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**Education Department**

A group of people putting their hands together

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**Handbook for**

**leaders of church schools**

**September 2023**

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**Section one – Welcome and introduction**

* 1. **Congratulations** on taking up your headship appointment in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

We celebrate with you your calling and vocation to serve in one of our church schools and hope that this handbook will support you in your role. The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership’s vision for school leadership at all levels is that they are ‘Called, Connected and Committed’. We share that vision and will work with you to see it fulfilled in your school/s.

Thank you in advance for everything you do to care for the children and young people in our diocese. We look forward to working with you and please rest assured that your own wellbeing and flourishing is our priority.

**1.2 The Diocese of Bath and Wells Vision for Education.**

**‘I have come that you might have life in all its fullness’ John 10:10**

These are the words of Jesus, which are central to our vision and mission for education.

We believe that every child and young person with whom we work should have the opportunity to experience the Christian faith, lived out in our schools and churches. This aspiration drives us in the way we understand our call to serve our wide ranging and diverse communities around the diocese. Our schools are church schools, providing the highest possible education for pupils of all faiths and none within a Christian ethos.

We aim to offer a diverse range of services, activities, resources, courses, advice and guidance to the equally diverse range of schools, multi-academy trusts, colleges, universities, chaplaincies, youth groups and parishes that exist in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Our department is staffed by an exceptional team with a vast skill, experience and knowledge base. No question is too large or too small and we aim to support all those who work with children and young people in a manner that is collaborative. We understand the growing needs of young people and seek to promote their natural curiosity and a love of learning. Working alongside school and church leaders, our aim is that children and young people will have the opportunity to flourish, fulfil their God given potential and become contributory members of our many communities and our society at large.

The Education department is divided into three teams; School Effectiveness (including standards, ethos and SIAMS), School Organisation (including governance and academy conversions) and the GO Team (which works to support, resource and equip youth and children’s ministry locally). The teams reflect the educational landscape and variety of learning communities which our diocese serves. The teams are organised on an archdeaconry model, and staff work within either the Bath, Wells or Taunton archdeaconry.

If you are a new school leader, you will wish to get to know your colleagues and the diocese. Key to this will be attendance at the annual diocesan heads’ conference and the termly briefings for head teachers and chairs of governors. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

**1.3 Overview of the diocese**

The Diocese of Bath and Wells is one of 41 Church of England dioceses in the country.  The diocese stretches from Portishead in the north to Crewkerne in the south, Minehead in the west to Frome in the east.

The diocese loves and serves the 940,000 people who live here through its family of 466 parishes and 182 church schools.

The Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (BWMAT) is a well-established MAT with four hubs containing largely though not exclusively church schools. The number of schools in BWMAT is steadily growing. In addition, the diocesan education team works with multi academy trusts which contain church schools. We have a good relationship with all our partnership MATs.

Everything the diocese does is underpinned by prayer and worship and is driven by its vision that:

“In response to God’s immense love for us, we seek to be God’s people, living and telling the story of Jesus.”

**1.4 The diocesan education team**

To support you in your new role and beyond, you will be allocated one of three schools’ advisers, who will be your link with the diocese. They will get to know you and visit your school at least annually. You are welcome to contact the diocesan education team for help and support at any time.

**For details of Who’s Who please see Appendix 1 at the end of this handbook.**

**1.5 The Diocese of Bath and Wells safeguarding statement**

Safeguarding refers to the range of plans and activities that are put in place to protect children and adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect from being exploited or harmed.

Safeguarding in the school/diocesan community – making our schools and churches safe for children, young people and vulnerable adults – is everyone’s responsibility.

If you wish to report concerns or abuse, please call one of the numbers below.

In addition to the school’s own safeguarding policies and procedures, the diocesan safeguarding team provide professional advice and training to parishes to ensure they can meet that responsibility, as well as support those who may have suffered abuse or exploitation.

