

Staff: the most important resource in the school

Teachers feel undervalued in our society. The respect that was once theirs is often hard won and too often lacking. Where this is so, it undermines their authority and effectiveness in the classroom and their standing with parents. It bears directly on the willingness of people to enter the profession and on the retention of those already in the profession. **This is an issue for the whole nation. But it is one that can and should be tackled by the Church. Church schools should stand out as places where teachers and other staff are valued and respected. The headteacher should be able to look to the parish church as a source of unfailing support and encouragement.**

The Way Ahead, paragraph 6.5

The staff of a Church school are its most important asset. Next to the pupils they are the most important people in the school. Through them the educational objectives of the school are delivered. They share with the governing body the task of preserving the school's identity as an Anglican school. All teaching and other staff must be aware of their role within the overall policy and ethos of the school. All new staff will require induction into the school traditions. All will require induction, training, support, management, leadership, direction and opportunities for further development. This chapter will consider the principles underlying the employment of support staff, contract staff, teachers and the leadership team within the school. They apply to all categories of Church school.

Employment

Support staff

Within this general category fall all those staff of the school who are not teachers. Some will be employed on an hourly or part-time basis. Some will be full-time employees. Some will need specific qualifications and experience to undertake their responsibilities. Some will simply need a willingness to undertake the task and the personal qualities appropriate to it. Without them the school could not function.

In voluntary aided and foundation schools the governing body is the employer of all the staff within this category except, in some cases, kitchen staff and those employed by contractors. While governors may develop their own policies with regard to their staff, they must work within the framework of employment law. This means, in particular, that they are not able to discriminate on religious grounds on the employment of these members of staff. Staff should know that they must act in accordance with school policies, provided that these policies are not themselves a form of hidden discrimination. All the staff who are employees of the governing body will need a contract of employment that specifically reflects that fact. The National Society produces forms of contract for support staff in voluntary aided and foundation schools. Governors need to be satisfied that those responsible for administering these contracts are completing them in accordance with the guidance provided by the Society. This is also important for part-time staff and those who will only be working during term time.

In voluntary controlled schools the LEA is the employer, but many of the employment functions will be delegated to the school. The governing body must act within the policies laid down by the LEA in the appointment of support staff, and should seek the advice

of the appropriate department if they are in doubt. They must not act in ways that exceed their delegated powers under Fair funding. The contract of employment should make clear that in law the employer is the LEA.

Staff employed by others to carry out work in the school on contract

This section deals with the specific issues that arise when the school enters into a contract for services with an ‘outside’ contractor. The essence of this group of staff, which might include cleaners, kitchen staff and ground maintenance workers, as well as employees of builders, is that they are not employed by the governing body or the LEA. Before any contract is awarded to a contractor it is important that the governing body, the school leadership and the contractors have a clear understanding of how the staff undertaking the work will be expected to conduct themselves. If they are to have unsupervised access to children the contractor must be able to provide evidence that the appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks have been carried out.

Should there be concerns about such staff, either in terms of their performance or their conduct towards pupils or staff, these issues will need to be dealt with in accordance with previously agreed procedures. It is essential that neither school staff nor governors interfere with the established patterns of management. This can lead to confusion and in some cases increased costs. It is important to ensure that employees of contractors engaged in work that can affect the general ethos of the school are appropriately trained to understand their role. Great care needs to be taken in this area in Church schools. The headteacher should be prepared to work with the manager of the contractor’s staff to ensure that everyone understands what is required of them. Although the most obvious example of staff in this category are those involved in making, serving or supervising school meals, this group of employees may

be engaged on a variety of tasks within the school. The issues are basically the same for all.

