

An Investigation of Maintained Schools with a Non-faith Foundation

Colin Buchanan and the Institute of Education,
University of Warwick



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with a Non-faith Foundation*

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Summary

Objectives

The aim of this study is to identify good practice in the way foundations support maintained schools with a non-faith foundation both through the governing body and the wider range of activities that they engage with in partnership with their schools. The report's findings will help inform the continuing development of policy for trust schools (foundation schools with a foundation).

Methodology

The study was limited to maintained schools with a non-faith foundation. The study consisted of:

- a literature review of school governance issues
- data analysis of schools with a foundation
- postal survey of all schools with a foundation and their foundations
- in-depth interviews with headteachers and chair of governors of selected schools.

The number of maintained schools with a non-faith foundation is approximately 100.

Key findings and conclusions

The report's key findings are set out below:

- Schools with a foundation have few common characteristics in terms of location, size, pupil diversity or deprivation. They are however predominantly secondary schools with a significant over-representation of grammar schools amongst them.
- Good governance generally has a positive impact on school development and improvement. As foundations appoint governors they have an important role to play in supporting good governance and hence school development. Schools reported that foundation governors were more or at least equally as effective as their other governors.
- Foundation governors made up a quarter of all governors in responding schools and in only 15% of cases did they constitute a majority. Sixty percent of foundation governors were male, compared to the over-representation of women generally found in governing bodies, and there was a 6% vacancy rate amongst foundation governors compared to 11% generally.
- The techniques used by foundations in selecting new governors ranged from use of the "old boy network" to undertaking a rigorous needs assessment. Former pupils were often sought out to provide a degree of continuity.
- The changing nature of the foundation's school sometimes led to anomalies in choice of governors. For example, while this study is concerned with non-faith foundations, some of these foundations were originally faith related. This meant that either faith organisations were still involved in the selection of governors or that governors were selected on the basis of their faith or role in the faith community.

There were, for example, instances of local clergy automatically being appointed as foundation governors.

- There were sometimes tensions between foundation and other governors. This was sometimes down to foundation governors having very different backgrounds than parent, staff and local authority governors but also because of the different time horizons they often considered. Foundation governors often took a long-term view while parent and staff governors had shorter-term perspectives.
- Self-governing schools are most effective where the governing body reflects the diversity of the community it serves. Over a third of schools stated that their foundation governors did not reflect this diversity as they were more likely to be male, older (often retired), from a higher social class and less likely to be from an ethnic minority. A quarter of foundations also reported that their governors did not reflect local diversity.
- Half the foundations monitored the performance of their foundation governors. This ranged from checking attendance at meetings to reviewing minutes through to an annual presentation by the foundation governors to the foundation.
- The role of foundations in the life of their school was heavily dependent on the nature of the foundation. Some foundations have effectively come to the end of their life. In one case the foundation governors were the foundation and there was no back-up support or resources to call upon. In other cases the foundation was backed by a substantial organisation and funds.
- Foundations and schools reported that the foundations' main involvement in the school was financial. This level of financial support ranged from significantly funding the rebuilding of the school to the provision of prizes and bursaries to students. Some of this smaller scale funding was seen as a key element in maintaining the tradition and ethos of the school.
- Foundations were also able to appoint governors with particular skills to support the school, in particular in finance and law and less often education. Where the foundation was backed by a high profile organisation it was also able to lever in additional financial support for particular projects and obtain access to key decision makers at local, regional and even national level.
- Foundations were, less often, also able to help obtain access to major employers for pupil work placements and links into universities.
- In some cases foundations owned or had access to external sites such as residential centres or camping sites which the schools had access to, which greatly enriches the curriculum.
- Overall half of school respondents stated that their foundation had a significantly beneficial effect on their school, around a third reported a marginal beneficial effect and the balance reported that it had no effect.
- In the vast majority of cases it was felt that parents and pupils were not aware of the role of the foundation.

The study's findings provide some clear messages for trust school policy, some of which have already been addressed in the enabling legislation.

- Longevity is an important factor, with many of the schools having had a link with their foundations for over 400 years. Over that time the nature of the schools and foundations has changed but this has not always been reflected in the nature of relationship between them.
- Organisations wishing to support schools need to consider that they are entering a very long-term commitment. That commitment has to take on board that there will be future changes in both how the school and its trust will develop. There is a need to continually review the relationship between the school and its foundation/trust and to encourage governing bodies to be pro-active in ending a relationship (as the legislation allows) if the trust is no longer able to play the role originally envisaged.
- Given the importance of good governance it is vital that trusts/foundations appoint governors with the right skills and attributes and who are prepared to make a long-term commitment to the role. This requires a rigorous needs assessment, selection and monitoring process.
- While it is important to have the right mix of skills on the governing body it is also important that it represents the diversity of the community served by the school and is conversant with the local community's issues and aspirations. Selecting the right balance of foundation governors is a major challenge for foundations / trusts.
- The ability of the foundation/trust to provide support to its governors can greatly improve the working of governors and give them greater confidence in their work. It is important for the trust / foundation to take an active interest and provide adequate support to its foundation governors.
- The ethos of a school, which is strongly influenced by its foundation/trust, is an important factor in parental choice. Yet the role of the foundation is often not known or misunderstood. It would be beneficial for foundations/trusts to raise their profile with parents, staff and pupils.
- The ability of foundations to support their schools is very dependent on the resources available to them and the nature of the foundation. Given the generally positive view of foundations it would be beneficial if foundations / trusts are able to be involved in the life of the school beyond just appointing governors. Where foundations are most appreciated is where they can bring something additional to the school, whether that is financial resources, the ability to open doors into higher education or employers or provision of specialist advice.

2 Introduction

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aim of this study is to identify good practice in the way foundations support maintained schools with a non-faith foundation both through the governing body and the wider range of activities that they engage with in partnership with their schools. The report's findings will help inform the continuing development of policy for trust schools.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The study was limited to maintained schools with a non-faith foundation. These include voluntary controlled and voluntary aided as well as foundation schools with a foundation. Future references to schools with a foundation should be taken as being defined as schools of this nature. (Figure 1.1 outlines the key features of the main school types. It should also be noted that the majority of foundation schools do not have a foundation.) The foundations appoint foundation governors who are responsible for maintaining the ethos of the school in line with the ethos of the foundation.

Figure 2.1: Main types of maintained school

Community school: The local authority owns the school's land and buildings, employs the school staff, is the admissions authority and fully funds the school for both revenue and capital expenditure.

Foundation school: The governing body employs the school staff and is the admissions authority. Where the school has a foundation, the school's land and buildings are owned by trustees or by a charitable foundation; where the school does not have a foundation, its land and buildings are owned by the governing body. Foundation schools are fully funded by local authorities for both revenue and capital expenditure. However, few foundation schools have a foundation.

Voluntary aided school: Established by voluntary bodies and the school's land and buildings are normally owned by trustees or a charitable foundation. The school's governing body receive their revenue funding from the local authority, and are responsible in law for providing capital funding, although in practice they receive the majority of their capital funding either from the local authority via strategic capital programmes or direct from central government with the school usually being required to contribute 10% to capital costs. The governing body also employs the school staff and is the admissions authority.

Voluntary controlled school: Established by voluntary bodies and the school's land and buildings are normally owned by trustees or a charitable foundation. They are fully funded for both revenue and capital costs by local authorities. The local authority employs the school staff and is the admissions authority.

2.2.2 The study consisted of:

- a literature review of school governance issues
- data analysis of schools with a foundation
- postal survey of all schools with a foundation and their foundations
- in-depth interviews with headteachers and chair of governors of selected schools.

2.2.3 The number of maintained schools with a non-faith foundation is approximately 100.

Literature review

2.2.4 There is an extensive literature on school governance and good practice, although limited material on schools with a foundation. We undertook a short literature review setting out the main issues relating to good governance. The review forms chapter 2.

Data collection

2.2.5 Using data provided by the Department we undertook an analysis of the characteristics of schools with a foundation. This covered:

- type of school, (primary, grammar, comprehensive)
- size
- teacher pupil ratios
- proportion of children eligible and taking up free school meals
- proportion of children with special educational needs both with and without statements
- ethnicity
- English as a additional language; and
- exclusions.

2.2.6 The analysis is set out in chapter 3.

Postal surveys

2.2.7 The next stage was a postal survey of all schools with a foundation and their foundations. The topics covered in the questionnaire included:

- the character of the foundation
- the level and the nature of contact between the school and its foundation
- the composition and effectiveness of governing body

- background composition of the school's governing body and its impact on the community it serves; and
- the role of the foundation and its impact on the school and how it is perceived by staff, parents and pupils.

2.2.8 The results of the survey are discussed in chapter 4 and a copy of the questionnaires can be found in Appendix B. In addition a telephone survey was undertaken of foundations who had completed the survey to obtain more detailed information on some of their responses in relation to the support provided by the foundation.

Case studies

2.2.9 A much smaller population of schools than originally envisaged and a low response rate from schools and foundations to take part in more detailed case studies, led to a change in emphasis towards a desk study. So rather than detailed case studies of schools, a small number of interviews were held with headteachers and chairs of governors. The results are presented in chapter 5.

Conclusions and findings

2.2.10 Chapter 6 brings together the key findings of the study and our recommendations and conclusions.

3 Literature review

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 An important role of foundations is the appointment of foundation governors. There is minimal literature about the effectiveness of foundation governors although there is some in relation to faith schools and the new academies which is touched on in section D below. In the main therefore this chapter provides a brief overview of the literature on effective governance generally.
- 3.1.2 Since the 1986 Education Act the governing bodies of schools in England and Wales have had a major role in the development, maintenance and management of schools. This increased function has been matched by increasing demands upon their time and expertise and an increased awareness of accountability to the communities they serve. There are two aspects of effective governance within schools. The first is governance as the system related to the national and local political context and educational philosophy. The second is more localised and concerned with roles and responsibilities related to the school as a learning community. This review uses governing as the process of evolving and implementing external and internal policy.

3.2 Governance

A. *Self-governing schools*

- 3.2.2 Effectiveness in governance is judged by the way in which the education system delivers outcomes that meet individual as well as stated national and local political objectives. Overall, it is an attempt to strengthen local democracy, seen as empowerment and as a means of supporting community cohesion.
- 3.2.3 Subsequent legislation (Education Acts especially 1997, 1998, 2002 and 2005, and Education Inspections Act 2006) has minimised some levels of central government involvement in local education and set a monitoring rather than controlling role for local authorities whilst leaving schools to be allegedly 'self-governing' providing that their standards are deemed to be satisfactory by the independent Ofsted. This legislation has enhanced local ties through a range of new school organisations including community and foundation schools, which may or may not be faith schools.
- 3.2.4 However, Harris and Ranson argue that although the local link has been strengthened, the parallel development of academies financed by a combination of central government and diocesan and corporate funding may inhibit local governance and the decline of stakeholder involvement. This is because of the power of the foundation in appointing governors. There are however, examples of schools where local voice is strongly heard. Cummings et al (2007), in reporting on the pilot extended schools developed to enhance full service provision within localities, point to the encouragement of 'voice' in a number of ways. These include shared educational and leisure provision, local parenting classes, and outreach activities used as a catalyst for the involvement of those who might otherwise be disenfranchised.

- 3.2.5 Effective governance occurs where there is interest in the work of the school in its community and empowered local voice in both voting for and serving as governors.

B. Involvement

- 3.2.6 There has been a marked movement away from the political governors as appointees of local authorities as seen in the pre-1986 period to 'school first' people.
- 3.2.7 There are many examples of encouragement being given to those within the community who might become governors but these come from three primary sources - as parents, as community members, and as political appointments made by local authorities.
- 3.2.8 Gann (1998) outlines strategies that might fill parent and community governor vacancies including local publicity, personal invitation and joint parent and governor activities that could prove attractive to some people.
- 3.2.9 Ranson et al (2003) reporting on a sample of 2000 governors noted that they were predominantly altruistic seeking to support the school or to give something back to the community but noted, as had Thody (2000), that most governors were white, middle class and male and that there is marked under representation of women and ethnic minority groups. However, research in three disadvantaged areas in York by Dean et al (2007), supported the findings of more recent research that some groups in the community are more likely to be involved in governing bodies, and that women in particular are over-represented. Anderson (2000) reported that there were increasing problems of recruitment for governors of all backgrounds for schools in disadvantaged areas (p.380).
- 3.2.10 Ellis (2003), following interviews with governors from minority groups, suggests that representation would be increased if publicity material overcame the white middle aged male view of governors, if expenses were met as a matter of course, and if attempts were made to accommodate those available, but committed to working at times when governing bodies usually met. It could be argued that these requirements need to be met for all social groups for schools working in challenging circumstances (Creese and Earley, 1999, p.90-98). The case studies illustrated in Cummings et al (2007) and Coleman (2006) show that where schools have developed their neighbourhood links and are seen as the focus for the community, problems of recruitment have been overcome.
- 3.2.11 Effective involvement occurs where there is active encouragement for all sectors or society to be interested in the school and where there is a perceived opportunity for service in a variety of ways.

C. Representativeness

- 3.2.12 Some attempts have been made to ascertain the effect of governor 'representativeness' on school development. Ellis (2003) argues that if the governors are truly representative they reflect the ethnic, socio-economic and cultural contexts of the community served by the school. Glendinning et al (2004) show that whilst ideally this may be true, in practice:

'governing bodies divided themselves informally into a small active 'core', who did most of the work, and a less-active periphery who made fewer contributions. The core group was even less likely to reflect the local population than the governing body as a whole. It seems that many people from non-professional, minority or marginalised backgrounds were daunted by the prospect of joining governing bodies or playing a leading part in their work.' (p.13)

3.2.13 May (2007) supports this view and suggests that there is a 'triangle of engagement' whereby the higher the level of engagement required from participants, the fewer people there are who are willing or able to make this commitment and notes the negative impact of this in deprived socio-economic contexts. This is also reflected by Gibbons and Silva (2006) pointing to more effective governor involvement because of the ownership evident in faith schools.

3.2.14 Effective involvement occurs where governors reflect the community context of the school and where they recognise that they are representative of the community

D. New structures

3.2.15 Since 2002 a range of new school structures have emerged. In particular quasi independent 'academies' have increasingly been established. The role of governors in these schools is of a particular kind because they are the appointees of the sponsoring body be it faith based or commercial in origin. Woods et al (2007) outline the 'public entrepreneurialism' involved and note the positive impact that sponsors have in appointing strongly committed local people as governors for whom the school exists as part of local community empowerment.

3.2.16 Hatcher (2006) also echoes the positive gains from such appointments also noting that some governors combine the role of trustees of the school with that of governance. Taylor (2007) suggests that this explains the heightened effectiveness of many academies and specialist schools because of the linkage between sponsorship, the quest for improvement and heightened accountability. Paton (2006) argues that governance is particularly effective in faith schools where there is a cohesive culture and context. He does however, note the negative effect of governor power, e.g. in the teaching of creationism Stewart (2007).

3.2.17 Overall, Marley and Stewart (2007) argue that there is some lack of governor oversight and accountability within these new school structures and that they lack external advice and supervision. In this environment governors may not be able to realise the full impact of their role.

3.2.18 Federations of schools are also being quickly developed. These may be either 'hard' i.e. with a single governing body, or 'soft' retaining individual school identity and governance. Ireson (2007) and Glatter and Harvey (2006) outline the importance of governor support for federations to be effective, and point to the importance of having a single, overarching governing body rather than having a separate governing body for each school. They stress the importance of community ownership of the change but Glatter and Harvey (2006) show

that in four out of six federations, school improvement had been a direct result of effective governance activity and involvement.

- 3.2.19 Effective governance is in an important contributor to effectiveness in the newer school structures. This is largely because the schools are dependent upon sponsorship and considerable preparatory plus developmental activity that necessitates active governor involvement.

3.3 Governing

A. Roles

- 3.3.2 The school centred approach, evident from the key provisions from the school Standards and Framework Act 1998 state; 'the conduct of a maintained school shall be under the direction of the school's governing body' [Section 38(1)] and that 'The governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school.' [Section 38(2)].

- 3.3.3 As time has progressed schools have moved from the political to a corporate culture but much depends on the relationship between headteacher and governors (for example as stressed by Dean, 2001; Creese and Earley, 1999; Gann, 1998). Several typologies explore this relationship. Bush and Gamage (2001) distinguish between 'inactive' governors who delegate many functions to the headteacher and staff, and 'pro-active' where they expect to be involved in both policy and operational leadership. Creese and Earley (1999) offer 'abdicators, adversaries, supporters and partners' (p.9). Whilst this shows relationships it only hints at the way in which governors' work. Ranson et al (2003) offer four models of involvement which explore this:

- Deliberative forum - allowing questioning but reserving authority to the headteacher
- Consultative sounding board - expecting headteachers to bring policies for approval
- Executive board - partnership where governors scrutinise policies and resources to support the school
- Governing body - governors additionally propose policy even though meeting school disagreement.'

- 3.3.4 Successful governors are more concerned to support their headteacher in implementing change; organise their support for the school in the most effective way, usually through the work of subcommittees; promote the school through their interest and representation in the community, and keep parents fully informed of developments and expectations (Ofsted, 1997 p.15). To do so though, they may have to face difficult issues in a resolute way where there is ineffective leadership or teaching, in budgetary matters and in health and safety issues. In doing this, definition of the precise role of each participant is necessary to prevent misplaced procedures, misguided talk, and even subversive action.

- 3.3.5 Ofsted note a tendency to a positive correlation between the effective governance and the attainment of schools because of the effect on the quality of teaching, pupil behaviour, and the quality of leadership and mismanagement. (Ofsted, 2002) The work of governors has been proved to be more difficult in areas of disadvantage, especially for secondary schools and as they have a greater tendency to experience being in need of 'special measures', their governing bodies are often under yet greater pressure.
- 3.3.6 Shearn (1995) identifies the particular role of the chair of governors as fundamental to good relationships in any school and notes that where there is mutual agreement about the respective roles of headteacher, chair and governors (even though they may not accord with any standard pattern) a stable situation exists. Whilst this may be good for relationships, as Ofsted subsequently showed (2001, 2002), it may not be in the best interests of achieving higher educational standards.
- 3.3.7 Effective school governing bodies have a clear understanding of their general role and the way in which it relates to the school community. Effective chairpersons know their school, establish working relationships with headteachers that are clear, coherent and structured.

B. Leadership

- 3.3.8 In fulfilling their roles, which are distinguished from the detail of responsibilities there is a distinction between governance and management. Cuckle et al (1998) suggest that:

'By governance is meant a concern with the broad outlines which would shape the ethos of the school (regarded as the right and proper domain of the governors). By management is meant the daily running of the school which would translate the guidelines and ethos into practice (considered the business of the headteacher and staff).' (p.20)

- 3.3.9 This raises questions about the leadership role of governors.

'For many school governing bodies, leadership is still something that is largely perceived and practised through the headteacher and senior colleagues. The research findings suggest that headteachers had a rather limited concept of the role of the school's governing body but that many welcomed governors and wanted them to play, in collaboration with themselves and others, a leadership role. It is also apparent however that there is a clear gap between the desired state and the practice on the ground. It is not always easy for school governing bodies (or boards of non-executive directors) to operate strategically. It is often said of school governors that they feel more comfortable giving support and offering advice than they do in helping to decide the school's strategy and direction.' (Earley, 2003, p.364)

- 3.3.10 Similar views are expressed as a result of work with governing bodies in disadvantaged areas.

'Although government guidance expects governors to act as critical friends to headteachers and as strategic leaders of their schools, the reality is more complex than this. By and large, the governors in our study felt happier offering support rather than challenge, and relied on heads to set a strategic direction for the school. They also found it difficult to articulate any clear and detailed vision of 'service quality' on which to base their leadership. However, they did have a strong and principled sense of acting in the interests of the school and of the children within it. They were, therefore, prepared to battle external threats to these interests and their support for headteachers was conditional on the head, too, acting in this common interest.' (Dean et al, 2007, p.ix)

- 3.3.11 How then, do they lead? In effective schools this is through leadership by following - recognising the leadership role of the headteacher but then showing loyalty in living the vision for the school.

- 3.3.12 The role of the chair of governors is rather different. In community terms he or she is seen as the link with the school and expected to achieve change if it is thought necessary. Shearn (1995) offers a typology of school governor leadership hinging on a definition of the locus of power. This passes from the headteacher taking the major role (through governors delegation, personal determination, or default); through responsibility shared between headteacher and chair of governors on an implicitly agreed basis, either with a stronger nurturing or monitoring role, to a contested role which is often characterised by conflict. His evidence is that effective schools emerge where the intermediate position is held with headteacher and chair in agreement and then with either overt or implied negotiation over respective responsibilities. (p.178)

- 3.3.13 The nature of this relationship determines the way in which governors fulfil their responsibilities.

- 3.3.14 Effective governing bodies have considered the leadership role they, and the headteacher, fulfil and achieved a modus operandi which appears to offer more where there is a balance between the nurturing and monitoring role.

