

Guidance for Headteachers, Governors & Clergy in Church Schools and Academies

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Contents

Introduction	3
Vision and Values	4
Our powers as a statutory body	4
Derby Education team and our core business	5-6
Our diocesan context	7
A brief history of church schools	8
Christian Vision, Identity and Flourishing in Church Schools	9-10
Religious Education (RE)	12-13
Collective Worship	14-15
Governance	16-18
Admissions and Appeals	19
Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)	20-21
Buildings for Voluntary Aided & Controlled Schools and Academies	22-24
Safeguarding and wellbeing	25
Inclusion, Belonging and Flourishing	25
Attendance and Support for Vulnerable Children	25
Growing Faith and Lifelong Discipleship	25
Leadership Wellbeing and Flourishing	26
Care for Creation and Environmental Stewardship	26
Key Characteristics of Different School Types	27-29

Introduction

Dear Colleague,

It is a real privilege to welcome you to the family of Church of England schools and academies in the Diocese of Derby.

For more than two centuries, the Church of England has played a significant role in education, driven by a belief that every child is precious, made in the image of God, and deserving of an excellent education. Whilst much has changed over the years, that commitment remains as strong today as ever. Our church schools continue to serve their communities with generosity, hope and a deep desire to help every child and young person flourish.



Education is both challenging and rewarding work. Schools today operate within a rapidly changing landscape and are responding to increasing expectations, financial pressures and the diverse needs of children, families and communities. Yet, wherever I visit, I continue to be inspired by the dedication, wisdom and compassion of school leaders, governors, trustees, clergy and staff who work tirelessly on behalf of the children in their care.

At Derby Diocesan Board of Education, we are committed to working alongside you in genuine partnership. Our role is to support, encourage and challenge our schools and academies to be places where academic excellence and human flourishing go hand in hand; where children and adults are known, valued and loved; and where a distinctively Christian vision shapes everyday life and learning.

Rooted in the Church of England's vision for education and in the Diocese of Derby's commitment to transformed lives, growing faith and building community, we seek to support schools in enabling every child to experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Whether you are a headteacher, governor, trustee, clergy colleague or member of school staff, thank you for the part you play in the lives of children and young people across our diocese. I look forward to working with you as we continue to nurture schools that are deeply Christian, inclusive, aspirational and committed to serving the common good.

Within the love of God, our schools can help children and young people flourish and fly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Anderson'.

Sarah Anderson
Director of Education, Diocese of Derby

Our vision and values

Derby Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) seeks to cultivate a landscape of deep hope, where every child and adult is formed in love and justice, and where communities flourish together through strong, life-giving partnership. Rooted in the Christian story, we nurture character that reflects courage, compassion and integrity, enabling our schools to become places where all can grow, belong and thrive. In this shared calling, we are committed to transforming lives, growing faith, and building community, so that every school becomes a beacon of God's hope in the world.



This is strongly rooted in the Diocesan Vision: The Kingdom of God, good news for all; transformed lives through growing church and building community

The DBE in Derby Diocese works to support the diocesan vision in church schools. This does not mean that we try to make everyone a Christian who works or attends a church school! It means that we are motivated by our faith in and love for Jesus Christ to help church truly flourish, that the staff, children and local community might truly flourish and know 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

We strive to live out the following values in our work:

Generous faith	Courageous hope	Life giving love
		

There is much more about the Church of England's vision for education in ['Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'](#). This is essential reading for anyone involved in a church school.

Our powers as a statutory body

Derby DBE is the statutory body responsible for supporting and overseeing Church of England schools across the Diocese of Derby. Its powers come from Church of England legislation, particularly the [Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021](#), together with education law, school trust deeds and academy funding agreements. These powers enable the DBE to protect the Christian foundation of church schools, support school leadership and governance, advise on education, admissions and buildings, and help ensure that church schools flourish as inclusive communities serving their local areas.

Derby Diocesan Education Team



Sarah Anderson Director of Education	Liz Seymour Deputy Director of Education	Lindsey Bowe Executive Assistant	Nina Hern Business & Operations Manager
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Who's Who – Derby Diocesan Board of Education

Our core business

Flourishing system leadership	Flourishing schools	Flourishing leaders	Flourishing structures	Flourishing communities
Leading change, partnership and advocacy for a flourishing education system.	Strengthening Christian vision, educational excellence and pupil flourishing.	Developing courageous, healthy and effective leaders for the future.	Building sustainable governance, trusts and resources for long-term impact.	Creating inclusive, hopeful communities where all can belong and thrive.
Strategy and Policy Partnerships & Collaboration Advocacy Inclusion and Equity Accountability	Christian Vision SIAMS Religious Education Collective Worship Curriculum	Recruitment Succession Planning Wellbeing Professional Development	MAT Growth Small School Sustainability Governance Estates	Parish-School Relationships Inclusion Attendance Vulnerable Children Mission & Ministry

Derby DBE values every one of the schools and academies it serves and offers the support of a professional and successful team.

All new headteachers are offered additional training and support in the first half term and beyond. Derby DBE team also offers regular training and visits for governors and staff. The team provides and facilitates a range of courses over the school year, including and pre- and post-SIAMS support. Additional support is offered to church schools through the [Partnership Agreement](#).

