

**Carlisle Diocesan Board of Education**

**Recruiting and Appointing Headteachers**

Advice for Governing Bodies of Church Schools and Academies

**This policy was established and approved for implementation by the Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

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| **Signed by the Chair of Board: Andrew Towner** |
| **Dated: 24th May 2022** |
| **This policy is to be next reviewed in: May 2023** |
| **Appendix 1 was updated at a meeting of the DBE on 22nd September 2022** |

1. **Introduction**

Appointing a Headteacher is one of the most important decisions a Governing Body makes. The role of the Headteacher is key to sustaining and developing the Distinctive Christian Character of the school as set out in the school’s Trust deed.

Church schools are places where outcomes for young people are transformational, as they combine academic rigour with development of the whole child, including their spiritual development.

Your school will be allocated a Diocesan Adviser who will support you through each step of your recruitment process.

We work closely with Cumbria County Council (‘**CCC**’). Their document, ‘Recruiting and appointing Headteachers: Guidance for General Advisers and Governing Bodies’ (Summer 2020), should be followed. It sets out the process in full, including timelines.

This document provides some supplementary advice and materials relevant to recruiting a Headteacher in a Church of England school.

1. **The Selection Panel**

**Skills:** It is important to ensure that the Panel is as strong as possible, with a range of skills represented and that they understand the strengths and development areas of the school and therefore what they are looking for in a new Headteacher. Does the panel have a deep understanding of what the role of a Headteacher, in a church school, entails?

**Staff:** using Staff Governors as part of the Panel can put the staff member in an uncomfortable position. It can result in difficult working relationships in the future, e.g. if the appointed Headteacher was not the staff member’s preferred candidate. Unless there is an exceptional reason why you need to use a member of staff, we strongly recommend not doing so. If you do have to use a member of staff, do make sure they are aware of the potential conflict of interest.

**Chair:** The Panel need to appoint a Chair who will be the main point of contact between the Panel and candidates.

**Clerk:** The Panel need to appoint a Clerk – all decisions reached at meetings of the Panel should be recorded, in case of a future challenge by a candidate. The Clerk could be the Clerk to the Full Governing Board; or one of the Panel may feel comfortable to take minutes; or another person could be asked.

1. **Should we be seeking a practising Christian?**

Voluntary controlled schools **cannot** require personal faith, church attendance or any kind of Christian practice of candidates. Headteachers in voluntary controlled schools are employed by the local authority and, as public employees, cannot be discriminated against on the grounds of their religion/belief (Equality Act 2010).

A voluntary aided school can technically require personal faith or Christian commitment if they can show that it is a genuine ‘occupational requirement’ of the role. It would be very hard to demonstrate that a church school Headteacher **needs** to be a Christian, as we know that there are many highly successful church school Headteachers who are not Christians. A decision to include this as an **essential** requirement in the Person Specification could be challenged as discriminatory. Therefore, if you do wish to include this, it should appear in the **desirable** section.

Remember that being a practising Christian does not necessarily make someone a good School Leader!

We encourage you to think about how you will find someone who is:

* deeply committed to protecting and developing the distinctive Christian character of your school;
* who has an ethos and leadership style which aligns well with the Christian culture of the school; and
* who lives out and exemplifies Christian values.

The Church of England’s Vision for Education is helpful when exploring how you might approach this. The ways in which the national Vision is relevant during a Headteacher recruitment exercise are summarised in **Appendix 4**.

1. **Attracting the right candidate**

It can be easy to mis-sell your school, perhaps by painting a picture which is rosier than reality, in order to attract a large field of applicants. This can result in the appointment of someone who does not have the skills necessary to deal with the challenges they will encounter in post.

It is important to take the time to get your documentation right so that it reflects both the opportunities available (and is therefore attractive to candidates) whilst also being realistic about challenges and the skills needed to deal with them. Remember that good candidates are looking to be challenged, but they must have the opportunity to decide whether they have the right skills for your school.