Everyone involved in school life should know what to do in situations where a child, young person or vulnerable adult may have been harmed. Each school must have in place a safeguarding person who knows how to respond and where to seek further help and advice.

Anyone who wishes to report abuse or exploitation needs to know that they can do so and receive the support they need.

Ben Goodhind Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser Tel: 01749 588917

Leonie Jones Assistant Safeguarding Adviser Tel: 01749 588907

May you, your pupils and staff know ‘life in all its fullness’ as you take up your new post as head.

**1.6 Commissioning Services**

Each section in this handbook contains prayers for adults and children, which you may find helpful. If you would like a commissioning service as you take up your new post, please contact Felicity Cobley on <Felicity.cobley@bathwells.anglican.org>

**1.7 Prayers**

**A prayer for the first day at work/school**

O God, the strength of my life,  
make known your will for me in this place:  
help me to discover friends among strangers,  
to meet opportunities and challenges eagerly,  
and to do my daily tasks in your name.  
Give me strength to overcome my worries,  
and preserve me in your safe keeping,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
  
Loving God, let me be strong today  
as I meet new people in new places.  
Make me brave when I am worried,  
show me how to learn from everyone around me,  
and help me to do my very best. **Amen**

Lord Jesus, I ask for Your help as I/we begin this new school year. Allow me/us to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before me/us. Open my/our eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings. Open my/our heart/s and mind/s to new friends and new teachers. Give me/us a generous spirit to be enthusiastic with my/our studies and courage to accept new opportunities. Let me/us experience Your presence in my/our new friends. Jesus, inspire me/us to do my/our very best this year! **Amen**

God who made us, give {me} your special gifts of leadership, wisdom, patience and care, for the well-being of your children, and the glory of your name.

Lord, hear your people and answer our prayers.

God who loves us, help {me} the staff, and all who work and assist in the school, to ensure that all pupils reach their potential.

Lord, hear your people and answer our prayers.

God who knows {me}, through the shared values of church and school, may we learn and share together, and continue to grow in love and understanding.

Lord, hear your people and answer our prayers. God who is with us, give wisdom and guidance to those who go from here to new places of education, work and living.

Lord, hear your people and answer our prayers**. Amen**

Father help me to organize my day in a way that prepares me for unforeseen situations. Give me the grace to deal with problems in a loving way that honours You and others. Please be glorified through me; in the name of Jesus Christ, who reigns supremely with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. **Amen.**

**Section two – spiritual leadership of a church school**

**2.1** The overriding priority for all church schools in the Diocese of Bath and Wells is to provide high quality education for pupils of all faiths and none within a Christian context. Church schools are not “faith schools” in the traditional sense, but neighbourhood schools with a Christian character. What distinguishes a Church of England School or Academy from a community school are the Christian principles on which everything from written policies to relationships are grounded. Although all church schools are “distinctively Christian” in their ethos, and will hold much in common, there will be differences between them because of the locality they serve and the parish with which they are in partnership. The school, as in all things, will also take its lead from the headteacher, who holds the responsibility for the spiritual life of the school.

All schools seek to improve the life chances of the children they serve, and this has been reinforced for church schools by the “Church of England Vision for Education” with its emphasis on holistic education for: wisdom, knowledge and skills; hope and aspiration; community and living well together; dignity and respect.[[1]](#endnote-1) This vision should be reflected in the aims and practice of your school. This chimes with Ofsted, who look at the spiritual development of pupils as shown by their ability to ‘be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people’s faiths, feelings and values’\* You can find out more on the Church of England Education Office website <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education>

However, there should be no distinction between academic standards and the Christian ethos of schools and each should be used to support and improve the other. The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership talks of ‘ethos enhancing outcomes’. Ofsted recognise this as the use of imagination and creativity in pupils’ learning’ and ‘a willingness to reflect on their experiences’. These are given as indicators of spiritual development. These attributes are valuable in enabling pupils to be successful learners as creativity, enjoyment and self-reflection can build resilience and confidence. Church schools already have an edge on this, as their commitment to flourishing will provide the lever.

