

Guidance notes for governors

Background

These guidance notes have been prepared in response to a meeting between diocesan representatives of the RC Diocese of Arundel & Brighton and the C E Dioceses of Guildford, London and Southwark with representatives of VT/4S, to discuss ways of ensuring an integrated and effective support service for Church schools.

This protocol has been agreed by the Guildford Diocesan Board of Education.

Division of responsibility between Diocese and Local Authority

In the case of VA schools, it is the diocese that takes the lead in supporting governors. For VC schools, it is the LA. In either case, the diocese will work closely with the LA and vice versa. These guidance notes are therefore written primarily for VA schools.

Situations in which an interim appointment is required

Most frequently it is when a headteacher/deputy headteacher is appointed to another post too close to the relevant resignation deadline, for an appointment process to be completed within the timescale. It may also arise in other situations such as long term sickness, unexpected resignation, suspension etc. In the former the process is fairly straightforward. In the latter, it can be highly complex.

Being prepared to take on a secondment

It is important that the person involved thinks this through very carefully. To that end a second document is available 'Guidance notes for staff considering interim headteacher/deputy headteacher secondments'.

Likely governor questions regarding interim headships

NB: The same questions generally apply in the case of a deputy headship

Can we appoint our own interim headteacher?

You have every right to do so. You are not required to use an interim headteacher recommended by the diocese/LA. However, any appointment you make must follow this guidance and the diocese/LA would need to be represented in all stages of the process.

What role does the governing body have in appointing an interim headteacher?

It is likely that the process will need to move very swiftly. The chairman may use 'chairs action' to agree the interim appointment process. As the protocol makes clear, the chairman is consulted at every stage of the process and will make the final decision. The chairman should keep the chairs of finance and personnel informed and report back to the full governing body at the earliest opportunity.

What support will the diocese provide for the governing body in making an interim appointment?

The diocese will provide advice, guidance and support at all stages of the process as set out in the protocol.

How long will the interim appointment last?

Ideally for the length of the vacancy. Should however the vacancy continue for longer than expected, the appointment may need to be reviewed.

Can the diocese guarantee to provide us with an interim headteacher?

The short answer is 'no'. We have many potential headteachers/experienced deputies, one or more of whom may fit the needs of your school. We could be unfortunate in that no headteacher/experienced deputy is available or that their governors may not release them. We would also contact recently retired headteachers. If we were unable to source a Church school headteacher, we would consult with the LA who will have a register of potential interim headteachers. The requirement would be for someone who as a minimum is sympathetic to the aims, objectives and ethos of Church schools and willing to work within that framework in terms of leading acts of worship etc.

Do we need to interview interim headteachers?

Only if you choose to manage the process yourselves or via an agency. The diocese/LA will only nominate someone they are confident will be able to do a good job and has the relevant skills base to meet the needs of your school. All headteachers will have had references taken up by their governing body on their appointment and their current experience and performance will be well known to the diocese/LA. Should there be sufficient time to do so, the opportunity for 2/3 governors to meet with the person, can only strengthen the process (see appendix B for a list of possible questions).

What charge will the diocese make for the service provided?

None. It is part of our core services to provide this service free to schools.

What are the contractual objectives of the interim headteacher?

These follow the same performance management procedures as for a substantive headteacher.

Who pays for the interim headteacher?

The school, just as it would pay the salary of the substantive headteacher/deputy headteacher.

What support will the diocese provide for the governing body during the interim appointment?

The Diocesan Director of Education will arrange planned visits throughout the period of the interim appointment, provide appropriate support from Officers and liaise closely with the LA/SIP in agreeing what additional support might be needed.

How is the level of pay decided?

The diocese will advise, following consultation with the LA finance consultant. It will be pitched in relation to current salary of the interim headteacher and the salary of outgoing/absent substantive headteacher. Surrey LA guidelines are: 'two additional points on top of the current salary plus excess travel allowance if applicable. The providing school may need to be reimbursed for administrative/support time. Should the salary need to be considerably more than budgeted for, the Diocesan Director of Education would approach the LA personnel department for additional funding. The governing body may wish to pay an honorarium at the end of service, if appropriate.

Can we not just make an internal appointment?

Whilst in many cases this may well be a possibility, it should not be thought of as automatic. A good member of the senior leadership team or deputy does not always make a good headteacher, particularly in their own school. The appointment is crucial to the health and well being of the school. The person appointed has to have the ability to take forward the agenda of the school. It is not merely a case of 'holding the fort'. The person appointed needs to be able to gain the full confidence of staff, governors and parents. The possibility would need to be fully discussed with the Diocesan Director of Education.

