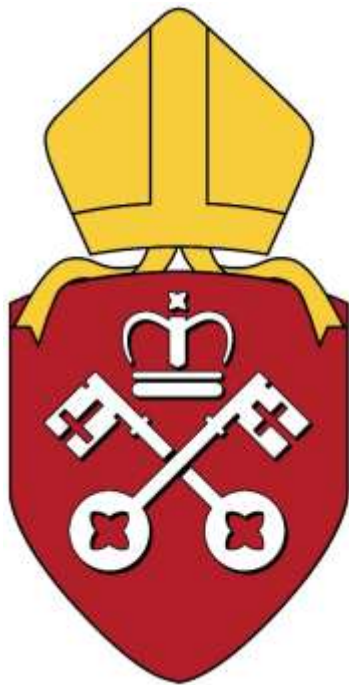


Appointing a Headteacher to a Church of England School



DIOCESE OF
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Appointing a Headteacher to CE School

Introduction

The text refers to a governing body (for Foundation/VA/VC schools), but can be read as Trust Board (for Academies) except where differences are noted.

- Recruiting a new church school leader is a significant role for a diocesan adviser
- Appointing a new headteacher is probably the most important task that a governing body undertakes and so support of a diocesan adviser is essential
- It is the governing body's responsibility in law to select the headteacher
- It is also a statutory duty of governors in a CE school to preserve and develop the religious character of the school, hence the need for appropriate support
- The Trust Boards may have a delegated body responsible for the appointment process, but the support from the diocese is still the same.

The Diocese of York offers a free advisory service to its 122 Church of England schools (Foundation/VA/VC/Academies) working alongside the local authorities. Whilst it is the full governing body that makes the appointment, they are required to consider the advice of the representatives.

The following pages outline the process for headteacher recruitment and the role of the diocesan adviser.

It should be noted that the diocese works alongside 7 local authorities in terms of recruitment, with each offering a different level of support to schools. It is essential to establish an early link with the relevant LA adviser for the smooth running of the process.



Section A: The Initial Process

Headteacher Resignation

On receiving the headteacher's written resignation, the governing body should inform the local authority and the Diocese of York.

In the diocese, headteacher recruitment is coordinated by Yvonne Methley, Assistant Director of Education in partnership with the Director of Education. Yvonne Methley usually takes responsibility for the process, but this may be delegated to another adviser dependent on availability and current workload.

For the Diocese of York, the governing body should email the Director of Education and copy in Yvonne Methley.

Resignation Dates

Notice periods for **headteachers**:

Resign by:	Notice period:	Termination date:	Start new post:
31 January	3 months	30 April	Summer Term
30 September	3 months	31 December	Spring Term
30 April	4 months	31 August	Autumn Term

Notice periods for **deputy headteachers or teachers**:

Resign by:	Notice period:	Termination date:	Start new post:
28/29 February	2 months	30 April	Summer Term
31 October	2 months	31 December	Spring Term
31 May	3 months	31 August	Autumn Term

Governor Responsibilities

All schools must have a headteacher. It is the responsibility of the governing body to select and appoint a new headteacher as soon as is possible following the resignation of the current headteacher. If there is to be a period of time between the present headteacher leaving and the new headteacher taking up their post, it may be necessary to appoint an acting headteacher. This may be an existing member of staff such as the deputy headteacher, but it is recommended that the chair of governors discusses the appointment with the diocese and LA.

The diocese and the LA need to establish with the chair of governors a date for an initial meeting with the full governing body. This is usually an extraordinary meeting of the board and will require a record of the minutes.



Section A: The Initial Process

Initial Meeting

The full governing body must meet with the LA and diocese in attendance. This is the formal start of the process. It is important that confidentiality is maintained throughout the appointment process.

Areas to Cover in Initial Meeting

- a) Needs analysis
- b) Headteacher Pay Range
- c) Selection panel
- d) Future meeting dates

a) Needs analysis

A needs analysis helps to determine whether the school is in a position to appoint their own substantive head. Primary Schools may need to consider other options such as shared headship either as a confederation or a federation depending on financial viability. At this point, if not previously discussed, academisation could be considered. The diocese produces guidance on all forms of collaborations, as there are particular considerations for CE schools and this is available on the diocesan website.