The use of photos and children’s voice in your recruitment pack can help to make it stand out from the crowd.

Your Diocesan Adviser will be able to provide you with some examples.

1. **An Inclusive Diocese**

Please take every opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion in the process. It is important to ensure that you have not inadvertently discouraged non-white candidates from applying. You may wish to actively state that people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are under-represented in our Headteacher workforce and that you would particularly welcome applications from people in these groups. Clearly whether or not any such applicant is then shortlisted will depend on their strengths as assessed against the Person Specification.

**6. Timings**

It is important to be aware of key dates to ensure that each stage of the process occurs at the right time (for example, the window for potential applicants to visit the school should not fall during a school holiday).

As you work through the CCC timeline, make sure that you take into account any potential interruptions, and check with school whether there are any dates to avoid (such as periods of residential trips) and build in extra time to allow for these.

Whether the person appointed is currently a serving Headteacher or not will affect how long their notice period is and accordingly, when they can take up their post. Ensure that your timetable results in an offer being made to your chosen candidate in time for them to resign from their current post.

**Last Possible Resignation Dates**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Period** | **For teachers (inc. DHT or AHT)** | **For Headteachers** |
| Autumn | 1st September to 31st December | 31st October | 30th September |
| Spring | 1st January to 30th April | 28th/29th February | 31st January |
| Summer | 1st May to 31st August | 31st May | 30th April |

You may need to explore what **interim arrangements will be needed to cover a gap between the outgoing Headteacher leaving and the new Headteacher starting** (especially if more than one round of recruitment is needed to find the right person).

**7. Headteacher Job Description**

Do not spend hours on the Job Description!

The Job Description for the recruitment of a Headteacher is largely fixed by external documents:

* Expectations set out in the Headteachers’ Standards 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers/headteachers-standards-2020>

* The statutory requirements set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions

 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

* The Teachers’ Standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>

We therefore do not include a template Job Description in this pack but instead recommend using the pro forma Job Description in Appendix 2 to CCC’s guidance (which is updated regularly taking legal and union advice into account).

You may wish to add something about your character as a church school, and any exceptional aspects of the role, which are particular to your school. This might include, for example, the expectation that the Headteacher will have a regular teaching commitment. Where you are expecting your Headteacher to taking on a teaching role, you should be aware that the National Association of Headteachers recommends a 50% teaching commitment as an absolute maximum.

**8. Headteacher Person Specification**

The Person Specification is the most important document in the recruitment process. It determines the nature of the Headteacher you will recruit.

Each school will be at a different stage in its exploration of what it means to be a church school, within its particular community. Governors and (where possible) staff should take the opportunity to review the school’s strengths and needs with regard to its religious foundation in preparation for a Headteacher appointment. This will help governors to determine the sort of person they are seeking to lead the school.

A Person Specification will set out in two columns the attributes which are essential or desirable in a successful candidate. Governors should make time for discussion and debate about the column in which each attribute is to be placed, and the precise wording used.

**The Person Specification will be the tool used to assess each candidate’s suitability at both the shortlisting and interview stages.**

An example Person Specification is set out in **Appendix 1** illustrating how the distinctive Christian requirements of a church school might be expressed.

**9. Shortlisting**

No template shortlisting grid is provided because it will need to be generated by reference to the Person Specification to judge applications against the stated requirements.

A clear grid which enables individual panel members to score each candidate against the Person Specification is always helpful and enables the panel to demonstrate a robust process in the event of challenge. Your Diocesan and CCC advisers will support you in producing this.

No one should be interviewed who hasn’t satisfied the Panel’s **Essential** criteria as listed in the Person Specification. Remember that there is legislation governing recruitment processes and that the implications of not conducting a fair and transparent process can be serious.

Ideally, Panel members should score applicants individually before the shortlisting meeting, so that they are not influenced by what others say and can be as objective as possible.

Hopefully a consensus about who has or has not met the threshold for interviewing will emerge. However, where it doesn’t, your Advisers will help you to navigate the applications and reach a decision.