The work of Derby DBE team centres on the following:

- Supporting schools and academies to flourish as distinctively Christian communities, rooted in their vision and serving the common good.
- Helping schools to develop, articulate, live out and evaluate their theologically rooted Christian vision.
- Working in partnership with trusts, local authorities, diocesan and national education partners, the Department for Education and Ofsted to promote school effectiveness and improvement.
- Providing training, support and challenge for school leaders, governors and trustees in preparation for SIAMS inspection and ongoing self-evaluation.
- Developing and nurturing current and future leaders across the diocesan family of schools.
- Supporting governors and trustees in safeguarding and developing the Christian foundation and character of their schools.
- Offering professional and pastoral support to headteachers, leaders, governors and school staff.
- Advising and supporting schools in the development of high-quality Religious Education that reflects the Church of England's Vision for Education.
- Promoting and supporting meaningful, inclusive and invitational collective worship that enables communities to flourish spiritually.
- Supporting governing bodies and trusts in the appointment, induction and development of school leaders, including headteachers.
- Advising on the stewardship, maintenance and development of church school buildings and sites.
- Acting as an advocate for Church of England schools and academies and representing their interests with local, regional and national partners.
- Supporting the continuing development and profile of Religious Education through engagement with SACREs, diocesan networks and national initiatives.
- Strengthening partnerships between schools, parishes, trusts and local communities to enhance children's and young people's flourishing.
- Promoting educational excellence, inclusion, wellbeing and opportunities for every child and young person within the Diocese of Derby.

Our diocesan context – The Diocese of Derby

The Diocese of Derby covers the whole of Derbyshire, together with a small number of parishes in neighbouring areas. At its heart is Derby Cathedral, the mother church of the diocese and a centre of worship, mission and learning.

The diocese serves communities across cities, towns, villages and rural areas, working through its churches, schools, chaplaincies and partnerships to share the good news of Jesus Christ and contribute to the flourishing of individuals and communities. Through its vision of *Transformed Lives, Growing Church, Building Community*, the Diocese of Derby seeks to nurture hope, develop discipleship and serve the common good.

The diocese is organised into the Archdeaconries of Derby City and South Derbyshire, East Derbyshire, and Derbyshire Peak and Dales. Across the diocese, churches work alongside partners from other Christian traditions and faith communities in service of their local communities.

The Bishop of Derby provides spiritual, pastoral and strategic leadership for the life and mission of the diocese.

Derby DBE is the statutory body responsible for supporting, championing and providing strategic oversight for Church of England schools and academies across the Diocese of Derby. The board brings together a range of expertise from education, governance, ministry and wider public life, united by a shared commitment to enabling church schools to flourish.

The DBE derives its responsibilities from Church of England legislation, education law, school trust deeds and academy funding agreements. Its principal responsibilities are to:

- promote education that is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England;
- promote and support religious education and collective worship in church schools and academies;
- support and develop the effectiveness and distinctiveness of Church of England schools;
- work collaboratively with partners across the education sector in the interests of children, young people and their communities.

Derby DBE is committed to promoting educational excellence, human flourishing and the development of the whole person. Inspired by the Church of England's Vision for Education, *Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, we seek to support schools in nurturing wisdom, hope, community and dignity. Through advice, training, challenge and support, Derby DBE works alongside leaders, governors, trustees, clergy and schools to ensure that every child and young person can experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Church Schools and Academy Trusts

The Diocese of Derby actively supports church schools in a variety of organisational forms, including maintained schools, single academies and Multi-Academy Trusts. As the education landscape continues to evolve, Derby DBE works closely with schools, trusts and partners to ensure that church schools remain sustainable, effective and faithful to their Christian foundation.

A Brief History of Church Schools

Church of England schools have been serving their communities for more than 200 years. Many were originally founded by local churches to provide education for children who might otherwise have had little access to learning. Long before universal state education was available, churches established schools rooted in a belief that every child is valued by God and deserves the opportunity to flourish.

The Church of England remains the largest provider of schools in England, educating over one million children and young people through a diverse family of schools and academies. While the educational landscape has changed significantly over time, the Church's commitment to serving children, families and communities remains as strong today as it was when many of our schools were founded.

Most church schools were established under charitable trusts and continue to operate in accordance with their founding trust deeds. These documents remain important today, setting out the Christian foundation and purpose of the school. We encourage headteachers, governors and trustees to become familiar with their school's trust deed and to reflect on how its original vision is expressed through the school's current Christian vision, values and ethos. Copies of trust deeds may be held within school records or by the Diocese.

The Education Act 1944 established the categories of Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, creating a partnership between the Church and state that continues today. More recently, the Academies Act 2010 enabled many church schools to become academies and to join or form Multi-Academy Trusts, whilst retaining their Christian foundation and distinctive character.

Throughout these changes, the role of the Church in education has continued to evolve. The National Society for Education, founded in 1811, continues to provide leadership, guidance and resources for church schools, dioceses and educational leaders across England.



[National Society for Education](#)

In recent years, Church of England educational thinking has also been shaped by the development of *Growing Faith* and the work of the **National Society Foundation for Educational Leadership (formerly CEFEL)**, which supports leadership development across church and community schools

[Foundation for Educational Leadership — Grow your leadership — National Society for Education](#)

Today, Church schools are called to provide excellent education within a framework of Christian hope and service. They seek to nurture wisdom, dignity, community and aspiration, enabling every child and young person to experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Flourishing Leaders, Flourishing Schools

Schools and governors are encouraged to subscribe “Flourishing Leaders, Flourishing Schools” the Foundation for Educational Leadership’s newsletter which is published six times per year.

[Flourishing Leaders, Flourishing Schools — National Society for Education](#)

Christian Vision, Identity and Flourishing in Church Schools

Church of England schools are called to be communities where a theologically rooted Christian vision shapes every aspect of school life. This vision is not simply expressed through words on a website or in a policy document; it is lived out through relationships, decision-making, curriculum, worship and the daily experiences of pupils and adults.

The Church of England recognises the vital role of school leaders, governors, trustees and clergy in nurturing and sustaining this vision. Together, they provide leadership that promotes both educational excellence and human flourishing, ensuring that every member of the school community is known, valued and able to thrive.

So what does it mean to be a distinctively Christian school today?