C. Establishing values

- 3.3.15 Effective governing bodies have played a full part in the determination and dissemination of values within schools. Donnelly (1999) showed that school governance cannot be separated from the societal culture within which it develops (p.278) and that effective schools integrate the two. Ofsted (2001) note that:

'Where governors and the headteacher have worked effectively to clarify the school's aims, levels of consultation have been good, involving teaching and non-teaching staff, and in some cases, parents and pupils. Involving pupils and parents often helps governors to show the wider school community that they are serious about establishing a positive set of values that will guide the school's future development, and this can reassure everyone that the school's weaknesses are being tackled from a fundamental level.' (Ofsted 2001, p.24)

- 3.3.16 The values of the school are often played out in the way in which the governors work with the headteacher and senior staff, all staff, parents and especially in the appeal committees set up to deal with staff discipline, pupil discipline and admissions. Although the guidance is most frequently that provided by the LA, underpinning values determine procedures (Dean, 2001).
- 3.3.17 Effective governors are involved in the process of determining and implementing values but require understanding of staff and pupil and parent community to assist them in this task.

D. Monitoring and evaluation

- 3.3.18 The role of monitoring and evaluation is one offering a great deal of challenge to untrained governors. Ofsted outline the requirements as follows:

'Where governors monitor the school's policies effectively, they have a list of what ought to be in place, the time each policy was ratified, and a rolling programme for reviewing the state of these policies over time. The school improvement plan will already clarify which policies are a priority for review or development this year and possibly beyond, and governors will know which policies were reviewed the previous year. There will usually be areas of the school's work that are low priority, and it may well be that some policies needing to be updated have to wait, because of other pressures. However, given a systematic approach to policy review, based on sound development planning, governors can be confident they have structures to address any areas needing attention.' (Ofsted 2001, p.28)

- 3.3.19 Governors have to rely on the headteacher and other staff for an interpretation of the plethora of data now becoming available. Earley (2000) lists the range of sources and then comments:

'It could be argued that in the space of only a few years schools and their governing bodies have gone from a situation of a paucity of data about school performance (particularly comparative data) to one where there was now the danger of there being too much. Schools and their governing bodies were beginning to talk about such things as target-setting, benchmarking, baseline testing and 'added value'. For many schools and governors it was new territory for both and they were learning together... governors were able, however, 'to get the flavour of the developments that have taken place' and active involvement in the monitoring process was said to help keep governors informed about what was happening in school and improved their general understanding of factors affecting both pupils and staff.... As a result of their involvement in action planning, some governing bodies had increased their participation in the school and this was seen as a very positive development by both governors and school staff. (p.207-8)'

- 3.3.20 Effective governing bodies establish systems of monitoring and evaluation using professional guidance in the interpretation of data from all sources, participating in the life of subject departments and assessing the progress being made to the attainment of stated objectives.

E. Finance

- 3.3.21 McClure (1998) saw financial control as the most contentious area of governor involvement partly because it was an area in which many governors felt more confident, and partly because many headteachers were not prepared to let control of the purse strings pass elsewhere (Glover and Levacic, 2007). However, in the past decade governors have developed closer understanding of staffing management through performance management with its demands for much more documentation of decision making and its relationship to stated criteria, and of considerable financial autonomy through the delegation of capital funding to school level.
- 3.3.22 Recently the use of public finance initiatives (PFI) has introduced a new element into this. Harris and Ranson (2005) show how this approach to capital funding has subverted 'the practice of public democratic accountability of the public sphere' (2005, p.584). Edwards and Shaoul (2003, p.381) illustrate this in charting developments at Pimlico school where governors were excluded from the preparation of the business case. It is only where individual governors have been strong enough to campaign for inclusion that this vital monitoring role has been fulfilled.
- 3.3.23 Effective governors are aware of the financial framework within which the school operates and use their ability to work with external agencies to protect the best interests of the school.

F. Admission policies

- 3.3.24 The role of governors in admission policy development has been scrutinised in recent years. Wise et al (2001) showed how governors can be faced with political pressure as they endeavour to maintain their school recruitment in the face of opposition either from within the LA or from other schools anxious to inhibit their growth. West and Hind (2003) show how governors (with or without headship support) have evolved criteria for places that limit school attractiveness to certain groups, or enable them to be selective in accepting local pupils e.g. 'the first 100 nearest of band A academic ability'. The evolution of admission policies offers an area for contention within governing bodies but recent changes to the law with a fuller monitoring role for the LA and diocesan authorities will remove much of this by ensuring clarity and conformity from governing bodies as custodians of school admissions.
- 3.3.25 Effective governors develop admission policies with professional advice but then ensure that they are impartially implemented.

G. Accountability

- 3.3.26 Governors are part of the accountability system within education in England and Wales. This is recognised by the current Ofsted inspection system which now looks more deeply at the way in which governors fulfil the triple role of critical friend, monitoring and evaluating and offering community accountability. Governors fulfil this role in the way outlined above. Effective governors however, build upon their relationships with the school and community to enhance understanding of the school its achievements and its problems. This has required considerable work by effective governors. In 1994

Deem argued that the notion of local accountability was being inhibited by the market ethic and the potential widening of catchment areas.

- 3.3.27 Farrell and Law (1999) further assessed the concept of accountability and argued that effective schools promote this through ensuring that parents are fully involved in all policy discussion, reporting back to them at convenient times and in convenient places and encouraging participation. Until 2005 the annual parents meeting was considered to be the vehicle for the tendering of accountability but poor attendance overall and lack of community interest means that the compulsory requirement has been withdrawn. As a result they contend that more pro-active action is needed by the governing body as a whole (p.15)
- 3.3.28 Effective governing bodies recognise their accountability to local and national constituencies and develop means of demonstrating this in action especially in the local community.

H. Impact

- 3.3.29 There is limited literature on the impact that governing bodies have on the outcomes of the schools they work with. The Ofsted reports (2001, 2002) note that successful schools tend to be supported by effective governors with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities developed through monitoring activities. Impact is affected by the relationship between headteacher and governors and Shearn (1995) notes that when there is agreement about the roles, which can be in different forms, a stable situation exists but when there is no agreement about role boundaries instability and, potentially, conflict arise.
- 3.3.30 The work of individual governors may have considerable impact as shown in an investigation of the work of Special Educational Need governors in the Isle of Wight (2006). The school governors One Stop Shop recruitment agency suggests that recruitment backed by training can make a difference to the impact of the governing body. In evaluating the work of the agency Punter and Adams (2006) comment:
- 'While any data must be used with extreme care since any change in the Ofsted rating could be attributable to a multiplicity of factors, the returns showed that when the SGOSS-recruited governors were appointed, and on the 7-point scale used by Ofsted prior to September 2005, 41 governing bodies were graded as "unsatisfactory", "poor" or "very poor" and six were graded "inadequate". The equivalent figures for inspections that occurred once the new governors were in post were only one school graded as "unsatisfactory" and 24 as "inadequate". At the other end of the scale, the number of "excellent/outstanding" schools rose from 17 "excellent" and 5 "outstanding" to 12 "excellent" and 33 "outstanding". (p.3)*
- 3.3.31 Ranson et al (2005) ask whether there is a relationship between good governance seen as monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation, and school performance. Their view is that where these functions are fulfilled schools do improve and thus the impact of governors could be proven. However, they suggest that such functions could effectively be carried out by headteachers and other professionals - the function may be more important than governors undertaking the tasks (p.321).

3.3.32 Effective governors have an impact on the work and achievement of their schools where they are active in the monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation of the all aspects of the organisation.

3.4 Conclusion

3.4.1 With the growth of trust schools and more diocesan and corporate-sponsored academies and federations of schools, the role of the governors will become even more important. Earley (2003) in a review of governor roles and responsibilities contends that their focus should be on ensuring effective leadership, performance management and a revised external advisory function. Similar views are expressed by the Way Forward group (2001), who argue for greater local responsiveness and the capacity to interpret role according to need. This is met in part by arrangements for newer governance in trust schools and academies. However, with an increased part being played by businesses, churches, faith groups or other voluntary bodies in governing schools much more attention needs to be paid to context specific governance.

3.4.2 The local changes wrought as a result of Extended School provision (Cummings et al, 2007), and the generally favourable reporting on governors by Ofsted (with over 93% judged satisfactory or better) suggests that there is great potential for school improvement through the new and emerging school governance arrangements.

4 The schools

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter provides an overview of the characteristics of the 114 maintained schools with a non-faith foundation identified by the Department. The vast majority of schools with a foundation are secondary schools with only eight primary schools. A significant proportion of the former are grammar schools (22% of secondary schools). The grammar schools are more likely to be single sex (39%) compared to the comprehensive schools (13%). However, it is clear from the analysis below that there is no common characteristic of a school with a foundation compared to schools generally.

4.2 Key points from the data - Primary schools

4.2.1 Comparing the primary schools with a foundation against primary schools generally there are some marked differences, table 3.1. However, the sample size of the schools with a foundation is too small to draw any conclusions from, and the differences are probably mainly influenced by the location rather than the nature of the schools themselves. The schools with a foundation tend to be in more rural areas.

4.2.2 The primary schools with a foundation range in size from 33 to 621 pupils with pupil teacher ratios ranging from 11.8 to 27.5. The average school roll for schools with a foundation at 284 is markedly higher than the national average of 239 but the average pupil teacher ratio at 21.7 is virtually identical.

4.2.3 The average proportion of children eligible for free school meals in the schools with a foundation, at 6.3%, is just 40% of the average across all primary schools. Whilst those with SEN statements is only slightly less in schools with a foundation (1.0% compared with a national average of 1.4%), the proportion of non-statemented SEN children in schools with a foundation (9.8%) is virtually half the national average of 18.1%. Schools with a foundation also have a higher proportion of children who are white British (89.5% compared to 75.9% nationally) and only a fifth of the proportion of children who have English as an additional language.