Frustratingly, the best decision for your school might be not to shortlist any of the applicants, but to re-advertise. Although disappointing, it is worth it in the long-run in order to ensure you find the person who is right for your school.

**10. Interviewing**

Interview tasks and questions should be tailored to:

* Help the Panel answer questions which have not been answered by the application form and associated paperwork.
* Unpack further anything in the application/s which is unclear; causes any concern or uncertainty or needs further explanation.
* Enable the Panel to deal with any Person Specification requirements which applicants were not able to demonstrate in their application.

The Panel may find that one candidate hasn’t fully answered one of the requirements in the Person Specification and that they want to explore this further. It is important for the purposes of being fair and consistent that all interview questions are pre-agreed and the same for all candidates. That said, it is absolutely appropriate for Panel members and advisersto ask impromptu follow-up questions, to unpack the responses which candidates give to the pre-agreed questions.

There may well be some school development priorities which it is hard to assess at the Application Stage. An example would be moving on RE: can the candidate identify strengths and areas for development in RE teaching (and leadership) and does she or he have suggestions for how to move forward? This might involve sharing pupils’ work, teachers’ planning, subject leaders’ monitoring etc.. Your Advisers will support you in devising interview tasks and activities which test candidates’ abilities to tackle the school’s context-driven priorities and not just ‘generic’ headteacher expectations.

Your Advisers will also support you in finding interview questions which reflect your school’s context and address any elements of your Person Specification which have not been demonstrated as part of the application process or the interview tasks and activities. Some example questions can be found in **Appendix 2** for information.

**11. Safer Recruitment**

In order to ensure that the recruitment is as safe as possible, it is important to see the candidates interacting with pupils as part of the interview process which means that fully online or remote interviews are not appropriate.

**12. Collective Worship**

Although not compulsory, most Church of England schools choose to ask candidates to prepare and lead an act of Collective Worship as one of their tasks. It is a great way of testing a range of skills: ability to relate to pupils of all ages and appropriate interactions with children; understanding of current expectations in Collective Worship as outlined in the [Church of England’s Guidance Document 2021](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf); interactions with staff; warmth and delivery style.

A carefully chosen theme for the Collective Worship which the Panel ask candidates to deliver is vital. It can be one of the most illuminating elements of the interview process. Avoid suggesting a topic which will **automatically** result in the candidate using Christian content (for example, ‘*Please prepare an act of Collective Worship based on your favourite parable*’*).* You will not find out whether the candidates would have independently included Christian content in their session.

It is better to choose something which could be interpreted in different ways (for example, *‘Please prepare an act of Collective Worship based on our current school value, Love’)*. This way you will see whether candidates understand Love as a Christian value and naturally and effectively include Christian content.

A pro forma for observing an act of Collective Worship (which will help you to focus on content you might be looking for) is included at **Appendix 3**.

**13. Remember, this isn’t the end, it is the beginning!**

Following a recruitment process, it is good practice for the Panel to review the procedures and anything they have learnt from the process (although we all hope you won’t have to repeat it any time soon!)

You should also reflect on the strengths and areas for development of the person you ultimately appoint as Headteacher, in order to help plan for their induction and any training or support they will need. Remember that first-time Headteachers, even those who have served extensively as a Deputy, will not yet possess all the knowledge, skills and experience that they need to perform the role. This is why new Headteacher induction, offered collaboratively by CCC, the Diocese and Primary Heads Association, is so important. Please ensure that your new Headteacher is enrolled on and is free to participate in this programme.

The following questions may be useful in conducting such a review:

* To what extent did your advert reflect the deeply Christian vision and ethos that characterises your school?
* What values did your practical/logistical arrangements communicate?
* If the ‘qualities of character that enable people to flourish together’ are important, to what extent do our recruitment processes focus on character, as well as competence?
* How did your recruitment processes demonstrate the dignity with which you treat your staff?
* If an internal candidate was unsuccessful, how do you love and respect them in their ongoing participation in your community? Who is responsible for this?
* In what ways will governors ensure the newly appointed leader sustains their ‘reservoir of hope’?
* What training or support does your new Headteacher need in their first year in post?

