

Dear Parents and Carers

I have had a number of conversations with some parents about the role of governors: what our responsibilities are and how we are appointed; and how that is different because we are a Church school.

I thought it might be helpful to share some of the points arising with you all.

Duties of Governors

A school Governing Body has 3 main statutory responsibilities:

- To set the strategic direction for their school
- To hold the Headteacher to account for the school's performance
- To monitor school finances

To help in the carrying out of these duties, and to steer governors along the right lines, St Barnabas' Governing Body (GB) adopted a Code of Conduct that sets out how governors should carry out their role. You can see this online at: [St Barnabas' Governors' Code of Conduct](#). Governors are not responsible for the day-to-day running of the school which is done by the Headteacher and staff.

These duties are fulfilled by the GB meeting at least 4 times a year and there are 2 GB committees, one that leads on Resources and the other on Teaching and Learning. These meet 3 times a year. In addition, individual governors take the lead on working with the Headteacher and relevant staff on specific areas of responsibility, such as SEN provision.

Composition of the Governing Body and How Governors are Appointed

The GB is constituted in accordance with its [Instrument of Governance](#).

The GB has 14 members. The policy that sets out how the GB is made up and that provides guidance on the appointment process is at: [Policy on Making Appointments to the St Barnabas Governing Body](#).

The composition of the GB is largely dictated by law. We have to have 2 parent governors, 1 staff governor, 1 Local Authority governor, and the Headteacher is a governor by right. We also have a position for a co-opted governor, to provide some greater flexibility in securing the right skills and experience for the GB. That makes 6 governors.

Because we are a Church school, the law requires us to have two more Foundation (Church-appointed) governors than the non-Foundation governors noted above, which means we are required to have 8 Foundation Governors in total. The policy for appointment of Foundation governors is at: [St Barnabas Church School Governor Appointments](#).

Foundation governors have a particular responsibility to safeguard the character of the school and ensure it is conducted in accordance with any founding documents. But otherwise every governor's role is to govern the school in the best interest of pupils, not to represent the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.

Being a Church school

In common with all maintained schools, the school relies on Oxfordshire County Council, our Local Education Authority, for educational support and back-office functions such as HR, accounting and payroll processing. But as a Church school, St Barnabas' gets additional assistance from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (OBDE).

ODBE notes the following about what it means to be a Church school. This is consistent with the school's own [Mission Statement](#) and helps sustain St Barnabas' as an excellent community school.

"St Barnabas' Church of England Primary School is one of 284 Church schools in the Diocese of Oxford and is a popular and successful Church school. The school is delighted to welcome families of different faiths and beliefs to the school. This diversity brings a richness to school life and the school seeks to serve its local community by providing a school which is, first and foremost, an excellent place of education where children can reach their highest potential and where all are valued and loved for who they are."

Further information is available online at [ODBE – Being a Church School](#).

I hope that this is useful background to what your school's Governing Body is about. The current roster of Governors is as set out on the [Governing Body page](#) of the school's website. Any of us would be happy to discuss this letter with you if you have any questions.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Tim Jones

Chair, St Barnabas' Governing Body

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References:

- [St Barnabas' Governors' Code of Conduct](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/Code-of-Conduct.pdf>
- [Instrument of Governance](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/IoG-St-Barnabas-Primary-School-2015.pdf>
- [Policy on Making Appointments to the St Barnabas Governing Body](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/Policy-on-Making-Appointments-to-the-St-Barnabas-GB.pdf>
- [St Barnabas Church School Governor Appointments](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/St-Barnabas-Church-School-Governor-Appointments.pdf>
- [Mission Statement](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/Mission-Statement.pdf>
- [ODBE – Being a Church School](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/ODBE-Being-a-Church-School.pdf>
- [Governing Body page](#)
<http://www.st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk/community/governors>