Leaders of church schools hold the responsibility for their school or schools’ distinctive Christian vision and values and how they enable all children and adults to flourish. As a measure of this, there is a five yearly national inspection process for Christian distinctiveness known as the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)[[2]](#endnote-2). Support and advice on preparing for SIAMS is available from the diocesan team, but your school’s vision and Christian values should underpin the work of your school at all times.

A change of leadership and/or a new school year are often a good time to take stock of the school’s vision. The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership has produced a series of booklets entitled ‘Bringing the Vision Alive’ which can be used for discussion and strategic planning. These booklets can be accessed by logging into

<https://www.cefel.org.uk/accounts/login/?next=/resources/>

To understand the Christian vision and values of your school, and how to sustain and develop it further, you may wish to explore the following.

* Read the school’s most recent SIAMS report[[3]](#endnote-3) and current SIAMS SEF. Like all SEFs, this is a working document which should be updated regularly. Involve as many members of the school community as possible in the completion of the SIAMS SEF so that all have a greater understanding and ownership of what is important in your school. Involving a range of stakeholders may also increase the accuracy of the judgements made.
* In between SIAMS inspections you will receive a supportive SIAMS ‘mid-term review’ from a member of the diocesan education team. This will be conducted as a review on the accuracy of your church school SEF and the judgements made as a result. Also, how you are successfully addressing the development issues from the previous report.
* Evaluate how RE and collective worship are lead and managed. How high a priority are they given within the school? How are the outcomes and impact of RE and collective worship reported to the governing body?
* It is recommended that your school should be embedding the use of new ‘Understanding Christianity’ resource materials (see wwwunderstandingchristianity.org.uk) and taking account of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE. [re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf (churchofengland.org)](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf) How are these being implemented in your school?
* Talk to the members of your governing body who are Foundation Governors. Foundation Governors have been nominated by the local church or the diocese and their role specifically includes supporting and monitoring the Christian character of the school.
* Get to know your clergy – a strong partnership link between the school and the local church(es) is mutually beneficial.
* Visit other church schools. There are numerous examples of excellent church schools in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and heads who are open and willing to share and develop best practice.
* If you are in a mixed MAT, discuss with your CEO or other MAT contact how your school’s distinctive Christian vision will be sustained and developed within the MAT, and how you can support and work with other schools on it.
* Contact the education team for advice and support.

The Church of England National Society Foundation for Educational Leadership has produced a series of booklets called ‘Bringing the Vision Alive’. These can be accessed through logging into

<https://www.cefel.org.uk/accounts/login/?next=/resources/>

**2.2 Prayers for school ethos**

Father may the culture of Heaven flood this place.

May the precepts of peace, honesty, joy and kindness be ever present here.

In Jesus name**, Amen**.

Circle us, Lord,  
Circle our school within the shelter of your outstretched arms,  
Protect us in each moment of our daily lives,  
Protect us in the decisions that we face,  
Protect our homes and relationships.  
(Silent prayer)  
Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation,  
Circle our school with the light of your presence. **Amen**

Almighty God may our school be welcoming

May our school be encouraging

Let friendship flourish here

Let learning fill our day

Give us the strength to do our best

Give us the hope to carry on.

Be our guide in all that we do.

Lord make this school your home too. **Amen**

Help us, Loving God, to see

beyond the smile of the child

who misses weeks at school,

to the embarrassment of the parent

who cannot afford their child's uniform.

Beyond the apology of the child

who misses a friend’s birthday party,

to the parent who can’t afford a gift

as they try to clear off a payday loan.

Beyond the bullying in the dinner hall

of the child with too little for lunch,

to the ache in the parent who

goes hungry for the sake of their child.

