

Gloucester Diocesan Board of Education (GDBE)

Policy and Procedures: Headteacher and Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) CEO Recruitment

Last reviewed: May 2026

Underpinning Principles

- The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Annual Report (2023-24) indicates that “Inspection evidence supports the notion that strong, knowledgeable and supportive leadership is the single most important element in a successful Church school.” Therefore, GDBE Education Team involvement in supporting the appointment of strong and effective headteachers for our Church schools and MAT CEOs is critical to ensure they are able to live out their foundation and flourish.
- As outlined in the Small Schools Strategy, inappropriate leadership models can lead to a budget position of unsustainability preventing the continuing flourishing of a Church school. Therefore, our involvement at the earliest stages of considering headteacher recruitment must include supporting the school to consider affordability and alternative models such as executive headship.
- The DBE Measure 2021 does not give the DBE direct authority to recruit a headteacher; this power rests with the school’s governing body or academy trust board. However, the Measure does strengthen the DBE’s role, by making its advice and involvement in the recruitment process for Church schools a statutory requirement, as follows:
 - DBE’s Advisory Role: The Measure formalises the responsibility of DBEs to advise governing bodies in any matter, including headteacher appointments. The governing body or academy trust board is required to have “due regard” to this advice, and it would be highly unusual for that advice to be disregarded.
 - Mandated Involvement: The GDBE requires, under this statutory advisory role, that the DDE or a delegated officer must be involved in the recruitment process from the outset, including the agreement of the job description, person specification and advertisements. The GDBE therefore considers the right of involvement in all headship recruitments and the due consideration of their advice statutory. This applies for all headship recruitments including interim, substantive and executive.
 - No Voting Rights: Since the Measure gives advisory powers, the DDE or their representative does not have a voting right on the selection panel itself, with the final decision-making authority resting with the governing body or academy trust. Where there are concerns about that the decision-making of the governing body in any aspect of the life of the school, including headship recruitment, does not support the school to live out its foundation as a Church school, the Measure in certain circumstances gives additional powers to the DBE, via its DDE, to intervene. These powers may be applied if there are concerns about decisions related to headship recruitment which cause such intervention to be deemed proportionate.

- The primary function of the DBE's involvement is to ensure that any headteacher recruitment, both in terms of its contractual structure and the individual recruited is suitable to lead and manage the school in a manner consistent with its foundation as a Church school.
- The significance of the role of the MAT CEO in ensuring the flourishing of Church schools within their trust means that a similar requirement for involvement is made for MAT CEOs as for headteachers.

Process

- Single-academy trusts (SATs), and schools, or their schools trusts (MATs) on their behalf, must inform the DBE, via David Williams (Principal Advisor) as soon as they become aware of headteacher or CEO recruitment. Maintained schools must also inform their local authority (LA).
- The DDE will allocate appropriate resource from within the DDE and Principal Advisor team to support the headship recruitment process.
- To enable this resource allocation, the school, SAT or MAT must not set dates for any aspect of the recruitment activity without consulting David Williams unless it has already been indicated that the DDE does not require GDBE involvement in that element of the recruitment.

Step 1: Identifying Needs and Affordability

- The school governing body/trust must first consider the school's needs in relation to headship recruitment, including budget modelling to confirm the affordability of a suitable model of headship recruitment, which may include executive headship.
- The governing body or trust must obtain the advice of the allocated member of the GDBE Education Team in relation to these decisions.
- The school/trust must confirm that it has appropriate traded service HR support in place for the recruitment process and that it is actively seeking and appropriately responding to this advice at each step of the recruitment process.

Step 2: Creation of Recruitment Pack/Process and Design of the Recruitment Process

- For interim or executive headship roles, there may be appropriate sourcing of resource via the trust/LA. However, the governing body/trust must still have appropriate conversations with appropriate candidates to assess suitability for the role.

- Any recruitment pack must be reviewed by the allocated member of the GDBE Education Team prior to being published.
- This must include agreeing dates for the recruitment process to ensure that appropriate involvement of the GDBE Education Team is possible.
- For maintained schools and SAT headteachers, and for MAT CEOs, it is the expectation that the DDE or an allocated Principal Advisor from the Education Team will be involved in shortlisting and the recruitment process in the advisory capacity detailed above.
- For headteachers of schools within MATs, the DDE may decide, on a case by case basis, that we are satisfied with the robustness of central team process and decision-making and are willing to delegate responsibility for some or all aspects of the process to the trust central team. The reason for this distinction is that it is not uncommon for a MAT to conduct multiple headteacher recruitment processes using the same recruitment processes and same experienced members of the the central team. In such cases where the GDBE has previously been involved in and satisfied with recruitment processes, it is often not proportionate to allocate a GDBE officer as the delegated officer, where the DDE is confident that this can be delegated to experienced central team members. This decision will be based on sampling of previous recruitment processes and discussion in relation to the above steps. The GDBE retains the right, at the DDE's discretion, to require involvement in any headteacher recruitment. Equally, even if the DDE is content to delegate to MAT central staff, the MAT may request GDBE officer involvement where they would regard it as beneficial.

Step 3: Shortlisting and Recruitment Days

- For maintained schools and SAT headteachers and MAT CEOs, where deemed appropriate by the DDE for schools within MATs, an allocated member of the DDE and Principal Advisor Team will attend both shortlisting and recruitment days in an advisory capacity.
- Advice will be clearly stated and focus on evidence of the ability of the candidates to enable the school to flourish and live out its Christian foundation.
- In accordance with the DBE Measure 2021, the governing body should have due regard for this advice. Where the Principal Advisor has concerns that their advice is not being given due regard and that this places the ability of the school to live out its Christian foundation at risk, they must urgently inform the DDE, so that appropriate decision-making can take place with regard to any required intervention under the DBE Measure.

Step 4: After the Recruitment

- Once any offer of a role has been formally accepted, the school must inform David Williams, Principal Advisor, who will ensure that:
 - GDBE records are appropriately updated.
 - The headteacher is invited to attend New Headteacher training, which is a requirement of the GDBE.
 - A headteacher mentor or CEO mentor is allocated if appropriate.
 - The school's Pastoral Lead, or in the case of CEOs the DDE, is alerted to the start date to enable supportive contact to be made early in the candidate's time in post.