



Diocese of Northampton



# Governance in Catholic Schools & Academies



A guide for Foundation Directors,  
Representatives  
and Governors

September 2017



**NORES**



# CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
NORES	6 - 8
Training	9
The Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education	10
The Role of the Foundation Governor Schools in the Diocese of Northampton	11
The Bishops Expectations	12
The Governing Body's Strategic Role	13
Monitoring and Evaluation & School Visits	14-15
School Premises	16
Employment of Staff	17
Admissions	18
Collective Worship & Religious Education	19 - 21
Relationship & Sex Education	22
Other Sources of Information	23

# FOREWORD

Foundation Directors, Representatives and Governors play a vital role in the leadership of our schools. Appointed by the Bishop of Northampton your role is to ensure that your schools' Catholic ethos is preserved and developed, and the religious worship reflects the tradition of the Catholic Church. Your special form of ministry in representing the Bishop and the interests of the Catholic Church gives the Diocese confidence that our schools will remain both academically strong and a haven of God's love.

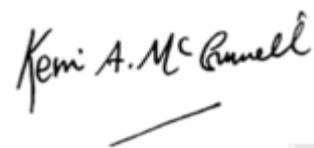
You share in the strategic responsibility of promoting high educational standards and ensuring that your school is conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with the Diocese of Northampton's Memorandum of Understanding, your school's Instrument of Government, MAT Scheme of Delegation and other legislation.

This booklet has been produced as by NORES with help from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle who we would like to thank for their cooperation and guidance. It is an introduction to your responsibilities as Foundation Directors, Representatives and Governors and aims to complement the range of useful advice already available. I hope you find this booklet useful and NORES will be pleased to answer any enquiries you may have.

Thank you again for your service in the cause of Catholic education.



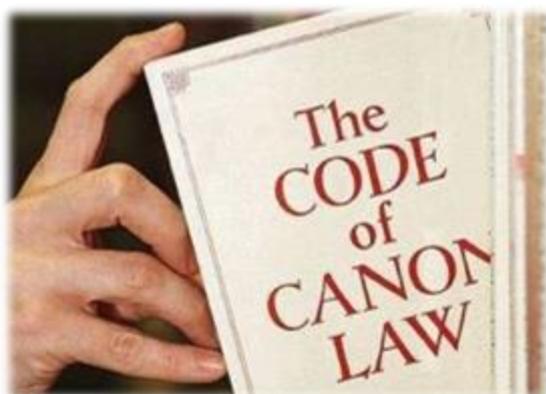
**NORES**



Monsignor Kevin McGinnell, Episcopal Vicar for Education

# INTRODUCTION

Under Canon (Church) Law, it is the duty of each Diocesan Bishop to make sure that there is proper provision of Catholic schools for the children and young people in his diocese. Most Catholic schools and the land they are built on are owned by the Diocese of Northampton. They are held in trust by the company to safeguard the interests of



the Catholic community and to serve its needs. Catholic schools owned by religious orders have their own Trustees.

However, all catholic schools are under the authority of the Bishop (including Multi Academy Trusts, VA schools, grammar and independent schools). There can be no Catholic school without the approval and support of the Diocesan Bishop.

The school's Instrument of Government/Articles of Association and MAT Scheme of Delegation defines the school category and identifies the types of Directors, Representatives or Governors that must be represented. As a school or academy under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Northampton, it is the responsibility of the Bishop to appoint an overall majority of the governors who are known as Foundation Directors, Representatives or Governors depending upon the designation of the school. Throughout this guide, we will refer to 'Foundation Governors' this includes Directors and Representatives in Multi Academy Trusts as this guidance applies to all those appointed by the Bishop in governance roles in VA schools, Independent schools and Multi Academy Trusts.

# NORES

## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON OFFICE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, EVANGELISATION, CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS

NORES has been established to support the Bishop in determining Diocesan education policy; to assist schools and parishes in its implementation; to address current and future need, ensuring they reflect the pastoral mission of the Church in education.