Table 4.1: Analysis of characteristics of primary schools with a non-faith foundation compared to all primary schools

	Infant and junior schools with a non-faith foundation	National average for all primary schools
Total	8	
Co-ed	8	
Boys	0	
Girls	0	
<i>School roll</i>		
Lowest number	33	
Highest number	621	
Average	284	239
<i>Pupil / teacher ratio</i>		
Lowest	11.8	
Highest	27.5	
Average	21.7	21.6
<i>% Taking FSM</i>		
Lowest	0	
Highest	25.6	
Average	5.7	
<i>% Eligible FSM</i>		
Lowest	0.0	
Highest	37.4	
Average	6.3	15.5
<i>%SEN Statemented</i>		
Lowest	0.0	
Highest	5.9	
Average	1.0	1.4
<i>%SEN no statement</i>		
Lowest	2.6	
Highest	18.1	
Average	9.8	18.1
<i>% White British</i>		
Lowest	72.1	
Highest	99.4	
Average	89.5	75.9
<i>% EAL</i>		
Lowest	0.0	
Highest	7.5	
Average	3.1	14.4
<i>Exclusion</i>		
Average	0	

4.3 Key points from the data - Secondary schools

- 4.3.1 The main difference at secondary school level is not so much between schools with a foundation and all schools but between grammar and comprehensive schools. Table 3.2 provides a detailed comparison by grammar, comprehensive by age structure and all secondary schools. Table 3.3 presents the data by grammar, all comprehensives with a foundation and all secondary schools while table 3.4 provides a comparison between all secondary schools with a foundation and all secondary schools.
- 4.3.2 Again there is considerable variation in size of school ranging from 296 to 2,214 pupils and with pupil teacher ratios which range from 13.0 to 29.5. However, average teacher pupil ratios across all schools with a foundation are broadly in line with national averages (16.2 compared to 16.1 respectively).
- 4.3.3 The proportion of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) is low within the grammar schools (from 0.1 to 5.9%) but for the comprehensives it ranges from 1.2 to 55.9%. The average for all comprehensive schools with a foundation is 10.9% and all secondary schools with a foundation 8.9% both of which are lower than the national average of 12.8%. Take up of free school meals across the schools with a foundation averages 72% of those eligible.
- 4.3.4 The proportion of children with special educational needs (SEN) again varies considerably. For grammar schools the proportion of statemented children ranges from 0 to 1.2% and 0.1 to 8.2% for non-statemented. For comprehensive schools the figures range for 0 to 7.6% for statemented and 4.4 to 52.5% for non-statemented. The average proportion of statemented children in the comprehensives is 2.2% and 1.8% for all secondary schools with a foundation compared with a national average of 2.0%. For non-statemented children the proportions are 14.0% for the comprehensives with a foundation, 11.7% for all secondary schools with a foundation compared with 17.8% nationally.
- 4.3.5 Ethnic diversity is in evidence across all schools including grammar schools, the average percentage of white British pupils is 81.8% for grammar schools and 81.5% for the comprehensive schools against an average of 78.9% nationally. The lowest proportion of white British in grammar schools is 22.3% and 6.1% in comprehensive schools.
- 4.3.6 The range of children with EAL is also large with up to 56.5% for the grammar and 88.6% for comprehensive schools. The average for grammar schools is 6.5% and 9.8% for comprehensive schools compared with 10.8% nationally.
- 4.3.7 In summary, schools with a foundation can be found across England in areas of both prosperity and deprivation, in some of the most and least ethnically diverse locations and are both large and small.

Table 4.2: Analysis of characteristics of secondary schools with a non-faith foundation (by type of school and age structure) compared to all secondary schools

	Secondary schools with a non-faith foundation				National average for all secondary schools
	Grammar	Comp 13-18	Comp 11-18	Comp 11-16	
Total	23	7	58	18	
Co-ed	14	7	50	15	
Boys	6	0	5	3	
Girls	3	0	3	0	
School roll					
Lowest no	542	946	600	296	
Highest no	1354	2214	2104	1218	
Average	922	1457	1239	727	975
Pupil / teacher ratio					
Lowest	13.9	14.4	13.4	13.0	
Highest	17.5	18.9	29.5	20.5	
Average	16.0	16	16.2	16.8	16.1
% Taking FSM					
Lowest	0.1	1.3	0.5	1.1	
Highest	3.7	4.4	43.4	36.0	
Average	1.1	2.5	7.4	11.5	
% Eligible FSM					
Lowest	0.1	2.9	1.2	1.8	
Highest	5.9	9.1	55.9	41.6	
Average	1.6	4.9	10.0	16.0	12.8
%SEN Statemented					
Lowest	0.0	0.8	0.2	0.0	
Highest	1.2	3.1	7.6	6.6	
Average	0.3	1.8	2.0	2.8	2.0
%SEN no statement					
Lowest	0.1	4.7	4.4	9.3	
Highest	8.2	14	52.5	45.7	
Average	3.5	8.3	12.8	19.9	17.8
% White British					
Lowest	22.3	93	6.1	25.9	
Highest	93.6	97.6	98.6	99.4	
Average	81.8	94.9	81.2	77.2	78.9
EAL					
Lowest	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	
Highest	56.5	3.9	88.6	51.0	
Average	6.5	1.8	10.3	11.1	10.8
Exclusion					
Average	2.0	10.5	8.5	18.7	

Table 4.3: Analysis of characteristics of secondary schools with a non-faith foundation (by type of school) compared to all secondary schools

	Secondary schools with a non-faith foundation		National Average for all secondary schools
	Grammar	Comprehensives	
Total	23	83	
Co-ed	14	72	
Boys	6	8	
Girls	3	3	
School roll			
Lowest number	542	296	
Highest number	1354	2214	
Average	922	1146	975
Pupil / teacher ratio			
Lowest	13.9	13.0	
Highest	17.5	29.5	
Average	16	16.3	16.1
Taking FSM			
Lowest		0.5	
Highest	3.7	43.4	
Average	1.1	7.9	
Eligible FSM			
Lowest	0.1	1.2	
Highest	5.9	55.9	
Average	1.6	10.9	12.8
%SEN Statemented			
Lowest	0	0	
Highest	1.2	7.6	
Average	0.3	2.2	2
%SEN no statement			
Lowest	0.1	4.4	
Highest	8.2	52.5	
Average	3.5	14.0	17.8
% White British			
Lowest	22.3	6.1	
Highest	93.6	98.6	
Average	81.8	81.5	78.9
EAL			
Lowest	0	0	
Highest	56.5	88.6	
Average	6.5	9.8	10.8
Exclusion			
Average	2	10.9	

Table 4.4: Analysis of characteristics of secondary schools with a non-faith foundation compared to all secondary schools

	All secondary schools with a non-faith foundation	National Average for all Secondary Schools
Total	106	
Co-ed	86	
Boys	14	
Girls	6	
School roll		
Lowest number	296	
Highest number	2214	
Average	1098	975
Pupil / teacher ratio		
Lowest	13.0	
Highest	29.5	
Average	16.2	16.1
Taking FSM		
Lowest	0.1	
Highest	43.4	
Average	6.4	
Eligible FSM		
Lowest	0.1	
Highest	55.9	
Average	8.9	12.8
%SEN Statemented		
Lowest	0	
Highest	7.6	
Average	1.8	2
%SEN no statement		
Lowest	0.1	
Highest	52.5	
Average	11.7	17.8
% White British		
Lowest	6.1	
Highest	98.6	
Average	81.6	78.9
EAL		
Lowest	0	
Highest	88.6	
Average	9.1	10.8
Exclusion		
Average	9.0	

5 Postal survey

5.1 Methodology

5.1.1 A postal survey of schools with a foundation and their foundations was conducted in the period November 2007 to January 2008. It comprised of two questionnaires, one for the schools, and one for their foundations. Given the small population being studied and typical response rates from postal surveys we used a 100% sample frame. The questionnaires were distributed as a package to the schools, with a request to pass on the foundation questionnaires (which were in a stamped envelope) to an appropriate person representing the foundation. Follow up emails and phone calls were made prior to the submission date, and further calls after the submission date.

5.1.2 Both surveys consisted of a covering letter, explaining the purpose of the study, a short questionnaire and a stamped addressed reply envelope.

5.1.3 Respondents were asked to provide information about their school or foundation, and to indicate whether they would be willing to take part in more detailed case studies.

5.1.4 The topics covered in the questionnaire included:

- The character of the foundation
- The level and the nature of contact between the school and its foundation
- The composition and effectiveness of the governing body
- Background composition of the school's governing body and its impact
- The role of the foundation and its impact on the school and how it is perceived by staff, parents and pupils.

5.1.5 Copies of the questionnaires are provided in Appendix B.

5.2 Return rate

5.2.1 In total there were 27 returns from schools, and 20 from foundations, including those that arrived after the submission deadline. This represents a 23.8% return from schools and 17.7% from foundations. Therefore within the target of 20-25% which the study anticipated.

5.2.2 The return rate from foundations represents a 74% return as a percentage of the questionnaires returned by schools. This exceeds the target return rate of 25% of the number returned by schools.,

5.2.3 Although the method of distribution to foundations was via their school, this did not result in a pair of completed questionnaires in every case. Ten pairs of questionnaires were received from schools and their associated foundations, meaning 17 questionnaires were returned by schools with no matching foundation return and 10 foundations made a response where their school did not.

5.3 Results: schools survey

5.3.1 The following section presents an analysis of the responses to the school questionnaire.

Characteristics of schools' foundations

5.3.2 The schools' foundations are almost equally split between educational establishments (53%) and charities that are not educational establishments (47%). (Many of the foundations which are educational establishments were also identified as charities). No schools identified their foundation as having any other nature, e.g. commercial.

5.3.3 The foundations are longstanding entities, having been in existence for an average of around 250 years. Only a fifth of schools indicated that they had had a foundation for 50 years or less. A third had been in existence for over 400 years and the remainder had been in existence between 100-400 years.

Governing body

5.3.4 The average size of the governing bodies surveyed is 19, ranging from 11 to 23. The average composition across all schools is set out in table 4.1., Only in 15% of cases did foundation governors constitute an outright majority of governors and on average they made up only a quarter of the governing body. In one other instance local authority governors constituted just over a third of the governing body at one school compared with the usual maximum of one-fifth.