Help us, Loving God, to see

beyond the stereotypes and statistics

and inspire us to work to ease the burden

on children and their families

trapped in seemingly never-ending debt. **Amen.**

**2.3 Church School Inspection**

As a church school, you will be inspected under the Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework every five years. The inspection Framework changed in September 2023. This document and a model self-evaluation template are available to download from [our SIAMS page on the website.](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/siams-school-inspections/)

The School Effectiveness team are offering schools termly training on the new schedule and it is wise to start using the new model self-evaluation well in advance of your school’s next inspection.

You will also need to be aware of your own school’s vision in the light of the [Church of England Vision for Education](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/our-approach/church-england-vision-education/)**‘Deeply Christian Serving the Common Good’. Taking on a new school is often a good opportunity to review the vision and values of the school, and refresh or renew what is in place. This can be done as part of SIAMS preparation.**

The new Evaluation Schedule, called **‘Vision, Provision, Impact’** calls for schools to articulate the Christian underpinning of their vision and associated values.  Other key documents you will find useful are the [RE Statement of Entitlement](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/RE-Statement-of-Entitlement-June-2016.pdf),  [Valuing All God’s Children](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Valuing%20All%20God%27s%20Children%27s%20Report_0.pdf) and Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a whole schools approach.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/education-publications>

For any help, questions or advice, please contact your school adviser, [David Williams](mailto:david.williams@bathwells.anglican.org), [Karen Sancto](mailto:karen.sancto@bathwells.anglican.org) or [Pauline Dodds](mailto:pauline.dodds@bathwells.anglican.org) who are looking forward to working with you.

**2.4 Prayers for inspections**

Father allow favour to follow us all around today.

Give us the grace and power to reflect You in this school

and bring glory to Your name. In Jesus name, **Amen.**

Father help us to prioritize the day accordingly and be able to handle things in order of importance. In Jesus name, **Amen.**

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. **2.5 The church/school partnership**

   Building a relationship with your parish clergy and congregation is important, but not always easy. There are many ways in which this partnership can be built up. It does not always have to be a member of the clergy who visits the school to take collective worship. Many members of the congregation may already be involved in the school as governors or volunteers. Getting to know them can provide a way to develop creative ways in which school and church can work together.

   Visiting the church: visits to any place of worship can enrich a child’s understanding of faith within a sacred space and the activities of a worshipping community. Such a visit can support many areas of the curriculum including art, maths and RE.

   Using the church for school worship or celebrations. A church service can mark the beginning or end of the term, or special festival such as Christmas or harvest. The church can also provide a larger space for celebrations such as concerts.

   Invite church members of the church to come into school as volunteers, to hear readers for example.

   Publicise school events through the church and vice versa

   Invite clergy or congregation to services and/or events in the school.

   Attend a meeting of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to give an update on the school at least annually

   Ask pupils to write for the parish or community magazine.

   Invite members of the congregation in to school talk about their faith.

   Some time ago a small group of advisers and clergy conducted a review on churches and church schools as partners in mission. The subsequent report and resources can be found on the [website](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/schools-and-parishes-in-partnership/).

   **2.6 A prayer for churches and schools working together.**

   Thank you for our relationship with {our church}.

   We pray that this work will prosper and bear much fruit

   in the lives of pupils, staff, congregation and community

   Show us how to open doors and bless our future together. **Amen**

   **2.7 Collective Worship (CW) in schools**

   Collective worship is the entitlement of all pupils. A daily act of collective worship is statutory in all schools and must be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’. As a church school, VA or VC, the school’s trust deeds will state that collective worship will be ‘distinctively Christian with some Church of England elements’. When a school becomes an academy, this clause will be included in the articles of governance and scheme of delegation, so it is sustained post conversion.

   Parents/carers have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. Staff also have the right not to take part if they so wish.

   Worship in church schools be inclusive, invitational and inspiring and be an expression of the school’s Christian vision. It can be the heart and soul of a school, offering the opportunity for children and adults to grow spiritually.

   Schools may gather as a school, in key stages, year groups, house or class/tutor groups for a daily act collective worship

   Collective worship needs to have a theological basis, and provide opportunity for worship, prayer and reflection.