The service liaises and consults with the Department of Education (DfE), local authorities, the Catholic Education Service (CES) and other external groups to protect, manage and promote Catholic education throughout the Diocese. NORES works collaboratively and in active consultation both with those who are involved professionally and those whose contribution is a voluntary commitment to the Church's work.

NORES officers are appointed by the Bishop to help in the planning, organisation and the management of Catholic schools in the Diocese. Staff negotiate with officers of local authorities and the DfE in matters relating to the organisation of schools for example the formation of Multi Academy Trusts or place planning and new school buildings. They also work closely with Governing Bodies, advising on the appointment of Headteachers and other senior staff building projects and maintenance and they organise training for governors and teachers.

They support the Bishop by promoting his policies on the teaching of religious education in schools. They organise and report on the standard of RE teaching and worship in schools via the Section 48 Inspection process. They advise governors on the appointment of teachers of Religious Education and work with staff and governors on the curriculum for RE.

NORES promotes the well-being of all Catholic schools in the Diocese and particularly any that may be in difficulty. Officers do so for the sake of all Catholic parents and children and for the common good of our school community as a whole.



NORES works closely with each of our seven local authority partners, Ofsted, the Church of England Diocese of Oxford, St Albans and Peterborough and the Regional Schools Commissioner for North-West London and South-Central England. Governors in Voluntary aided schools (those under local authority control) can access governor training through their LA Governor Services department. Directors and Representatives of Multi Academy Trusts may access training organised by their Trust. This training is designed to complement, not replace Diocesan training offered by NORES.

# NORES TEAM



Mgr Kevin McGinnell  
Episcopal Vicar for  
Education



Collette Curtis  
Director of  
School



Paul McHugh  
Secondary RE  
Advisor



Jackie McCarthy  
Team  
Administrator



Anne Marie  
McIntosh  
Primary RE Advisor



Steve O'Brien  
Inspection Manager



Debbie Main  
Schools Officer



Alex Heath  
Adult  
Formation,  
Catechetics &  
Chaplaincy



Warren Edwards  
CCRS Course  
Administrator



Fr Francis Higgins  
Director of Adult  
Education

## TRAINING

NORES runs a comprehensive schedule of training and information days throughout the school year. Based at our Luton office, but with events taking place across the Diocese, we aim to complement training available from your local authority and elsewhere.

Our training calendar is published every year in the final school term looking forward to the next school year. Governance training is free to delegates and we encourage you to make use of it. Our most up to date training list can be found on our website.

Recent governance events have included:

- School Premises - Securing the right funding
- Governor Forum - Spirituality in Leadership (across the Diocese)
- Governor Conference with Martin Post, Regional Schools Commissioner

NORES also run training for school staff and adults across the Diocese and can tailor bespoke sessions for your school, contact us to discuss your requirements.

## CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This course is run across the Diocese by NORES and is nationally accredited. It is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. We encourage all Foundation Directors, Representatives and Governors to undertake this course as it provides an excellent grounding in the both the workings of the Church and our faith, and also Catholic social teaching or Faith and Culture. It is valuable for all teachers and an essential requirement for any teacher applying for senior management positions in Catholic education.

For details of where CCRS is running, the modules and cost please have a look at our website (Adult Education & CCRS) or contact Warren Edwards - Course Administrator on [edwards@nores.org.uk](mailto:edwards@nores.org.uk)

# THE DISTINCTIVE NATURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Parents have the first responsibility for the academic and religious formation of their children. The local Catholic parish and school help them to fulfil this responsibility, but can never take their place.

One of the main reasons why Catholic schools and colleges are publically recognised as being successful is because those involved - parents, students, teachers, governors, parishioners and clergy, share a common purpose and common gospel values.

This means you are committed to promoting:

## **The Search for Excellence:**

The search for excellence is seen as an integral part of the spiritual quest. Christians are called to seek perfection in every aspect of their lives. In Catholic education, students are given every opportunity to develop their talents to the full.