Church schools are called to serve their communities through a vision that is rooted in Christian theology and expressed through relationships, curriculum, culture and leadership. While every church school will articulate its vision differently, all are called to be places where children and adults can flourish and experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

The Church of England's Vision for Education, *Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, reminds us that church schools are places where wisdom, hope, community and dignity are nurtured. These values shape not only what schools seek to achieve but how they go about achieving it.

As *The Way Ahead* reminds us:

The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium (2001)

"There will be different interpretations of distinctiveness by governing bodies reflecting the role of the school in its community, its statutory category, the composition of the community, and the traditions of the local church. Although there will be variations between one church school and another, there will be certain core principles and values that should unite all church schools within the Christian mission. These will be the gospel values of loving God and one's neighbour, as well as the practical outworking of these values in how pupils are taught to conduct themselves and relate to one another and to God's world."

Church schools are also called to be places of generous inclusion and belonging.

As Archbishop Stephen Cottrell has observed:

"...a Church school is able to be both particular (clear about its own Christian faith) and inclusive (welcoming of all because of the Christian understanding of God). It is not a problem for us that people do not share the specific beliefs of Christianity, for one of the best ways that we witness to the reality of our faith is by the way we love and honour God in our neighbour."

Distinctiveness is not demonstrated through policies alone. It is evident in the quality of relationships, the strength of community, the experiences of pupils and adults, and the extent to which the school's Christian vision shapes everyday life.

A Distinctively Christian School Will Seek To:

- be rooted in a clear and theologically grounded Christian vision;
- enable every child and adult to flourish and fulfil their God-given potential;
- provide a broad, ambitious and inclusive curriculum that serves the common good;
- place high-quality Religious Education at the heart of its educational offer;
- offer meaningful, invitational and inclusive collective worship that supports spiritual development;
- nurture dignity, respect and positive relationships for all members of the school community;
- promote courageous advocacy, justice and service within local and global communities;
- value spirituality and create opportunities for reflection, wonder and growth;
- foster strong partnerships with churches, families and the wider community.

The Parish and the School

Most Church of England schools have close relationships with one or more local churches. These partnerships enrich the life of both school and parish and provide opportunities for worship, spiritual development, community engagement and shared service.

The precise nature of the relationship will vary according to local context, but strong partnerships between school and church remain a distinctive and valued feature of church school life. Together, schools and churches support children and young people in exploring questions of meaning, purpose, faith and belonging, whilst serving their communities with generosity and hope.

Appointment of Staff, Including Headteachers

The appointment of staff is one of the most significant responsibilities of school leaders, governors and trustees. Appointments should seek not only professional excellence but also a commitment to the school's Christian vision and values. In church schools, every appointment contributes to the culture, character and effectiveness of the school community.

Particular care should be taken when appointing senior leaders, especially headteachers and principals, whose leadership is critical in embedding and sustaining the school's Christian vision. Governing bodies and academy trusts are encouraged to seek diocesan advice and support at an early stage in the recruitment process.

The following guidance summarises key differences in appointment arrangements across different categories of Church school.

Voluntary Controlled	Voluntary Aided	Academy Trust
• The Local Authority is the employer. • The Local Authority is entitled to attend proceedings relating to the appointment of staff. • In the appointment of deputy headteachers, the governing body may take	• The governing body is the employer. • The governing body may accord advisory rights to the Local Authority. • The diocesan authority should be afforded equivalent advisory rights.	• The Academy Trust is the employer. • The Diocese will normally be consulted regarding senior leadership appointments in accordance with the Articles of Association and other governance documents.

into account a candidate's suitability and ability to preserve and develop the religious character of the school. • The governing body may extend advisory rights to the diocesan authority and this is strongly encouraged. • The governing body may appoint reserved teachers for the purpose of denominational Religious Education.	• For deputy headteacher and teaching appointments, governors may give preference to candidates whose beliefs and practice are consistent with the denominational character of the school, where permitted by legislation.	• Articles of Association may contain provisions relating to a leader's ability to uphold and promote the Christian foundation, vision and ethos of the school or trust. • Schools and trusts should ensure that recruitment processes reflect both statutory requirements and the Christian foundation of the school.
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Additional Guidance on Appointments

- Detailed advice on staffing, governance and recruitment should be sought from the Department for Education, the relevant employer and professional HR advisers.
- Recruitment processes must comply with current employment legislation and HR guidance.
- Recruitment materials, including advertisements, application packs and person specifications, should clearly communicate the school's Christian vision and explain how applicants will be expected to support and contribute to the distinctive character and ethos of the school.
- Schools are encouraged to work closely with the diocese throughout the recruitment process, particularly when appointing headteachers, principals and other senior leaders.

Religious Education (RE)

Religious Education is a core element of a Church of England school's Christian vision and educational purpose. Derby DBE is committed to enabling high-quality, meaningful and transformative RE in all our church schools and academies. Whilst RE holds a unique legal position within the curriculum as an academic subject, its significance extends far beyond statutory requirements. Through RE, pupils are given opportunities to engage openly and honestly with questions of faith, belief, meaning and purpose, whilst developing an understanding of Christianity and the diverse religious and non-religious worldviews that shape our society.

In a church school, RE should help children and young people understand what it means to be a person of faith in the world today and how Christian beliefs inspire and underpin the values of the school community. It should support pupils in recognising and reflecting upon the insights, beliefs, attitudes and values that may influence and guide their own lives. RE therefore makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' spiritual development, personal growth and understanding of the world around them.

The National Society's 2026 Statement of Entitlement sets out a clear vision for Religious Education in Church of England schools. Through RE, pupils should be enabled to:

- engage meaningfully and critically with learning that helps them make sense of the multi-religious and multi-secular world in which they live;
- know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith;
- gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews;
- grapple with questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience;
- understand the continuing significance of religion and belief in society and culture;
- develop disciplinary knowledge that equips them to become religiously literate;
- explore and reflect on their own developing worldview and ways of understanding life, belief and meaning.

