



## BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,  
and Christ is made known to all.”*

## Handbook for New Chairs



**‘Catholic education endeavours to make the person of Jesus Christ known and loved, and to place Him and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of the educational enterprise.’**

***The Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School, 1999***

**‘The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already.’**

***John Buchan***

Dear Chair,

We want to take this opportunity to welcome you as a new Chair and thank you for your significant contribution to Catholic education. Bishop Alan values the contribution made by you and all governors in the success of our schools and recognises the time, commitment and hard work of all who volunteer to become Chair.

The Church provides Catholic schools to be more than just places where pupils are equipped with learning and skills for the workplace and responsible citizenship. Rather, they are the communities where the spiritual, cultural and personal worlds within which we live are harmonised to form the roots which support our values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform our choices and actions as persons and this is at the heart of your role.

National research indicates that a school is unlikely to succeed without an effective governing board. Chairs are key to achieving strong governance, to ensuring successful educational outcomes due to their vital strategic role in holding school leaders to account through support and challenge in equal measure. Chairs thus play an important strategic role in driving school improvement. There are also clear expectations for the behaviour and personal attributes of chairs, including a personal commitment to take up opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills and we are here to support and advise you as you grow into the role.

The guidelines set out in this handbook, based on research into effective governance, will give you important information you need to start your journey. We will also keep you up to date on significant educational developments and good practice through our twice termly Chairs' News and monthly Governor News.

I hope you enjoy the challenge and find it a rewarding experience.

If you have a question about governance or need further support please get in touch with Debbi Botham, Diocesan Governance Support Officer [debbibotham@brcdt.org](mailto:debbibotham@brcdt.org) or your Diocesan School Link Adviser.

Robert Simpson  
Director of Education  
Diocese of Brentwood

## Introduction

### Responsibilities of Catholic schools

Under English law, governing bodies of Catholic schools have a corporate responsibility to ensure that their schools are managed in accordance with the diocesan Trust Deed or the Trust Deed of the relevant religious institution, as well as the school's Instrument of Government (maintained schools) or Scheme of Delegation, Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association (academies).

Governing bodies are responsible for understanding, maintaining and developing the distinctive nature of the Catholic school, within the Church's mission of education and in awareness of the contribution the Church makes to society through this mission.

### Educational Vision

As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects you to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards.

A Catholic school's primary purpose is to support families in the education of their children. Schools strive to enable each child to attain personal excellence in their studies and through the formation of their human values and understanding of God's purpose in their life.

### Core Functions

Your core strategic functions, as a governing body at a Catholic school, are to:

- ensure clarity of Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction
- hold the appropriate senior leadership to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the School and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, including performance management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the School and make sure its money is well spent

### Diocesan Protocol for VA schools and Academies in the Diocese of Brentwood

Your overarching duty is to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school or schools for which you are responsible. This is best achieved through a committed working relationship with the Diocese.

The [Diocesan Protocol](#) explains and exemplifies the relationship between the Bishop and the Catholic schools of the diocese, building on the Memorandum of Understanding that has existed in the diocese for many years. Based on a CES model document, the basis for the Protocols document is to ensure the preservation and development of the Catholic character of the school through your relationship with the Diocese and provides clarity about what is expected from governors and school leaders in a variety of situations.

**It is important that you familiarise yourself with the Protocol and ensure compliance by your governing body.**

### Eligibility for Chair and Vice Chair

The Diocesan Bishop has a duty to ensure that all the Foundation Directors/Governors appointed to govern Catholic schools in the Diocese have the personal commitment and skills to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school or schools for which they have responsibility. Foundation Governors must be practising Catholics to be eligible for appointment by the Bishop.

They are appointed in the name of the Bishop and form the majority of the governing body of a Catholic school and have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed.

In this Diocese the Bishop wishes that in the case of all voluntary aided schools and academies the position of chair and vice chair of the governing body or local governing committee be held by a Foundation Governor.

**Any exception to this must be approved by the Diocese of Brentwood.**

The Chair is usually elected by the governors annually.

In Catholic multi academy trusts (CMATs) the appointment of the Chair of the Local Governing Committee following election is subject to the approval of the Trust Board. This is because of the vital link and the importance of maintaining a strong and effective relationship between the Local Governing Committee and the Trust Board.



- Have I read the Diocesan Protocol for VA Schools and Academies in the Diocese of Brentwood?
- Do I understand the three core functions of the governing body?

## Your school

As a new Chair, your school should ensure you have key information to fulfil your role, including the following:

- **List of governors**  
A list of governors with contact details, terms of office and any specific responsibilities they may have.
- **Meeting timetable**  
A timetable of governing board meetings
- **Terms of reference**  
The governing board may, where permissible, delegate some of its functions to committees or individuals. Each individual or committee to which functions have been delegated must have terms of reference that record the scope of their remit and decision-making powers. These should be reviewed at least annually.
- **Staffing structure**  
Details of teaching and non-teaching members of staff.
- **School Development Plan/School Improvement Plan**  
The latest school self-evaluation and School Development Plan
- **Governor training record**  
The [DfE Governance Handbook](#) and [Competency Framework for Governance](#) makes it clear that everyone on the governing body should make a commitment to developing their skills and keeping their knowledge up to date. There should be a record of training and development undertaken by governors, including Diocesan training; any persistent skill gaps across the governing body or for individuals should be addressed by the Chair
- **Instrument of Government (maintained schools) or Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation where appropriate (Academies)**
- **Details of committee structure and membership**
- **Dates of terms and holidays**
- **Policy review timetable**



- Have I received all this information?
- Is there anything else I need?