Does the interim appointment have to be full time?

Not necessarily. The school may be sufficiently strong with a revised management structure to manage with additional support for just two or three days a week.

Will the interim appointment be one person?

Ideally yes. However, whilst every effort will be made to find one person to fill the vacancy, there may need to be a job share arrangement. If this is the case, there will need to be a swap over period for exchange of information.

Appendix A

Time line activity sequence for managing the process

Who	What	Date	Actioned
CoG	notify DDE of need for interim appointment. Initial conversation to cover: reason; likely timescale; internal/external solution; key requirements.		
DDE	inform relevant officers.		
DDE	inform SC/SIP for LA.		
DDE	contact potential interim HTs/DHTs, summarise requirements, elicit initial response. request summary CV		
DDE	contact CoG of potential provider school to seek their broad agreement. (It is important that the protocol is followed and confidentiality maintained.)		
DDE	meet with CoG of school with vacancy Agenda: school issues/needs role of interim HT/DHT length of contract salary summary CV		
CoG	arrange school visit for proposed interim appointment. confirm with DDE willingness to proceed subject to agreement as below.		

Cont'd over

Who	What	Date	Actioned
DDE/CoG/ proposed interim appt + 1 or 2 other governors if possible	meet Agenda: question bank (appendix B) school issues/needs role of interim HT/DHT length of contract salary discuss individual concerns hand-over arrangements keys/access medical/CRB clearance (as appropriate) synchronisation of informing both schools - staff/governor/parents support by diocese/LA arrangements for meeting - staff/governors/parents arrangements for visits PPA time		
CoGs	agree memorandum of understanding (appendix C)		
DDE	advise SC/LA		
SC	confirm appointment to GB		
CoG	write to providing school re transfer arrangement		
CoG	write to interim HT/DHT confirming temporary contract arrange contract with admin officer/personnel consultant.		
CoGs	write to parents confirming secondment/appointment		
GB	set key objectives		
CoG	arrange performance management with SIP		

CoG Chair of Governors
 DDE Diocesan Director of Education
 GB Governing Body
 SIP School improvement partner

SC Senior consultant for local
 authority
 LA Local authority

September 2007

Appendix B

Question Bank: Interim Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher secondments

1. what initial impressions did your visit leave you with?
2. did you notice anything that you thought 'I would like to change that'?
3. what is it about your experience that you would say has empowered you to have the capacity to help lead and manage the school?
4. a) what areas do you see as your particular strengths?
b) what areas do you see as areas for further development?
5. what experience do you have in working with the GB?
6. how would you intend keeping governors informed of progress in meeting the targets set within the SDP?
7. should Ofsted return within your time at the school how confident would you feel in managing the process?
8. how would you seek to establish your credibility with staff vis a vis leadership and management of the school?
9. what is your philosophy for the management structure of the school?
10. after a term or so would the school begin to look like a clone of your old school?
11. the school, is a VA/VC school. How would you seek to nourish the Christian ethos of the school?
12. what support would you expect from the GB?
13. what would you do if for whatever reason you felt the secondment was not working out?
14. what questions do you have for governors?

(Draft) Memorandum of Understanding

On behalf of the Governors of School, and the Governors of School, .

Memorandum of understanding in respect of the arrangements for the secondment of , current position School, as interim Headteacher of School.

1. The secondment to take effect from
2. The secondment to last for an initial period of term(s) ie until subject to the proviso below (clause 6). Consideration would be given by the governors of school to a request by the governors of school, to an extension to this deadline subject to months notice.
3. to remain on the payroll of School. School to set up a transfer journal to reimburse School for the total amount of the salary currently received by, plus the additional sum payable in respect of the responsibilities assumed as interim Headteacher. This transaction to take place on the day of each month.
4. The governors of School agree to release to return to School on the following (dates).
5. The governors of School will ensure that staff professional development opportunities will be provided and appropriate support from the Local Authority and the Diocese.
6. The governors of School reserve the right to recall to the school in the case of extreme unforeseen circumstances.
7. The governors of School and/or the Diocese, reserve the right to review the interim appointment should there be substantial evidence that the placement is not proving effective.
8. Should there be other issues that arise, not covered in this memorandum, such matters will be resolved between the Chairs of Governors. Any unresolved issues to be referred to the Diocesan Director of Education.

Signed on behalf of

Governing Body of School

Name: Signature: Date:

Governing Body of School

Name: Signature: Date: