support you.

We have a team who can provide support in a number of areas including:

- Church school distinctiveness
- RE and Collective Worship
- School effectiveness
- Church school governance and collaborative structures
- Appointment and appraisal of headteachers
- School buildings

Further details and team contact details can be found on our website (<http://dioceseofyork.org.uk/supporting-schools/whos-who/>).

If you're unsure who to get in touch with, the best person to contact in the first instance is Anita Smukulis (anita.smukulis@yorkdiocese.org, 01904 699511).

Join the Family!

Welcome to the family of Church of England Foundation Governors, Directors and Local Governors, spread across more than 4,700 Church of England schools and academies in England and the 122 Church of England schools and academies in the Diocese of York. We hope that you'll find the role of a Foundation Director rewarding.

This booklet is intended to give an introduction to the role, and to signpost you to where you might find further help and support as you develop in your role.



Why are we here?

Working together to:

- nurture disciples in our schools/academies
- deepen commitment through participation in daily acts of worship and engagement in religious education
- promote partnerships with and in the communities we serve
- enhance our ability to be salt and light to the whole world and help more people to encounter the living Christ.



The Right Reverend Paul Ferguson

Chair of the York Diocesan Board of Education

"Thank you for being a Foundation Director, or thinking whether this role might be for you."

Foundation Directors have a vital role in holding some essential parts of our mission together: providing a first-class experience for the children in our schools and academies, maintaining contact with parents, supporting head teachers and staff, ensuring that the assets we have for education are used wisely, and seeing all this as part of our shared vision in the Diocese of York to grow in Christlikeness, commitment, partnership, influence and numbers. As a school governor myself, I hope that you would find this role as fulfilling as I have."

BEING A FOUNDATION DIRECTOR – WHAT’S REQUIRED?

The key function of Foundation Governors is to “explore, with their partners on the Governing Body, ways in which the Church’s role in the school may be more fully and positively implemented.”

(National Society, 1996)

The “traditional role”

Foundation Governors (in maintained schools) and Foundation Local Governors (in academies) have a special role in, and responsibility for, ensuring that the Christian character of the school/academy is secured, preserved and developed and that the school/academy is run in accordance with any trust deed relating to the school. A Foundation Director in a multi-academy trust will have responsibility for overseeing this in respect of all Church of England academies within the multi-academy trust, supported by Foundation Local Governors.

Foundation Directors are representatives of the Church of England on the Board of Directors. They have certain specific roles and responsibilities which will depend on the type of Church of England academies within the trust. However, in all cases, they should endeavor to cultivate respect for the spiritual and moral beliefs of the Christian tradition, and to create a community in which pupils, cared for as individuals, are helped to find fulfilment as they grow towards adulthood.

A Foundation Director will need to be able to understand and articulate the role of the Church in the academy trust and the importance of the distinctively Christian character of the Church of England academies within it; encourage and focus debate in key areas (including Christian vision and values, Collective Worship and Religious Education); and secure that the Church of England academies within the trust thrive as Church of England academies. Foundation Directors should ensure that the Board of Directors gets sufficient information and advice from CE academy Local Governing Committees about the operation of the relevant academy as a CE school, so as to enable the Directors to make informed decisions and to be satisfied that the academy trust’s Objects are being upheld.

Where there are non-Church of England schools within the trust, their non-designated status should be respected.

- ◆ As well as receiving an Ofsted inspection, Church of England academies (like other Church of England schools) are inspected additionally under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework. The inspection will cover (as a minimum) Christian Character, Collective Worship and leadership of the academy as a Church school.
- ◆ Like in other Church of England schools, Church of England academies must provide a daily act of Collective Worship in accordance with the academy’s trust deed/the Anglican tradition.
- ◆ Special importance should be given to the study of Religious Education, with RE being a core subject within the academy. Like in a number of Church of England schools, some academies follow a denominational RE syllabus. However, this will depend on the requirements set out in the academy trust’s documentary framework. Diocesan advice should be obtained on a case by case basis. In cases where this is permitted, in practice academies use the syllabus recommended by their Diocese. In cases where an academy trust is following a denominational syllabus, the school’s SIAMS inspection will include an inspection of RE as a specific area in addition to the areas listed above.
- ◆ Like in all academies, staff are employed by the academy trust, rather than being employed by the Local Authority (the latter being the case in most maintained schools). In some CE school contexts, Christian commitment may be taken into account in making appointments in appropriate circumstances. However, Diocesan guidance should be obtained on a case by case basis.
- ◆ Like in all academies, the academy trust is the Admissions Authority, and has the responsibility for setting its own admissions policies for the academies in the academy trust. (In most maintained schools, the Local Authority is the Admissions Authority.) Faith based over-subscription criteria are permitted for the Church of England academies. The Board of Directors (or the Local Governing Committee if admissions matters are delegated to them) must consider the DBE’s guidance in determining the admissions policy and must consult the Diocese prior to making any changes to the academy’s existing policy.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Growing as a Director

There is a lot that you will need to know as a Director. You won't know everything straight away and you will grow in knowledge and confidence over time.

We'd encourage you to take as much advantage as possible of the training opportunities available to you, including those within your academy trust and those provided by the Diocese and third parties.

And of course, there's no substitute for getting stuck in and getting to know your trust and its academies!

Getting to grips with Church of England academies

Church of England academies differ from most other publically funded schools in a number of ways. For example:

- ◆ Governance documents (Articles of Association and Schemes of Delegation) will contain a faith based Object/ethos statement. These documents will also provide for the appointment of Foundation Directors and Foundation Local Governors.
- ◆ Like in other Church of England schools, the sites and buildings of Church of England academies are generally owned by separate site trustees, except for the playing fields. The site trustees (who might, for example, be the York Diocesan Board of Finance, or the vicar and churchwardens) hold the land for the specific purposes specified in the trust deed and have a responsibility to ensure that the activities on the site comply with the requirements of the trust deed. Playing fields and any structures thereon are usually owned by the Local Authority and - in the academy context - leased to the academy trust.

Ethos statement for Church of England Academies

"Recognising its historic foundation, the academy will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The academy aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils."

The wider role of a Director/ Trustee

At the same time, Foundation Directors have a responsibility to the academy trust, their academies, their pupils and their communities to support them to be effective in terms of achieving and exceeding the standards expected by Government. Foundation Directors, who will take on the full responsibilities of being a company director and a charity trustee, will need to have the skills and otherwise be in a position to contribute appropriately to the Board of Directors and the effective governance of the academy trust.

The Government provides guidance on the role of academy trust Directors in its "Governance Handbook" (the latest version of which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>). The Handbook identifies the following three core strategic functions of Governing Bodies (including academy trust Boards of Directors and, as appropriate, academy Local Governing Committees):

- ⇒ Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- ⇒ Holding the executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- ⇒ Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

A question of "fit"

And of course Foundation Directors need to be able to work well with the particular academy trust and the Board of Directors they are being appointed to. We ask those thinking about becoming a Foundation Director to speak to the Chair of the Board of Directors/Chief Executive (or equivalent) and a serving Foundation Director about the role before taking it on. This is both so that the individual can understand more about what's required and questions of "fit" can be properly considered.

WHAT MAKES A CHURCH SCHOOL/ACADEMY DISTINCTIVE AND DIFFERENT?

Whilst every school/academy is distinctive and different, the question of distinctiveness is frequently asked with reference to Church schools and academies. Church schools and academies should be distinctive in their Collective Worship and Religious Education offering, their ethos, and the ways in which their distinctively Christian values are worked into the daily life of the school or academy. Some of the ways in which this might be seen might include:

- ◇ A core Christian vision with Christian values embedded across the school or academy;
- ◇ A place of distinctive excellence, where all are valued as individuals and as God's children;
- ◇ A safe place where there is no ideological pressure and yet Christian inferences are built into the ethos and the teaching;
- ◇ Understanding of, and sensitivity towards, those of other faiths and those of no faith;
- ◇ Effective links with the local Church, Diocese and local community;
- ◇ A deliberate attempt to link the concerns of Christ's Gospel with the life of the school or academy;
- ◇ Visible signs and symbols of its Christian foundation around the school or academy;
- ◇ An inclusive place where selfless care and Christian love is apparent to all;
- ◇ A place where learning and the acquiring of skills are seen as a part of the revelation of God and His continuous involvement in His creation;
- ◇ Distinctively Anglican Collective Worship that develops a true sense of awe and wonder, follows the liturgical year, and celebrates with the parish significant Christian festivals and feast days;
- ◇ High quality Religious Education that is seen as an important part of the curriculum and a core subject;
- ◇ A commitment to developing the spiritual dimension both in the formal and the hidden curriculum;
- ◇ A place that takes the views of all the members of its community seriously and where the voice of the weakest is heard.

A good academy is both reflective and evaluative, willing to challenge itself with the help of critical friends such as Directors and Local Governors. An effective Church academy extends these processes to include the development of the spiritual dimension. Foundation Directors and Foundation Local Governors have a particular role to play in this aspect of a Church of England academy's management and governance.

WHO ELSE WILL BE THERE WITH ME?

How many other Foundation Directors will there be?

The precise composition of the Board of Directors varies from academy trust to academy trust. The academy trust's Articles of Association will set out the position.

The same is also true of Foundation Local Governors on Local Governing Committees of Church of England Academies. The composition should be specified in the academy trust's Scheme of Delegation which sets out the delegation of responsibility from the Board of Directors to the Local Governing Committee of a particular academy.

How will Foundation Directors be appointed?

The academy trust's Articles of Association will detail who is responsible for making Foundation Director appointments. In general, Foundation Directors will be appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education/Diocese of York Educational Trust.

In order to help the Diocesan Board of Education/Diocese of York Educational Trust to carry out their responsibilities effectively, the academy trust may be asked to make recommendations as to suitable candidates in light of the guidance provided on the role.