## **The Uniqueness of the Individual:**

Within Catholic schools, each individual is seen as made in God's image and loved by Him. All pupils are therefore valued and respected as individuals so that they may be helped to fulfil their unique role in creation.

## **The Education of the Whole Person:**

Their belief in the value of each individual leads Catholic schools to have a duty of care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically and emotionally disadvantaged. The education of all with the particular duty to care for the poor and disadvantaged is a central principle of Catholic education.

## **Moral Principles:**

Catholic education aims to offer young people the experience of life in a community founded on Gospel values. In religious education in particular, the Church aims to transmit to them the Catholic faith. Both through religious education and in the general life of the school, young people are prepared to serve as witness to moral and spiritual values in the wider world.

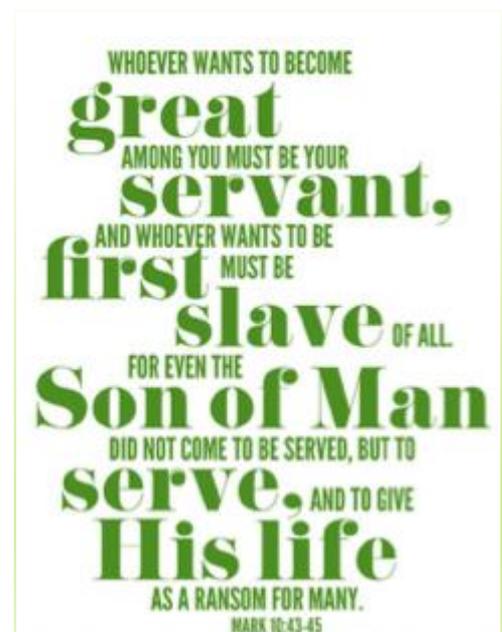
# THE ROLE OF GOVERNING A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Foundation Governors have a duty to protect the Bishop's interests and play a leading role on the Catholic community: they collaborate with the Bishop in his ministry in education. As such they are required to be practicing Catholics in full communion with the Church.

**It is a requirement that the Chair of Governors is a Foundation Governor.**

It is therefore, important for them to:

- Know and implement the Bishops policies on education
- Understand and promote the distinctive nature of Catholic education
- Act for the good of Catholic education as a whole in the Diocese
- Secure the long-term future of Catholic education



The Governors of a Catholic school work as a team, in close cooperation with the Headteacher and staff. Although all governors and staff contribute to the Catholic nature of education in the school, as set out in the mission statement, Foundation Governors are specifically appointed to ensure:

- That the religious character of the school is preserved
- That the school is conducted in accordance with its governing documents and the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding
- That the religious education in the school is in accordance with the Bishop's policy for his Diocese and fulfils the requirements of the Bishop's Conference.

In fulfilling these duties, they have the right to be supported by the Catholic community in general and by the Bishop and his officers in particular.

# THE BISHOPS EXPECTATIONS

As Foundation Directors, Representatives and Governors you have been appointed by the Bishop to represent him in our schools. This is an important ministry of the Church and as such, the Bishop wishes to ensure that all those in governance roles within school undertake the following commitments:

A commitment to the vision of your School and/or Trust and to support it fully.

To promote the success of the school and/or Trust in the local community while providing a voice for the school community to raise any concerns.

To work together in whichever capacity in the school and/or Trust to achieve the school vision over the coming years by focusing on key priorities:

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress across all key stages
- Ensure strong and effective leadership and governance
- Ensuring financial security
- To enhance the Catholic life of your school/Trust and build positive relationships with parishes and communities

To promote the key principles of Catholic education in everything we do:

- Search for excellence (not only academic excellence but in our welcome, relationships, dealings with parents and parishes etc.)
- The uniqueness of the individual (all pupils and staff are valued and respected as individuals and helped to fulfil their potential)
- The education of the whole person (academic, pastoral, prayer and worship to prepare young people for their life as Christians in the community)
- The education of all (particularly the disadvantaged)
- Moral principles