   It can be led by staff, pupils or visitors, including clergy. All visitors, including clergy are present by invitation, and not by right.

   The whole school community can be involved in planning and delivering collective worship, but pupils particularly need to take a lead.

   Collective worship should contribute to the development of SMSC across the school.

   Foundation Governors are responsible for monitoring the school’s Christian distinctiveness, which involves the quality of collective worship. See section three for further details.

   For further details on resources for collective worship and policy guidance, see [the Bath and Wells website.](tps://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/collective-worship/)

   **2.8 RE in Bath & Wells schools**

   **Aims for RE (taken from the** [**Church of England Statement of Entitlement**](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/religious-education/)**)**

   To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.

   To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.

   To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

   **The RE syllabus**

   In the [Diocese of Bath & Wells, VC Somerset](http://www.amvsomerset.org.uk/) schools should follow the Somerset Agreed Syllabus.

   [North Somerset and B&NES](https://www.awarenessmysteryvalue.org/) VC schools should follow theirs.

   VA schools should teach RE according to their Trust Deeds. Our general advice to VA schools and all academies is that they follow the appropriate Agreed Syllabus. Further details are on the [RE page of the website.](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/religious-education/)

   **Curriculum balance**

   KS 1 – 3: at least 2/3rds Christianity.

   Where Church schools are following an Agreed Syllabus, which requires less than 2/3rd Christianity, they could enrich their Christianity input with additional whole-school RE days, cross-curricular work including RE, or work on major Christian festivals.

   KS 4: the study of Christianity will be a significant and substantial part of any Religious Studies qualification.

   KS 5: continue the study of religion and world views within the provision of core RE in an appropriate format for all students.

   **Curriculum time**

   Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5%.

   **Understanding Christianity**

   The diocese recommends schools and academies in Bath & Wells will use ‘Understanding Christianity’ as a resource to teach the core Christian concepts within any Agreed Syllabus. Training and support for schools is available. Contact the School Effectiveness team for more information

   **SIAMS and RE**

   Inspectors will explore:

   How effectively the school is ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of high quality RE, reflecting the ‘Statement of Entitlement’

   How effective the school is in ensuring that RE expresses the school’s Christian vision

   How effective is RE teaching and learning in the school? (VA only)

   **Learn, Teach, Lead RE (LTLRE)**

   There are cross-phase twilight hubs with primary and secondary trained leaders in areas across the diocese. All who teach or lead RE in schools in the Bath & Wells area are welcome. See the [LTLRE page](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/religious-education/learn-teach-lead-re/) on the website for details of dates, venues and leaders.

   **2.9 Staff Wellbeing**

   Our Education department sees one of its key roles being to offer pastoral support to all our staff in our schools. We seek to do this in a variety of ways through our core offer, from our school visits to our training packages and bespoke advice. There is additional professional support available where schools experience a bereavement which impacts on their community. Please don’t hesitate to contact your school effectiveness adviser for support in dealing with any pastoral issues or visit [the Bath and Wells diocesan website](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/wellbeing-and-pastoral-support/).

   In the current climate of change and challenge looking after your own mental health and wellbeing and that of your staff is even more critical. Being aware of the mental health and wellbeing of the staff can lead to a reduction in sickness absence and research continues into the positive links between high staff morale and pupil outcomes.

   Working in a school can be stressful, and it is important for leaders to set the tone for the working environment. Improving staff well being is not a one-off event but is about creating a culture and ethos which is fair and inclusive. A school based on Christian principles is well placed to do this.

   Some things to think about:

   **Be a Barnabas! An encourager as well as a challenger.**

   What is the tone of communications between leadership and staff, staff and staff? Delivering a message in a particular way can generate additional fear and stress which can cripple staff creativity. Consider how you would like to hear about something, even if it is bad news. For example, ‘Ofsted is coming, so we must…’ or ‘we want the best for our children, so we will…’

   Be approachable as a leader. Do what you say you will, and if not, say why not. Be transparent but ensure that staff understand that they do not need to know everything about everything.