Teachers

In voluntary aided and foundation schools the teachers are employees of the governing body. The LEA provides the finance through the delegated budget and, in most schools, may provide payroll services. Since this need no longer be the case, it is no longer, if it ever was, appropriate in voluntary aided schools to refer to the division of responsibilities between the governing body and LEA as that between employer and paymaster. The LEA has an important advisory role, as does the diocesan authority, over matters of employment, but the governing body needs to ensure that it has proper protection in law. As the employer, the governing body must have contracts of employment with teachers in voluntary aided and foundation schools. The National Society produces forms of contract for all teaching staff in voluntary aided and foundation schools. Governors need to be sure that those responsible for administering these contracts, whether the clerk to the governing body, the LEA's personnel service or another provider, are completing them in accordance with the guidance provided by the Society. This guidance can be found either in the series of booklets on staffing issues published by the Society or on the web site. As the employer, the governing body must also have its own policies and procedures for the employment of staff. It is not enough simply to assume that the LEA will have appropriate policies that can be applied. If the governing body has not considered and adopted such policies on the basis that they are suitable to their school, they cannot expect to be fully protected under the law.

The law explicitly gives the governing body of a voluntary aided school the right to choose, in the appointment of teachers, candidates who can demonstrate that they are actively and personally committed to the faith of the school. The governing body needs

to have a clear set of policies over how they will use this right in any particular appointment to the school's teaching staff. They should make their intentions clear in both their advertisements and the person specification they send out to interested parties. This right enshrined in section 60 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 is not undermined by the Human Rights Act nor is it expected to be by forthcoming anti-discrimination legislation.

In foundation schools the governing body does not have the same power to choose teachers of their own denomination (but see below: reserved teachers).

In voluntary controlled schools the teachers are the employees of the LEA, although many of the functions of employer are delegated to the governing body. In all teacher posts except reserved teachers, the governors must follow the employment policies of the local authority. Only in the specific area of the appointment of reserved teachers may they explore the candidate's suitability to teach religious education in accordance with the teachings of the faith or denomination of the school. Reserved teachers, a special feature of foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, enable religious education to be taught in accordance with a diocesan rather than an LEA syllabus (see pp. 93–4), where parents so request. The governing body will need to have established a clear understanding of how a Church school approach to RE is given particular expression in its school at the present, in order to be able to assess the suitability of a candidate for a post that carries the responsibility of a reserved teacher. No more than one fifth of teachers (counted to include the headteacher) at a foundation or voluntary controlled school can be reserved teachers and the headteacher cannot be a reserved teacher.

All schools with a religious character have established an 'ethos statement' (see p. 85). This should form part of the information

sent to all candidates for teaching posts. Since they have chosen to teach in a school with a religious character, it is perfectly reasonable to expect them to give active support to the ethos of the school. This applies to all categories of Church school.

Headteachers

The headteacher is the key appointment in any school. All studies of successful schools identify the role played in the school by the headteacher as being critical. The most important contribution that governors can make to their school is to appoint the right headteacher.

In all schools the appointment process for headteachers will be based on the important provisions in education law (section 60 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) designed to help governing bodies make the best possible appointment in a Church school. These take account of equal opportunities and human rights legislation and, alongside relevant anti-discrimination legislation, should inform the governing body's equal opportunities policy.

In voluntary aided schools the headteacher is an employee of the governing body. Normally the governors will be looking to appoint a very successful teacher, able to give effective leadership to the school and with a strong commitment to the Anglican Church. Sometimes a candidate who is actively involved in another Christian denomination will be the best candidate, but it is difficult to see how someone without a strong Christian commitment can provide the Christian leadership necessary for the school to be a good Church school.

All candidates for the post of headteacher should be able to demonstrate that they have made a thorough professional preparation for the post. This will include completion of the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers, but on its own this

will be sufficient only rarely. Good candidates will have taken advantage of one of the opportunities provided by dioceses, Church Colleges or the National Society to study the specific issues that distinguish Church schools from community schools.

In foundation and voluntary controlled schools the appointment of a headteacher cannot take account of personal religious commitment in the same way. However, the governing body, whether they are the employers (foundation schools) or working under delegation from the LEA (voluntary controlled schools), have the explicit right under section 60 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998 to assure themselves that the headteacher they appoint is fit and able to preserve and develop the religious character of the school. Candidates will give evidence of this both by their professional preparation and by their answers to questions about the professional issues involved in leading an Anglican school. It will be important for governors to distinguish carefully between asking candidates about their personal beliefs and asking them about their professional competence and attitudes. It is the latter that should be explored with every candidate. This will include their approach to the headteacher's important role in leading collective worship in an Anglican school and their understanding of the spiritual development of pupils in an Anglican school.