## The importance of strong leadership

### Vice Chair

Every governing board must have a Vice-Chair who acts as Chair if the Chair is unavailable. When the Vice-Chair acts as Chair, they have the same role and powers as the Chair, including a casting vote.

**It is the Bishop's wish that the position of Vice-Chair of the governing body or local governing committee be held by a Foundation Governor - a practicing Catholic with the support of a Parish Priest.**

**Any exception to this must be approved by the Diocese of Brentwood.**

The Chair should look to the Vice-Chair for support and advice so a close professional working relationship is important. Remember that the role also offers scope for the development of leadership skills.

A key quality of effective Chairs is the ability and willingness to delegate. Make sure there is a common understanding of the role.

You should consider encouraging your Vice-Chair to:

- take on a specific responsibility, such as committee chair
- chair particular agenda items or some FGB meetings
- welcome and induct new governors, possibly acting as a mentor for new governors
- ensure governors' participation in and between meetings
- share the work on issues such as complaints, staff grievances and performance management

### Succession Planning

You won't be the Chair for ever! Succession planning is important to ensure continuity of leadership and the ongoing effectiveness of the governing board.

You may find this booklet [Succession breeds success – how to grow leaders in your governing body](#) useful.

### Chairs' Action

Governing bodies are corporate bodies, and individual governors have no power or right to make decisions on behalf of the governing board, unless the governing board has delegated a specific function to them.

However, in maintained schools, the Chair may take urgent action on behalf of the governing board when:

- it is not possible to call a meeting before the decision has to be made
- not acting would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, pupils, their parents or anyone employed at the school.

As a legal concept, Chair's Action only exists in the regulations governing maintained schools. No equivalent can be found in the regulations or model articles, which govern academy trusts. Nonetheless, trusts retain the option of setting out a similar procedure in their scheme of delegation, and many have chosen to do so.

**Note:** Any urgent action the Chair takes on behalf of the governing board must be reported at the next meeting.



- What, if any, delegated authority has the Chair been given by the governing board?
- Is 'Chair's Action' an agenda item at FGB meetings?
- What arrangements are in place to enable smooth transition from one Chair to another?
- How well are responsibilities delegated to other members of the governing body?

## Working with the Headteacher

### Understanding the strategic role

Day-to-day management and operational decisions should be left to the Headteacher, and the Chair needs to ensure that the governing board understands the difference between strategic and operational decision-making.

The role of the governing board is strategic, and involves:

- setting the ethos and direction of the school
- agreeing the strategic direction of policies
- long- and medium-term planning
- oversight and accountability of performance, including setting the performance management culture
- major spending decisions

### Negotiating the relationship

[Research shows](#) that a professional working relationship between the Chair and Headteacher, based on trust, openness and transparency, is a crucial factor in successful schools. An effective Chair is able to listen and ask appropriate questions as well as act as a sounding board for the Headteacher.

As a new Chair, you and the Headteacher will need to:

- get to know each other as people
- explore your expectations of each other and establish an agreed understanding of your roles and responsibilities
- agree the need for effective challenge and support and for an open dialogue about the school's strengths and weaknesses
- identify the priorities on which you will work together
- mutually agree regular contact, such as the timing and frequency of your meetings and the use of phone and email contact
- model Gospel values and protect the Catholic ethos

Some issues discussed by the Chair and the Headteacher may need to remain confidential, but careful thought should be given to which information is confidential and which should properly be shared with the governing board

It may sometimes be tempting for the Headteacher and Chair to sort things out on their own but the governing board should not feel that sides have been taken or decisions made behind their backs. Remember that the Chair is only able to make decisions when a matter is urgent.



- Have you agreed the 'ground rules' for your one to one meetings with the Headteacher?
- Does this suit both parties?



## Leading governing body business

A key role of the Chair is to provide clear leadership and direction for the governors, understanding the aims and vision of the school and keeping the focus on the governing body's core functions.

### Working with your Clerk

The Chair needs to ensure that meetings are business-like and run smoothly, so building a good working relationship with your Clerk or Governance Professional is very important.

[Research shows](#) that in effective governing bodies, the role of the Clerk to the governors is pivotal to ensuring that statutory duties are met, meetings are well-organised and governors receive the information they need in good time.

An effective Chair will work closely with the Clerk/Governance Professional to ensure that:

- meetings are scheduled to link with the school improvement planning cycle, so important decisions can be made at the right time
- draft agendas are agreed in good time
- agenda items are focused on strategic school improvement issues
- all papers are circulated within the timescales agreed by the governing board and *not* tabled at the meeting
- minutes are a clear and concise record of the main points of the meeting
- meeting dates are set for the academic year, ensuring days and times to suit the current membership

The clerking role is often undervalued and governing bodies are not always of the full extent of the Clerk's responsibilities as set out in the [Clerking Competency Framework](#).

It is good practice for the Chair to undertake an annual performance review of the Clerk. Good clerking is about much more than taking minutes to record the discussions and decisions of the board. It is also about providing governing boards with expert advice on constitutional or procedural issues and directly contributing to its efficient conduct.

### Meeting Management Checklist

#### Before the Meeting

Is there clear delegation to any committees with clear terms of reference which are reviewed annually?

Is there clarity on the membership of any committees?