# THE GOVERNING BODY'S STRATEGIC ROLE

The Headteacher has the responsibility for the day to day running of the school. The governing body has a more strategic role, shaping the character of the school and formulating its general direction. To do this effectively the governors will need to work closely with the HeadTeacher and their school improvement adviser (or equivalent in academies) in setting aims and ensuring those aims are met. Monitoring and evaluating progress will identify strengths and weaknesses and give direction for further improvement. With information gained from monitoring and evaluation, the governors will be able to provide challenge and ask pertinent questions of the HeadTeacher to support and develop the school.

The governors' role embraces both the pursuit of high academic standards and the development of the schools' distinctive Catholic nature. This strategic role is set out in The Governance Handbook, available to download from the DfE website.



Image credit: Open Learn via Open University

# MONITORING & EVALUATION

Governors involvement in the cycle of school improvement planning is vital. It is only with a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development that school improvement can be achieved.

Here is a wealth of information available to help governors in their role of monitoring and evaluation, relating to both academic standards and the Catholic life of the school:

- Recent Ofsted Inspection reports - Section 5 and 8
- Diocesan Section 48 inspection report or feedback from Interim Monitoring Visits
- School Improvement Plan
- RAISEonline or FFT data
- Local Authority reports for VA schools
- DfE performance tables
- Schools and Academies Financial Benchmarking websites
- SEFRE
- Reports from your Headteacher and senior staff

## **Self-Evaluation & Board Effectiveness**

The Catholic Education Service (CES) recommends that governing bodies use the model Self Evaluation Form that has been published which is available on their website.

The model Self Evaluation Form evaluates the following three core strategic functions of the governing body:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the HeadTeacher or principal or chief executive (as appropriate) to account for the educational performance of the school or academy and its pupils, and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school or academy, including performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school or academy and making sure its money is well spent.

## SCHOOL VISITS

A key way of engaging in monitoring and evaluating both the academic and Catholic life of the school is through governor visits. Visits are an excellent way for governors to see the school in action and to build relationships with staff. The Governance Handbook says:

“Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, the board can see for themselves whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice.”

It is important to remember that governors are not undertaking lesson observations as this is not part of a governor’s role.

Evaluating the Catholic Life of your school is also important and not just confined to the teaching of Religious Education. The Diocese encourage all schools to operate a Catholic Life Committee to continually assess the delivery and effectiveness of the Catholic ethos of the school. Multi Academy Trusts have a Catholic Life Committee that looks at this over all their Trust schools.

The Catholic life of the school can be assessed though considering:

- The way the schools mission statement is lived out in the daily life of the school
- The quality of pastoral care and PHSE
- The quality of pupils’ spiritual development
- The quality and variety of worship, prayer and Chaplaincy
- The extent to which the Catholic nature of the school is explicit in schools’ buildings, displays and other physical characteristics
- Does the Behaviour Policy reflect Christian values?
- Is pupil welfare actively promoted?
- What is the strength of relationship between school, church and parish?
- How are staff cared for and spiritually developed?

This is not an exhaustive list of questions to consider and it is the responsibility of all governors to monitor, develop and cherish the Catholic nature of their school.

## SCHOOL PREMISES

As Diocesan school buildings are in the ownership of the Diocese rather than the local authority or Academy Trust, the governing body or Directors have a duty to ensure that the school buildings are safe and fit for purpose. In Voluntary Aided (VA) schools the governors must contribute 10% towards the cost of capital projects. In practice, many schools generate this income through asking parents for a voluntary contribution of a set amount per child or per term. Academies are not required to provide this 10%, but many choose to implement a similar system to supplement their budget.