Chaplains/chaplaincy

Some schools have a specifically appointed school chaplain. The employment/appointment arrangements for such posts vary considerably. In some places the appointment is made by the diocese in consultation with the school and may be held by a priest, who divides his or her time with a parochial appointment in the area. In other places the chaplain may be a member of the teaching staff and combining chaplaincy duties with a teaching commitment. In many primary schools the role is undertaken as

a voluntary service by the local parish priest or a member of the parish ministerial team. Sometimes the role is undertaken by a group or committee drawn from the staff of the school. Many variations and combinations of these arrangements are possible.

The duties undertaken by the ‘chaplain’ are almost as varied as the arrangements for employment. They will include a contribution to the organization and leadership of worship and may include a contribution to the pastoral care and spiritual development of pupils and colleagues. As has been implied above, some chaplains may also have a teaching role. Chaplaincy in a Church school is important and how it is given practical expression will be tailored to the needs of the individual school and the resources (human and financial) that are available.

The appointing process for all staff

The governing body’s policy for all appointments must ensure that a number of basic steps are taken. These are detailed in the guidance booklets and on the web site. In summary they include:

1. selecting those who will be making the appointment;
2. delegating to those making the appointment the authority to do so;
3. contacting those persons who have a right to attend for the purpose of giving advice (e.g. from the LEA or DBE) and involving them in the planning;
4. drawing up a job description when it is a new appointment, or amending the job description as necessary;
5. drawing up a person specification when it is a new appointment, or amending the person specification as necessary;
6. checking that the application form will elicit the information

needed (if the form is from the LEA, that it is designed for the category of school in question) and does not contravene the governing body's equal opportunities policy;

7. ensuring that the budget can cover the costs of the appointment;
8. establishing a timetable for the appointing process;
9. advertising (internally or externally, in the LEA bulletin and/or newspapers);
10. arranging for candidates to visit the school and ask questions about the nature of the post;
11. drawing up a short list of those candidates who fulfil all the essential criteria in the person specification and, if appropriate, narrowing down through the use of the desirable criteria;
12. ensuring that the interviewers can be present at the whole of the interviewing and decision-making process.

Each of these steps could be further broken down into sub-steps. Some may appear to be so standard or routine that they are obvious. Each needs to be completed. The National Society can provide examples of incidents where failure to complete each of these individual steps has led to subsequent problems or challenges.

Once all these steps have been completed, the school will be in a position to conduct the part of the selection process in which the most appropriate candidate is finally selected. The interviews should be conducted by members of the governing body or by the head or other members of the school leadership team to whom have been delegated the necessary powers.

During the interview every candidate should be asked the same basic questions, though the use of supplementary questions to

draw out a reticent candidate cannot, of course, be subject to the same restriction. The questions should relate to the job description and person specification prepared by the governing body. Governors should ensure that, if they do not possess the specialist knowledge necessary to frame appropriate technical questions and evaluate the answers, they have an adviser or specialist with them to assist with the interview process. This will be particularly important for all headteacher posts and some other senior posts, including heads of subject departments. Time should always be given for the candidates to ask their own questions of the panel and to make sure that the candidate would accept the job if it were offered.

Governors should ensure that notes are kept of each interview – preferably by more than one of the interviewers. Sometimes it is helpful to provide prepared forms for note-taking, which help interviewers to relate what is being said to the requirements of the post.

Formal interviews are not the only nor are they sometimes seen to be the best means of selecting the most suitable candidate. If candidates are to be invited to give a presentation, the available technology will need to be agreed in advance and the time to be allowed for the presentation carefully monitored. The same would be true of an in-tray exercise or a group discussion. It would rarely be possible to ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities if they were to be asked to teach a class under observation, nor would it be fair to the pupils, so this method of assessment is discouraged. Care also needs to be taken if there is a desire to seek opinions from potential colleagues; it should be absolutely clear that such opinions cannot be taken formally into account (the colleagues will not have seen anything like the picture the panel has seen) and generally the seeking of such views is discouraged. By the same token, too great a reliance on references is discouraged. They are inevitably partial and should generally not be circulated

in advance and should only be used to confirm the panel's judgement once it has come to a view.

