

What is a voluntary aided Church of England school?

Church of England schools are fully part of the maintained state education sector and in many respects are exactly like any other maintained school. Like other maintained schools, church schools:

- Receive revenue funding via the Local Authority who retain the overall responsibility for their standards and performance
- Follow the National Curriculum (although voluntary aided schools follow their diocesan Religious Education curriculum)
- Are subject to OFSTED inspections and covered by the same safeguarding requirements as other maintained schools
- Are subject to the requirements of education legislation in the same way as other schools
- Are overseen by governing bodies with the same core functions as other maintained schools
- Are subject to the local authority's admission procedures and must comply with the DfE's School Admissions Code

The Church of England is clear that its schools are not faith schools for the faithful, but church schools for the community – as part of the Church's vision to serve its communities by offering excellence in education so that children and young people can fulfil their true potential. Church schools seek to offer an experience of Christian community but do not proselytize and are deeply respectful of those of other faiths or no faith. Church schools offer a vision of human flourishing for all which embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people and promotes their wellbeing in the widest sense.

The key characteristics of a voluntary aided Church of England school are:

- The governing body appoints and employs the school staff
- Foundation governors, who uphold the school's Christian character, are in the majority on the governing body
- The governing body is responsible for admissions arrangements within the terms of the DfE's School Admissions Code
- Capital funding for school buildings is received through the diocese and governors must contribute 10% of the capital cost of projects
- The school follows the Religious Education syllabus agreed by the Diocese
- They are inspected under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework focusing on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults

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