Is there an annual plan of work? The key topics to be discussed each term should be based on the school development plan, statutory requirements, policies and other business

Are agendas and papers distributed at least 7 working days before the meeting? (Academy Articles of Association may require longer)
<b>During the Meeting</b>
Start on time and finish on time. Don't allow the meeting to go too long – aim for no more than 3 hours, ideally 2
Minutes and actions from the previous meeting are reviewed and signed off
It is good practice to summarise the outcome of any discussion to ensure clear decisions and shared understanding
Date of next meeting is clear
<b>After the Meeting</b>
Minutes are produced in a timely fashion
Challenge is well recorded
Actions are clear, including by whom and when

### Chairing the meeting

A key ability of an effective Chair is to chair meetings well. A well chaired meeting:

- gives everyone a voice, but no one is allowed to dominate the discussion
- encourages the governing body to work effectively together
- starts on time and has good time management
- makes it clear which items are for information or decision
- ensures governors leave the meeting confident that things have been achieved and that good use has been made of their time and skills

### Disagreements

Even where there are good working relationships and good teamwork, the best planned meetings do not always run smoothly. Differences of opinion are an inevitable part of decision-making, but research shows that teams that do not always agree make better decisions and achieve more than those who are always in agreement.

It is up to the Chair to try to reduce tensions between individuals, and it is important that the Chair remains emotionally uninvolved and is seen as impartial.

Sometimes, it may be better to go for a vote to seek resolution and then secure commitment to a corporate decision.

### Governing body effectiveness

As a new Chair, this is a good time to review the effectiveness of your current governing board structure. Governing boards should have robust methods of self-review to assure themselves they are effective and that governors work together well. What impact does your governing body have on school improvement?

Ask yourself:

- Is the governing board a good size for effective working?
- If you have a committee structure, does it work well? Are committee terms of reference reviewed annually?
- Could working parties occasionally be used to take on specific tasks?

- Are the right people on the governing board? Are they committed, able to attend meetings and possess 'the skills required to contribute to effective governance and the success of the school'?
- How do you ensure that everyone is contributing effective skills?



- Is there an annual calendar of work for the governing body?
- Does your clerk regularly update the Diocese when there are changes in membership?
- Do you have an annual review of governing body effectiveness?
- Do you have a calendar for the review of school policies?

## Leading school improvement

[Research shows](#) that the lack of a capable governing body can be a substantial disadvantage to school effectiveness and that strong leadership and governance are key to ensuring successful educational outcomes for young people.

Children and young people in Catholic schools in the Diocese deserve the very best educational opportunities and life-fulfilling experiences within Catholic communities imbued with Gospel values where Christ is at the centre and the governing body is expected to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards.

The Chair should work closely with the headteacher (and the Chair of the Trust Board if you are Chair of a Local Governing Committee) with the focus on school improvement.

An effective Chair works to create a climate in which the governing board is able to think and take decisions at a strategic level by:

- focusing the business of the governing body around the school's improvement priorities
- knowing their school well (eg asking 'How well are we doing? How do we compare with similar schools? What must we do to improve?') and the governing bodies' role in school improvement
- seeing the big picture (including school, local and national priorities)
- ensuring there is proper challenge and encouragement
- seeking the views of parents and pupils

## School visits

If governors are to monitor and evaluate the school's work they need to visit the school. Regular planned visits give governors an insight and understanding about their school, help to strengthen the governing body's strategic and monitoring role, and help to build trust and respect between staff and governors.

- Governors should not be routinely involved in the day-to-day activity of the school and it is important that the governing body plans its visits to focus on school priorities in the School Development Plan. **Each visit should have a clear purpose which aims to impact on school improvement**
- Every governor should make at least one visit to the school a year to monitor an area of the school development plan and see the school in action.

The Diocese has a [Protocol for Governor Visits](#) which can be used or adapted for your school.

## School Policies

Governing bodies must have in place various policies to satisfy their statutory duties and assist them in fulfilling statutory obligations - and a key strategic function of the governing body is to ensure these fit with the vision and aims of the school and are regularly reviewed.

DfE has published [useful guidance on statutory policies for schools and academies](#).

In addition, Catholic schools and academies are required to use the [CES model employment documents](#) as mandated by the Bishops of England and Wales. As a vital part of their role as governors of a Catholic school, governing bodies must ensure that the CES models are adapted, where appropriate, consulted upon and then adopted and communicated to staff and any other interested parties.

*Reflection:*

- Are your Religious Education Policy, Prayer and Liturgy Policy and RSHE Policy up to date?
- How confident are governors that the school meets all [statutory requirements for safeguarding](#)?
- Are policies regularly reviewed and easily located on your website?

### Engaging with Parents

A Catholic schools primary purpose is to support families in the education of their children:

*“Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognised as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking.”*

*Declaration of Vatican II on Catholic Education, 28 October 1965*

On some issues, governing bodies have a statutory duty to consult with parents; for example, consulting on becoming a federated governing body or on changes to the admissions criteria. If you are unsure whether this applies, contact Debbi Botham, Diocesan Governance Development Officer [debbibotham@brcdt.org](mailto:debbibotham@brcdt.org)

Even where there is no legal requirement, as strategic leaders of their organisations it is vital that boards are connected with, and answerable to, the communities they serve, particularly parents and carers.

Engaging with parents and carers is one of the most effective ways for governors and trustees to get to know their school, its strengths, weaknesses and its community. An effective governing body will want to consider the views of parents to inform strategic decision-making, give parents the opportunity to help shape their child’s education, and as part of its self-evaluation. Examples of this may be a proposed change to the homework policy, school day or school uniform.

Some governing bodies produce a termly Governors’ Newsletter which aims to keep parents aware of who the governors are and what they do for the school, others include a regular message from the Chair on the school newsletter.

## School Website

Governors and trustees need to ensure that the website is maintained, up-to-date and compliant. In the interests of transparency, the board must publish on its website up-to-date details of the governance arrangements they have put in place. The school must also make available a range of information such as the latest Ofsted report, details of the school's complaints procedure, accessibility plan and the impact of pupil premium spending.