When the interviews are complete the interviewers should proceed to evaluate the candidates' suitability and potential. Steps should be taken to ensure that those who are making judgements do so carefully and make full use of the criteria that have been established for the post. It is unfair to all the candidates if any of those making the decisions uses information other than that contained in the application or elicited during the interview. If any of the candidates is known personally to the governors (other than, for example, through being an internal candidate) this knowledge should be declared. Conscious efforts should be made to ensure that such knowledge is not used to influence the decision. There is a special need for care if one or more of the candidates is already working in the school. It is very important that internal candidates are given the same interview experience and are judged on the same criteria as external candidates. This should take account of the particular stress of the interview for all candidates; not all will perform at their best, so it would be unfair to say of a candidate known to the panel, 'I know she can do better than that', when such judgements cannot be made of all candidates.

Someone from the interviewing panel, usually a person with specialist knowledge of the post, should be prepared to offer unsuccessful candidates comments on their performance during the interview. This requires skill and sensitivity. The 'feedback' process is intended to help unsuccessful candidates to learn constructively from the experience. It is usually most helpful once there is some distance between the experience and the feedback, enabling reflection and balance to be restored.

Governors must agree with successful candidates for school leadership the point on the salary scale for remuneration. All those involved in these negotiations on behalf of the governing body

should be aware of the school pay policy and the budgetary and personnel implications of any departure from the agreed policy. The clearer that the governors can be on this issue when the post is advertised, the easier are subsequent discussions likely to be. Governors must avoid being trapped into discussing the remuneration package from scratch after the post has been offered and accepted.

Before an announcement can be made, even informally to colleagues, the necessary criminal record checks should have been undertaken and letters exchanged.

Development

It is very unlikely that anyone appointed to a new post has all the skills that will be necessary to undertake their duties effectively in their new setting without some initial support or training. Every new member of staff needs to find his or her way into work in a new setting, within a new policy framework and with new colleagues. For this reason it is important that there is a good programme of induction in place in every school. The need for effective continuing professional development (CPD) for all teachers is increasingly recognized. The General Teaching Council in its first two years laid heavy emphasis on this need of a professional workforce and over the next few years teachers' entitlement to CPD should develop into clear expectations of annual time committed, as in other professional bodies. But the need for appropriate training extends to all school staff and, incidentally, to members of governing bodies.

Induction

The first few days in a new post can be challenging and confusing even for an experienced professional. It is very important that

there are good arrangements for the induction of any new employee. This applies whether the employee is the headteacher or the cleaner. The principles are the same. Anyone joining the staff needs to learn about the layout of the buildings, key school policies that will affect them and their work, the overall management structure of the school and how they will personally fit into it. They will need to meet key colleagues. They will need to feel that they are welcomed into the school and that people are committed to supporting them in their work. For many posts it will be appropriate to ask someone to act as a mentor for the first few weeks or months to ensure that the new employee has continuing support and makes the best possible start in the new post. For headteachers a mentor may be a serving headteacher from another similar school (preferably a Church school) within a reasonable distance.

Being a mentor is a major professional responsibility. Good mentoring can help a new employee feel part of the team quickly. It can help them reach an effective level of professional performance as soon as possible. Poor mentoring can lead to disillusionment and alienation. Good mentors are able to provide appropriate levels of support, information and encouragement in equal proportions. They also provide guidance on the way in which the school or the authority is organized and how individuals can extract the best from the institution and work at their best within it. There are no quick guides for mentors on how they are able to achieve this. Essentially they have to develop their role as an interaction with the individual whom they are mentoring.

For teachers in their first year of teaching after qualification (newly qualified teachers or NQTs), special arrangements apply. These are laid out in guidance and now involve the General Teaching Council (GTC), as the body that keeps the register of all teachers. Those responsible for appointing such teachers must be certain that the proper arrangements have been made to ensure that newly qualified teachers make the best possible start in their

chosen profession. There is clear guidance available from the GTC about the successful completion of an induction year and the steps to be taken if an NQT is demonstrating inadequate levels of competence for the work. Every effort needs to be made to help NQTs (and qualified teachers for that matter) overcome any areas of incompetence but, ultimately, neither the education of the nation's children nor proper respect for the teaching profession is well served by incompetent teachers.

