For those governing bodies wishing to boost their governor recruitment processes here are some examples of fruitful initiatives in governor recruitment from Dr Lisa Bennett, the Chair of Governors at **St Mary’s CE Primary School**

**Moss Side**, **Manchester.**

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**Parent Governor Recruitment**

“Recruitment of parent governors at St Mary’s had historically been really challenging. With one applicant for each open position at best, parents had no choice who to appoint through an election and we were obviously not making the position seem attractive to the families of our 450 pupils. In addition, several committed governors had served for decades and were approaching retirement.

To tackle the issue strategically, we set up a separate committee called Governance and Members that identified the following barriers and solutions to participation:

***A lack of awareness about school governance***

The SLT and parent governors held workshops and Q&A with parents to explain the role of governors. We highlighted that governors bring transferable competencies and experiences from life and work. Governance knowledge and technical skills can be developed through training and mentoring.

***Recruitment material and application process needed to be updated to be accessible to everyone from our diverse community***

We created an advert that describes the attributes of potential governors that people with no prior experience might identify with:

* Commitment to the local community
* People who like to work with others or are looking for that opportunity
* People who enjoy helping to shape what happens for children, parents, families and our neighbourhood

The application process was updated to allow parents to nominate themselves, rather than requiring two other parents to nominate. We asked for a short statement about who the applicant was, what capabilities they had and why they wanted to be a governor at St Mary’s.

***Consideration of timings and format of meetings, ensure access to on-line governance materials***

Thanks(!) to the Covid pandemic, we realised that remote meetings improved attendance and are often more convenient for working governors and parents. Most committee meetings have continued to be held remotely and are equally effective as in-person meetings. We check with governors that they have suitable devices at home to access on-line documents.

We had dozens of people turn up for the workshops and seven excellent applications for the last election! It took around three years from the first workshop to seeing a big increase in applications, but persistence paid off.

**Foundation Governor Recruitment**

Buoyed by our success at recruiting parents, we embarked on a foundation governor recruitment campaign. St Mary’s is proud to have contributed to the Manchester Governance Association’s events and has hosted stakeholder meetings at school in the past. However, Covid has vastly reduced our school’s interactions with external networks, so we designed a structured communication plan for recruitment rather than relying on word-of-mouth. We used our parent governor advert as a template and added the foundation governor [role description](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5fbd76bf103bd/content/pages/documents/role-of-diocesan-governors-in-church-of-england-schools.pdf) from the Diocese and elements from the [Called, Connected, Committed Leadership](https://www.cefel.org.uk/ccc/) publication. We sent this out to about 20 partner organisations via our clerk including high schools, churches, chaplaincies, universities and children’s centres and followed up with phone calls. Unsurprisingly, many said that Covid has adversely impacted their small groups and available resource and people did not have the capacity to volunteer.

The Headteacher and I were invited to the St Edmund and St James’ PCC meeting and a local high school to share information about governance at St Mary’s School. The personal interaction made an impact and we have been successful in appointing a governor from our local church congregation and a high school vice-principal.

As our Rector Revd Tony Hardy takes his well-deserved retirement, we will adapt the foundation governor materials to recruit a substitute ex-officio governor. I hope that the more our community hear about the positive experience of governance from existing governors, the more they can see themselves joining the St Mary’s Governing Body.”

The school recorded a recruitment video to encourage volunteering, adding to the school’s website. The results were very successful!



[https://www.st-marys-mossside.manchester.sch.uk/#](https://www.st-marys-mossside.manchester.sch.uk/)

**Foundation Governor Advert**

St Mary’s Church of England Primary School in the heart of the Moss Side is recruiting for the position of Foundation Governor.

Foundation Governors are appointed to school governing body by the Parish of St Edmund’s or the Diocese of Manchester. St Mary’s cherishes our multi-faith community with its rich mix of ethnicities and cultures and takes every opportunity to enable children to flourish and become the best that they can be.

Competent and skilled people of all denominations, faiths or none, may apply to be a Foundation Governor on the understanding that they sign up to the commitment to the Christian Foundation of the school.

St Mary’s is a catalyst for integration and mutual respect across the community and demonstrates ‘Christianity and Islam at their best’ (SIAMS Inspection report 2019). The UNICEF Children’s Rights Article “Your right to become the best that you can be” is fundamental to the effectiveness of the school as a place of learning, where Christian and other religious values flourish, diversity is celebrated and all are welcomed.

The Foundation Governor will be part of a governing body team whose work is rewarding, interesting and makes a huge difference to the school, its pupils and the local community.

St Mary’s can support you to grow in confidence, feel part of a great team and make the difference for our children. In return, you will:

* Support the school to be the best it can be
* Bring insights and links into the diversity of our communities to support our children and families
* Work collaboratively with others, including the Parish of St Edmund’s, for the good of our school and community
* Work to ensure our UNICEF Children’s Rights ethos works for all
* Bring facilitation skills and a willingness to develop and consider taking on the chair of subcommittees
* Have a commitment to developing governance expertise with the support of St Mary’s, local partners and the Diocese.

The governing body has a collective responsibility for many aspects of the school, including its standards, ethos, mission, curriculum, management, planning, personnel, financial and building matters, and promoting good links with parents, the Church and the wider community.

Foundation governors share with all other governors the legal responsibilities of the governing body in managing the school to provide the best education for its pupils. The additional responsibilities are:

* that the interests of the Church of England are safeguarded, and that the religious character of the school is preserved;
* that the collective worship of the school is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the trust deed and as determined in the worship policy with parents, the Church and the wider community.

Appointment is subject to the applicant consenting to a Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) check for Safeguarding purposes. A Foundation Governor must be over 18 years old and serves terms of four years.

Exceptions

People in the following categories would not be appointed as a Foundation Governor:

A former headteacher or deputy headteacher of the school.

A person with a spouse or close family member already on the Governing Board.

A current member of staff of the school, in any paid capacity.

Applicants should submit a 1 page personal profile outlining their relevant skills and experience to the Headteacher, Mrs Jenny McGarry, by email to

head@st-marysmossside.manchester.sch.uk.

Or by post to St Mary’s CE Primary School, Adscombe Street, Moss Side, Manchester M16 7AQ.

Requests for further information on the role or assistance in applying can be made by phoning the School Office on 0161 226 1773. The closing date for applications is 7th November 2021