All building projects (including alterations) costing in excess of £5000 including fees and VAT must be approved by NORES before work commences or suppliers/contractors are engaged. All contracts must be made with the Diocese rather than the individual school or academy and all invoices must be raised to the Diocese. Schools and Academies are required to complete a **School (or Academy) Project Request Form** which must be signed by the Chair of Governors and sent in hard copy (not email) to NORES for approval before any funds can be released or work commences. Your Headteachers are all familiar with this system, but further guidance and copies of the Request forms can be found on the NORES website: [www.nores.org.uk](http://www.nores.org.uk)

Capital funding for schools can be a complex issue, with academies accessing CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) or funding buildings through school budget and VA schools using LCVAP (LA Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme) or DFC (Devolved Formula Capital). Schools and Academies can also source funds through grant making trusts, donations and fundraising.

For advice on the funding available for schools and academies, a list of approved contractors and advice on insurance for school buildings, please contact the Diocesan Property Office on: 01604 715 635

## EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF

The governors of Catholic schools appoint and employ their own teachers and support staff. Whenever possible, they should appoint practising catholic teachers to maintain and promote the catholic ethos of the school.

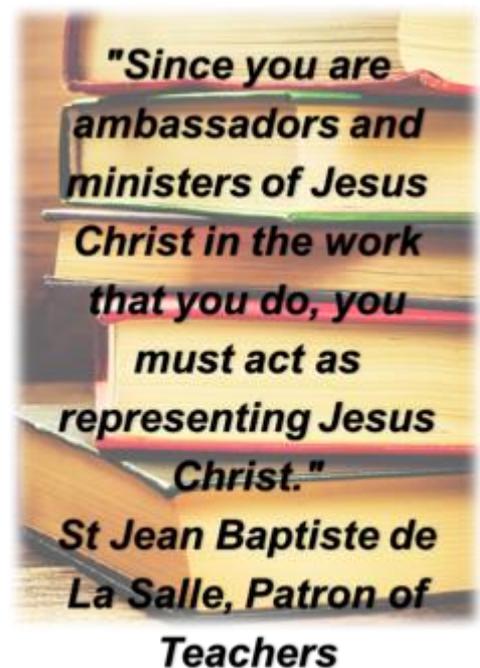
Teachers of other denominations and faiths also make a valuable contribution through their support of the Gospel values and by promoting the school's mission statement.

When recruiting school senior leaders, governors are required to inform NORES so that a diocesan recruitment adviser (who is the Bishops representative) can assist the school in the recruitment process. School leaders play an important role within the Catholic community and are leaders of their faith. The Bishop asks that practicing Catholics are appointed where possible, however as a minimum the following posts must be held by practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church:

- Headteacher, Principal or equivalent
- Deputy Headteacher, Deputy Principal or equivalent
- Head or Coordinator of Religious Education
- Chaplain

Diocesan guidance on the definition of a 'practicing Catholic' may be found in the Diocesan Memorandum of Understanding. Further recruitment guidance can also be found on the NORES website.

The Catholic Education Service (CES) provides guidance on many aspects of school leadership and governance in Catholic schools and academies. Their website is [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)



## ADMISSIONS

The governors of Catholic schools and Directors of Multi Academy Trusts are their own admission authority and are responsible for drawing up their own admissions policy in accordance with NORES guidelines. Admissions policies are determined annually and must be consulted upon every seven years. No changes can be made to a school or academy admissions policy without consulting NORES for approval.

Even though local authorities now have the duty to coordinate arrangements for the admission of pupils to schools, governing bodies of our Catholic schools determine the oversubscription criteria to be used in accordance with NORES policy and DfE guidance if the number of applicants exceed the number of places available.

Where a child has been refused entry to the school, the child's parent/guardian has the right to appeal against the decision made by the governing body to refuse the child admission. It is important that your admissions policy is fair, transparent and as simple as possible to allow parents a clear understanding of how oversubscriptions are assessed.



# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Worship is central to the life of a Catholic school and both formal and spontaneous acts of worship take place in a variety of contexts. Foundation governors, appointed by the Bishop, have particular responsibility for seeing that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in acts of worship.