For teachers who are coming to work in a Church school for the first time it is important that they are helped to understand what this will mean in theory and in practice. A command of the technical details of what makes a Church school different is not necessary for teachers outside the school leadership team but all new members of staff should at least understand the important role of worship in a Church school and how they can and should appropriately bring the Christian faith of the school to life in the classroom. It would be useful if they had undertaken the Church Colleges Certificate in Church School Studies, or its equivalent, as part of their professional preparation for their new post. If they have not done so this could be offered as part of their induction process (see below).

Continuing development and support

Even when the individual has been successfully inducted into a new post, the need for support in it does not end. Staff will need continuing opportunities to develop their skills. This implies that training must be a continuing process throughout a person's service in the school. Involvement in a continuing programme of training is important for the individual's professional development and for the school's continuing improvement. Some of the training may derive from the appraisal process. All will relate to the school's Educational Development Plan (Education Strategic Plan in Wales).

Training is as important for support staff as it is for teachers, so there will be no one in the school whose training needs will be neglected. Governors should be aware of the development in training opportunities open to teachers. The Teacher Training Agency and the National College for School Leadership have developed a range of training appropriate to a series of stages in a teacher's career. These stages include induction, subject leadership, preparation for headship and programmes for newly appointed and experienced headteachers. Teachers preparing for or at these stages in their careers should be encouraged to take part in these schemes. The Church Colleges, working with the National Society, have developed award-bearing courses specifically related to the needs of teachers working in Church schools. These courses can be followed either by attendance at lectures or through distance learning. These colleges have also developed a certificate programme of training for governors. More information on the Church College awards schemes is available from the National Society, from any of the twelve Church of England/Church in Wales Colleges of Higher Education or from the diocesan director of education.

Support for staff goes beyond the provision of training, however. It includes effective leadership and management, both from the school leadership team and from any other colleagues who have leadership responsibilities. Governors also contribute to the development of the school, by their policies, by the setting of realistic but challenging targets and by their general interest in the school. Governors will need to ensure that they act in concert with the school leadership, so that employees perceive that they are led and managed consistently and fairly.

One aspect of good management is concern for the long-term career development of staff. Promotion, internal or external, will be a key aspect of career development as will training, study and skill development. The governing body has a part to play in these issues, as it will be called upon to set policies and to make decisions

that affect the careers of the staff of the school. It is necessary for governors to understand the patterns of career development open to staff in their school. Some career moves need careful preparation; some involve an element of risk taking. It is the task of the school leadership to provide guidance and encouragement to individual employees within the context of the school programme of performance management. Governors need to support this process. Sometimes, particularly in primary schools, the next move in the career and professional development of a teacher will involve a change of school. It is helpful if governors recognize that this is the case and do not seek to discourage teachers from a commitment to their own careers even if this means their school losing an exemplary teacher.

An important aspect of good staff management will be the establishment of an appropriate, fair and affordable pay policy. Governors have limited discretion on the salary and benefits that can be provided for their staff. The policy must stay within the limits set by law and by the LEA Fair funding scheme.

Another aspect of support for staff is the conditions in which they are required to work and the extent to which the school buildings represent a good environment. Governors should do their best to ensure adequate staff facilities. For example:

- Is the staff room large enough to accommodate all the adults who may need to meet for their breaks or for a staff meeting?
- Are the facilities in which the staff work in good condition and well cared for?
- Do those staff who need space to interview people in private have access to appropriate rooms?
- Do those staff who need to store specialist equipment or to change for specialist activities have the facilities they need? Are they adequate for their purpose and well maintained?

Much publicity has been given in recent years to the need for schools to ensure that their security systems are adequate. Staff need to know that they are able to work in an environment where they are as secure as possible from the threat of attack, and that they can summon help quickly should they feel threatened. The measures that the governing body needs to take in any particular school will depend on a careful risk assessment exercise on their school, taking account of advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Education and Skills. If there is a local school watch scheme governors should consider ensuring that their school is a fully participating member of the scheme.

