

Headteacher Recruitment

Recruiting a headteacher is often said to be one of the most challenging and important tasks a governing body will ever make. For Church of England schools, there is the added dimension of recruiting a school leader who has the skills, experience and knowledge to lead a school with a theologically rooted Christian vision at the heart of their work. This does not mean that candidates must have a personal Christian faith. However, it does mean that governors will need to be assured that their chosen candidate can provide gospel-inspired leadership to the whole school community.

Although headteachers must serve over a term's notice, it can often be the case that a new school leader is unable to be recruited to start directly following the previous headteacher's departure. Governors often feel concerned that having a vacancy can be problematic for the school community. However, it is preferable to make the right appointment and this can take some time. If interim leadership is needed, the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) will work with the Local Authority (LA) or Academy Trust board to support the school.

The DDE or a delegated professional should be involved in the recruitment of all headteachers of church schools. The DDE or delegated advisor will provide the governing body or MAT board with advice in line with the DBE Measure 2021. Whilst the DDE or their representative would not have voting rights, there is a statutory requirement to heed advice from the DBE and it would be highly unusual for DBE feedback about the suitability of candidates to be disregarded.

Outgoing headteachers are asked to indicate their intention to the DDE, and chairs of governors are asked to liaise with the DDE to set a date and time to discuss the recruitment process. Following these initial contacts, arrangements for recruitment will be made in partnership with the LA for maintained schools and Academy Trust Boards for church schools which are academies.

The DDE will be available to guide, advise and support you with your pre-appointment preparation including:

- Initial meeting with governing body during which the DDE will advise them to consider all potential options, i.e. executive leadership, joining a MAT etc
- Advice on the composition of the selection panel
- Advice on the timing and scheduling of all recruitment activities
- Assistance with the creation of an advert/recruitment pack
- Advice on the inclusion of a statement to encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply
- Assistance with the preparation of job description and person specification
- Circulation of advert to all church schools, if requested
- Advice on selection methods and interview techniques
- Attendance at shortlisting meetings and interviews (first and subsequent adverts)
- Review of candidates' references by the DDE
- Advice on suitability of candidates

- Advice on the procedure for notifying candidates
- Provision of professional debriefing for candidates on behalf of the governing body, if requested.

All adverts for headteacher posts must include a safeguarding statement. Wording of this statement may be advised by the relevant Local Authority or MAT board and will be along the following lines:

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment, and all appointments will be subject to appropriate vetting, including an enhanced DBS disclosure check and two suitable references.

Additionally, the DBE encourages governors to promote the leadership opportunity to candidates from a range of backgrounds. It is recommended to include within the recruitment pack a statement such as:

The governing body/MAT board values equity, diversity and inclusion and works to build a culture where all can flourish. We welcome applications from a range of candidates.

Governors of maintained schools are required to hold an extraordinary full governing body meeting where the panel will advise the board of their preferred candidate. Governors will have the opportunity to ask any questions for clarification and will ratify the panel's decision.

Governors will need to arrange for the relevant administrative support throughout the process. This will include completing a recruitment pack, placing an advert, receiving application forms, organising visits to the school, requesting and receiving references (to be passed to the DDE) and any other practical support required for the interview day.

All newly appointed headteachers will have an extensive induction programme provided by the DBE team. This induction programme will focus on the leadership of the school as a church school.