

## **Policy for Appointing Christ Church Foundation Governors**

It is fully recognised that the appointment of foundation Governors to Christ Church School is the sole responsibility of the PCC.

Appointments to vacancies should initially be sought from among those who are committed worshippers at Christ Church to ensure that the school “*preserves and develops its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level*”

Candidates not from Christ church may be considered, providing they

- Uphold orthodox Christian beliefs compatible with those held by the Anglican Church.
- Demonstrate regular membership of another local Church.

(In this instance the PCC should seek references from the leader of the church that the person attends)

- Understands and gives an undertaking that they are appointed to “*preserve and develop the school’s religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level*”

The PCC will undertake to support all governors in their commitment to this ministry by prayer, by encouraging the appropriate training provided by the Diocesan Education Board on the role of a Foundation Governor and by providing information about the “religious character” of Christ Church.

Approved by PCC November 2010

## INTRODUCING FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

The very first primary schools were church schools. A new charity was founded in 1811 called the *National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church*. Through its grants parish schools were established up and down the country. They carried the main burden of primary education in this country. Primary schools supported by rates and general taxation did not come into being until several decades later.



The Diocese  
of St Albans

Schools  
Team

Today, about a sixth of primary pupils attend church schools. Church schools are an intrinsic part of the state education system but the church retains various rights and privileges, including that of appointing Foundation Governors.

Foundation Governors are appointed by the Church at parish or diocesan level. They are full members of the Governing Body of the school and, like all governors, are expected to play a full role in the life of the Governing Body, together with its sub-committees etc.

The *Instrument of Government* of every Church of England School contains a common Ethos Statement:

*Recognising its historic foundation, the school 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 school 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 its offers to all its pupils.*

NB: Some schools have added to this wording slightly.

The school should also have a *Trust Deed* (though some have been lost in the mists of time) which describes the foundation character of the school.

It is the particular responsibility of Foundation Governors to uphold the foundation character and ethos of the school as set out in the Trust Deed and Instrument of Government.

Foundation Governors would normally be practising Christians and regular and supporting members of the local Anglican church<sup>1</sup>. It may be appropriate for the total

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<sup>1</sup> This really is a matter for local discretion, but "going to church" and "not being a notorious evil liver" would seem to be acceptable proxy indicators.

number of Foundation Governors to reflect an ecumenical dimension and to include members in good standing of other local churches. It may also be helpful for a school sometimes to recruit Foundation Governors from a wider area, perhaps to ensure a wider perspective or range of skills. A measure of local discretion is appropriate.

The local church (PCC) or a Trust may appoint some foundation governors. The Diocesan Board of Education appoints others after local consultation. The school has an Instrument of Government that sets out how many Foundation Governors the school has and by whom they are appointed.

In **Voluntary Controlled Schools** no single group of governors is in the majority.

In **Voluntary Aided Schools** the governing body contains an overall majority of two Foundation Governors. At least one-fifth of Foundation Governors should be eligible for election or appointment as parent governors<sup>2</sup>.

Foundation Governors generally serve a term of office of four years (but are free to resign at any stage within that period).

Foundation Governors should be prepared to present the views of the Diocesan Board of Education to the governing body<sup>3</sup>.

Diocesan education officers offer regular opportunities for governor training in church school issues.

Foundation Governors are called to be "critical friends" of the school. Like all Governors they should be prepared to get to know the school and its concerns thoroughly and work with the headteacher and others in its effective management.

Through the appointment and contribution of keen and committed Foundation Governors is one way in which the Church shows its commitment to church schools and makes a very substantial contribution to the education of young people in a parish. Becoming a Foundation Governor is seen to be a significant Christian lay ministry. PCCs and the local churches have a vital role in recruiting, encouraging and supporting Foundation Governors.

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<sup>2</sup> Since September 2003, the definition of a "parent" is that of a parent or carer of a child registered at the school, of a former pupil of the school, or of a child of or under compulsory school age.

<sup>3</sup> The wording here is important: it does not demand *carte blanche* acceptance of the Board's views, but simply that such views will be made known if requested.

Dave Ilott comments 17/11/2010

The above document is useful in drawing your attention to what is expected of a PCC elected Foundation Governor. Whilst it does not exclude a person standing because they do not attend or worship at Christ church or to be in the same denomination as ourselves, I believe that the PCC has a duty to only elect foundation governors where we are satisfied that that person will fulfil the criteria of making sure that the school

*Develops its religious character in accordance with the principles of the **Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.***

Governors should also be prepared **to present the views of the Diocesan Board of Education** to the governing body.

The Diocesan Board of Education realise the difficulties that occur in filling vacancies and in reply to a question on "faith" have stated that an elected person should uphold Anglican Authordox beliefs and therefore there would not be a problem of appointing someone from a Greek authordox background.

The last paragraph in the Instrument of Government reinforces the point that the Church should take this seriously as the role is seen to be a significant lay ministry of the church and one that is vital the PCC appoint to and encourage.

I personally would find it difficult to elect someone of another denomination who therefore has no relationship with the Church or England; does not attend our Parish Church and therefore knows nothing of the "religious character" we uphold.

I believe that first we should actively encourage our church membership to be active in this role before looking outside to fill these positions.

Discuss!!!

Once we have discussed at PCC we can then inform Marcia of our decision.

Dave.