[Maintained schools including Federation and Collaboration - Diocese of York](#)
[Academies and the Diocesan Academisation Strategy - Diocese of York](#)

If the governing body chooses to explore collaboration, then the chair of governors must contact other schools with support and advice from LA/diocese.

b) Headteacher Pay Range

If a school is opting for a like-for-like appointment, then the Individual School Range (ISR) needs to be agreed in line with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. The LA advises on the appropriate ISR for the size of school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

c) Selection panel

The selection panel then needs to be determined.

- In the case of an Academy, Trustees may have delegated the responsibility to a smaller panel including the Chief Executive which is especially convened for this purpose
- The interview panel must comprise of at least three governors. Whilst the panel could include all governors, the recommendation is that it should be an odd number between three and seven with five as the optimum number. Unless a governor stands to gain (either directly or indirectly) from the appointment, or is related to a candidate, all governors have an equal right to be considered for the selection panel. This guidance strongly recommends staff governors and anyone working with the school for a fee should not be included in the interview panel.

Section B: The Recruitment Process

- It is mandatory for at least one governor on the panel to have undertaken and passed safer recruitment training
- At least one governor should be a foundation governor and in a VA school, if possible, the foundation governors should be in the majority
- It is quite common for most governors to be involved in the process and some of the activities. A selection panel is established to manage the process and interview the shortlisted applicants and make a final recommendation to the full governing body for ratification
- For a governor to be a member of the interview panel, they **must** be present at the shortlisting meeting and throughout the first day of selection activities. It is good practice that all members of the selection panel attend the meetings relating to the appointment
- The LA and diocesan adviser sit in attendance with the selection panel and can offer advice but do not have a vote
- The decision of the selection panel has to be ratified on the **same** day by an extraordinary meeting of the full governing body. In the case of an academy, the delegated body has to recommend the candidate to the Trustees so that the Trust Board can approve the appointment.

Existing headteacher

The role that the existing headteacher (or acting headteacher) is allowed to play in the process of appointing their successor is limited and laid down in legislation. These regulations require that the existing headteacher **should not** be present at meetings during the consideration and discussion of the appointment of a successor. The governors may, however, ask the headteacher to offer assistance in other parts of the process e.g. gathering and preparing information for candidates and providing the governors with information. LA's offer different advice on the headteacher's involvement in terms of receiving and showing candidates around the school and being present in the school on the interview day. As the LA lead, governors usually follow their suggestions.

The broad advice would be that it should be the same person/people who show prospective candidates around the school and the ideal would be a governor alongside the incumbent headteacher. On the interview day, the headteacher should be accessible, though may be on or off site depending on the LA's advice.

d) Future meeting dates

Dates for the first meeting of the selection panel need to be agreed as soon as possible with the LA and diocesan adviser. It may be at this stage that dates for shortlisting and interview are considered as most processes take ten to twelve weeks.

Section B: The Recruitment Process

Second Meeting – the Selection Panel

The selection panel is required to:

- Agree dates for the process
- Advertise the post
- Select applicants for interview
- Ensure safeguarding recruitment practices are followed, including seeking references
- Interview selected candidates
- Recommend an interviewee to the full governing body for appointment or, if no appointment can be made, recommend the governing body reconsiders the situation and discusses the way forward.

Areas to cover in second meeting

- a) Prepare the job description
- b) Prepare the person specification
- c) Advertisement
- d) Recruitment pack
- e) Candidates visiting the school

The selection panel should familiarise themselves with key documents such as the school development plan, any self-evaluation, the most recent Ofsted inspection report and the SIAMS report (Section 48). This will enable the selection panel to evaluate the school's current position, its strengths and potential weaknesses and assists in identifying areas for development. This helps to clarify the type of person required to lead the school.

a) Preparing the job description

The Teachers' Standards and the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers should be used to inform the preparation of the job description.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers>

The context of the school as a church school and preserving the character of the school as a church school should be visible in the job description. The diocese will provide examples to support governors.

b) Preparing the person specification

Areas to look at in the specification should include:

- Knowledge and experience relevant to the post
- Qualifications and evidence of recent continuing professional development
- Leadership skills
- Personal qualities/education philosophy
- Responsibility for safeguarding.

The mandatory requirement for all candidates to hold the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) has now been revoked. It can still be a desirable criterion.

