

School Governance in the Archdiocese of Cardiff

An Introduction



The Context

In the Archdiocese of Cardiff, there are 44 primary schools, including 3 in Herefordshire, 10 secondary schools, including 1 in Herefordshire and 1 Sixth-Form College, in Cardiff. Within the country of Wales as a whole, the Catholic Church plays a major part in education provision, with, in 2015, a total of 71 Primary Schools, 15 Secondary Schools (1 co-managed with the Church in Wales) and 1 Sixth Form College, educating approximately 30,000 children every year.

The 'dual system', incorporating both Voluntary-Aided Catholic Schools and other schools with a religious character, together with 'maintained' community schools, recognises the benefits to society that parental choice and diversity brings. It acknowledges that pupils have the right to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, as set out in Article 2 of Protocol 1 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*. This diversity of provision is a source of great richness in society as, together, the Catholic Church and the UK and Welsh Assembly Governments work to build a just, inclusive and cohesive society.



*St Mary's Catholic Primary School,
Newport*

The nature and purpose of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cardiff

Fundamentally, Catholic schools exist:

- **To assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children.** It is the responsibility of parents to nurture and form their children. Public finances are used to assist parents in this task by providing schools and colleges. Catholic schools and colleges exist so that children can be educated in the context of their religious beliefs and to show that all human knowledge has its source and destiny in God our Father.
- **To assist in making Christ known to all peoples.** The Catholic Church believes that the fullness of life is found in Jesus Christ. Its mission is to proclaim this Good News to all people. The Catholic school and college, working in partnership with local parishes and families, aim to place Christ, and the teaching of the Church, at the centre of people's lives and of society.

- **To be at the service of the local Church – the Archdiocese, the parish and the Christian home.** The Catholic school/college is an integral element of the one Body of Christ and the Church's mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. Working in partnership with families, the parish and the wider Catholic Church, the Catholic school/college plays its part in fostering communion and unity.
- **To be of service to society.** The Catholic Church provides schools and colleges to contribute to the creation of a society that is inclusive, just, highly educated, skilled and cultured. Ethnic and racial diversity is, and always has been, a feature of the Catholic Church's transnational identity and membership. In the diversity of the pupils of its schools and colleges, it contributes to authentic social cohesion and the Common Good.



School Governing Bodies in Wales and Herefordshire

In England and Wales, every Local Authority (LA) maintained school has a governing body, consisting of specified numbers of various categories of governors depending on the type and size of school. Governors are unpaid, but they may be reimbursed for expenses for such as the care of dependants or relatives and travel costs. Under section 50 of the Employment Rights Act (1996] employers must consider giving anyone in their employment who serves as a governor reasonable time off their employ to carry out their governor duties. Employers can decide whether this time off is given with or without pay.

Catholic School Governing Bodies consist of the following categories of people:

- **Foundation Governors:** appointed by the Archbishop, some of whom must be parents of the school, who also must always be in a majority on the Governing Body and, if possible, on statutory committees of the Governing Body;
- **Parent Governors:** parents of children at the school, elected by parents;
- **Staff Governors:** members of the school staff, elected by school staff;
- **Authority Governors** (previously known as LA Governors): appointed by the Local Authority.

The proportions of categories vary between differing types of school. Governors are appointed for four years of office, which is renewable. **NB: Members of staff cannot be on the Governing Body of a school in any other capacity than as a staff member, i.e., a member of staff cannot be a LA, Foundation or Parent Governor (Education, Wales 'The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations' 2005, Part 2, 4.1 and 7.1). In addition, members of staff cannot be the Chair or Vice-Chair of a Governing Body (Part 7, 39.2).**

The **Headteacher** of each school can decide whether or not to be an 'ex officio' member of the Governing Body. Should the Headteacher decide not to become a member of the governing body, the place is left vacant.

By law, governing bodies meet at least three times every year as a Full Governing Body, where the ongoing business of committees and the school are reported on, and discussed, and where decisions are taken by a majority vote. Most of the work of governors, however, is done at committee level.

The Governing Body is led by the **Chair**, elected by the Governing Body from within its membership. Anyone employed by the school cannot be elected Chair or Vice-Chair. The process for election of Chair and Vice-Chair, and their term of office, should be laid down in the Governing Body's standing orders. The full Governing Body can remove the Chair and/or Vice-Chair by a majority vote of no confidence.

The governors are supported in their work by a **Clerk** to the Governing Body. The Clerk is remunerated for his/her work. The Clerk is an integral part of the Governing Body, although he/she is not entitled to vote. The role is primarily one of providing advice and interpretation on the regulatory and administrative framework in which Governors work, preparing and distributing minutes and agendas, keeping records and dealing with correspondence.

The Responsibilities of Governors

The Governing Body provides strategic management, conducting the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. It acts as a 'critical friend', supporting the work of the Headteacher and other staff.