For full details on [what maintained schools must publish online](#)

For full details on [what academies and free schools must publish online](#)



- As a governing body, are you setting/agreeing standards for our school? Are these targets SMART? Do they show high expectations/ambition?
- Are monitoring findings discussed at meetings?
- When did you last review the School Visits Policy?
- How does your governing body currently engage with parents, including those who might traditionally find working with the school difficult?
- Is the school website compliant, accessible and easy to navigate?

## Developing the governing body

The Chair is elected to lead the governing board team and a key ability of effective Chairs is to build and get the best out of the governing body team.

An effective Chair:

- builds an effective team that understands its role
- ensures the team has a range of skills and knowledge to carry out its role effectively
- sets a culture of commitment to professional development and training
- ensures that governors and staff feel valued.
- sets the highest of expectations for professional standards of governance
- develops the skills, knowledge and experience of other governors
- ensures everyone is contributing relevant skills

### *Reflection:*

- How effective is the governing body?
- What impact does it have on school improvement?
- How do I know this?
- What actions should be taken to increase the effectiveness of the governing body?

## Code of Conduct

A key role of the Chair is to set the highest expectations of professional standards of governance. All governors are expected to sign the Code of Conduct on an annual basis and uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (the Nolan principles). This sets out clear expectations of the role and behaviour required from all school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work.

The expectation of the Diocese is that you adopt the [Catholic Education Service Code of Conduct](#) (they have three versions for different types of school). The Code of Conduct should be reviewed and agreed at the first full governing body meeting of the autumn term each year, but please remember that new governors should sign the Code of Conduct when they are appointed.

## Skills audits and self-reviews

Research indicates that effective governing bodies have clear induction procedures for new governors and regularly reflect on their own development needs.

A key role of the Chair is to develop the skills, knowledge and experience of other governors, ensuring that everyone is contributing relevant skills

A regular skills audit can help build a team with the range of skills you need. Skills audits and self-reviews are tools to help assess the skills, knowledge and development needs of the governing board and individual governors. They can be used to lead a discussion, completed individually or filled in as part of a short development session.

The Brentwood Diocesan Education Service (BDES) has developed a [model self-review tool](#) which aims to help governing bodies assess the contribution of governors and to ensure the board makes best use of the skills of governors/trustees. You are welcome to adapt this for use by your own governing body

### Governor Induction

How well do you induct new governors?

It is vital that new governors feel welcomed into the school community and have the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. All governors share in the strategic responsibility of promoting high educational standards and ensuring the school is conducted as a Catholic school.

BDES has developed a [model Induction checklist](#) which gives examples of the key information and support new governors in Catholic schools should receive. You are welcome to adapt the checklist to meet the needs of your own governing body.

### Buddies/Mentors

It is important that new governors/trustees feel supported and that their skills and experience are utilised to good effect.

Think about matching new governors to an experienced governor as a 'buddy' to help them settle in and get quickly up to speed. This will help new governors settle into their new role and understand what is expected of them, as well as to be a listening ear to help with [jargon](#), protocols and other questions they may have.

### Governor Training

Make sure governor development is discussed regularly at governing body meetings and your governing body identifies learning and development needs to keep up to date with.

Participating in appropriate Catholic governor training is an expectation of all governors regardless of length of service and experience and the Diocese has developed a blended programme of governor development which includes webinars, face-to-face training and online learning through Gift-ED.

The current programme of governor webinars and face-to-face training, and details of how to book, can be found in the [Events section of the Diocesan website](#).

Make it clear that you expect new governors to attend an Induction course. The Diocese also has an online module for new governors in the Gift-ED library called 'Faithful Governance'. Safeguarding training is now a statutory requirement for new governors.

Please note that the Diocese expects that Foundation Governors will be able to identify specifically Catholic training they have completed during the course of a term of office before re-appointment is approved.

### Gift-ED

Although training via the Gift-ED App has been funded by the diocese for 4 years there is now a charge for using this valuable resource.

As well as the Gift-ED library for governors and trustees which includes:



- Faithful Governance (for new governors. A Catholic MAT version is also now available)
- Headteacher Appraisal (essential for governors serving on the Headteacher Appraisal panel)
- Engaging with Parents
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Curriculum for governors
- Appointing Headteachers/Deputy Headteachers (essential reading for governors appointed to the recruitment panel)
- Appointing Heads of RE

the resource now includes an Introduction to Catholic Studies for teachers and a five module programme for leaders of Catholic schools. [All resources are created by diocesan education specialists in partnership with Anspear. The 12 month subscription covers all courses for all users.](#)

When did the governing body last review governors' development needs?

*Reflection:*

- Does your governing body have the skills to understand data such as Analyse School Performance?
- How confident are you that governors understand the latest [statutory safeguarding requirements?](#) We have updated our [safeguarding checklist for governors](#) to support you
- Do governors ensure that the school's finances are properly managed?
- Is Headteacher performance appraisal rigorous?
- Does the governing body understand its [legal duties in relation to pupils with SEND?](#)
- Does your school subscribe to Gift-ED? If so, do governors know how to access resources?



- New governors are inducted well, and this includes safeguarding training. Can the induction process for new governors be improved?
- Governors sign a Code of Conduct each year
- Do all governors attend meetings regularly? If not, has this been discussed?
- Do all governors visit the school at least once a year for strategic monitoring?

## Effective governance

The [Competency Framework for Governance](#) outlines the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance – some are essential for everyone on the board, some are specifically for the Chair. The Competency Framework should be read alongside the DfE's [Governance Handbook](#).