Derby DBE is committed to supporting schools in the planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation of RE. Through diocesan networks, training opportunities and partnerships with organisations such as RE Today and the Open Centre, schools are supported in developing high-quality RE that is academically rigorous, engaging and relevant to pupils' lives.

Schools are encouraged to engage with the National Society's Statement of Entitlement and to make use of high-quality resources, including *Understanding Christianity*, which the DBE strongly recommends to support the teaching of Christianity.

RE in Different Types of Church School

RE has equal standing with other curriculum subjects and remains compulsory for all registered pupils. RE encompasses both religious and non-religious worldviews and should be taught with the same level of ambition, rigour and professionalism as any other curriculum area. Derby DBE recommends that schools adopt the relevant Locally Agreed Syllabus for Derby City (2025-2030) or Derbyshire (2025-2030). The DBE also strongly recommends that schools and academies use the *Understanding Christianity* resource to support units teaching Christianity.

Voluntary Aided Schools

In Voluntary Aided schools with a religious character, responsibility for RE rests with the governing body. Provision must be consistent with the school's trust deed. Derby DBE recommends that governors, in consultation with the headteacher, adopt the relevant Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Voluntary Controlled and Foundation Schools

Voluntary Controlled and foundation schools with a religious designation are required to provide RE in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Academies

Academies are required through their funding agreements to provide RE for all pupils as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. RE must meet the same broad requirements as a locally agreed syllabus, recognising that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst also taking account of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Derby DBE recommends that academies adopt the relevant Locally Agreed Syllabus.

The Contribution of Religious Education

High-quality RE:

- deepens pupils' understanding of Christianity as a diverse global living faith;
- develops knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews;
- encourages exploration of questions about meaning, purpose and identity;
- fosters critical thinking, reflection and respectful dialogue;
- promotes religious literacy and informed engagement with contemporary society;
- supports pupils' spiritual development and personal flourishing;
- develops respect, empathy and understanding for those whose beliefs and experiences differ from their own;
- helps pupils become thoughtful, responsible and compassionate citizens.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment and recording of progress in RE should be conducted with the same rigour as other curriculum subjects and in line with the school's assessment policy. Standards of teaching and learning should be regularly monitored through lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, assessment information and pupil voice activities. Governors should play an active role in understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of RE provision. Derby DBE offer training for governors to equip them to do this; contact us for more details.

RE leaders are expected to take a lead role in monitoring the subject and in evidencing the contribution that RE makes to the life, vision and effectiveness of the school, including within the school's SIAMS self-evaluation processes.

Further guidance, resources and training opportunities are available through the Derby DBE and on their [website](#).

Collective Worship

Collective worship is a central expression of the Christian vision of a church school. It provides a regular opportunity for pupils and adults to come together as a community, reflect on life's big questions, explore Christian beliefs and values, and respond in ways that are meaningful to them. Through collective worship, schools create space for spiritual development and offer opportunities for individuals and communities to flourish.

All schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship. In church schools, arrangements for collective worship should reflect the school's Trust Deed, Christian vision and foundation, and should be planned in accordance with relevant statutory requirements.

As the Church of England's Vision for Education reminds us, church schools are called to be places where wisdom, hope, community and dignity are nurtured. Collective worship plays a significant role in bringing this vision to life by creating opportunities for reflection, celebration, prayer and spiritual growth.

Collective Worship in a Church School

Collective worship should:

- be rooted in and reflect the school's theologically grounded Christian vision;
- be carefully planned, coherent and purposeful;
- create opportunities for meaningful participation and engagement by pupils and adults;
- support spiritual development and encourage reflection on matters of meaning and purpose;
- be inclusive, invitational and accessible to all members of the school community;
- contribute to a strong sense of belonging and community;
- be valued as a central part of school life.

As an educational experience, collective worship should:

- take account of the ages, experiences and backgrounds of pupils;
- provide opportunities for curiosity, reflection and spiritual growth;
- complement learning across the wider curriculum;
- encourage pupils to explore questions of belief, values and identity;
- support the development of respectful and compassionate relationships.

Inclusive and Invitational Worship

Church school worship is *collective worship*, rather than *corporate worship*. Schools are diverse communities that include people of different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. Collective worship therefore provides an opportunity to experience Christian worship whilst respecting the integrity and beliefs of every participant.

Worship in Church schools should be *inclusive, invitational and inspiring*:

- *Inclusive*, because everyone is welcomed and valued.
- *Invitational*, because individuals are invited to participate whilst respecting freedom of belief and conscience.
- *Inspiring*, because worship should engage people intellectually, emotionally and spiritually.

The aim is not to compel participation but to provide a safe and supportive environment in which pupils can encounter Christian faith, reflect on their own beliefs and consider how faith shapes the lives of others.

Schools may also recognise and celebrate major festivals and events from other faith traditions. Such recognition contributes to pupils' religious literacy and understanding of the diverse communities in which they live while maintaining the distinctly Christian character of worship.

The Contribution of Collective Worship

High-quality collective worship:

- develops pupils' spiritual awareness and understanding;
- strengthens the school's Christian vision and values;
- provides opportunities for prayer, reflection and contemplation;
- supports wellbeing and emotional development;
- encourages community, belonging and mutual respect;
- promotes dignity and the value of every individual;
- creates opportunities to explore justice, service and courageous advocacy;
- enables pupils and adults to reflect on how faith can shape action and decision-making.

Anglican Tradition and Heritage

As Church of England schools, worship should also provide opportunities for pupils to encounter and engage with the rich traditions of Anglican worship.