   Do all policies align with each other and the school’s vision and values? Are they consistent, fair and proportionate when referring to difficult situations such as underperformance?

   Are all policies implemented consistently, fairly and proportionately? What do they look/feel like to those who are affected by them?

   How is workload managed? What can be discontinued? What will make things easier and better?

   How are complaints, requests for time off and other difficult situations managed so that trust and dignity are maintained afterwards even if the answer is no?

   How is CPD organised? It is tempting to reduce spending on training but investing in staff CPD and developing their strengths is valuable to the school as well as empowering to those concerned.

   Provide opportunities to develop the spiritual life of staff and pupils. Identify who could run prayer or reflection groups.

   Is help available for staff if they are experiencing difficulties? Are key phone numbers for helplines discreetly but prominently displayed? The back of toilet cubicle doors is a good place. Make sure staff know where to go to get help in school. Is there a chaplain or clergy member who can provide sympathetic support?

   **Take joy where you can!**

   Celebrate successes and victories both in and out of school.

   Thank staff publicly and encourage them to praise each other.

   Have treats in school. Set up social events out of school but don’t be offended if not everyone wants to come!

   **Remember cabin pressure?**

   You must always put on your own oxygen mask first before helping others. This is true in schools.

   Make sure you take care of your own mental health and well-being and work on strategies to build your resilience.

   What do you do to ‘de-stress?’ Allow yourself time to do it!

   Think through and rehearse difficult conversations/scenarios ahead of time, so that you can reflect on different responses.

   Who are your ‘go to people’ in and out of school who will provide support? Keep their key contact details handy.

   The school chaplain can be a source of support. If you are interested in school chaplaincy, contact Revd Mike Haslam or follow the [chaplaincy links](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/chaplaincy/) from the website.

   **2.10 Prayers**

   **A staffroom prayer**

   Heavenly Father

   Whenever we feel broken or lost

   Send us a comforter with a friendly voice.

   Whenever those we work with feel broken or lost

   May we be their voice of comfort.

   Whenever we make mistakes

   Help us to forgive ourselves … smile … and move on.

   Whenever those we work with make mistakes

   Help us to forgive them … to help them smile … to help them move on.

   Whenever we feel weak, anxious or sad

   Strengthen us so we can keep going.

   Whenever those we work with feel weak anxious or sad

   Strengthen us all so we can keep going together.

   **God in the midst of our work**

   As we plan and make decisions, God be our way

   As we learn and ask questions, God be our truth

   As we grow and as we change, God be our life. Amen

   Loving Lord I come to you with all my anxieties and burdens

   The pressures I face and the things I ought to have done.

   Enfold me in your love and keep me close to you,

   Forgive me and help me start anew. **Amen**

   **Prayer for a staff meeting**

   Almighty God

   Thank you for the beauty and majesty we see in your creation here in this school.

   Thank you for the opportunity to care for the world you have made.

   We ask that your blessing would rest on this {team},

   that you would give us great vision and enthusiasm for our work.

   Please bless the efforts of our hands, hearts and minds to the benefit of those pupils in our care,

   Bless the bonds between us and the influence of our work in this school and beyond.

   Lord, as we plan and share together now, may you guide us by your Holy Spirit and lead us into all truth.  
   In Jesus name, Amen.

   **Section three – system leadership of a church school**

   **The diocesan School Effectiveness Strategy**

   The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) for Bath and Wells subscribes to the Ten Marks of a High Performing DBE and envisages that all church schools within the diocese will be judged as good or better by Ofsted and SIAMS inspectors. There is an expectation that church schools will improve and/or maintain their educational standards, their Christian distinctiveness and that the critical link between achievement and ethos is recognised as important by all.