If people have become more aware of safety issues in schools they must also be aware of concerns over the 'bureaucratic burden' on teachers. Schools must be well administered and, of course, teachers have a part to play in that administration, but it is very important that they are enabled to undertake their main role properly. This means that schools must ensure that they use appropriately skilled staff for the different tasks that must be completed. A school should not be organized in such a way that teachers feel forced to undertake tasks that could be done, perhaps even better done, by other people with different skills. Governors will be aware of this issue when they are making policy decisions about staffing and about the workload that they create for teachers by their own ways of working. As money becomes available it may well be more appropriate for governing bodies to develop a staffing structure with more learning support assistants and other support staff than to seek to increase the number of teachers in the absence of rising school rolls.

Finally in this section there are two issues that will have a particular resonance for Church schools. The first is the area of pastoral care and concern for all members of staff. Sometimes there will be circumstances, perhaps within the personal life of a colleague, when an individual member of staff needs a significant level of support and understanding in order to come through a

crisis. Responsible staff will need to act with sensitivity and flexibility in such circumstances. A failure to handle one incident of this nature appropriately will quickly have an impact on a whole range of staff attitudes. 'They wouldn't even let me have time off to go to my mother's funeral', if true, can undermine years of work to generate a family atmosphere within a school.

The second issue is the concern for the spiritual life and development of staff members. Raising this issue should not be taken to imply that schools should be attempting to provide everything that is needed for the spiritual development of the staff. It is, rather, the assumption that Church schools will accept the logic of the argument that suggests that, if the school is committed to the spiritual education and development of its pupils, one of the ways of doing this is to show that the adults in the school take this area of their own life seriously. Governors might ask themselves how their school demonstrates its care for the spiritual life of its staff. What does the school do? What does it facilitate? How is the interest shown?

Appraisal

An important part of any system of staff support is appraisal. Regular meetings to review progress and needs with a senior manager should help staff to maintain a proper view of their performance and value as professionals. This is not just an issue for teaching staff.

There is a national framework for teacher appraisal from which LEAs have developed their own schemes. LEA schemes should include appropriate provision for Church schools. Governors need to be clear about the way in which appraisal operates within their school. They need to be satisfied that all staff have had appropriate training in the appraisal system that is in use in the school. The governing body also needs to ensure that

the process is properly supported by an allocation to ensure that any identified training need can be met. This is a key factor in a satisfactory appraisal process. If the result of an appraisal process is the identification of a training need that is not subsequently met, all that has been achieved is to deskill the person being appraised.

The appraisal of headteachers is of particular importance for two reasons. First, it sets the tone and standard for the appraisals of the rest of the staff. Secondly, it is more complex as it will involve external appraisers. In a Church school one of these external appraisers, at least, should have personal experience of work in a Church school. For many members of staff the Church school ethos and their contribution to it will be an important aspect of the appraisal process.

One of the governors, nominated for this purpose by the governing body, will receive reports on the appraisal process from the headteacher. These reports are provided so that the governing body may be assured that the appraisal process is being monitored effectively. It also means that there is a governor who can speak on the issue of staff training and development needs when the governors are discussing the school budget.

Other governors may be asked to provide evidence to the appraiser, when their responsibilities mean that they work closely with the headteacher or other teacher who is being appraised.

The National Society and a number of dioceses have taken steps to ensure that there are publications and training opportunities for teachers and other staff working in Church schools, which can be used as part of a planned follow-up to appraisal.

Performance management

A related but distinct issue is performance management. All Church schools will need to be implementing the formal aspects

of performance management. They will be seeking to do this within the overall context of their church foundation and their commitment to providing the best possible education in the name of Christ. Where appraisal is usually understood as a process of review and development for the individual, performance management is focused on a continuing need for the school to enable its employees to work at their best level.

Discipline, grievances and competence

In this short introduction to the many issues that arise in any situation when one of these procedures is likely to be used, the focus will be on general principles. Should any head or chairperson feel that a situation is likely to develop in their school, they should seek the advice of their diocesan director of education immediately, and certainly before any decisions are taken. Too often difficult situations have been made worse by people trying to act without first taking advice.