There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be a single act of worship for all pupils, such as Assembly or Mass; or separate acts for classes or groups of children.



Collective worship is an important part of a Catholic school's distinctive ethos.

Taking part in daily collective worship helps build community cohesion by creating a consistent structure around the core values and symbols of Christianity. In Catholic schools, pupil participation and engagement in worship are important criteria in the diocesan inspection of Catholic education, not least during the daily act of collective worship. From Year R to Year 13, pupils are invited to play an active part in collective worship.



Throughout the year, Catholic school communities come together to celebrate important events in the Church's calendar, such as Lent and Advent, as well as the start and end of the academic year. Through regular prayer and worship, including Mass, the rhythm of the Church's

year becomes a normal part of school life and each pupil's life.

These activities are integral to the Catholic identity and life of the school; they would take place in all Catholic schools, whether or not schools were required by statute to provide collective worship.



Religious Education is the "core of the core curriculum" in a Catholic school (Pope St John Paul II). Placing RE at the core of the curriculum in Catholic schools helps the school to fulfil its mission to educate the whole person in discerning the meaning of their existence, since "Religious Education is concerned not only with intellectual knowledge but also includes emotional and affective learning. It is in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of what it is to be human truly becomes clear.

Without religious education, pupils would be deprived of an essential element of their formation and personal development, which helps them attain a vital harmony between faith and culture." (Religious Education curriculum Directory p4). Furthermore, religiously literate children and young people can engage in a fully informed critique of all knowledge, "leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body. " (Religious Education Curriculum Directory p4).

### **The 'Section 48' Inspection of Catholic Schools**

The Bishop of Northampton is entitled to inspect all Catholic schools located in his diocese, whether they are in diocesan trusteeship or not.

Inspections are conducted under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The responsibilities of the governing body can be summarised as follows:

- The Catholic life of the school: The mission statement and its review
- Improvement planning: The link governor for RE and liaison with the RE subject leader
- Monitoring of the quality of religious education
- Analysis of the standards achieved in religious education
- Curriculum time devoted to classroom RE
- The resources available for the delivery of RE
- Collective worship, policy and practice
- Spiritual and moral development; policies and monitoring
- Community cohesion: Policy and monitoring

# RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION

Catholic schools, like all other schools in England, are required to produce a written policy following the guidance issued by the Department for Education on Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Catholic schools are also required to deliver RSE in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

For Catholic RSE to be fully effective it needs to:

- be faithful to the Church's vision of human wholeness whilst recognising the contemporary context in which we live today;
- involve parents as they are primary educators of their child;
- provide a positive view of human sexuality and dignity of the human person;
- equip young people with the ability to make practical judgments about the right thing to do in particular circumstances;
- explore and promote virtues which are essential to promoting respect and dignity;
- be delivered in an age appropriate way which reflects the development of the child;
- be part of the cross-curricular work in both primary and secondary schools;
- be sensitive to the needs of the individual pupil and recognise the mix of pupils with different sexual orientations, genders and family backgrounds in each class;
- be taken seriously by governors and teachers as an integrated part of the broad and balanced curriculum that Catholic schools offer;
- be delivered by competent professionals who understand the Church's teaching.

Each governing body has a statutory responsibility for producing a Relationship and Sex Education Policy.



## OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Local Authority Governor Services Departments

Bedford	01234 276792
Buckinghamshire	01296 383 342
Central Bedfordshire	0300 300 8304
Luton	01582 548 017
Milton Keynes	01908 253 497
Northamptonshire	01604 365 087
Slough	01753 475 111

Useful web links include:

[www.nores.org.uk](http://www.nores.org.uk)

[www.northamptondiocese.org](http://www.northamptondiocese.org)

[www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)

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

[www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)

For more information please contact:

**NORES**

**33 Westbourne Road, Luton. LU4 8JD**

**01582 723 312**

[admin@nores.org.uk](mailto:admin@nores.org.uk)



**NORES**

