



Diocese of Lancaster  
**Education Service**  
Euntes in mundum



# Called to Serve

## BEING A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

With Christ at the centre, we lead and serve in  
partnership to secure the long-term future of Catholic  
education

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# Foreword from Bishop Paul



*"In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subject you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed on the context of growing in friendship with God, and all that flows from that friendship."* Pope Benedict, The Big Assembly 2010.

These words, from Pope Benedict, speak of the motivation for our Catholic schools. They offer something to our young people and to their families that goes far beyond teaching a curriculum or following a syllabus. Our schools are places where the relationship with God, to which we are called, enables those we educate to take their place in the Church and Society conscious of their dignity as children of God.

Foundation Governors have a very important role in Catholic schools and academies there are various way in which they do this. There are meetings of the governing body and its various committees, which ensure that the school is being true to its mission as a Catholic school as a Catholic school, is maintaining as high as possible a standard of teaching and learning, and is managed efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Church's teaching and the law of England and Wales.

Thank you for considering this ministry. I am confident that you will find working as school governor a fulfilling role in a school or academy.

# Introduction

Are you looking for a way to live out your faith and serve your local community at the same time?

If so, becoming a Foundation Governor could be just the thing for you.

There are more than 2200 Catholic schools and academies in England and Wales, making the Church the largest provider of secondary and second largest provider of primary education in the country.

Foundation Governors play an important part in maintaining and developing the Catholic character of these schools.

This booklet will explain the role of a Foundation Governor and how you can go about applying.



# What is a Foundation Governor?



All schools have a governing body comprising of different types of governors, for example parent-governors, teacher-governors etc.

In addition to these categories, governing bodies in Catholic schools also include Foundation Governors, these Foundation Governors will always form a majority.



The main role of a governing body is to operate at a strategic level, ensuring that the Catholic vision and character of the school is upheld, holding the Head teacher and leadership team to account and overseeing the financial performance of the school.



Governors also set the budget, manage the school's admission criteria and are involved in the recruitment of senior leadership.

Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop specifically to preserve and develop the Catholic ethos of the school and represent the

Bishop's education policy (e.g., worship and Religious Education) to the governing body.

This is why Foundation Governors will always outnumber other governors.

There is no magic formula about what makes a perfect Foundation Governor, they come from all walks of life and all ages. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.

The Diocesan Education Service manages the administration process for the appointment of Foundation Governors on behalf of the Bishop. The Education Service provides support to governing bodies in carrying out their responsibilities.



# Responsibilities and Time Commitments

The average Foundation Governor role will take up about ten to twelve hours per month.

However, this can vary depending on the school calendar or by events, such as an Ofsted Inspection or Catholic School Inspection.

This commitment includes the minimum requirement of attending three full governor meetings per year and serving on at least one committee.

The committees will focus on areas such as finance, curriculum, pupil progress and site management.

The Diocesan Education Service provide free training and support in all aspects of school governance, you will be encouraged to attend training sessions.



# Do I fit the Criteria?

Governors come in all shapes and sizes. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experiences.

Because not all governing bodies need the same skills, to be successful, it is vital that individuals from all backgrounds volunteer to be a Foundation Governor.

Any practising Catholic over the age of 18 can become a Foundation Governor. A reference from your Parish Priest will be taken up as part of the application process.



# The Application Process

If you think you might make a good Foundation Governor, you should express an interest by talking to your Parish Priest, the Chair of Governors or Headteacher. Alternatively contact the Diocesan Education Service to discuss further.

The Foundation Governor Application Form can found on the education service website.

<https://www.lancaster-diocese-education.org.uk>.

Simply complete and return the form.

When a school has been identified, we will then process your application form, seeking all references before passing the documentation to the Bishop for consideration.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q: How do you define a practising Catholic?**

A practising Catholic is defined as someone who keeps the precepts of the Church, as summarised in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

## **Q: I am not a practising Catholic but I would like to become a governor. What do I do?**

If you are not a practising Catholic but are interested in becoming a governor at a Catholic school, you are strongly encouraged to contact your diocese to discuss other options.

## **Q: What are safeguarding checks?**

As a requirement of the appointment process, all governors, regardless of category, will be required to consent to the carrying out of any appropriate checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously Criminal Records Bureau Checks), in respect of eligibility/suitability to be appointed as a school governor.

Checks are carried out by the school concerned and must be complete before any appointment is made by the Bishop.