The Governance Handbook sets out six features of effective governance:

1. Strategic Leadership
2. Accountability
3. People
4. Structures
5. Compliance
6. Evaluation

Think about the following questions in relation to the six features of effective governance. How would you respond to them?

### Strategic leadership

How well do you understand national and regional educational priorities and the implications of these for the board and your school/CMAT?

### Accountability

How do you work with the Clerk to make sure governors have the information they need to challenge and support?

### People

How do you ensure new governors/trustees are supported to help them understand their role and start to make a positive contribution to the governing body?

### Structures

When did you last review the effectiveness of governing body structures?

### Compliance

How do you ensure the governing body receives appropriate training and development?

### Evaluation

How confident are you about having open and honest conversations with governors/trustees about their commitment, performance and development needs?

## And there's more....

### Leadership Recruitment

The appointment to school leadership ranks amongst the most important duties and responsibilities entrusted to the governing body of a Catholic school or the board of trustees of a Catholic Multi –Academy Trust (CMAT).

The Chair should always be on the panel for Headteacher appointments and there should always be a Foundation Governor majority.

In MATS, the Trust Board is responsible for Headteacher appointments and therefore the panel is usually CAO/CEO plus the Trust Board Chair and chair of the relevant Local Governing Committee.

### Please note:

- Once the Chair becomes aware that there will be a vacancy, you **must** inform your Link School Adviser at the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service (BDES), and if applicable, the local authority and/or the trustees of a religious order as soon as possible
- As a minimum requirement the Bishop expects that the posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Co-ordinator of Religious Education are reserved for practising Catholics and advertisements should make this clear from the outset
- The CES provides model employment documentation that the School must use for its staff during the stages of application, recruitment and appointment
- In maintained schools and single academies, the decision to appoint a person to the post of Headteacher, Principal or Deputy Headteacher must be ratified by the whole governing body
- In a Catholic multi-academy trust (CMAT) the Headteacher appointment is that of the Trust Board and therefore is ratified by the Trust Board. Deputy Headteachers can be ratified by local governing committee (LGC) if this is confirmed in the Scheme of Delegation.

### The governing body as employer

The governing body, as the employer, is required to ensure that the [CES model documents](#) are used in their school. This is because the contracts reflect the Bishops' requirements that the Catholic character of schools is preserved and developed. Any amendments to CES contracts must be agreed with the Diocesan Director of Education and potentially with the CES where the Diocesan Director believes this to be relevant.

Furthermore they are required to ensure that provisions of the contractual documents are fulfilled and to take steps in relation to any breaches of contract, taking advice from your Diocesan Link School Adviser.

The CES model workplace policies provide that where disciplinary allegations concern misconduct which could bring the Catholic character of the school into disrepute then the school **must** notify their Diocesan School Link Adviser.

## Headteacher Appraisal

All schools are required by law to have an appraisal process in place for all teachers and this includes the Headteacher.

Good performance management and development of the Headteacher, including effective appraisal, is an important part of the governing body's drive for school improvement but please note that there are differences in procedures between maintained schools and academies:

**Maintained Schools:** Performance management and appraisal of the Headteacher is an important statutory duty of the governing body. The governing body must appoint two or three governors to carry out the performance review - this is a full governing body (FGB) decision, **not** a decision that can be made by the Chair or Headteacher

It is considered good practice for the Chair to be part of the Headteacher's appraisal panel as the person with the closest working relationship with the Head. However, if the Chair is on the appraisal panel, remember that they cannot be used to hear any appeal. For this reason, it is recommended that you do not have the Chair **and** Vice Chair on the panel where possible.

**Academies:** If you are a governor at a standalone academy then performance management and appraisal of the Headteacher is the duty of the governing body/trustees. This should be delegated to 2-3 members.

If you are part of a Catholic MAT, the board of trustees are ultimately responsible for appraising the Headteachers in their MAT. The Scheme of Delegation prescribes that appraisal is undertaken by the Trust Board in collaboration with the local governing committee.

In practice, the local governing committee usually works with their Headteacher and the External Adviser to set objectives. A member or representative of the Trust Board should be present at the initial target-setting meeting and at the end of year review. Please note that the Trust Board may well insist that a trust wide objective is included as one of the objectives.

**External Adviser:** There is a statutory duty for the governing body of maintained schools to appoint a suitably skilled and/or experienced External Adviser to provide advice and support in relation to the appraisal of the Headteacher. It is important that the External Adviser is familiar with the particular needs of a Catholic setting. eg development of the Catholic ethos. The Brentwood Diocesan Education Service offers the provision for the Diocesan Link Adviser to be your External Adviser. Please contact your Diocesan Link Adviser or [victoriabarnes@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:victoriabarnes@dioceseofbrentwood.org) for further information.

Academies are advised to appoint an External Adviser to the appraisal panel to add an objective element and help prevent them from becoming inward looking.

It is important to remember that the External Adviser is working for the governing body since they are a governing body (or Trust Board in the case of Catholic MATs) appointment, not a Headteacher one.

## The Curriculum

The governing body of a Catholic maintained school is responsible for policy relating to the whole curriculum, including religious education. This ensures that the curriculum of the school, including all the subjects of the National Curriculum, is taught in the light of the Gospel values and actively promotes the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

In Catholic schools, RE is the 'core or the core,' and at least 10% of timetabled teaching time must given over to the subject at key stage 1-4 (5% at Key Stage 5)

### *Reflection:*

- How is the Catholic Life, Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy in your school promoted, monitored and evaluated? How well does your website reflect this?
- How do leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the [Religious Education Directory for Catholic Schools \(RED\)](#)? Can governors articulate plans for the implementation of RED? (full implementation is expected September 2025)
- Do you have an RE link governor at your school?