These may include:

- regular use of biblical texts and stories;
- exploration of Christian symbols and their significance;
- observing the seasons and festivals of the Christian year, including Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost;
- opportunities for prayer using a variety of forms and styles;
- the use of silence, stillness, meditation and reflection;
- learning traditional prayers and responses alongside opportunities for spontaneous prayer;
- engagement with music, art, story, drama and other creative forms of worship;
- opportunities to encounter clergy, church leaders and Christian role models;
- developing an understanding of the Church's place within local, national and global communities.

DBE Guidelines for Collective Worship are available on our website [HERE](#).

Governance

“In order to enable the continued development of successful schools, high quality governance is essential. The governance of our schools cannot be left to chance; schools need governors with the right skills and gifts to provide strategic oversight and direction.”
(*The DBE of the Future*, para. 32)

Effective governance is essential to the flourishing of church schools. Governors, trustees and school leaders work together to ensure that schools remain faithful to their Christian foundation whilst delivering high-quality education for all. Through strategic leadership, support and challenge, governance helps ensure that a school's theologically rooted Christian vision is reflected in decision-making, culture, relationships and educational provision.

Governance Structures

The constitution of governing bodies and academy committees varies according to school status and governance arrangements. Maintained schools and academies typically include a combination of foundation, parent, staff, local authority and co-opted representatives, although categories and responsibilities may differ depending on the school's Instrument of Government, Articles of Association or Scheme of Delegation.

Church school governors and trustees share collective responsibility for:

- promoting the school's Christian vision and values;
- supporting educational excellence and pupil flourishing;
- holding school leaders to account for educational performance and wellbeing;
- ensuring effective stewardship of resources;
- safeguarding and developing the Christian foundation of the school;
- serving the school community with integrity, wisdom and compassion.

The Role of Foundation Governors

Foundation governors and trustees play a distinctive and important role within church school governance. They are appointed to help preserve and develop the Christian foundation of the school and to ensure that the intentions of the trust deed continue to be reflected in the life and work of the school.

In maintained schools, foundation governors are appointed or approved by the diocese, usually following nomination by or consultation with the local PCC. In many schools, the incumbent serves as an ex-officio foundation governor or may nominate an approved substitute. The appointment of a substitute is approved by the archdeacon.

Foundation governors work alongside all members of the governing body to promote excellent outcomes for children and young people, whilst ensuring that the Christian vision remains central to strategic decision-making.

Foundation Governors Have a Particular Responsibility to:

- safeguard and develop the Christian foundation of the school;
- ensure that the school's theologically rooted Christian vision informs governance and strategic leadership;
- uphold the requirements of the trust deed, Instrument of Government and other governing documents;
- support strong relationships between the school, parish, diocese and wider community;
- contribute to the spiritual, educational and organisational flourishing of the school.

Christian Vision and Governance

Responsibility for the Christian foundation of a church school rests with the whole governing body or trust board. However, foundation governors have a particular responsibility for ensuring that the school's Christian vision is understood, lived out and reflected throughout school life.

Effective governance goes beyond compliance and oversight. It involves asking how decisions contribute to the flourishing of pupils and adults, how the school's vision shapes its priorities, and how governance supports the school's mission and service within its community.

Appointment of Foundation Governors

The composition of governing bodies in maintained schools is set out in the school's Instrument of Government. In most cases, foundation governors are appointed by Derby DBE in consultation with the local parish and PCC.

Governance arrangements within academies and Multi-Academy Trusts vary according to each trust's Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation. Foundation governance remains a key aspect of Church of England academy governance, and schools and trusts should work closely with Derby DBE to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and develop their Christian foundation.

Once appointments have been confirmed, Derby DBE will notify the relevant governance body. Diocesan foundation governors are normally appointed for a four-year term of office. Governors may resign at any time during their term of office and governing boards should notify the DBE Office of any changes to membership.

Further information and nomination forms are available through the Derby DBE [website](#).

Governor and Trustee development

Derby DBE provides a programme of training, networking and development opportunities for governors and trustees serving church schools.

These opportunities are designed to:

- strengthen understanding of church school governance;
- support governors and trustees in their responsibilities relating to Christian vision and foundation;
- develop knowledge of SIAMS and the Church of England Vision for Education;
- support effective governance, safeguarding and school improvement;
- encourage collaboration and mutual support across the diocesan family of schools.

Whole governing body and trust training can also be provided to meet local needs.

Understanding Governance in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)

Governance arrangements in Church of England academy trusts can be complex, particularly for those new to academy leadership. While structures vary between trusts, the following roles are commonly found:

Members

Members are the guardians of the trust's vision, purpose and governance. They hold the trust board to account for delivering the charitable objectives of the trust and are responsible for appointing and, where necessary, removing trustees.

Directors/Trustees

Trustees have overall responsibility for the strategic leadership, governance and performance of the academy trust. They ensure that the trust fulfils its legal responsibilities, uses resources effectively, delivers high-quality education and safeguards the Christian foundation of church schools within the trust.

Local Governance Committees

Many academy trusts delegate aspects of governance to local governance committees (sometimes called local governing bodies or local trust committees). These committees provide local knowledge, support and challenge, maintain links with the school community and help ensure that the trust's vision is reflected in the life of individual schools.

Foundation Governance in Church of England MATs

Foundation governance helps protect and develop the Christian foundation of church schools within academy trusts. Foundation trustees, members and local governors have a particular responsibility for ensuring that the trust and its schools remain faithful to their Christian vision, uphold the requirements of trust deeds and diocesan agreements, and enable pupils and adults to flourish within a distinctly Christian educational environment.

Because governance arrangements differ between trusts, leaders, governors and trustees should always refer to the trust's articles of association, scheme of delegation and diocesan guidance to understand how responsibilities are distributed within their organisation.