Table 5.1: Make-up of governing body

Staff	Local Authority	Parents	Foundation	Community	Other
18%	10%	27%	25%	11%	9%

5.3.5 Other governors tended to be sponsor governors and only exist at a few schools.

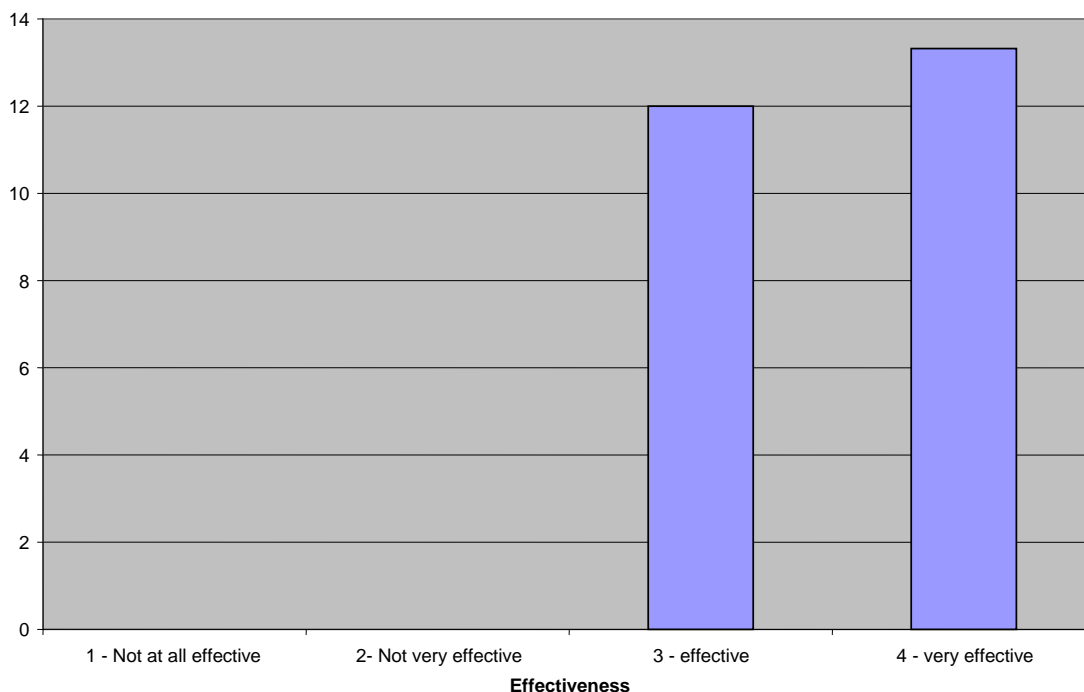
5.3.6 The gender breakdown of foundation governors was 60% male and 40% female. This compares to findings in other research that women are over represented on governing bodies¹. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that this may be more so at primary schools whilst the vast majority of schools reviewed in this report are secondary. The general vacancy rate for governors is believed to be in the order of 11%² which compares with a 6% vacancy rate for foundation governors in the respondent schools.

¹ Research into the Role of School Governors, DCSF, 12 May 2008 (Sec.1.3) at <http://www.governor.net.co.uk/publishList.cfm?topicareald=7> accessed 11 July 2008.

² Major review into strengthening school governance is launched by Jim Knight DCSF Press release 2008/0085 8 May 2008

5.3.7 Schools felt their governing bodies were effective or very effective. In comparison Ofsted reported that for 2001/2 53% of primary school and 34% of secondary school governing bodies were considered to be good or better. A survey of headteachers in 2007 reported that approximately a fifth described their governing body as very effective and a similar proportion described it as ineffective. Research has also shown that grammar schools have the highest levels of effective governors with over 75% found to have good or better governance.³ While a relatively high proportion of schools with a foundation are grammar schools analysis of the survey results shows that the level of effectiveness is evenly distributed across all types of schools. It would appear therefore that the overall effectiveness of governing bodies in schools with a foundation responding to the survey is markedly better than those for schools in general.

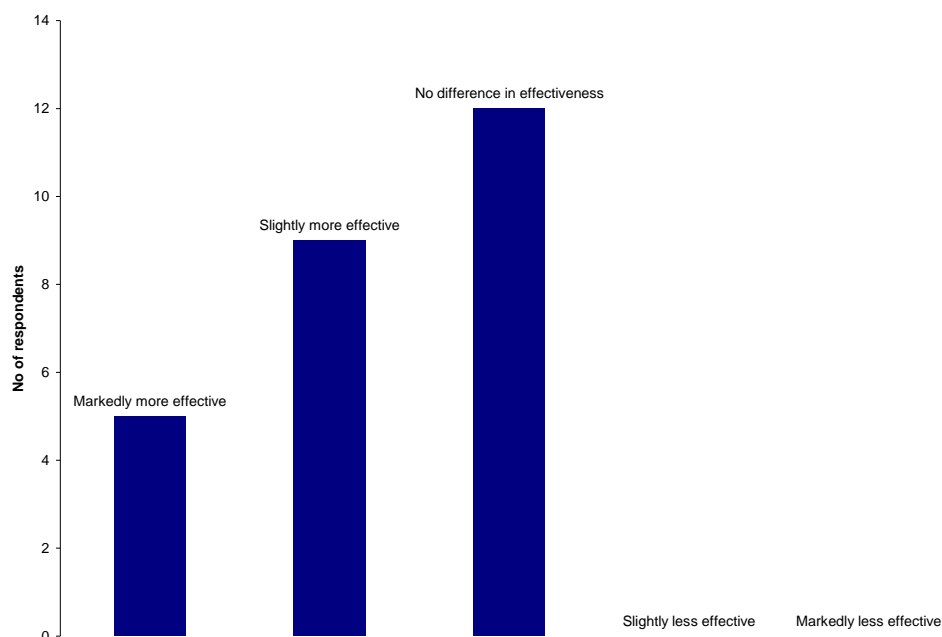
Figure 5.1: Across all its responsibilities how would you rate the effectiveness of the school's governing body?



5.3.8 In terms of the effectiveness of foundation governors in respect to other governors the majority of schools (57%) felt that they were either slightly or markedly more effective. The balance felt they were as effective as other governors. That is, no school thought their foundation governors were less effective than other types of governors. One reason given for this greater effectiveness was that foundation governors were often longer serving and, therefore, were more experienced and tended to take a longer term view than, for example, parent governors.

³ All research referred to in this paragraph is reported in Research into the role of school governors DCSF May 2008 at <http://www.governor.net.co.uk/publishList.cfm?topicareald=7> accessed 11 July 2008.

Figure 5.2: Collectively how effective are your foundation appointed governors compared with the other governors?



5.3.9 The majority of schools (62%) stated that the background of the foundation appointed governors reflected the community from which the school takes its students. In the remainder the key difference was social class, although age, ethnicity and gender were also a factor. Foundation governors tended to be from higher social classes, older (often retired), more likely to be male and less likely to be from minority ethnic groups.

5.3.10 In some cases, the foundation’s articles determined the appointment of foundation governors (i.e. foundation trustees might automatically be appointed governors, or organisations that were not local had the right to appoint governors), hence leading to a lack of representation of the local community. There were also comments about church appointed foundation governors even though the schools were non-religious. In another case, a school stated that while foundation governors were often former pupils, and hence were originally from the local community, they were no longer locally based. Another school stated, however, that the foundation governors may be more representative of the local community than its pupils, as many students lived a bus-ride away while the governors were more locally based.

Involvement of the foundation in the life of the school

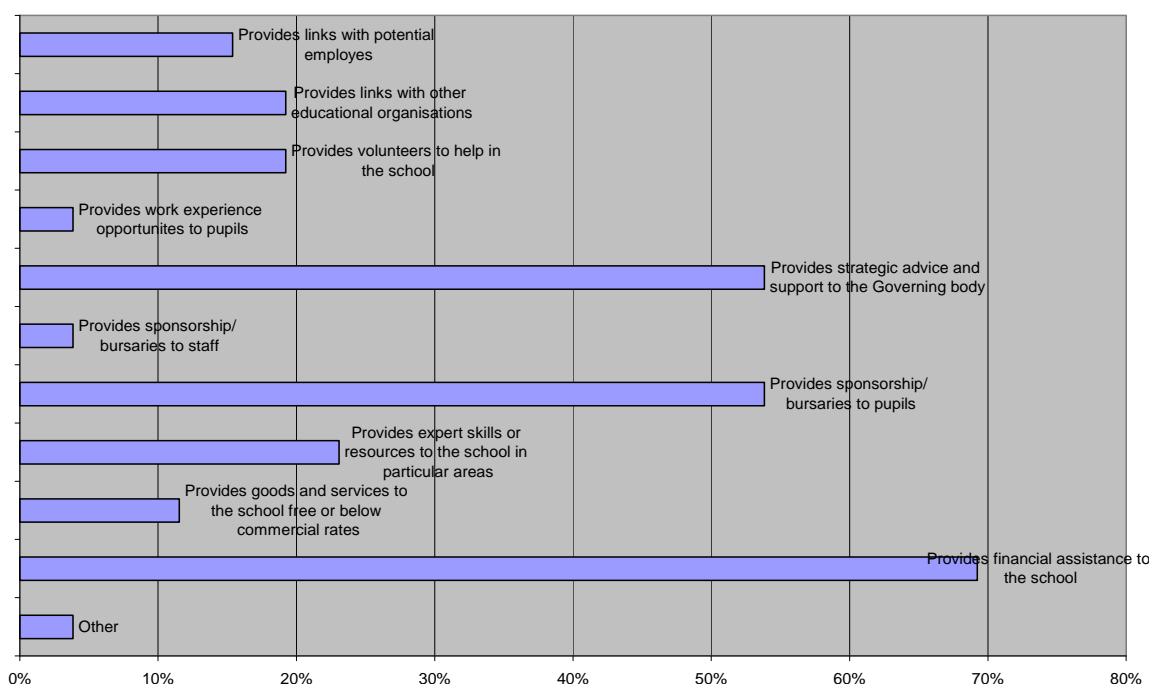
5.3.11 The survey showed there is a wide range of support provided by foundations, and their involvement in the life of their school usually goes well beyond just appointing governors.

5.3.12 The most common form of support from foundations was financial assistance (69%), bursaries for students and strategic advice to the governing body (both 54%). Other forms of support included links to employers (including large supermarket chains), links to colleges providing post-16 education and Oxford

University, advice from former Government Ministers and advice from skilled property and educational experts.

- 5.3.13 In some cases the foundations owns or has access to external sites such as a residential centre and camping sites which the schools have access to which greatly enriches the curriculum. In another the foundation's land holding will help to pay for the rebuilding of the school without recourse to public funds providing it with greater independence in terms of school design and layout.
- 5.3.14 Other forms of communication between schools and foundations revolved around regular meetings between the headteacher and the foundation and attendance by the foundation at school functions.
- 5.3.15 In some cases the involvement can be rather circuitous. In one instance the head and staff, the parents, the old boys and the governors each appoint a number of trustees to the foundation while the foundation appoints some of the governors. While in another the governors were also the trustees, so that the foundation and governing body was essentially one and the same.

Figure 5.3: Besides appointing governors, in what ways, if any, does the foundation become involved in the life of the school?