The context of the school as a church school and preserving the character of the school as a church school should be visible in the person specification. The diocese will provide examples to support governors.

Section B: The Recruitment Process

Church of England requirement:

In a Voluntary Aided school/VA equivalent Academy, the governing body is the employer and has the right to ask for a faith commitment and include a faith reference under the Equality Act 2010: Genuine Occupational Requirement [See Appendix C].

In a Voluntary Controlled school, candidates should be fully supportive of the school's Christian vision and committed to developing links between the parish church and school.

Safeguarding

Both the job description and person specification must contain a reference to the responsibility the role has for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and the qualities that will be needed to fulfil these.

c) The advertisement

The advert should clearly state that this is a Church of England school.

The local authority's human resources team/Resourcing Solutions advise on adverts, but the cost is met by the school. Most schools advertise in the TES and on the LA vacancy board. Trusts advertise in the TES and on their own websites. The diocese also puts the advert on the diocesan website, for which there is no charge. Details should be passed to the diocesan administrator (Anita Smukulis) as soon as the advert goes live.

d) The recruitment pack

Governors may wish to delegate to a small working group the task of compiling the recruitment pack that will go out with the application form. The diocese has examples of packs in the database, however, Resourcing Solutions are web-based and therefore do not use a paper resource.

Usual contents of recruitment pack for CE School

- Letter from the chair
- Letter from the vicar/diocese
- Message from the children
- Photos of school activities
- Job description
- Person specification
- Key information: contact/address/ how to apply /pay scale/ visiting the school/ closing date/shortlisting date/interviews and start date.

e) Visiting the school

Potential candidates need to be given the opportunity to visit the school and consideration must be given as to how this will be handled.

Section B: The Recruitment Process

The Shortlisting Meeting

After the closing date, all returned applications will be distributed by the LA/HR to the chair and diocese, usually electronically. There is no rule of thumb as to the number of applications; it can range from 0 to 15, with rarely less than two and rarely more than fifteen for a CE Primary School.

The applications need to be read in advance of the meeting and scored against the agreed criteria.

Areas to cover in the shortlisting meeting

- a) Selection of candidates against criteria
- b) Clear reasons for rejection of candidates must be given as the LA may be asked for feedback. The non-selection must be based on the criteria.
- c) Checking that referees are appropriate
- d) Establishing the activities for day one (if not already agreed from a previous meeting)

The shortlisting meeting is normally held shortly after the closing date. The selection panel including the LA and diocese attend the meeting. It is **essential** that all governors on the selection panel attend. If a governor can't make this meeting, they should not be involved in the interview day.

The diocesan/LA advisers can be a different person as there are no voting rights, but ideally the same advisers see the process through to its conclusion.

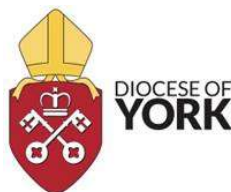
a) Selection of candidates against criteria

Shortlisting is conducted against the agreed criteria. Depending on the number of applicants, the recommended shortlisted number is **four**. More candidates make the day very difficult to manage.

Church of England requirement:

It is the distinct role of the diocesan adviser to ensure whether the candidate has addressed the specific requirements for leading a CE school. It is possible that a candidate may not have any experience of a CE school, but a failure to address these criteria should be seen as a serious omission and a reason for non-selection. This is a key golden thread that needs to be picked up during the selection process.

Inconsistencies and gaps in employment history should be identified so they may be explored with candidates at interview. The gaps **must** be accounted for by the candidate.



Section B: The Recruitment Process

- b) Clear reasons for rejection of candidates must be given as the LA may be asked for feedback. The non-selection must be based on the criteria.**

A candidate may not be able to display all the required qualities/skills in an application, but the key areas to look for which may lead to non-selection are:

- No acknowledgement of the school as Church of England
- No or weak support for the school's Christian vision
- No or weak reference to the school's distinctive Christian ethos
- Lack of appropriate qualifications
- Lack of appropriate experience
- No acknowledgement of safeguarding role
- Failure to address the criteria
- No recent relevant experience.

Human resources usually take responsibility for contacting applicants, but the chair of governors may choose to ring successful candidates and invite them personally. HR usually organise the taking up of references.

- c) Checking that referees are appropriate**

All candidates should provide at least two professional references, one of which should normally be their current employer or line manager.

