

STATUS

It is important that the GB is aware of the status of the school and the implications of this for school governance (e.g. number of foundation governors, staffing appointments, admissions, RE requirements etc). This understanding is essential to ensure effective oversight.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

This is about the GB reflecting on whether Collective Worship is legally compliant and in line with the school's Trust deed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

This is about the GB reflecting on whether the legal requirements around RE syllabuses have been met and whether the % curriculum time for RE is adequate and in line with the RE Statement of Entitlement. It is also about reflecting on whether the curriculum and its delivery is effective in enabling all pupils to flourish. The reported information in this area might prompt GB reflection on:

- Whether the provision/profile/priority/resourcing of RE reflects its place as a core curriculum subject.
- Whether the curriculum is challenging, accurate, well-sequenced, well-balanced, relevant, and diverse.
- What is the quality of teaching?
- How assessment informs teaching and learning.
- Whether all pupils make progress in their learning – and what patterns emerge in this regard e.g.
 - How do they compare to other subjects?
 - How do they compare nationally (secondary only)?
 - What do outcomes look like over time?
 - How does attainment and progress of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils compare?
- The monitoring that is conducted to verify this.
- Whether there are areas of weakness where additional support is needed.

STRUCTURAL MATTERS

Admissions - this is about:

- (in the VA/Foundation school context) confirming that certain key statutory requirements relating to admissions are being complied with (the policy is determined annually, whether or not material changes are being made, public consultation takes place every 7 years, the YDBE's guidance has been considered prior to recommending/determining admission arrangements etc in line with the Admissions Code.
- (in all contexts) understanding the patterns of admissions, including in the context of any faith-based criteria.

The GB should ask questions if, for example, a VC school is using faith-based oversubscription criteria (as it should not be). The GB of a VA/Foundation school might want to probe as to the inclusion of faith-based oversubscription criteria in policies if this is not being used in practice: there is no requirement that faith-based criteria are included in any CE school policy.

Policies - This is about ensuring that there is a cycle of review being undertaken to ensure that key policies are reviewed to reflect the CE vision. Progress should be seen over time.

Compliance - It is important that information relating to the site trustees is known about. If there are gaps in knowledge, schools should contact the Diocese. It is also important that the school/GB is mindful of the need to contact the site trustees/Diocese in certain instances (e.g. in relation to building work).

DBE SUPPORT

This is to prompt the GB to reflect on the level of engagement with, and support from, the Diocese and whether it has key information in relation to that support.

All schools should be signed up to the YDBE's SLA with at least the standard package, which should see them accessing a minimum of 3 visits over 2 years. It would be expected that the focus of those visits would dovetail with areas for development and/or key identified priorities as set outlined the Key Church school priorities box.

Questions should be asked by the GB if it does not look like there is engagement with and/or support from the Diocese.

York Diocesan Board of Education (YDBE)



Accompanying Guidance notes on Maintained School Church School Overview report

September 2023

The purpose of the report is:

- To draw certain key areas of Church school oversight in one place as a summary document for Governors.
- To prompt reflection and questioning in key areas related to the Church foundation and to enable strategic oversight by the Governing Body (GB).

Please note that this report provides a snapshot only and is not a substitute for the wider work of the Governing Body or any Church School ethos committee/similar in relation to Church school matters.

THEOLOGICALLY ROOTED CHRISTIAN VISION

This is about capturing and raising awareness of the school's Christian vision and ensuring that it is known by, and promoted by, leadership at all levels.

Given the importance of the vision, which is reflected in the prominence of the vision in the new SIAMS inspection framework, the GB may wish to explore questions such as:

- Is the Vision distinctively Christian and theologically rooted?
- How has the vision been developed? Who was involved in formulating the vision?
- How do leaders know that the vision is enabling people to flourish? Are leaders at all levels aware of, and guided by, the vision? What strategies to leaders employ to ensure that the vision is a living reality?

INSPECTIONS AND SELF-EVALUATION

This section is about the GB reflecting on:

- the key Church school priorities included in the School Development Plan (including any outstanding areas for development from the last inspection and any other areas identified through self-evaluation)
- The steps that have been taken/are still to be taken and
- The impact of those steps to date.

Having to hand key inspection and self-evaluation information should help to focus minds on where the school is, and where it should be, on its Church school journey.

The GB might wish to reflect on whether progress is in line with expectations and whether any additional support/resource is needed to support the school in key areas.

Note: The Church School Overview report prompts schools to report priorities by reference to the SIAMS Inspection Questions. Where there is overlap, schools should include the priority under the area that appears to be the most relevant. Please note:

- *There is no requirement/expectation that schools have an area for development against each Inspection Question – in fact, the opposite would be true.*
- *Whilst IQ7 is not relevant to the inspection of a number of schools under the SIAMS framework, it is still relevant to the school as a Church school (and as such has been included in the template for all schools).*

GOVERNING BODY

This is about ensuring that:

- The composition of the GB reflects the requirements as set out in the school's Instrument of Government.
- The GB is in a good position to fulfil its responsibilities e.g. there is a full foundation governor contingent, appropriate training is being accessed, and CE school matters are routinely discussed in the appropriate forums.
- The GB reflects on the structures that are in place for the protection of the school's CE foundation and the strengths and weaknesses within the structure. The detailed oversight might be conducted by a Church school committee or similar, with regular reporting to the Governing Body, or by the full Governing Body itself.

Areas the GB might wish to reflect on include:

- Are governors accessing the relevant Diocesan training/keeping up to date with local and national policy/guidance?
- Do we have challenges identifying people to fulfil the foundation governor role? Is there anything we can do to identify others potential foundation governors? (Note in general the YDBE appoints foundation governors, but local recommendations are sought in line with our published appointment processes.)

STAFF

This is about giving assurance that the necessary staff resource is in place and ensuring that everyone who needs to be is familiar with those fulfilling certain key roles. It is also intended to provide assurance as to (or enable challenge regarding) the CPD and wider support available for staff relating to their specific roles/working in a CE school.

Questions the GB might like to ask could include:

- Are staff accessing the relevant Diocesan and internal training/support?
- How are we developing future Church school leaders?

PARTICULAR AREAS FOR CELEBRATION

This is an opportunity to highlight some key areas to celebrate.

OVERALL

The key overall question that the GB will need to ask itself is whether, based on all it has seen and heard relating to the effectiveness of the school as a Church school, the CE foundation of the school has been preserved and developed.

The GB might also want to reflect on what information/evidence it receives in relation to Church school matters which enables it to come to this conclusion e.g. SIAMS self-evaluation, headteacher presentations, link governor reports, ethos committee minutes etc.