**14. Thank you**

We appreciate how much work goes into a positive Headteacher recruitment exercise and we extend our thanks to you for being part of this invaluable process.

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| **Appendix 1** |
| **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* CE School****Headteacher Person Specification** |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Qualification** | * Qualified Teacher Status
* Evidence of continuing professional development relating to school leadership
 | * Christian Leadership qualification and/or experience
* (CE)NPQH or other leadership qualification
* [Holding, or willingness to complete, SENDCo Qualification – *this might appear as an Essential criterion if it is needed in your school*]
* Other relevant post-graduate qualification
 |
| **Experience***Recent and successful experience of:* | * Best practice in safeguarding
* Teaching and Leadership in a primary school
* Leading curriculum development
* Tracking pupil progress and attainment to inform and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and interventions
* Positive behaviour management
 | * Leading safeguarding
* Working in the church school sector
* Teaching in more than one key stage [you might want to make this an essential criterion]
* Working with governors [you might want to make this an essential criterion]
* Working with external agencies for the well-being of pupils and their families
* Strategic financial planning and budget setting in line with a school vision
 |
| **Wisdom***Demonstrate wisdom through understanding of:*  | * The distinctive Christian character of a Church of England school, as expressed through its vision, values and ethos
* Principles for the development of effective teaching and learning to reflect the needs and worth of every pupil
* Principles of school self-evaluation and strategies for planning school improvement to enable flourishing for all
* Strategies to develop ‘community and living well’ together through partnership with families, and relationships with church and the local community
* The Church of England Vision for Education
 | * The particular context of \*\*\*\*\* CE School [if there is something of especial relevance]
* The legislative framework for a VA/VC (delete as appropriate) school, including governance, curriculum and inspection frameworks and the requirements for statutory assessment
* Personnel issues relevant to school leadership
 |
| **Skills***Ability to:* | **Develop Hope and Aspiration:*** Inspire motivate and challenge staff, pupils and others to [if no current vision in place, insert ‘implement a’ in place of ‘live out the’] live out the school’s Christian vision by communicating a hopeful journey of improvement
* Develop teaching and learning to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential, including modelling exemplary teaching practice
* Provide leadership in Collective Worship that reflects the Christian identity of the school
* Provide leadership in RE that reflects the context of the school

**Promote Community and Living Well Together:*** Monitor and evaluate the performance of people and policies in line with the ethos of the school
* Further enhance relationships with the Governing Body, external agencies, the Diocese, the LA, and other schools

**Promote Dignity and Respect:** * Ensure all children are kept safe from harm and educated in an environment where all God’s children are valued
* Create and maintain an effective learning environment and culture that positively recognises individual strengths and needs
 |  |
| **Personal Attributes***Evidence of:* | * Commitment to supporting and further developing the Christian identity of the school
* Wisdom grounded in creative and courageous thinking and imagination
* The capacity to communicate effectively and sensitively (in spoken word and in writing in a range of contexts) in a way which inspires confidence in others
 | * Developing mutually enriching networks and partnerships
* Championing the place of church schools in their community
* [Anything else which might be relevant in your context e.g. a personal interest in ethical issues, outdoor learning or anything else you might need for your school]
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**Appendix 2**