Recommended reading and resources

New governors and trustees may find the following resources helpful:

- *Church School Governance* by Mike Simmonds (Grove Education Series).
- National Society governance guidance and resources.
- Foundation for Educational Leadership resources on vision-led leadership and governance.
- *Called, Connected, Committed* leadership materials.
- Derby DBE governor induction and training materials.

For further advice on governance, the appointment of foundation governors, or governor development opportunities, please visit the Derby DBE [website](#) or contact the DBE office at officeDBE@derby.anglican.org.

Admissions and Appeals

Admissions

All schools and academies are required to comply with the [School Admissions Code](#) and relevant admissions legislation. Voluntary Controlled schools work in partnership with their Local Authority in relation to admissions arrangements, whilst Voluntary Aided schools and academies are supported by Derby DBE in developing, consulting on and reviewing their admissions policies so that they are consistent with diocesan expectations. Derby DBE believes that church schools should be welcoming, inclusive and deeply rooted in the communities they serve. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people from all backgrounds, faiths and none are able to access high-quality church school education. Admissions arrangements should reflect both the Christian foundation of the school and the Church of England's commitment to serving the common good.

For schools who subscribe to the [Partnership Agreement](#), and where they are their own admissions authority, Derby DBE provides detailed advice and guidance on developing admissions policies.

Appeals

Derby DBE offers an independent appeals service for schools in Derbyshire and Derby city (both Church of England and community schools). If you would like more information, contact the DBE Office at OfficeDBE@derby.anglican.org

Guidance on admissions and appeals is available on the Derby DBE [website](#). Schools requiring advice or support should contact the DBE Office at OfficeDBE@derby.anglican.org

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

In addition to Ofsted inspection, church schools are inspected through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework. SIAMS evaluates how effectively a school's theologically rooted Christian vision shapes its policies, practices and culture, enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

SIAMS is not simply an inspection event; it is an opportunity for schools to articulate, evaluate and demonstrate how their Christian vision influences every aspect of school life. Effective self-evaluation is therefore central to the process and schools should be prepared to provide evidence of the impact of their vision in practice.

The central inspection question is:

Through its vision and practice, how effectively is the school living up to its foundation as a church school and enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

To answer this question, inspectors consider the school's context alongside a series of inspection questions:

School Context

Who are we?

What are we doing here?

Inspection Questions

IQ1	How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?
IQ2	How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision?
IQ3	How is daily act of collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?
IQ4	How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in which pupils and adults are treated well?
IQ5	How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create an active culture of justice and responsibility?
IQ6	Is the religious education curriculum effective (with reference to the expectations set out in the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement for RE)
IQ7	What is the quality of Religious Education? (VA schools only)

Schools should regularly evaluate the impact of their Christian vision and be able to demonstrate how it influences decision-making, relationships, curriculum, worship, wellbeing and outcomes for pupils and adults.

The Inspection Report

SIAMS reports contain evaluative commentary against each of the inspection questions and provide a narrative assessment of the extent to which the school is living out its Christian foundation and vision. SIAMS reports for church schools within the Diocese of Derby can be accessed through the National Society and relevant school websites.

Timing of Inspections

The timing of SIAMS inspections is determined by the National Society and is informed by previous inspection outcomes and national policy. Schools should refer to current National Society guidance for the most up-to-date information regarding inspection scheduling and arrangements.

Supporting Schools for SIAMS

The National Society coordinates SIAMS inspections through its approved inspector network and publishes current guidance, frameworks and support materials.

Derby DBE provides training, guidance and support to help schools develop effective self-evaluation processes, prepare for inspection and deepen the impact of their Christian vision. Schools are encouraged to engage with diocesan training and support programmes as part of their ongoing school improvement and Christian leadership development.

Further guidance, resources and training opportunities are available through Derby DBE SIAMS team and on Derby DBE [website](#).

Buildings for Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled Schools and Academies

School buildings and estates play a vital role in supporting education, wellbeing, worship and community engagement. Derby DBE encourages schools and academy trusts to take a strategic approach to estate management, ensuring that buildings are safe, well maintained, sustainable and fit for purpose.

Capital funding opportunities are subject to national policy, eligibility criteria and available resources. Schools and academy trusts should discuss potential projects with Derby DBE and its buildings advisers at the earliest possible stage to identify the most appropriate funding route and approval requirements.

Undertaking Capital Works in Church Schools and Academies

The buildings and sites that make up diocesan schools provide the environment in which children learn, flourish and develop. Under the powers and duties set out in the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, the DBE has responsibilities in relation to the effectiveness and distinctiveness of church schools, including support for the stewardship of church school land and buildings.

School land and buildings are generally held by diocesan or other church trustees. Whilst responsibility for maintenance, repair and day-to-day estate management rests with governing bodies, local authorities, academy trusts or other responsible bodies as appropriate, all are encouraged to adopt a long-term approach to asset management and planned preventative maintenance.

In an environment where capital resources are limited, schools and trusts should seek to address building issues promptly to prevent deterioration and minimise future costs.

Schools and academy trusts are strongly encouraged to consult with Derby DBE and site trustees at the earliest stage of project development, before commissioning designs, appointing consultants or seeking quotations.

A range of forms and guidance documents are available to support schools and trusts through the approval process.

All church schools and academies must obtain DBE and site trustee consent where capital works constitute:

- Alterations to or extensions of existing buildings
- Construction of new buildings or installation of modular or prefabricated accommodation
- Alterations to or extensions of car parks, playgrounds or significant site features
- Refurbishment works to kitchens and sanitary facilities
- Renewal or replacement of building services, including heating, electrical, security, communications or data systems
- Renewal or replacement of drainage services
- Any other significant capital works exceeding the current diocesan approval threshold

Trustee approval is not normally required for routine IT equipment replacement. However, if there is any uncertainty about whether approval is required, advice should be sought from Derby DBE before work commences.