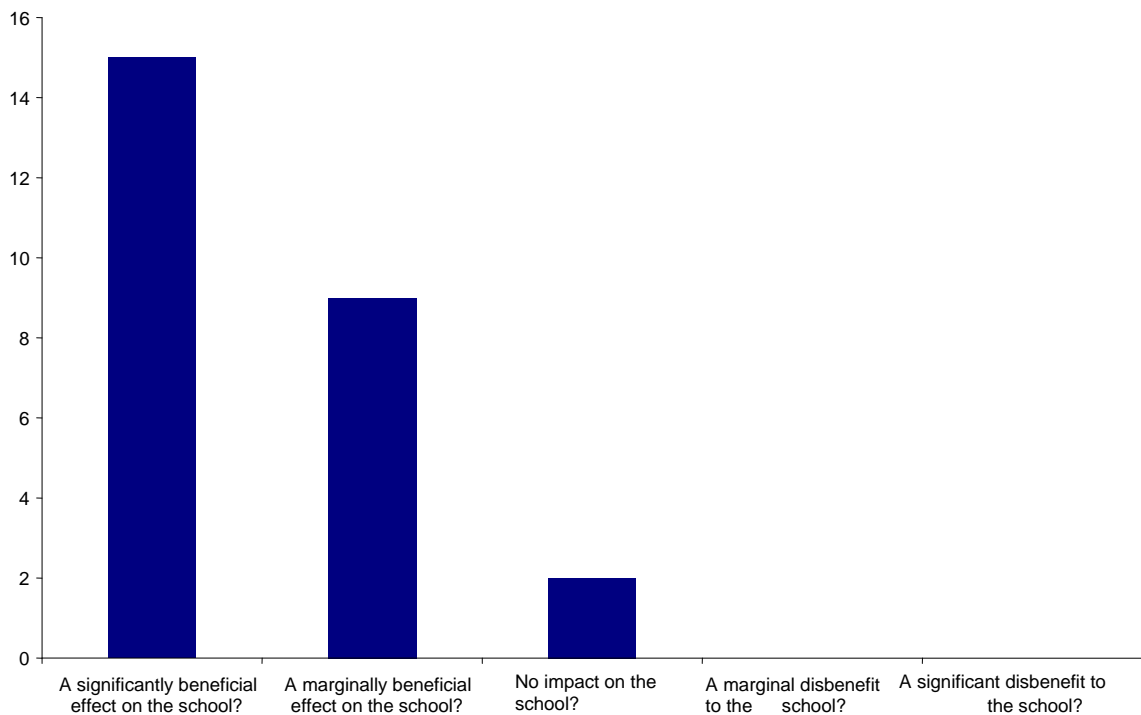
Wider knowledge of the role of foundations

- 5.3.16 The vast majority of the schools (72%) reported that they considered that parents have little or no knowledge at all of the role of the foundation. One school reported that it makes parents aware of the foundation's role through distribution of local authority admission booklets, the school prospectus and Founders Day activity.

Overall impact of foundations

5.3.17 The majority of respondents feel that their foundation brings significant or marginal benefits for the school with only 8% saying that there are no benefits produced and none reported any disbenefit deriving from the foundation.

Figure 5.4: Overall, in your opinion, what impact does the foundation have on the school?



5.3.18 In summary the general view is that foundations can have a significant impact in the life of the school, ranging from underpinning the schools' ethos, driving their goals, to enhancing their image and reputation. Foundations also appear to play an important role in helping schools access skills, funding and other resources. However, in some cases the original foundation has ceased to be or operate effectively and that schools' governing bodies have, for all intents and purposes, taken on the role and identity of the foundation as part of their functions. It appears that foundation governors, who are often 'old boys' or 'old girls', can be very committed to supporting their school, but some can feel excluded by the changing nature of their old school and the role of the foundation in practice.

5.4 Results: foundations survey

- 5.4.1 This section presents the results of the survey of foundations carried out in tandem with the survey of schools. As the Department's database did not have details of foundations or contact names and addresses, the sample was determined by the schools passing on the questionnaire for foundations to an appropriate person at their foundation. As a result, the response from foundations has been as patchy as the response from schools, with only ten pairs of responses from both a school and its associated foundation, and a variety of single responses made by schools and foundations.
- 5.4.2 Consequently, the results received from the foundation respondents cannot be directly compared to the responses from their associated schools. This precludes direct comparison of perceptions between schools and their foundations.

Characteristics of foundations

- 5.4.3 The majority (60%) of the foundations that responded were charities (excluding charities that are also education establishments) while 35% were educational establishments. This compares to a breakdown of 47% and 53% respectively as reported by schools. The apparent anomaly could be a result of schools being unclear as to the actual nature of their foundation, or the fact that there were few pairs of associated schools and foundations.
- 5.4.4 Most of the foundations that responded indicated that they had been in existence for some considerable time, the average being 218 years, broadly in line with the responses received from schools about their foundations. Four foundations had existed for 400 years or more, with only two being less than 20 years old.

Foundation appointed governors

- 5.4.5 How foundations identified suitable candidates to be appointed as governors ranged from rigorous selection procedures to the use of "the old boys' network".
- 5.4.6 In the former instances skills audits were used to ensure those put forward had the appropriate skills and complemented existing skills on the governing body. The Schools Governors' One Stop Shop (SGOSS) was sometimes used to recruit governors with particular skills. More common occurrences are for the present foundation governors to be asked to nominate suitable people and for foundations to appoint former pupils with some standing in the community
- 5.4.7 A number of anomalies were identified in the selection process. For example, while the study is concerned with non-faith foundations, in one instance the original foundation was non-conformist Christian. Hence, often people with a church connection had been considered even though it is no longer a faith based school. In two other instances it is standard practice for the local vicar to be appointed as a foundation governor even though, again, the school no longer has links with the church.

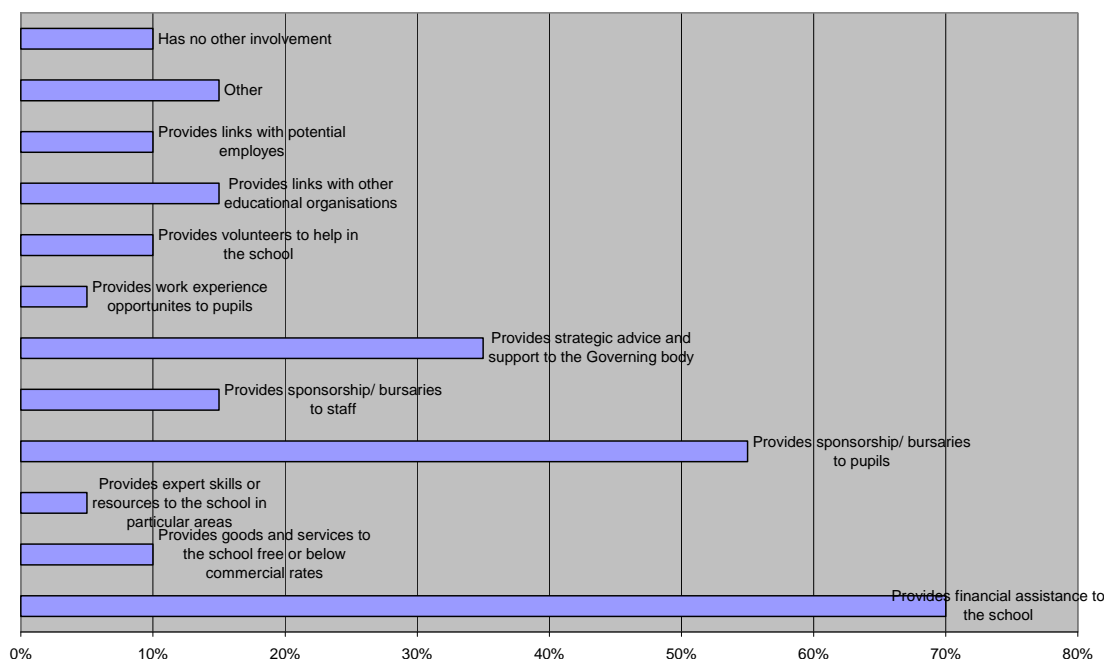
- 5.4.8 In some cases the appointments are automatic, for example, all trustees of the foundation are governors or the chair of the foundation is automatically a foundation governor. In others the foundation governors are nominees of third parties which can include universities, council, diocese and parish (again the schools are no longer church schools).
- 5.4.9 In terms of the characteristics that the foundation looks for in its governors the key attributes most mentioned were:
- Loyalty
 - Reliability
 - Commitment
 - Interests of the school at heart
 - Experience / knowledge in relevant fields
 - Local
 - Integrity
 - In tune with the ethos and objectives of the school.
- 5.4.10 In a number of instances foundations also sought to appoint someone with knowledge of the school, either a former pupil, or someone who has or had children at the school. In one case the foundation would also seek someone who was an active communicant of the Church of England, even though again it was no longer a church school.
- 5.4.11 The respondents overwhelmingly stated that they had very few problems in finding suitable governors (90%). In a couple of cases foundations stated that on occasions there had been some difficulties and that there remained a few vacancies for governor positions. This perhaps reflects the characteristics required of governors, meaning foundation governors positions may appeal to committed individuals who wish to support the community, with relevant experience, skills and availability to make a commitment to a school and its pupils.
- 5.4.12 There was a relative balance between foundations that monitored their governors' performance (10) as those that did not (8), with two that did not know. In some cases monitoring was fairly superficial being limited to checking attendance at governing body and committee meetings. In others the monitoring is by more senior foundation governors, the foundation monitoring reports and minutes, and through an annual presentation by foundation governors to the foundation.
- 5.4.13 Overall the foundations appear to take a strong interest in their own contribution, through their foundation governors, in how they support their schools.

- 5.4.14 The foundations indicated that in most cases (76%) the foundation governors reflect the community from which their schools' pupils are drawn. The remaining 24% did not consider this to be the case. The main imbalance being a lack of ethnic minority governors and those from lower social groupings.
- 5.4.15 So while foundations seek to appoint governors who bring commitment and special skills to some extent, and may be of a different social class to the local community, it appears that foundations consider their links to former pupils and committed individuals with an interest in the local community enable them to reflect the local community in their foundation governor appointments.

Involvement of the foundation in the life of the school

- 5.4.16 The ways that foundations get involved in the life of their schools mirrors the responses from the schools themselves. The majority of the foundations (70%) provide financial support in some kind to their related school, and indeed more widely to other organisations and communities. Over half (55%) provide sponsorship or bursaries to pupils. Interestingly the two areas showing the biggest difference in response from foundations and schools relate to the provision of strategic advice and guidance and expert skills and resources. In both cases the proportion of schools stating their foundations provide this support was far higher than the foundations (54% and 23% versus 35% and 5%) respectively. This may be just due to the differing population being sampled or an indication that schools were far more appreciative of such support while foundations might consider it part of their basic offer.
- 5.4.17 Only two out of the 20 foundations said they had no involvement in supporting their associated school apart from appointing governors. This was a lower proportion than schools where 22% reported the foundation had no involvement. By the very nature of such surveys only the more active of foundations are likely to respond which probably explains the difference between the two.