   The Bath and Wells education strategy outlines how the DBE will reflect and enact the Ten Marks of a High Performing DBE and fulfil the Church of England vision for education Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good. The new SIAMS framework 2023 is closely linked to the vision document, and challenges schools to consider the following three questions which should be central to all actions taken.

   Who are we?

   Why are we here?

   How then shall we live?

   The DBE, through the work of the diocesan education team, will be instrumental in assisting schools to explore these questions and develop their vision in their own context. The diocesan education team staff will empower local working practices and take account of the needs and strengths of individual schools, MATs and settings. The four core areas of the vision - Educating for Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity – under pin the ambitions the DBE has towards all church schools in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and the strategies through which it will seek to support schools to realise them.

   Through the delivery of high quality education for pupils of all faiths and none, our church schools are beacons of tolerance and hospitality in a wider society which is plural and post Christian. They are also powerful agents for community cohesion in an increasingly diverse region, acting as Christ requires us, to treat all as equal, respecting the lives and beliefs of others.

   To support this holistic view of education and promote the critical balance between Christian Flourishing and standards, the DBE approach to the delivery of the school effectiveness is to facilitate a partnership approach with all schools in whatever context they are working, and with stakeholders associated with their operations. Key stakeholders and partners include:

   * The Diocese of Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust
   * All other Multi-Academy Trusts in which our schools are located.
   * Local authorities. We recognise that the scope of the LA is reducing in line with the growth of MATS but will seek to sustain relationships for the benefit of our schools for as long as possible.
   * Partnership and standards boards.
   * The Regional Schools Commissioner and their representatives.
   * Local churches and parishes
   * Community partners
   * Teaching schools
   * Ofsted and HMI
   * Other diocesan departments
   * Wells Cathedral, Bath Abbey & Taunton Minster

   For further details of the DBE strategy and the full document, contact the diocesan education team.

   * 1. **Prayer**

   **A prayer for the success of a strategy or plan**

   Lord, I earnestly seek after You   
   I seek Your kingdom, Your will   
   That heaven may come to earth   
   And Your presence would be known by all   
     
   I lay my plans before You   
   Please rearrange them as You see fit   
   See if there is any corrupt way within me   
   And lead me in the everlasting way   
     
   I give you the desires of my heart   
   My ambitions and my schemes   
   I surrender them wholly to You   
   Please anoint them for Your purposes and glory   
     
   I give You my whole being   
   My giftings and my character   
   Come sharpen my skills and transform my heart   
   This day and every day **Amen**

   **Becoming an academy**

   The educational landscape continues to be fluid. There is still a mixed economy of schools which have become academies as part of a multi academy trust and those which continue to be VA or VC. The Diocese of Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (BWMAT) has been set up for church schools but in addition, many have become an academy in a non-church MAT.

   Taking the decision to become an academy is one which will impact on the life of a school for generations. To support governors and school leaders in making this important choice, a wealth of material is available on the diocesan website http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-organisation/academies/or for any queries contact tina.wilkes@bathwells.anglican.org

   **Working with multi academy trusts**

   The diocesan education team is committed to supporting church schools in whatever context. There are many excellent examples of a church school enriching a non-church MAT and vice versa and celebrating and sharing these will be a focus over the next year.

   The diocesan education team meet regularly with trust CEOs and directors to ensure that the interests and Christian distinctiveness of church schools are safeguarded.

   **Prayers**

   **A prayer for multi academy trusts**

   Lord, we all have a common commitment to [Your mission](http://www.wycliffe.net/missiology?id=3960) of reconciliation and the transformation of individuals, communities and nations. We ask that You would direct the {name of the MAT} to guide and support {the schools it} serves. That all may flourish, and the community thrive and live well within it. Let all live-in dignity and respect for others. Give hope and aspiration to all those who teach and learn, that through the knowledge and skills gained, we can grow in Your wisdom and find ‘life in all its fullness’

   **Amen**

   **Ofsted**

   The diocesan education team will be working hard to get to know you and your school over the coming months**,** not least so that they can provide support when an Ofsted inspection is due or is taking place**.** Further details will be provided in a separate document.