- Schools have a delegated budget to cover salaries, running costs, maintenance and equipment; the Governing Body is responsible for the budget. Governors can decide how many and what types of staff to employ, which equipment to upgrade or replace and what the priorities are for implementing new strategies and initiatives.
- Governors are responsible for appointing the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, and are usually involved in the appointment of other staff.
- Governors also have a role in monitoring the school's progress, and in setting annual targets for the school's performance, for the Headteacher, and for ensuring that the Headteacher sets targets for other staff.
- Governors must review school exclusions in certain circumstances, and have the power to reinstate an excluded pupil or reduce the term of the exclusion.
- In a Catholic School, the Governing Body also acts as a pupil admission authority. The governing body sets the admissions policy annually, makes admissions decisions and defends admissions appeals.



The Responsibilities of Governors for the Catholic Ethos of the School

Foundation Governors form the majority on a Catholic school's governing body. It is an important ministry in the life of the Church. All Governors of a Catholic school have a duty to preserve and promote the Catholic ethos of the school. Foundation Governors have the particular responsibility of assisting the bishop by sustaining and developing the Catholic ethos and distinctive Catholic nature of the school. Their task is to ensure that at all times the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Archdiocesan Trust Deed, such determinations made by the Archbishop and his Trustees, and follows these principles:

- To give clear witness, as individuals and as a team, to the teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and assume responsibility for governing the school according to Canon Law, the Catechism, and the teachings of the Catholic Church in general and Archdiocesan norms in particular.
- To comply with both legislation and diocesan guidance, for example, on the recruitment and employment of staff, on school pupil admissions, and convey this to the other members of the governing body if required.
- To seek to appoint Catholic teachers and school leaders who combine personal conviction and practice of the Faith with the qualities and experience required by particular posts.
- To represent the Archbishop, or his delegate, on the Governing Body with particular reference to the Catholic ethos of the school by ensuring that the whole curriculum of the school is rooted in an understanding of life in conformity with the teaching of the Gospel and the Catholic Church. To achieve this, Governors must ensure that the general religious and liturgical life of the school conforms to Archdiocesan policy.
- To take particular care that, with the help and advice of the Archdiocesan Director of Religious Education, Religious Education has first place in the curriculum, and embraces and enlivens every subject; and that the school follows a truly Catholic programme of religious and moral education approved by the Archdiocese.
- To consider not only the interests of the school but to also comply with wider Archdiocesan policy and the interests of other Catholic schools and the interests of Catholic education throughout the Archdiocese.

Committees

Most Governing Bodies use a committee structure to undertake their monitoring and evaluation roles. Membership and terms of reference of committees, e.g., Religious Education, Standards, Finance, Staffing, Admissions, Health and Safety, Curriculum and Premises, are determined annually. Other areas covered by committees may include marketing, discipline and management. Many Governing Bodies form working groups to tackle specific areas for development. Particular committees can be given delegated powers to make decisions about the school that do not then require approval by the full Governing

Body. As with all aspects of school life, meetings will have as their context the Christ-centred nature of the school and would always begin and end with prayer.

Guidance and Training for Governors

- **The Archdiocese of Cardiff.** Training events and policy and guidance documents are provided to assist Governors, including:
 - Staff recruitment and appointments, including contracts;
 - Staff policies, e.g., capability, disciplinary, absence and grievance;
 - The Admission of pupils;
 - The School Curriculum;
 - Religious Education;
 - Buildings and developments

Governors must seek diocesan advice and guidance for all key discussions and decisions and, in particular, for:

- **Religious Education**
- **the recruitment of school leaders,**
- **the admissions of pupils, and,**
- **the use and development of school buildings.**

Website: <http://www.rcadc.co.uk/schools-commission.html>

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CES Education Adviser for Wales and Archdiocesan Education Officer: Rev Dr Philip Manghan

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- **Local Authorities.** In Wales, Governors are required to attend various kinds of training. Further details regarding this training are provided by the Local Authority when appointed.
- In both England and Wales, there are national support organisations for school Governors :
 - In England, the **National Governors' Association:**
<http://www.nga.org.uk/>
 - In Wales, **Governors Wales:**
<http://www.governorswales.org.uk/>



*St Mary's Catholic High School, Hereford
School Chapel*

- **The Catholic Education Service of England and Wales.** The CES is an agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It works with governments and diocesan authorities to assist Catholic schools to fulfil their nature and purpose.

Further information is available at: <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/>

Important model policies for Governors are available at:

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/employment-documents/model-policies-and-procedures>



*St David's Catholic 6th Form College,
Cardiff*



St Peter's
Catholic
Primary
School,
Cardiff
Class-led
Act of
Worship

Important national Catholic Church publications

Mgr Marcus Stock, *Christ at the Centre: Why the Church provides Catholic Schools*; Catholic Truth Society; 2013

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Department of Catholic Education and Formation; *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools in England and Wales*; 2012

Patrick O'Donoghue; *Fit for Mission? Schools*; Catholic Truth Society; 2008



Corpus Christi High School, Cardiff