Figure 5.5: Besides appointing governors, in what ways, if any, does the foundation become involved in the life of the school?



- 5.4.18 The responses to the survey were followed up by telephone interviews with the foundations to explore in more detail the nature of the foundations' involvement in the life of their schools.
- 5.4.19 As the chart shows the main form of assistance was clearly financial. The nature of this assistance varies considerably depending on individual foundation's circumstances. However in most cases foundations stressed that in their view the funding provided was essential to the development and future benefit of the school as they felt the level of government funding was not adequate to fulfil all their aspirations. One foundation that owned land in an area with very high values was effectively able to fund a considerable proportion of the cost of rebuilding the school rather than participating in the local authority's school rebuilding programme. In another case, the foundation reserves funds specifically for annual capital works which do not obtain government funding.
- 5.4.20 A number of other foundations have also paid for building work, including sixth form centres, libraries, sports facilities and computer rooms as well as restoration and maintenance work to buildings, recreational grounds and sports fields. In the vast majority of cases the schools were not voluntary aided, that is, there is no expectation that funding beyond that provided by government is required for capital and maintenance purposes.
- 5.4.21 More common is funding of pupil prizes, awards and the costs of travel bursaries and student expeditions. Some foundations provided bursaries for students leaving to study higher education; in one case, funding was aimed at students in financial need, whilst in another funding was granted according to sports and academic achievement. Funding of school trips and other extra-curricular activities was also allocated based upon the financial situation of pupils in several cases. One foundation had focussed sponsorship towards

pupils with particular talents, such as in drama or sports, financing courses, training weekends, interviews and so on that pupils otherwise could not afford.

- 5.4.22 Foundations have also supported particular departments and projects where there is a particular interest such as science. A number of the foundations expressed that the extent to funding of bursaries varied largely according to the demands of the school and how pro-active both the students and the teaching body were.
- 5.4.23 In one case, the foundation extended funding for bursaries beyond pupils to residents in the local parish area, despite being a non-faith foundation. This was a tradition linked historically with the foundation, similarly another foundation drew on links with the parish community, whilst another saw necessary to provide funding for a school Chaplin.
- 5.4.24 The majority of foundations emphasised the need for a variety of small-scale funding towards activities that were essential in maintaining the tradition and particular ethos of the school,
- 5.4.25 Status of the school also appeared important to some foundations, two of which helped fund schools to become involved in the Specialist Schools Programme; establishing identities as Maths and Computing and Technology Colleges.
- 5.4.26 In several cases, the professional backgrounds of foundation governors have allowed foundations to offer strategic advice to schools. In one case the foundation continues to assist in negotiations with the local authority over matters such as funding. Linked to major capital projects foundations have also provided technical advice on major building projects in terms of advice on site identification and purchase, funding, development, specification and project management.
- 5.4.27 In other cases, advice to the governing body is provided according to individuals' field of expertise. One foundation included governors offering legal expertise and advice in financial matters, whilst others were able to offer guidance relating to their teaching backgrounds.
- 5.4.28 Foundations that provided volunteers specified, with the exception of one case, that this role was taken more generally in that foundation governors voluntarily offered information and advice when required by the school. Foundations emphasised however that this practice was important and could be attributed to the strong ties between foundation governors and the community. One foundation in particular suggested that this involvement in the life of the school is not always used to its full potential. The exception offered volunteers to the school in a variety of situations on a small-scale, such as providing support to troubled pupils and advice on future career prospects.
- 5.4.29 The professional backgrounds of governors have also provided foundations with the ability to offer both work experience and employment opportunities to pupils. Foundation members have arranged work placements with the businesses that they themselves have worked in or own. For example, in one case employers included Tesco and RAF Cranwell.

- 5.4.30 With regard to links with further education one particular foundation has ensured that strong ties exist with surrounding colleges, universities and other institutions. The foundation has also been developing a structured information package for pupils in cooperation with the local sixth form college.
- 5.4.31 The vast majority of foundations (90%) were satisfied with their relationship with their schools, with only 10% (2 respondents) not satisfied which was felt to be down to a lack of understanding of each others roles in the relationship.
- 5.4.32 In general, most of the foundations anticipated very little change in the future in their role / relationship with their schools. This appears to be influenced by the lack of new or additional funding to expand the level of support provided, although one foundation expected a major addition to funds which would allow an increase in grant-making. Change was anticipated only in relation to a major change of status of the foundations' associated schools. That is, through moving to trust status or through a federation of schools.
- 5.4.33 Several foundations had aspirations to support their schools more effectively in the future, through increased participation with the school and enabling them to support the local community, and reinforcing the schools' ethos and educational environment.

5.5 Overall effectiveness of foundation governing bodies

- 5.5.1 Table 4.2 summarises the latest Ofsted reports for all the schools with a foundation in terms of their overall performance, leadership and governance. As can be seen the schools overall performance, leadership and governance score very well. With the majority of schools achieving outstanding or good (grades 1 and 2) across all three factors.

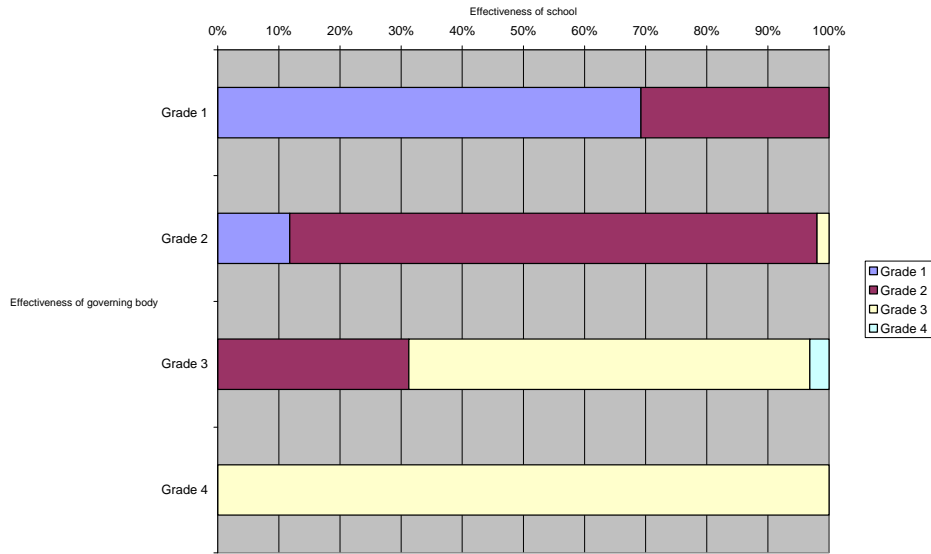
Table 5.2: Ofsted grading, overall, leadership and governance

Total	% Of Total		
	Overall	Leadership	Governance
Grade 1	23	26	21
Grade 2	45	49	55
Grade 3	29	26	22
Grade 4	3	0	1

- 5.5.2 Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 provide a comparison between the correlation between effectiveness of the school and the governing body. In the case of figure 4.6 for all schools with a foundation for their last inspection and figures 4.7 and 4.8 for all schools inspected in 2000-1⁴.

⁴ The Work of School Governors, May 2002, Report from the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Figure 5.6: Ofsted grading, overall, leadership and governance



5.5.3 The sample size for schools with a foundation is obviously much smaller than the main sample but it would appear that the effectiveness of governing bodies in schools with a foundation is higher than across all schools at the time of the Ofsted analysis.

Figure 5.7: How well pupils achieve in primary schools (% of schools)

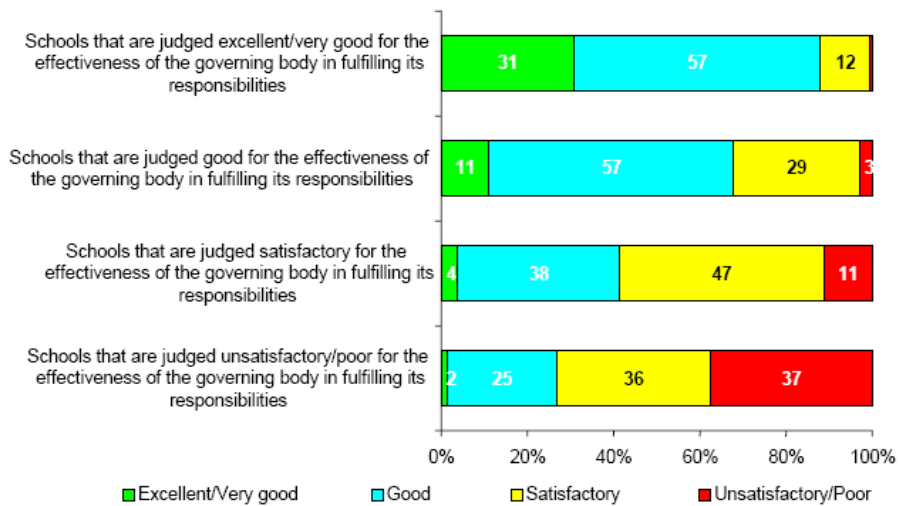
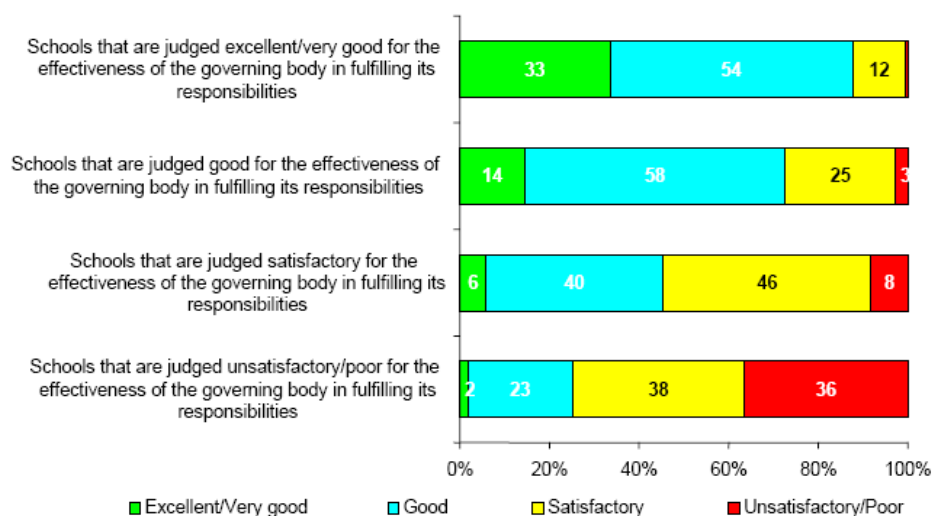


Figure 5.8: How well pupils achieve in secondary schools (% of schools)



5.6 Conclusions

5.6.1 The surveys raised a number of issues with regard to foundations. Although given the very small population of schools with a foundation the results cannot be treated as being statistically robust. Some key general points are:

- In just 15% of the schools surveyed did foundation governors constitute the majority.
- The gender breakdown of foundation governors was 60% male and 40% female with a 6% vacancy rate. This gender mix is the opposite of that found generally in governing bodies and the vacancy rate is relatively low compared to the estimated 11% vacancy rate for non-foundation governors.
- The majority of schools stated that the background of the foundation appointed governors reflected the community from which the school takes its students. In the remainder the key difference was social class, although age, ethnicity and gender were also factors. Foundation governors tended to be from higher social classes, older (often retired), more likely to be male and less likely to be from minority ethnic groups.
- In a number of cases either religious bodies appointed foundation governors or the foundation governors were appointed because of their religious position (e.g. local vicar) despite the school no longer having a religious nature.