**Example Interview Questions for a Headteacher Interview in a Church School**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Things to look for in a candidate’s responses | Score/Comments |
| 1. How will you go about monitoring the impact of our vision to ensure it is enabling pupils and adults to flourish?
 | Awareness of national vision: educating for wisdom, hope, community and dignity and link to school visionChristian vision affecting all areas of school lifeFulfilment of an individual’s God-given potentialImportance of ethos-enhancing outcomesRecognition of the whole school community: children, staff, parents and governorsAwareness of self-evaluation and monitoring roleStrategies for judging success of vision (policies, website, minutes, surveys, church-school connectivity, i.e. is it really baked into everything?!) | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. How do you ensure curriculum design ‘opens up horizons of hope’?
 | Curriculum is broad, balanced, aspirational, enrichedUse of resourcesMeets individual needs in the most appropriate wayUse of creative resources (including visits and visitors) to bring curriculum aliveOpportunities for spiritual development across the whole curriculum | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. Describe a time you have resolved a disagreement over your decisions as a leader. What happened? What did you learn from this experience?
 | Lifelong learning/growth mindsetAccountability and responsibilityValue of humilityRelationships and disagreeing wellTreating others with respectKnowledge of selfConsultative leadership style | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. What does dignity for all pupils look like in a church school?
 | Strategies for meeting individual needsAppropriate use of supportAppropriate behaviour management strategiesResources used effectively to support children’s leaningBelief in ‘ultimate worth’ of every child | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. In what ways do you ensure your financial management demonstrates wisdom?
 | Appropriate use of resourcesAcknowledgement of need to prioritise according to children and school prioritiesUse of financial supportCompetency with financial management protocols | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. How do you work with an underperforming staff member?
 | Recognition of strengths and areas for developmentCoaching, collaboration, mentoringAgreeing targets, strategies, success measuresValue of observation by and of the staff memberGuidance from LA and Diocesan advisers soughtCapability procedures if necessaryImportance of demonstrating dignity and respect for staff member | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. How would you ensure the school’s behaviour policy encompasses the ‘possibilities of reconciliation and transformation’?
 | Christian ethos evident in policy and practiceClear expectationsAppropriate reward strategiesConsequences not sanctionsCulture of forgivenessIndividual responsibilities | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. In what ways does safeguarding policy and practice convey a sense of ‘love and compassion’?
 | Awareness of up-to-date legislationTraining for all Children know how to keep themselves safeAspects of safeguarding including online | 1 2 3 4 5  |
| 1. How do you sustain your own ‘reservoir of hope’ and how do you ensure you are able to provide this for your staff?
 | Personal faith/belief systemWork/ life balancePastoral aspect of the HT role | 1 2 3 4 5  |

**Appendix 3**



**Recruitment of a Headteacher at \*\*\*\*\*\*\* School**

**Observation of an Act of Collective Worship**

|  |
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| a) Theme and content (e.g. appropriate to school context, does it reflect school vision, opportunity to encounter teachings of Jesus/from bible) |
|  |
| b) Atmosphere created (e.g. through movement, music, visual focus, artefacts or objects etc.) |
|  |
| c) Invitational nature (e.g. song lyrics, participation invited not expected, use of language avoids ‘othering’ etc.) |
|  |
| d) Pupil engagement (e.g. involvement, response, attentiveness, interest, participation, appropriate pitch for age etc.) |
|  |
| e) Staff engagement (e.g. which staff are present, is CW valued by staff, are present engaged?) |
|  |
| e) Opportunities for spiritual development (e.g. time for reflection) |
|  |
| f) Extent to which pupils are inspired (e.g. ‘buzz’ as pupils leave, motivation to ‘do something’/make a difference or change) |
|  |

SCORE: 1 2 3 4 5

**Appendix 4**

**Church of England Vision for Education in Headteacher Recruitment context**

1. **Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills**

The Headteacher will:

* Hold and articulate clear Christian values and purpose in accordance with the distinctive nature of a church school, focussing on providing ‘wisdom, knowledge and truth’.
* Lead by example – with integrity, creativity, resilience, and clarity – drawing on their own scholarship, expertise and skills, and that of those around them.
* Sustain wide, current knowledge and understanding of education and school systems locally, nationally and globally including the continuing role of schools with a religious character, and pursue continuous professional development.
* Work with political and financial astuteness, within a clear set of principles centered on the school’s Christian vision and distinctive Christian character and values, ably translating local and national policy into the school’s context.
* Communicate compellingly the school’s Christian vision and drive the strategic leadership, ensuring all have the skills needed to succeed.
* Inspire and lead the school as a worshipping community, which demonstrates the Christian vision and Christian values in everyday work and practice.
* Regularly review their own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for their own personal and spiritual development.
* Ensure that Religious Education and Collective Worship are central to the life and teaching of the school and set a high personal example in these aspects.
* Provide for the daily act of Collective Worship in accordance with the school's Trust Deed in consultation with the governing body
* Model entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to school improvement, leadership and governance.
1. **Educating for Hope and Aspiration**