Voluntary Controlled Schools

Although Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools are maintained by the Local Authority, they remain church schools. In accordance with the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, trustee and DBE approval is required before undertaking any building works described above.

A *Project Authorisation Form* should be completed and returned to the DBE Office at officeDBE@derby.anglican.org together with copies of quotations received and, where applicable, specifications, drawings and project information.

Approval applications are normally processed promptly following receipt of all required documentation. Forms and guidance are available on the Derby DBE buildings  webpage.

Voluntary Aided Schools

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

School Condition Allocation funding supports priority condition, health and safety, safeguarding and compliance-related capital works within eligible church school estates. Funding criteria and eligible project types are determined nationally and may change from time to time.

Schools considering significant capital projects should engage with Derby DBE buildings advisers at the earliest possible stage. Larger capital schemes often require substantial planning and development time, and projects may take 12 to 18 months or longer to progress from initial concept through design, approvals and delivery.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

DFC is an annual allocation provided to Voluntary Aided schools. Funding levels are determined nationally and are generally linked to pupil numbers.

DFC may only be used for eligible capital expenditure in accordance with current grant regulations. Schools may choose to administer their own DFC allocation or participate in diocesan arrangements for management of the funding. Many Voluntary Aided schools choose to have their DFC administered on their behalf through diocesan arrangements.

Before undertaking any capital project, all relevant approvals must be obtained. Following approval through the school's governance arrangements, consent must also be obtained from both the trustees and the DBE.

A *Project Authorisation Form* should be submitted to the DBE Office at officeDBE@derby.anglican.org together with quotations, specifications, plans and details of any required school contribution. Applications are normally processed promptly once all required documentation has been received. Funding-related approvals remain subject to the applicable funding programme requirements and timescales. Forms and guidance are available on the Diocese's buildings webpage.

Academies

Academy trusts are responsible for managing and maintaining their estates in accordance with the relevant land and governance arrangements applying to each academy. Before undertaking a capital project, the relevant approvals must be obtained. Following approval through the academy trust's delegated governance arrangements, consent must be obtained from the site trustees, the academy trust (where required), and the DBE. This applies regardless of the funding source being used, including trust capital funding, School Condition Allocation or other approved capital programmes. A *Project Authorisation Form* should be completed and returned to the DBE Office at officeDBE@derby.anglican.org together with copies of quotations received and, where appropriate, specifications, surveys, professional reports and plans. Forms and guidance are available on the Diocese's buildings webpage.

Sustainability, Accessibility and Estate Planning

When planning building projects, schools and academy trusts should consider:

- The Church of England's commitment to achieving Net Zero Carbon.
- Opportunities to improve energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- Accessibility and inclusion requirements, including Equality Act considerations.
- Long-term estate strategy and asset management planning.
- Condition survey findings and planned preventative maintenance priorities.

Schools and trusts are encouraged to discuss these considerations with the Diocese and its professional advisers at an early stage in project development.

Buildings Advice and Support

For further information about buildings and capital projects, please contact the Diocese's appointed buildings advisers:

Jonathan Warren, YMD Boon
jwarren@ymdboon.co.uk

DBE Office Contact Details

Sarah Anderson

Director of Education

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Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Church schools are called to be places where every child and adult is known, valued and loved. Safeguarding is therefore fundamental to our Christian vision and central to the life and work of every school.

Derby DBE is committed to supporting schools in creating cultures where children and young people feel safe, respected and able to flourish. Effective safeguarding is rooted in the belief that every person is made in the image of God and possesses inherent dignity and worth.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Governors, trustees, school leaders, clergy, staff and volunteers all have an important part to play in ensuring that children are protected from harm and can thrive in safe, supportive and nurturing environments.

Derby DBE works alongside schools to support safeguarding through training, advice, governance support and collaboration with local and national partners.

Inclusion, Belonging and Flourishing

Church of England schools exist to serve their communities and welcome children and families of all backgrounds, faiths and none. Guided by the Church of England's Vision for Education, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to flourish and to experience life in all its fullness.

Inclusive schools are places where diversity is celebrated, difference is respected and every individual is encouraged to recognise their own value and the value of others. This includes a particular commitment to supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those facing disadvantage, and those who may be vulnerable or marginalised.

Our schools are called to create communities of belonging where all children and adults are able to participate, contribute and succeed.

Attendance and Support for Vulnerable Children

Regular school attendance is essential for learning, wellbeing and belonging. It enables children and young people to build relationships, engage fully with the curriculum and participate in the life of the school community.

Derby DBE is committed to supporting schools in promoting excellent attendance and removing barriers that may prevent children from engaging fully in education. We recognise that attendance challenges are often linked to wider issues affecting children and families and therefore require compassionate, relational and collaborative approaches.

Particular attention should be given to children who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or experiencing significant challenges in their lives. Church schools are uniquely placed to offer hope, stability, encouragement and practical support to children and families when they need it most.

Growing Faith and Lifelong Discipleship

The Diocese of Derby is committed to the Church of England's Growing Faith vision, which seeks to place children, young people and families at the heart of the Church's mission and ministry.

Church schools play a vital role within this vision. Through strong partnerships between schools, churches and families, children and young people are given opportunities to encounter faith, explore spirituality, ask questions and develop a sense of purpose and belonging.

Growing Faith is not primarily about increasing church attendance; it is about creating environments in which children and young people can encounter God's love, deepen their understanding of faith and grow as individuals. Church schools are important partners in this shared mission.

Leadership Wellbeing and Flourishing

Leadership within education is both a privilege and a significant responsibility. The demands placed upon school leaders, governors and trustees continue to grow, and sustaining healthy leadership has never been more important.

Derby DBE believes that flourishing schools require flourishing leaders. We are committed to supporting the wellbeing, resilience and professional growth of those who lead within our schools and trusts.

