



# Apply to be a **Governor** in a Church of England School or Academy

This guide explains **how you can apply** and find out more about the opportunities to be a governor at Church of England schools and Academies in Southwark Diocese.

School governance is a demanding yet **highly rewarding role**, affording volunteers the chance to use their time and expertise to ensure children receive a full and rounded education that will benefit them throughout their lives.

## **How can I apply?**

**Whether or not** you have previously been a school governor the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) welcomes any interest from those who are willing to volunteer their time in aid of the education and well-being of children in our schools.

**Please contact us** either via phone or e-mail using the details below, and we will explore suitable vacancies. More information can be found on our website: [www.education.southwark.anglican.org](http://www.education.southwark.anglican.org)

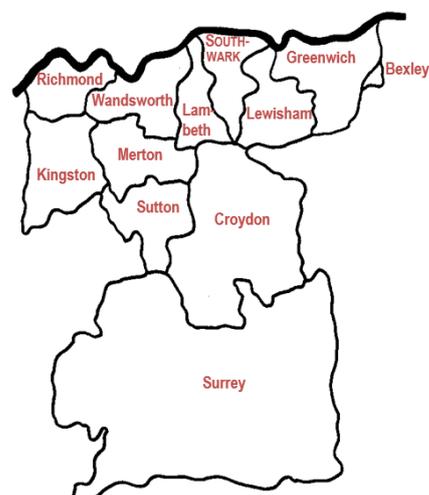
Those living in a parish without a Church School should not hesitate to apply; **there are no restrictions on your being able to volunteer for schools outside of your parish.**

## **The Diocese and its schools**

The SDBE is both a charity and a company limited by guarantee and is chaired by the Bishop of Croydon. The Board works in partnership with 12 local authorities in the Diocese, and has **92 primary schools** and **14 secondary schools**.

We provide advice in the following key areas:

- admissions
- church school distinctiveness
- inspections
- personnel
- religious education & worship
- school buildings
- school governance
- school improvement
- senior staff appointments



## **The Role of Governors in C of E Schools**

The SDBE appoints **over 200 governors** to Diocesan schools. Governors of Church of England schools and academies have similar functions to governors of other types of school. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility to strengthen and develop the Christian ethos of their schools. Most Church schools nationally have adopted the following ethos statement:

*Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England in partnership with the Church at parish and Diocesan level.*

*The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.*

Governors have specific responsibilities for setting the policy on collective worship in church schools and also have responsibility for setting the policy on religious education.

Governors play a **strategic role** in partnership with the headteacher and staff and bring their different skills and experience to their role as 'critical friends' of the school, holding the school to account for its performance. Governors play a key part in developing the **ethos and vision** for the school and in supporting and challenging the school to drive improvement. They also oversee the **financial performance** of the school, ensuring money is well spent.

Being a school or academy governor is a significant commitment, usually requiring attendance for at least **three full governing body meetings a year** in addition to being a member of at least one of the governing bodies committees. It is also important to make time to **visit your school**. Employers are legally able to grant you leave in order for you to meet your responsibilities as a governor.

To help governors the SDBE provides an **extensive governor training programme** free of charge to schools which subscribe to our Partnership Agreement. In addition we continually produce and update **clear guidance** covering all educational and legislative developments of concern to governors.

## **The SDBE's Role and Functions**

The SDBE has a range of specific legal functions as trustee of most of its schools. The Board is made up of representatives from each of the six archdeaconries in the Diocese. Each archdeaconry appoints a member of Diocesan Synod, a clerk in Holy Orders and a lay member to the Board.

The SDBE is not a local authority, but works in partnership with local authorities and others to support church schools and academies. The Board's staff have **particular expertise** in the regulations and law which govern church schools and in those key ethos-sensitive areas listed in this leaflet.

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