   **3.7 Prayers for an Ofsted inspection**

   

   Heavenly Father, I ask you to watch over me and my school today. Today is very important to me. Help me to concentrate and perform at the height of my ability and enable others to do the same. With you, all things are possible. Give me a peaceful heart and a quiet mind. Guide my hand and lift my heart towards an outcome that maintains the dignity of all, gives hope for the future and honours you. Amen

   God grant me the serenity  
   to accept the things I cannot change;  
   courage to change the things I can;  
   and wisdom to know the difference.  
   Living one day at a time;  
   Enjoying one moment at a time;  
   Trusting that He will make all things right.  
   Amen.

   **3.8 Governance**

   It is the aim of the DBE that all schools have ethical and effective governance whether they are VA, VC or part of a multi academy trust. In addition, all Church of England schools must have foundation governors. As well as their role in setting the vision and strategic direction of the school, and holding school leaders to account for pupil outcomes and financial management, foundation governors in a church school have a special responsibility

   They must ensure that the

   guiding principles of the founding church are incorporated into all aspects of the governance of the school.

   terms of the trust deed governing the school are adhered to.

   In the Diocese of Bath & Wells there are two types of Foundation Governor:

   • The ex-officio governor – normally the incumbent unless a substitute has been nominated and agreed by the Archdeacon

   • Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education on a nomination from the Parochial Church Council for the parish in which the school is situated.

   For maintained schools, the school’s Instrument of Government will determine the constitution of the governing body including how many foundation governors there will be. For academies, the constitution is agreed by the Directors, however, the number of foundation governors will still be based on whether the school was formerly a VA or VC model.

   It is a requirement of the trust deed under which Church of England schools were first established, when local churches or patrons undertook to build schools for the education of the children of their local communities and endowed them with a Church of England Foundation that foundation governors form part of the governing body.

   When a school becomes an academy, a foundation governor or member will still have the responsibility to uphold the school’s Christian distinctiveness, according to it’s original trust deed.

   **3.9 Prayers**

   **A prayer before attending meetings**

   Lord, before I go into this meeting, I still myself before you. For you are filled with beauty and light, and care deeply about me.   
   Help me to listen, before speaking.   
   Help me to fully understand these people, before making my case.   
   Help me to value and appreciate the ones I am about to meet, before thinking of my own concerns and anxieties.   
   May your light enfold me.  
   May your spirit guide me.  
   May your grace abound in me.  
   This is my prayer.  
   Amen. 

   **Prayers for the start of a governance meeting**Heavenly father we give you thanks for all the blessings and answered prayers in {this school}. In the name of Jesus please guide us towards the fruition of a successful meeting as we consider the issues facing {this school} at this time. Please guide our hearts to pursue excellence, dedication and hard work in your name. Let the meeting go well, watch over the proceedings and bless any decisions made. Amen.

   Almighty God May we bring reflection and wisdom to our meeting Use our expertise and our judgement Lord and direct our contributions. Let us be listeners more than speakers. And may we always have in mind your will for the well-being and the future of our school. In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.

   **3.10 Training and support offered by the diocesan education team**

   Offering high quality training and support is important to our schools developing and sustaining their Christian distinctiveness. Every academic year, the Bath & Wells Diocesan education team offer a wide range of training relevant to headteachers, subject leaders, teaching staff and governors working in schools with Bath & Wells Diocese. For further details, contact the diocesan education team or follow the link from the [education section of the website](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/events/category/education/list/?tribe_eventcategory%5B%5D=109), [training and support pages.](https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/schools/education-training-and-support/)

   We hope that you will find this document useful. It is intended to help you to settle in, get to know your school and grow and flourish in your role within the Diocese of Bath and Wells. It is intended to augment the information on the diocesan website, which will give further details of many of the items covered here and sign post you to other sources of information and support.

   Information correct at the time of posting. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)