This includes providing opportunities for professional development, peer support, mentoring, reflection and pastoral care. We encourage leaders to model healthy and sustainable leadership practices that enable both themselves and those they serve to flourish.

In church schools, leadership is not simply a role but a vocation. It is grounded in service, shaped by hope and sustained through relationships.

Care for Creation and Environmental Stewardship

As part of our commitment to serving the common good, church schools are called to help children and young people understand their responsibility for the world around them.

Rooted in the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God, we encourage schools to develop cultures of environmental responsibility and sustainable stewardship. This may be reflected through curriculum development, practical environmental initiatives, community partnerships and opportunities for courageous advocacy.

By helping pupils understand the interconnectedness of people, communities and the natural world, church schools can play an important role in preparing young people to contribute positively to the future wellbeing of society and the planet.

Key Characteristics of Different School Types

Area	Community School	Voluntary Aided (VA)	Voluntary Controlled (VC)	Academy
Buildings	Owned by the Local Authority.	Owned by site trustees. The Trust Deed provides the legal foundation for the school. Responsibility for capital works and building development rests with the governing body, supported through available DfE capital funding and diocesan processes. Playing fields may be owned by the Local Authority or trustees depending on local arrangements.	Owned by site trustees. The Trust Deed underpins the Christian foundation of the school. Responsibility for building maintenance and capital works generally rests with the Local Authority.	School land and buildings are usually owned by site trustees and occupied by the academy trust through legal agreements. Site trustees are distinct from academy trustees/directors. Capital works and building development are managed by the academy trust in consultation with site trustees, the Diocese and relevant funding bodies.
Teaching Staff	Employed by the Local Authority and usually appointed by the governing body.	Employed by the governing body and funded through public education funding. The governing body may apply occupational requirements where permitted by legislation and may seek evidence of commitment to the Christian vision of the school.	Appointed by the governing body and employed by the Local Authority. Governors may satisfy themselves that candidates for leadership positions are able to support and develop the school's Christian vision and foundation.	Employed by the academy trust. Appointment arrangements will reflect the Academy's Articles of Association, governance documents and Christian foundation.
Support Staff	Employed by the Local Authority or contracted providers.	Employed by the governing body or contracted providers.	Employed by the Local Authority or contracted providers.	Employed by the academy trust.
Collective Worship	Daily collective worship which is broadly Christian in character.	Daily collective worship reflecting the Christian foundation and Anglican character of the school. Worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring and may include worship in the parish church.	Daily collective worship reflecting the Christian foundation and Anglican character of the school. Worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring and may include worship in the parish church.	Daily collective worship reflecting the Christian foundation and Anglican character of the school. Requirements are set out within academy funding agreements and reflect the school's Christian foundation and designation.

Area	Community School	Voluntary Aided (VA)	Voluntary Controlled (VC)	Academy
Religious Education	RE must be delivered in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.	Governors are responsible for ensuring RE is provided in accordance with the Trust Deed. The DBE recommends adoption of the relevant Locally Agreed Syllabus alongside the use of high-quality Church of England resources such as <i>Understanding Christianity</i> .	RE must be provided in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.	RE must be provided in accordance with the Academy Funding Agreement. The DBE recommends adoption of the relevant Locally Agreed Syllabus.
Governance Arrangements	Governed in accordance with maintained school regulations.	Foundation governors form the majority of the governing body and are responsible for safeguarding and developing the Christian foundation of the school. Foundation governors are nominated and appointed in accordance with diocesan procedures.	Foundation governors are represented within the governing body and support the school's Christian foundation alongside all governors. Foundation governors are nominated and appointed in accordance with diocesan procedures.	Governance arrangements vary according to the trust's Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation. Foundation governance remains an important feature of Church of England academy governance.
Funding	Funding allocated through national and local authority funding arrangements.	Revenue funding is allocated through national and local funding arrangements. Governing bodies may be required to contribute towards certain capital projects in accordance with current DfE funding regulations.	Funding allocated through national and local authority funding arrangements.	Academy trusts receive funding directly from the Department for Education.

Area	Community School	Voluntary Aided (VA)	Voluntary Controlled (VC)	Academy
Admissions	The Local Authority is the admissions authority.	The governing body is the admissions authority and is responsible for determining and administering admissions arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code and diocesan guidance.	The Local Authority is the admissions authority and consults the governing body on admissions arrangements.	The academy trust is the admissions authority and is responsible for admissions arrangements in accordance with the School Admissions Code and funding agreement.
Diocesan Support	N/A	The Diocese provides advice, support and strategic oversight in relation to Christian vision, governance, leadership, admissions, buildings, Religious Education, collective worship and SIAMS.	The Diocese provides advice, support and strategic oversight in relation to Christian vision, governance, leadership, admissions, buildings, Religious Education, collective worship and SIAMS.	The Diocese provides advice, support and strategic oversight in relation to Christian vision, governance, leadership, admissions, buildings, Religious Education, collective worship and SIAMS.
Inspection	Inspected by Ofsted.	Inspected by Ofsted and SIAMS. SIAMS evaluates how effectively the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enables pupils and adults to flourish, including the impact on curriculum, collective worship, Religious Education, leadership, governance, relationships and culture.	Inspected by Ofsted and SIAMS. SIAMS evaluates how effectively the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enables pupils and adults to flourish, including the impact on curriculum, collective worship, Religious Education, leadership, governance, relationships and culture.	Inspected by Ofsted and SIAMS. SIAMS evaluates how effectively the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enables pupils and adults to flourish, including the impact on curriculum, collective worship, Religious Education, leadership, governance, relationships and culture.
Term Dates	Determined by the Local Authority.	Determined by the governing body, which may take account of local circumstances and faith considerations.	Determined by the Local Authority.	Determined by the academy trust in accordance with its governance arrangements.