Church of England VA requirement:

VA schools may ask for an additional, third reference to establish the candidate's level of Christian commitment and this is usually completed by the priest/minister/church leader from the place of worship where the candidate regularly attends. This is under the Equality Act 2010: Genuine Occupational Requirement. Failure to provide a third referee for a VA appointment may not preclude selection, but it must be followed up prior to a firm offer of interview.

- d) Establishing the activities for day one**

The selection process

It is recommended the selection process takes place over **two** days, but this may also depend on the number of candidates selected for interview. Over the course of these two days, candidates will be asked to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, experience and understanding in a variety of ways. The variety is important because it will enable the selection panel to form a rounded view of candidates and to make their judgements accordingly. It is important that the candidate's performance in each of the tasks is fully considered when the final decision is made.



Section B: The Recruitment Process

Structure of Day One and Day Two

DAY ONE

Church of England requirement:

Day One takes place at the school. Selection activities for a CE school **must** include the candidate leading **collective worship**. The theme is often a Christian value or linked to the church year. This is usually observed by at least a foundation governor and the diocesan adviser.

Other suggested activities

- Teaching (if a significant teaching post)
- Observation of teaching with feedback
- Data analysis exercise
- Finance exercise
- In-tray activities
- Interview by School Council
- Narrow focus panel interviews e.g. on teaching/learning
- Learning walk with a specific focus

All candidates must complete all selection activities.

DAY TWO

This is usually conducted off-site and involves a presentation and a formal interview. Questions can be agreed at the end of day one or at an earlier selection meeting. Not all candidates will necessarily go forward to day two.

The final interview panel will consist of members of the governing body and representatives of the LA and diocese. The diocese provides examples of questions appropriate to the context of the school as a church school.

Logistics

The selection activities will be undertaken during a normal school day and thus the current headteacher **must** be consulted about the organisation of the day.

DAY ONE

Things to consider:

- A room for candidates to use as a base
- A room for governors/advisers as a base
- Rooms available for selection activities
- Catering arrangements for the day/dietary needs
- Access needs if required
- Car parking provision
- Asking teachers to be observed
- Organising School Council questions
- A venue for collective worship
- Organising a cross-section of the school to attend collective worship with different

- children each time
- Arranging check of documentation/visitors badges

DAY TWO

Things to consider:

- Formal interviews are best conducted off-site
- Timings for each candidate
- A decision as to whether the candidate should be given the presentation prior to the interview day or on the interview day
- If prior to the interview day, it is recommended that the task is given at the *end* of day one. It is important to remember that giving the task before day two will cause the candidate to invest significant time in the presentation. If it is given *before* day one, candidates could be wasting their time if not taken through to day two
- If the candidate is being allowed to use PowerPoint etc. then the provision of IT must be made available
- If the task is given on the morning of the interview, sufficient time needs to be given for preparation. This would need to be a timed activity to be fair to all candidates and would need an additional governor, not involved in the selection panel, to supervise
- Car parking facilities/cloakroom facilities
- A base for candidates to wait/prepare
- A room sufficiently large for all governors + two advisers + candidate
- Catering arrangements for the day (especially if interviews go over lunch).

The agreed programme needs to be sent to selected candidates, with individual timings, together with a letter from the chair of governors.

The Interview Day

DAY ONE

The candidates require an identity check which is usually undertaken by the secretary/business manager. This includes applicant's identification, qualifications and address. Copies should not be taken.

It is recommended that the current headteacher is accessible in order to support, but cannot be involved with the process. This may be they are on site or off-site but available. LA's have different protocols and their advice is usually followed by governors.

Church of England requirement: Collective Worship

The diocesan adviser will observe collective worship. The diocese has its own observation form and it is recommended that this is used, as ones provided by LA/Resourcing Solutions are too generic. It has to be remembered that in a CE school, the collective worship must be distinctively Christian and Anglican in nature.

It is helpful if some teaching staff are present to help manage the children and assist the candidate with any technical issues. Candidates are likely to have brought their own props and may need access to screen/music. If the latter are not available, this needs to be made clear to candidates prior to the day.

End of Day One

The governors and advisers should meet at the end of the day to discuss the candidates, and this needs to be in a secure area for confidentiality. This is the opportunity for the selection panel to consider whether all, some or no candidates are to go forward to day two. The reasons for non-selection need to be clear, as the LA/diocesan adviser may be required to give feedback.

If interview/presentation questions haven't been discussed, this is the point at which this should happen. The LA/diocese have banks of questions, including MAT specific questions and questions specific to CE schools.

It is the role of the chair to contact candidates:

- The successful candidates need to be given a time/the presentation (if agreed) and the venue. No indication should be given as to how many candidates are going through to the second day
- The unsuccessful candidates have to be notified, but the chair shouldn't be drawn into giving reasons for non-selection but refer them to the LA/HR in the first instance for feedback.

DAY TWO

The selection panel usually meets at least 30 minutes before the arrival of the first candidate to finalise questions and discuss procedures.

The candidate should be greeted by a governor and either given the presentation or brought to the interview room where they should be given time to settle.

Presentation

The presentation is timed and usually an adviser takes this role so governors can give their full focus to the candidate. A one-minute warning should be given and the candidate must be stopped once time is reached in the fairness to other candidates. If there is only one candidate on day two, then discretion can be used.

Follow-up questions on the presentation may be asked by the selection panel.

Formal Interview

- All candidates should be asked the **same** initial questions, which have been planned and agreed in advance by the selection panel
- Follow up questions may be different and in response to candidates' individual replies
- The LA and diocese are entitled to ask follow-up questions, especially for clarification
- Under safer recruitment practice, there must be at least one safeguarding question

Church of England requirement:

There should be **at least** one question related to the leadership of a Church of England

school. Governors of a VA school are entitled to ask about personal Christian faith [Equality Act 2010: Genuine Occupational Requirement]. However, a question about personal faith **may not** be asked to those applying for a headteacher role in a voluntary controlled school or its academy equivalent

- It is often easier if each governor asks the same questions to each candidate
- Depending on the size of the panel, the chair may invite the LA/diocesan adviser to ask a question.

At the end of each interview the panel chair should ask each candidate:

- Is there anything that you would like to add or expand upon based on the questions that we've just asked?
- Do you have any questions that you would like to put to the panel?
- Confirm any gaps in employment
- If we were to offer you the post, would you still be interested in accepting? Are you still a firm candidate?
- Which telephone number can we reach you on at the end of the day? Where can you be contacted this evening?

The chair then clarifies to candidates that the appointment requires the support of the full governing body, the LA for a VC school and the diocese for a VA school and that pre-employment checks must be completed before a formal offer can be made.

The Decision

- The selection panel should consider all feedback from the selection process, including appropriate feedback from staff and pupils, provided it has been collected in a structured way and relates to the criteria for the post
- The opinion of the advisers is usually sought, but it must be remembered that the decision is solely that of the governing body and the advisers should not tell a governing body what to do or join in a vote. However, if the decision made is not supported by the advisers, then this is communicated in writing to the chair of governors following the meeting
- There has to be a **majority** decision – hence the importance of an uneven number of governors
- Once a decision is made then there needs to be agreement about the salary to be offered to the successful candidate, based on the published range
- If a decision cannot be reached, or if there is profound disagreement, this should be reported to the full governing body and a decision taken as to the way forward. This often entails the post being re-advertised.

Ratification Meeting

- The advisers do not attend the ratification meeting
- In taking the agreed recommendation to the full governing body, the chair of the panel should explain the reasons for the recommendation, and the views of the LA and diocesan representatives
- Formal minutes recording the decision of the governing body must be made.

Offer and Acceptance

- Following the decision of the governing body, the chair of governors should contact the successful candidate to confirm that they have been successful in the interview process and that he/she is the '**preferred candidate**' pending completion of all pre-employment checks
- The starting salary and expected start date should be confirmed along with the hours of the post i.e. full-time or job-share etc. **The chair should be clear that the conversation does not constitute a formal offer of the headship**
- The chair of governors should then contact the unsuccessful candidates to inform them of the governing body's decision and to confirm the arrangements for feedback
- For a maintained school, the governing body must recommend the candidate to the LA for appointment. This recommendation must be in writing to the Director of Children Services, cc to HR, including confirmation of the salary and start date.
- For an Academy, the delegated board makes the recommendation to the Trustees.

Administrative Tasks

Paperwork storage

All documents related to the whole process, including shortlisting and duplicate applications, must be collated and securely retained for six months by the school. This includes any notes made by panel members. At the end of six months, the papers should be destroyed.

