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Through following Jesus, we aim to be a caring, happy school, where everyone is valued and appreciated and can reach their true potential. We hope to act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God.

9th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Local Governing Committee of St John Vianney, on behalf of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (BBCET), are now seeking applications for a foundation governor and a parent governor to join the Local Governing Committee (LGC) of the school.

The LGC's main tasks are:

- To ensure that the school has a clear vision, ethos, and strategic direction;
- To work with and hold the senior leadership team to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- To oversee, on behalf of the Trust, the financial performance of the school and to make sure that money is well spent.

Foundation governor

Foundation governors are appointed in the name of the Bishop and form the majority of the governing body of any Catholic school. They have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with its trust deed.

Service as a foundation governor in a Catholic school is one of the most significant and important ways members of the Catholic Faith community can support the Church's mission.

Foundation governors play a crucial role in the leadership of our Diocesan schools. They share in the strategic responsibility of promoting high educational standards and in ensuring that the school is conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle 'Memorandum of Understanding', the school's Instrument of Government and other legislation.



In addition to all the other legal responsibilities of the governing body, the law recognises that foundation governors are appointed specifically to ensure:

- That the Catholic character of the school is preserved;
- That the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed; and
- That the religious education curriculum is in accordance with the bishop's policy for his diocese, based on the Bishops' Conference Curriculum Directory.

Foundation governors are, therefore, appointed by the bishop to represent his interests and those of the Catholic community as a whole.

Foundation governors play a leading role in the Catholic community: they collaborate with the bishop in his ministry in education. It is, therefore, important for them to:

- Know and implement the bishop's policies on education, including religious education;
- Represent those policies to the governing body;
- Understand and promote the distinctive nature of Catholic education;
- Act for the good of Catholic education as a whole within the diocese, considering not only the interests of the individual school but the interests of other schools;
- Respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole, as represented by the bishop;
- Secure the long-term future of Catholic education;
- Always act in accordance with the mind of the bishop.

Please note, the Diocese requires that to be considered for appointment you must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a practising Catholic evidenced by a reference from a Catholic priest
2. Be aged between 18 and 75

Guidance for prospective foundation governors can be found on the Diocesan website: <https://diocesahn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/5-Guidance-for-Prospective-Foundation-Governors-and-Directors.pdf>

Parent governor

Parent governors are welcomed as valued members of the committee and play a vital role in ensuring the governing body is aware of the views of parents and the local community. It is important to understand that the role is to bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed; parent governors are not there to speak 'on behalf' of the parent body.

The role of a parent governor is, statutorily, no different to that of any other governor, except that to be eligible to stand for election you must be a parent or carer of a child registered at St John Vianney's. Confidentiality is an essential part of the role and not discussing school matters with the wider parental body is a pre-requisite.

We hope that you may be interested and prepared to put yourself forward to take on this important role and to give your time and commitment to helping us continue to improve the school's performance.

What is involved?

If you are interested, it may be helpful for you to know what is involved. Governors are elected for a four-year term. The commitment to the role is significant in time and responsibility. It would involve you regularly attending meetings and undertaking a great deal of pre-reading, actively participating in training, visiting school during term-time, and taking a leading role during external formal inspections of school. The Local Governing Committee formally meets twice a term and a minimum of six times a year. All the meetings take place on a weekday evening, and each can take a number of hours, due to volume of work needing to be covered.

Training and support are essential to support you and help you develop into the role. This includes in-house mentoring and support as well as requiring attendance at various external governor training courses provided via the Trust, the Diocese and Newcastle Council. On occasions, whole governor training also takes place on site, in addition to the LGC meetings.

All new governors will be required to complete a skills matrix, a declaration form and be subject to an Enhanced DBS check prior to taking up the post.

Next steps

For the parent governor role, there will be an application process, including an interview. If successful and there are more applications than vacancies, we will also hold an election.

If you think that you might make a good foundation governor, we would welcome you to take part in an application process including an interview. If successful, the person with the best skills set matrix would be supported to go forward and apply to the Diocese to become a foundation governor of St John Vianney Catholic Primary School.

All appointments are made by the Diocese and on the basis of identified skills gaps on a particular governing body.

If you are interested in either role, we would ask that you contact the school office via email office@stjohnvianneynewcastle.org before the 20th January 2023 to arrange an appointment to meet with the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. At this meeting, we will discuss the roles, the application process, your skills and how these could help you bring a benefit of expertise to the LGC, and answer any questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

G Smith

Mr G Smith
Chair of Governors