The Headteacher will:

* Build a culture that recognises the worth of each individual whilst encouraging all to stretch themselves spiritually, morally, imaginatively and actively, to aspire to be the best they can be.
* Pay particular attention to supporting the disadvantaged to achieve their God-given potential.
* Instill a strong sense of accountability in staff for the impact of their work on pupils’ outcomes, hopes and aspirations.
* Secure excellent teaching through an analytical understanding of the core features of successful classroom practice and curriculum design as well as how pupils learn, leading to rich curriculum opportunities and pupils’ well-being that reflect the school’s distinctive Christian ethos and values.
* Establish an educational culture that reflects hope and aspiration in which ‘open classrooms’ are a basis for sharing best practice within and between schools, drawing on and conducting relevant research and robust data analysis.
* Identify emerging talents, coaching current and aspiring leaders in a climate where excellence is the standard, leading to clear succession planning.
* Demonstrate a personal ‘reservoir of hope’ through perseverance, patience, openness and celebration.
1. **Educating for Community and Living Well Together**

The Headteacher will:

* Work cooperatively with pupils, staff, governors, parents, the church and other members of the community to achieve the school’s Christian vision creating a ‘hospitable community’.
* Seek opportunities to invite parents/ carers, members of the Church family, community, businesses or other organisations into the school to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community.
* Contribute to the development of the education system by, for example, sharing effective practice with schools, working in partnership with others to promote innovation.
* Create a community within which all staff are motivated and supported to develop their own skills and subject knowledge, and to support each other demonstrating the school’s Christian values.
* Promote, build and sustain creative partnerships with the church and Christian communities that foster the spiritual development and emotional wellbeing of the children.
* Create and promote positive strategies for challenging prejudice and dealing with harassment in a Christian manner.
* Consistent with the School’s Christian vision provide a safe, calm and well-ordered environment for all pupils and staff, focused on safeguarding pupils and developing their exemplary behaviour in school and in the wider society.
* Welcome strong governance and actively support the governing body to understand its role and deliver its functions effectively, paying attention to the school’s distinctive Christian character, in particular its functions to set school strategy and hold the Headteacher to account for pupil, staff and financial performance.
* Exercise strategic, curriculum-led financial planning to ensure the equitable deployment of budgets and resources, in the best interests of pupils’ achievements, the development of the whole child spiritually, emotionally and morally, and the school’s sustainability.
* Recognise the value of all staff, through distributed leadership, forging teams of colleagues who have distinct roles and responsibilities and hold each other to account for their decision making.
* Recruit members of staff who are able and willing to contribute to the Christian ethos of the school, retaining and deploying them appropriately and managing their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school.
1. **Educating for Dignity and Respect**

The Headteacher will:

* Develop effective relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues in other public services to improve academic and social outcomes for all pupils, in particular those disadvantaged pupils.
* Treat people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture promoting the ‘ultimate worth’ of each individual in which there is no fear of failure.
* Establish rigorous, fair and transparent systems and measures for managing the performance of all staff which reflect the Christian identity of the school, addressing any under-performance whilst supporting staff to improve and valuing excellent practice.
* Shape the current and future quality of the teaching profession through high quality training and sustained professional development for all staff which also actively promotes and reflects the distinctive nature of Church of England schools.

Inspire and influence others, within and beyond the school, to believe education can be one of the greatest blessings in young people’s lives. In particular to work within the school and Church community to translate the Christian vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which will promote and sustain school improvement.