All staff should have signed a contract that contains a procedure to be used in cases where discipline, grievance or competence issues arise. One of the important aspects of this contract is that it should accurately reflect the employment arrangements in the school. Some of the arrangements for dealing with employment issues will be changing as a result of the Education Act 2002. Details of these changes will be found in the specific guidance on employment issues published by the Society. Those changes will affect the way in which disciplinary decisions are made in the first instance, but the member of staff's right to appeal will not be affected. The appeal will normally be heard by a committee of the governing body. In voluntary aided and foundation schools this is because the governing body is the employer, and in voluntary controlled schools it arises from the arrangements for local management of schools where staffing issues are delegated to the governing

body if the school has a delegated budget. In an Anglican school there will be a significant tension for the governors and senior staff of the school in the rare instances when these issues will arise. They will wish to ensure that all staff maintain the highest standards. They will also be concerned that the pastoral needs of all those involved in the situation are responded to appropriately. It is not normally possible for the same person both to be active in the hearings and to provide pastoral care for one of the other parties. Governors will want to be satisfied that arrangements have been put in hand for the pastoral support of all individuals while they deal with those areas of the situation that are their responsibilities as employers. Diocesan directors of education should be asked to provide advice and guidance on all matters to do with these hearings. They can be particularly supportive in assisting the governing body to work through the tensions between the need for formal proceedings and the pastoral care of all the individuals involved in the process.

One of the most difficult problems facing governors in any of these situations is that of being able to demonstrate that they have been fair to all parties. If they have discussed the issues before any hearing they could be perceived as having prejudiced their judgement. It is hard for governors who are concerned for and involved in their school to accept guidance that says, 'The governing body should not discuss this issue at this time, as there could be a formal hearing related to it at some point in the future'. It is, however, essential that they do accept such advice, if it is given.

It is also important that after a hearing those involved in it do not discuss the result or the content with their colleagues on the governing body. There may have to be an appeal and, therefore, a need for governors to be available who have not yet heard the arguments on either side.

Once an issue has been decided by the process, it is essential that all parties stick closely to any agreements that have been made. It

is usually helpful for there to be an agreement about what will be said, if anything, to staff, parents, press or the general enquirer. No one in the governing body or the school leadership should deviate from such an agreement. This can be particularly important if there is significant local or press interest in the issue.

Staff absence

Members of staff may be absent from the school for a number of reasons. These will include attendance at meetings and courses as well as absence related to health issues. For the person responsible for ensuring that every class has a teacher, any absence is inconvenient. For teachers asked to cover for absent colleagues, any absence is costly in terms of time that has been committed to other activities. It is very important that absence is monitored and appropriate steps taken to reduce the impact of absence to a minimum.

Five different types of absence related to health issues may be identified. They each call for a different response. All present challenges to the school.

1. *Normal sickness*, that is, short periods of absence resulting from infections, accidents or other cause within the hazards of everyday life. Except during periods of epidemic, schools normally cope with these occurrences, if not with ease, at least with efficiency. One problem faced by many schools is that many staff, knowing the potential disruption caused by any absence, come into work when they should have remained at home. This can delay their return to full fitness.
2. *Repeated absenteeism*, that is, when a member of staff has a series of short periods of absence, beyond that which can be put down to 'normal sickness'. Staff absence needs to be carefully monitored so that absenteeism can be identified and

appropriate action taken. It may be that such absence is a symptom of excess stress or anxiety. Action to reduce the stress being experienced by the member of staff may improve attendance.

3. *Maternity/paternity leave.* There is a legal framework for such leave, and schools must comply with the law suitably and with some flexibility, to meet the particular needs of staff members.
4. *Long-term sickness* resulting from a medical condition which, once diagnosed and treated, should result in a full recovery being made. These issues will arise from time to time in every school. It is clearly helpful to the school if the member of staff can ensure that the school is informed of the likely length of absence that will be needed to complete the recovery. This information will need to be reviewed from time to time.
5. *Chronic illness* resulting from a permanent condition. There are many teachers who work very effectively while suffering from such conditions. Occasionally they may need a short time away from work for treatment or because the condition has temporarily become worse. Some chronic conditions deteriorate over time. In such cases, where it becomes clear that it is no longer possible for them to continue to work, it may be possible for them to retire early on the grounds of ill health. In such circumstances the school will need to act supportively and with great sensitivity.