The exception is that advisers retain their own notes as these are used for feedback to candidates. These should be shredded when it is clear they are no longer required.

Under General Data Protection Regulations, no personal details should be kept about the candidates. The front page of the application form is given to the diocesan administrator for contact purposes, but all other applications should be destroyed – including those in electronic form.

The appointment of a headteacher is confidential until all the relevant paperwork has been completed. Yvonne Methley will update the relevant spreadsheet and the database.

For those new to headship in a Church of England school the following support is provided:

- A welcome email from the adviser with information about the Service Level Agreement
- A church school mentor
- Two headteacher induction events in their first year of headship
- A new headteacher visit by the link adviser
- Regular leadership online meetings and 2 leadership breakfast meetings each year.
- Support through the school's Service Level Agreement
- Email/phone support throughout the school year.



Section C: Appendix: VA Specific Requirements

Headteacher recruitment – VA schools

Guidance notes reflecting the Church of England foundation and Christian vision during the recruitment process

Job Description

In VA schools, it is appropriate to set the school's Christian foundation as an over-arching header for the job specification such as, *'In the light of the school's Church of England foundation and its commitment to sustaining and developing its Christian ethos and values, the Headteacher will be required to:* [see Headteacher Job Description]

Person Specification

In Voluntary Aided schools the governing body is the employer and as such may decide to exercise a preference in favour of candidates who can demonstrate positive commitment to the Christian faith. This is a particular right available to governors of Aided schools under the Equality Act 2010: Genuine Occupational Requirement [see Person Specification Template].

Staffing and Employment Guidance for Schools: DfE May 2018 states:

The governing body in a voluntary-aided school may give preference with regard to the appointment, remuneration and promotion of teachers at the school, to persons:

- whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the school's religion;
- who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets; or
- who give, or are willing to give, religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets. (p27 6.1)

- The diocese would expect governors to look for a Christian commitment in the head of a VA school
- It is essential that all governors have a shared view of how they define terms used such as "faith commitment", "practising Christian" and "communicant Anglican"
- They should be agreed as to the level of commitment required of the candidate to promote the Christian foundation of the school and carry out its trust deed and mission. This view should be made clear at every stage of the process, briefly in the advertisement and particularly in the information about the school.

The Person Specification also includes:

- To live out and embed the Christian vision and core Christian values of the school
- A commitment to maintaining and developing the Christian vision and values of the school and promoting an understanding of other faiths and cultures
- To manage the financial and human resources effectively and efficiently to achieve the school's Christian vision and values in line with legal requirements
- To lead, monitor and evaluate SMSC across all areas of the school life and develop the spiritual life of the school
- To lead, monitor and evaluate and develop collective worship
- To lead, monitor and evaluate and develop Religious Education as a core subject of the school

NB: Governors should remember their obligation under the Equal Opportunities Policy, not to discriminate on the grounds of gender, ethnic origin, marital status, sexuality, age or disability.

An important issue for governors of Aided schools is the responsibility of appointing a candidate who will promote the Christian foundation of the school without compromising on professional expertise

Advertisement

This should clearly state that this is a Church of England or Christian foundation school that seeks to promote Christian vision and values.

Letter from Chair of Governors to candidates

Early on in the letter to candidates, it should be made clear that this is a Church foundation school where the implementation of Christian vision and values in the everyday life of the school is seen as of paramount importance and reflected in relationships, policies and decision-making processes.

A statement such as, *'the governors are concerned to ensure that that the selection process will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability and fitness to sustain and develop the religious character of our school'*, might also be included.

Information pack

Foundation governors with the headteacher (or subject leader for collective worship / RE) could draw up a brief statement about the school's links with the local church and the diocese and how this is valued by both school and community, for inclusion in the info pack.

In order to conform to the Genuine Occupational Requirement legislation, the information pack must include a copy of the school's ethos statement (as stated in the Instrument of Government for the school). This makes clear the grounds for the requirement to *'demonstrate ability to sustain and develop the Christian ethos and values of the school'*.

Selection panel

It is usual for the panel making the appointment to consist of 3 or 5 governors. In a VA school, it is usual for the panel to be majority foundation governors. The Diocesan Director or his representative and a Local Authority adviser will support the panel throughout the selection process.