Education legislation states that the school curriculum should be balanced and broadly based and should:

- Promote the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical development of the pupils at the school and of society
- Prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life
- Responsibility for the curriculum is shared between the executive leader(s) and the board
- In maintained schools boards need to ensure National Curriculum plus RE is taught
- Enough teaching time is given over to cover the National Curriculum and other statutory requirements
- While there is no longer a duty on maintained schools to produce a school curriculum policy, they must publish the context of the school's curriculum for every subject including RE, the name of any phonics and reading scheme used at KS1 and how parents and carers can find out more about the school's curriculum offer

## Catholic Schools' Inspection

All Catholic schools and academies (including Catholic independent and special schools) are subject to a diocesan inspection at least every five years.

They are inspected under the new [Catholic Schools Inspection \(CSI\) Framework](#). All inspections are for two days with a minimum of two inspectors. Schools will be given two days' notice (including the day of the call).

Schools in the Diocese of Brentwood which were last inspected under Section '48 from May 2017- February 2018 can expect to be inspected under CSI between September 2023 and July 2024. (Please note this may be subject to change if inspection administration circumstances outside of our control dictate).

Our [CSI Checklist for Governors](#) is useful preparation.

## Ofsted

All maintained Catholic schools and academies are also subject to Ofsted inspections at the intervals prescribed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. Catholic independent schools are inspected by an Independent Schools' Inspectorate.

The judgement on governance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of Leadership and Management. In making this judgement, inspectors will consider the criteria set out in the [School Inspection Handbook](#).

Although there is no 'one size fits all' checklist of questions the inspectors will ask governors, our [Ofsted Checklist for Governors](#) outlines the key areas that will help you prepare for Ofsted.

## Dealing with Concerns and Complaints

It is in everyone's interest that complaints about your school are resolved at the earliest possible stage and all schools must have and publish a Complaints Procedure which sets out clear timescales for the management of the complaint.

Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to invoke formal procedures. Schools should take all concerns seriously and make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If the complaint is about the Headteacher, this must be made in writing to the Chair of governors. You must notify your Diocesan school adviser if you receive a complaint about the Headteacher.

DfE has published [useful guidance around best practice for dealing with complaints](#)

The [version for academies can be found here](#)

The [complaints toolkit](#) originally developed by Norfolk Governor Services is also available for use by governors and trustees across the Diocese of Brentwood.

## Useful contacts

### **Brentwood Diocesan Education Service (BDES)**

Cathedral House, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AT

Tel: **+44 (0)1277 265284**

[education@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:education@dioceseofbrentwood.org)

Professional support, advice and guidance to schools in the Diocese including support from school advisers, support for Diocesan academies and Catholic Multi Academy Trusts, governance support and training and support with premises issues.

### [Diocesan Education Service Team Members](#)

For [details of governance development and how to book](#)

For [access to current and past Chairs' News, Governors News and CMAT News](#)

For quick links to [DFE guidance](#), [Ofsted guidance](#), [Diocesan guidance and model policies](#) and [academy guidance](#)

### **Catholic Education Service (CES)**

<http://catholiceducation.org.uk/>

The Catholic Education Service (CES) represents the Bishops' national education policy in relation to the 2300 Catholic schools and colleges which the Church is responsible for across England and Wales.

Please note that the CES do not deal with Catholic schools individually. The CES work with each diocese and any schools that are referred to the CES by their respective Diocese. Any school contacting the CES directly will be asked to refer the matter they are enquiring about to their home diocese.

Here you can find model policies and procedures to be used in Catholic schools including:

- model disciplinary policy
- model grievance policy
- model appraisal policy
- model capability policy
- model admissions policies
- model recruitment documents
- model Codes of Conduct

### **Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI)**

<https://catholicschoolsinspectorate.org.uk/>

The CSI website has some useful downloadable documents for inspection, including a Catholic School Self-Evaluation Document (CSED).

**Department for Education (DfE)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

Information, statutory guidance, news and current consultations from the DfE

**Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>

Information and guidance for academies.

**FFT**

<https://fft.org.uk/>

FFT is an independent subscription service which provides data analysis to help schools, MATs and academy chains analyse pupil results and progress

**Ofsted**

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Matters relating to inspection of schools, reports on good practice and Ofsted inspection reports.





## **BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE**

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,  
and Christ is made known to all.”*

### **Key Abbreviations and Acronyms for Governors and Trustees**

#### **A**

AAD Academies Accounts Direction  
ACAS Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service  
AFH Academies Financial Handbook  
AFI Area for Improvement  
AfL Assessment for Learning  
AGM Annual General Meeting  
AHT Assistant Headteacher  
AI Assigned Inspector  
ALN Additional Learning Needs  
AO Accounting Officer  
AoA Articles of Association  
AMP Asbestos Management Plan  
AMP Asset Management Plan  
APP Assessing Pupils' Progress  
APS Average Point Score  
AQA Assessment and Qualifications Alliance  
ARE Age Related Expected  
ASB Aggregated Schools Budget  
ASCL Association of School and College Lecturers  
ASP Analyse School Performance  
ASS Average Scaled Score  
AST Advanced Skills Teacher  
ATCRE Association of Teachers of Catholic Religious Education  
ATH Academy Trust Handbook  
AWPU Age Weighted Pupil Unit

#### **B**

BAME Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic  
BDES Brentwood Diocesan Education Service  
BSA Basic Skills Agency  
BSF Building Schools for the Future

## C

CAF Common Assessment Form  
CAF Common Application Form  
CAGs Centre-Assessed Grades  
CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services  
CAO Chief Accounting Officer  
CAT Cognitive Ability Test  
CBCEW Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
CCC Catechism of the Catholic Church  
CCE Child Criminal Exploitation  
CCRS Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies  
CEO Chief Executive Officer (MATs)  
CES Catholic Education Service  
CiC Children in Care  
CIF Condition Improvement Fund (academies)  
CIL Community Infrastructure Levy (contributions developers have to make to Local Authorities when building houses)  
CIN Children in Need  
CFO Chief Financial Officer  
CLA Children Looked After  
CLMD Catholic Life and Mission Directory  
CMAT Catholic Multi Academy Trust  
CME Children Missing Education  
CoG Chair of Governors  
CP Child Protection  
CPD Continuing Professional Development  
CRE Core Religious Education  
CREDO Catholic Religious Education Development Opportunities (project)  
CSE Child Sexual Exploitation  
CSED Catholic Self-Evaluation Document (September 2022)  
CSEL Catholic Schools Executive Leader  
CSI Catholic Schools Inspection Framework (September 2022)  
CSS Children's Support Service (previously PRUs)  
CST Catholic Social Teaching

## D

DA Domestic Abuse  
DBE Diocesan Board of Education  
DBS Disclosure & Barring Service  
DCPO Designated Child Protection Officer  
DDA Disability Discrimination Act  
DFC Devolved Formula Capital  
DfE Department for Education  
DHT Deputy Headteacher  
DME Dual or Multiple Exceptionality (special needs)  
DSG Dedicated Schools Grant  
DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead  
DV Domestic Violence  
D&T Design and Technology

## E

EAL English as an additional language  
EBacc English Baccalaureate  
EBD Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties  
ECF Early Careers Framework  
ECT Early Careers Teacher (previously NQT)  
Edtech Education Technology  
EEDI Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion  
EEF Education Endowment Foundation  
EHCP Education Health and Care plan  
EHRC Equality and Human Rights Commission  
EMA Ethnic Minority Achievement  
EP Educational Psychologist  
ERG External Review of Governance  
ESFA Education and Skills Funding Agency  
ESG Education Services Grant  
EWO Education Welfare Officer  
EYFS Early Years Foundation Stage  
EYFSP Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

## F

FAP Fair Access Protocol  
FE Further Education  
FFT Fischer Family Trust  
FGB Full Governing Body  
FGM Female Genital Mutilation  
FOI Freedom of Information  
FOIA Freedom of Information Act 2000  
FRA Fire Risk Assessment  
FSM Free School Meals  
FSP Foundation Stage Profile  
FTE Full Time Equivalent

## G

GAG General Annual Grant  
G&T Gifted and Talented  
GCSE General Certificate of Secondary Education  
GDPR General Data Protection Regulation  
GEMS Good Estate Management in Schools (DfE)  
GIAS Get Information about Schools  
Gift-ED (library of online Diocesan courses for governors and school leaders)  
GLD Good Level of Development  
GSB General Schools Budget

## H

HBA 'Honour Based' Abuse  
HI Hearing Impairment  
HiMP Health Improvement Plan

HLP High Learning Potential  
HLTA Higher Level Teaching Assistant  
HMI His Majesty's Inspector of Schools  
HMLR Her Majesty's Land Registry  
HoD Head of Department  
HoS Head of School  
HR Human Resources  
HSE Health and Safety Executive  
HSWA Health and Safety at Work Act 1974  
HT Headteacher  
HTPM Headteacher Performance Management

## I

IB Improvement Board  
IB International Baccalaureate  
ICT Information & Communication Technologies  
IDSR Inspection Data Summary Report  
IEB Interim Executive Board  
IEP Individual Education Plan (SEN pupils)  
iGCSE International General Certificate of Secondary Education  
INSET In Service Educational Training  
IoG Instrument of Government  
ISA Independent Safeguarding Authority  
ISA Independent Schools Association  
ISR Individual School Range  
ITT Initial Teacher Training

## J

JAR Joint Area Review

## K

KCSIE Keeping Children Safe in Education  
KPI Key Performance Indicator  
KS1 Key Stage 1. 5-7 years  
KS2 Key Stage 2. 8-11 years  
KS3 Key Stage 3. 12-14 years  
KS4 Key Stage 4. 15-16 years  
KS5 Key Stage 5. 17-18 years

## L

LA Local Authority  
LAC Looked After Children  
LADO Local Authority Designated Officer (child protection)  
LCSF Low Carbon Skills Funding  
LCVAP Locally Controlled Voluntary Aided Programme – discontinued capital funding programme, now replaced by VASCA  
LD Learning Disabilities  
LGC Local Governing Committee  
LGPS Local Government Pension Scheme  
LI Lead Inspector

LLDD Learner with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities  
LLE Local Leader of Education  
LSP Local Safeguarding Partnership  
LSA Learning Support Assistant

## M

MARF Multi Agency Referral Form  
MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub  
MAT Multi Academy Trust  
MATSCA MAT School Condition Allocation  
MDA Mid-Day Assistant  
MDS Mid-Day Supervisor  
MDIF MAT Development and Improvement Fund  
M&E Mechanical & Electrical  
MEA Minority Ethnic Achievement  
MES Minimum Expected Standards  
MFL Modern Foreign Languages  
MLD Moderate Learning Difficulties  
MOU Memorandum of Understanding  
MPR Main Pay Range  
MSI Multi-Sensory Impairment  
MTC Multiplication Tables Check