All of the above comments assume that the absences are brought on by life chances. A tiny minority of teachers have adopted a lifestyle that leads to absences from school. Stereotypically, those who abuse alcohol would probably fall into this category. Head-teachers will need to act positively to ensure that such teachers do not become a burden on the school. Advice on these issues should always be sought before action is taken in individual cases.

Leaving and retirement

Schools are not just responsible for staff while they are employed at the school. They should be concerned and interested in them after they leave. Two examples will serve to illustrate the point.

- ‘Do you remember Mrs Smith who used to work here? Well she is a headteacher now!’ A teacher with great professional promise begins her career at the school. After a few good years’ work within the school she is promoted to a new post in another school. All those involved with the induction and professional formation of this teacher should take satisfaction not only from her first promotion but also from her subsequent career. It reflects credit on the school.
- ‘I look back on my spell in that school as time well spent.’ When an employee retires it is important that he can be sure that his work has been valued. The retirement party and leaving present are an important part of this process. It may also be important for a senior manager or governor to attempt to put the individual’s career in an appropriate, positive context. Individuals who have given many years to work deserve to be assured that this has been of value and importance, even if there have been differences of view or emphasis.

Students

Many schools will have a regular arrangement whereby students spend time in the school as part of their course. This may include school students on work experience and nursery nurse students and teachers on their period of initial teacher training (ITT). In recent years some schools have seen it as an undesirable and costly burden to take ITT students on placement and there has been debate over the level of remuneration from the higher education

institutions benefiting from a Teacher Training Agency grant. While placements demand time and commitment, they can also bring considerable rewards in a time of difficult recruitment and through the energy, insight and enthusiasm the best trainees can bring, especially to an established staff. Proper arrangements need to be in place to ensure that all those coming into the school as students are inducted into the school's pattern of work and expectations. Equally, care needs to be taken to ensure that their needs are properly catered for so that their time in school is a good experience. The induction of students will need to include an introduction to the school's policies that will affect them. These will include policies about the care of pupils, health and safety issues and confidentiality. For child protection purposes, the school should satisfy itself that the necessary clearances have been obtained by the placing institution. If there is any doubt on this matter the school should insist on taking the appropriate action itself to obtain the necessary clearance. Most students commencing courses after September 2002 at colleges of higher education will have been checked by the college.

Volunteers

Many of the comments made about students will also apply to volunteers. Most, but not all, volunteers in the school are likely to be parents. For most volunteers the school will need to ensure that it has initiated the appropriate clearance checks. There will need to be a period of induction into the school for all volunteers, although for many parents this may be quite short and informal. If the volunteer is undertaking work for which they have no recent training, the issue of the provision of training for the task may arise. It is usually helpful to discuss with the volunteer the boundaries for their work, both in terms of what they will and will not do in the school and in terms of the period for which they will do it. If it has been clear from the start that the volunteer has

agreed to offer two hours a week for a term, then towards the end of that term they can either be thanked for their contribution or a new agreement can be discussed for the following term. Some volunteers give many years of service to a school; others use volunteering at school as a way of re-entering the labour market after a period of caring for their children. Schools gain much benefit from both kinds of volunteer.

This chapter can only provide an introduction to the complex issues involved in the staffing of schools. It is a most important subject on which no one should feel inhibited from seeking advice from specialists in the diocesan or LEA office.



The National Society/Church House Publishing has published the following series of booklets on staffing issues, which develop in detail the themes touched on in this chapter.

Selecting, Appointing and Developing Staff in Church Schools – for employees in Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Voluntary Controlled Schools, Lankshear, David, 2001.

Managing Staff Sickness Absence – Procedures for employees in Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, 2000.

Discipline and Grievance Procedures – for employees in Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, 2000.

Redundancy Procedures – for employees in Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, 2000.

Capability Procedure – for employees in Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools, 2000.

Churches Serving Schools (second edition), Lankshear, David, 2002.

Pocket Prayers for Teachers, Lankshear, David, 2002.

More details on all the issues raised in this chapter can be found on www.churchschools.co.uk.