## N

NACE National Association for Able Children  
NAGC National Association for Gifted Children  
NAHT National Association of Head Teachers  
NASUWT National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers  
NBRIA National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers  
NC National Curriculum  
NCT Non-Contact Time  
NCTL National College for Teaching & Leadership  
NEET Not in Education, Employment or Training  
NEU National Education Union  
NFD No Formal Designation (Ofsted Inspections)  
NGA National Governance Association  
NLE National Leader of Education  
NLG National Leader of Governance  
NOR Number on Roll  
NPQH National Professional Qualification for Headship  
NPQLB&C Leading Behaviour and Culture  
NPQLL Leading Literacy  
NPQLT Leading Teaching  
NPQLTD Leading Teacher Development  
NPQSL National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders  
NQT Newly Qualified Teacher (Now ECT)  
NSC National Schools Commissioner  
NtG Narrowing the Gap  
NUT National Union of Teachers  
NVQ National Vocational Qualifications

## O

OCR Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations  
Ofsted Office of Standards in Education  
Ofqual Office of Qualifications & Examinations Regulation  
OT Occupational Therapy

## P

PAN Published Admissions Number  
PCT Primary Care Team  
PD Physical Disability  
PDD Professional Development Day  
PEP Personal Education Plan  
PI Performance Indicator  
PIB Pre Inspection Briefing  
PLA Primary Link Adviser (Diocesan)  
PLASC Pupil Level Annual Schools' Census  
PLD Prayer and Liturgy Directory  
PLP Pupil Learning Plan  
PMLD Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties  
PMs Progress Measures  
PMR Performance Management Review  
PP Parish Priest  
PPA Planning, Preparation and Assessment  
PPG Pupil Premium Grant  
PPM Planned Preventative Maintenance  
PPR Pupil Progress Reviews  
PRP Performance Related Pay  
PRU Pupil Referral Unit  
PSDS – Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme  
PSHE Personal Social Health and Economic education  
PT Part Time  
PTA Parent Teacher Association  
PTR Pupil Teacher Ratio  
PVE Preventing Violent Extremism

## Q

QA Quality Assurance  
QTS Qualified Teacher Status

## R

RA Reading Age  
RAD Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Pupils  
R&D Refurbishment and Demolition (An intrusive asbestos survey that MUST be used in localised areas before any building material such as a wall is disturbed by construction or demolition work)  
RAAC Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (used in the form of planks in some schools and now becoming dangerous, especially in roofs, as material deteriorates)  
RAP Raising Attainment Plan  
RBA Reception Baseline Assessment  
RECD Religious Education Curriculum Directory (2012 version in place until 2025)

RED Religious Education Directory  
REN Renaissance Reading Programme  
RHE Relationship and Health Education (Primary)  
RoA Record of Achievement  
RPA Raising the Participation Age  
RPA Risk Protection Arrangement  
RSC Regional Schools Commissioner  
RSE Relationships and Sex Education  
RSHE- Relationships, Sex and Health Education

## S

S106 Funding Contributions developers have to make to Local Authorities when building houses.  
S48 Inspection of the Religious Life and RE Provision in Catholic Schools  
SALIX Salix Finance is a company that provides interest-free Government funding to the public sector to improve energy efficiency  
SaLT Speech and Language Therapist  
SAT Single Academy Trust  
SATs Standard Assessment Tests  
SEL Senior Executive Leader  
SBM School Business Manager  
SBP School Business Professional  
SCA School Condition Allocations (given to eligible bodies responsible for maintaining school buildings)  
SCC Schools Causing Concern  
SCITT School - Centred Initial Teacher Training  
SCR Single Central Record  
SDP School Development Plan  
SEAL Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning  
SEMH Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs  
SEN Special Educational Needs  
SENCO Special Educational Needs Coordinator  
SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities  
SEP Single Education Plan  
SFVS Schools Financial Value Standard  
SIB Strategic Intervention Board  
SIC Statement of Internal Control  
SIMS School Information & Management System  
SIP School Improvement Plan  
SLA Service Level Agreement  
SLCN Speech, Language and Communication Needs  
SLD Severe Learning Difficulties  
SLE Specialist Leader in Education  
SLT Senior Leadership Team  
SoD Scheme of Delegation (Multi Academy Trust)  
SOFA Statement of Financial Activities  
SORP Statement of Recommended Practice  
SoW Scheme of Work  
SoWA Source of Wisdom and Authority

SpLD Specific Learning Difficulties  
SMSC Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (development)  
SRP School Rebuilding Programme  
SS Scaled Scores  
SSE School Self Evaluation  
STA Standards and Testing Agency  
STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics  
STPCD School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document  
STRB School Teachers' Review Body

## T

TA Teaching Assistant  
TAC Team around the Child (in the context of meetings for child protection/vulnerable pupils etc)  
TAF Team around the Family  
TLG Training Link Governor  
TLR Teaching and Learning (responsibility point)  
TOCAs Transfer of Control Agreements (premises)  
TRA Teaching Regulation Agency  
TSA Teaching School Alliance  
TSH Teaching School Hubs  
TPS Teachers' Pension Scheme  
TUPE Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations

## U

UIFSM Universal Infant Free School Meals  
UP Upper Pay Scale  
UPN Unique Pupil Number  
URN Unique Reference Number

## V

VA Value Added  
VA Voluntary Aided  
VASCA Voluntary Aided School Condition Allocation (capital funding programme for Voluntary Aided schools)  
VC Vice Chair  
VfM Value for Money  
VI Vision Impairment  
VLE Virtual Learning Environment  
VRQ Verbal Reasoning Quotient  
VSH Virtual School Head

Debbi Botham

Diocesan Governance Development Officer

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