5.6.2 On a positive level:

- overall schools felt their governing bodies were effective or very effective with the overall effectiveness of governing bodies of schools with a foundation appear to be better than those for schools in general.
- the majority of schools felt that foundation governors were either slightly or markedly more effective than other governors. The balance felt they were as effective as other governors.
- there is a wide range of support provided by foundations, and their involvement in the life of their school usually goes well beyond just appointing governors.
- the most common form of support was financial assistance, bursaries for students and strategic advice to the governing body. Other forms of support included links to employers (including large supermarket chains), links to colleges providing post-16 education and Oxford University, advice from former Government Ministers and advice from skilled property and educational experts.
- in some cases the foundation owns or has access to external sites such as a residential centre and camping sites which the schools have access to which greatly enriches the curriculum. In another the foundation's land holding will help to pay for the rebuilding of the school without recourse to public funds providing it with greater independence in terms of school design and layout.
- other forms of communication between schools and foundations revolved around regular meeting between the headteacher and the foundation and attendance by the foundation at school functions.

5.6.3 On a less positive note:

- the vast majority of the schools reported that they considered that parents have little or no knowledge at all of the role of the foundation
- some foundations are no longer in a position to provide support for their schools and their continued existence may be in doubt
- tendency by some foundations to use the "old boy" network to identify potential governors rather than being more rigorous in their selection process
- monitoring by the foundation of their governors' performance is patchy.

6 Case studies

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 It was originally hoped that five schools would be willing to participate in detailed case studies exploring the role of foundations in the school. However, there was a general unwillingness of schools to participate. In addition from the surveys it was becoming apparent that elements of the proposed case studies might not provide much insight into the role of foundations. This is discussed in more detail below.

6.1.2 In the end, in depth interviews were undertaken with chairs of governors and headteachers covering four secondary schools in total. The nature of the schools varied considerably, together with the contribution that their foundations were able to make to the life of the school. Their diverse nature may not provide commonly replicable lessons for all schools, but their experience demonstrates how mature foundations can add value to the life of schools.

Nature of the schools

6.1.3 The schools interviewed in depth are extremely long established reflecting the findings of the postal survey although their nature and location has sometimes altered considerably. Given the local historic nature of the schools they tended to have a high profile in their localities even if the populations they serve have changed dramatically through immigration and social change. The schools were often set up on a philanthropic basis, to meet the educational and social needs of their locality or the families of those connected to the founder or foundation. Despite a change of sites and the character of their localities, the schools have maintained a connection with their core constituencies.

6.1.4 The ethos of the schools tended to reflect their history. For example, former grammar schools, still maintained their former feel (e.g. uniforms and customs) and all were driven by a desire to provide high quality education regardless of the background that their children came from.

6.1.5 One school is a major focal point in its local community due to the wide range of services it provides space for both inside and outside normal school hours, it is open till 10pm and is used by the NHS primary care trust, police and social services.

6.1.6 Another school used the considerable resources of its foundation to build partnerships with neighbouring local authorities in order to provide additional support to disadvantaged children, e.g. through meeting extra-curricular costs. This illustrates how well established and well resourced foundations have the power to support children's educational experience.

Nature of the governing bodies

6.1.7 The interviews highlighted the very divergent nature of schools with a foundation. There is certainly no single model of how such schools operate but their variety does raise some interesting lessons for the new generation of trust schools.

- 6.1.8 As the literature review highlights governing bodies are often most effective where they are representative of the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the school's catchment. They are also effective when they contain people with the right expertise and experience, often professionals from a wide range of disciplines. In inner city areas schools often struggle to find people who both reflect the area's characteristics and have the requisite skills.
- 6.1.9 In the case studies some of the foundations could draw upon highly skilled individuals with backgrounds, for example, in finance and law who were considerably helpful given the schools' circumstances. However, these individuals sometimes had no link with the school other than through the foundation and this led to tensions between foundation and non-foundation governors. This can be especially so in deprived areas where foundation governors could be highly educated well paid professionals while parent governors were sometimes struggling both financially and to understand the issues being discussed in governing body meetings. In other cases the foundation governors are long standing members of the community and are former pupils and these long standing governors are often key to maintaining the school's ethos.
- 6.1.10 There can also be tensions between foundation governors and headteachers/ senior management teams in terms of their vision for the school. Longer standing foundation governors who are former pupils from when the school was a grammar school may want to maintain that ethos while headteachers may be more aware of an inclusiveness agenda. In another case the foundation governors were drawn from commercial backgrounds and were results driven while the headteacher saw the school more in a pastoral role given the social and deprivation issues in the area it served. The foundation governors to some extent saw the school as a business with strategies in place to raise finance, through partnership with other agencies in jointly delivering services, and using the money to improve facilities at the school. Without the expertise of the foundation governors it is highly unlikely that this strategy would have been undertaken.
- 6.1.11 The ability of foundations to support their schools depends on their resources. Some of the long standing foundations have seen their resources dwindle over the years as they have sold off their assets. Foundations have spent considerable sums on their buildings and, given that many are relatively old, maintenance and replacements of buildings can be a drain on resources. Foundations can spend a lot of time and effort either managing funds or raising funds for the foundation. This applies not just to voluntary aided schools but to voluntary controlled schools as well where foundations have provided resources to provide additional facilities.
- 6.1.12 The ability of foundations to recruit new governors with the appropriate skills often depends on the nature of the foundation itself and its continuing interest with its school. Where the foundation is small and its main reason for existence has all but disappeared it can struggle. In effect, some foundations have just become the foundation governors. In these cases the foundation governors are self-perpetuating. There is a danger in these circumstances of the foundation and its governors becoming inward looking. The governors stay until they retire or leave the area and are then replaced sometimes by individuals with similar views and ideas. The balance of experience with new ideas is hard to achieve in these circumstances.

- 6.1.13 Other more well established foundations can draw upon a wider range of possible candidates and can appoint governors for a fixed time period. This enables both continuity in ensuring governors who are sympathetic to the ethos of the school are appointed, while at the same time ensuring there is regular new blood amongst the foundation governors. The foundation and the nature of the governors appointed may also enable a school to obtain a hearing at senior levels within local and even central government, enabling it to effectively lobby decision makers.

Nature and role of foundations

- 6.1.14 The nature of the foundations varies significantly, which impacts on their ability to support the school. Some foundations are relatively wealthy with substantial assets and annual incomes. In one instance the local authority wanted to refurbish the school but the foundation's resources were such that it could provide additional funding to rebuild it. At a more trivial level, foundations were able to fund dinners and parties for staff and governors and thereby help to develop a more cohesive relationship between various groups. Other foundations are effectively penniless and are unable to provide additional support.
- 6.1.15 One foundation (albeit highly unusual in character) was very wealthy, owning the school's 260ha site and having a substantial endowment, but nevertheless demonstrated a very entrepreneurial approach to the use of its resources by seeking to leverage more funds as match funding for its activities. Its core role was to support disadvantaged children by providing financial support to the school, but it recognised that it could not support all qualifying students without extra resources. The headteacher effectively acted as a 'charitable entrepreneur', making contacts with business, industry and policy makers to raise the profile of the school and ensure it was at the forefront of donors' minds when charitable giving was being undertaken. The foundation's resources of approximately £300,000 per annum were therefore used as seed-corn funding to lever in match funding, and in some cases achieved a level of 75% match funding. This allowed the headteacher teacher to subsidise participation fees in school trips, sports equipment, music lessons, uniforms etc. The future programme, driven by a pro-active headteacher and foundation chair (who was formerly a City finance director), involves producing a fundraising DVD for £5,000 as part of a campaign to double the size of the foundation to approximately £14 million. This would allow the number of disadvantaged students supported to be more than doubled by 2012. The school had found that accessing private philanthropy was possible, and that accessing charitable trust funding was most successful when getting onto the radar of newer charities at an early stage before their 'pet' grantees were established.
- 6.1.16 At another school, the foundation had been set up by the amalgamation of two charities. One resulted from a personal endowment from a former shipbuilder to assist the poor of the locality. This was used to set up a school almost 200 years ago, and the remaining funds were invested with the interest being used to cover maintenance and upkeep of the school. A second charity sought to establish funds for the provision of another school in the same area. Both schools were amalgamated onto a single site in 1899. The limited nature of the foundation's funds meant that its main role was to support the governing

body with skills and links to government. This enabled expertise to be applied in the planning and delivery of new buildings at the school in particular, and connections with the local authority and DCSF enabled a high profile when bidding for resources and seeking other favourable outcomes.

Awareness of the foundation

- 6.1.17 In all cases the perception was that parents, children and even more junior staff were not aware of the role of the foundation. Staff, for example, tended to assume their employer was the local authority whereas for voluntary aided and foundation schools with a foundation, the governing body is the employer. Generally foundations through newsletters, founder's days and bursaries, try to raise their profile amongst parents, pupils and staff. Other strategies used to raise the profile of the foundation were supporting English language lessons for parents and providing local businesses with ICT support.
- 6.1.18 While the foundations' role was not well known, their influence on the ethos of the schools was strong and this was often a 'selling point' and an attractive element of the schools' offer. One school used its foundation's background to impress upon the students the school's 'special' history in helping children make the most of their opportunities. This was used in an 'ethos document' and formed the basis of what was conveyed to students. The school found that parents liked this approach to instilling a strong moral ethos in its pupils.
- 6.1.19 Another school does not promote the role of its foundation widely to potential parents, due to its focus on helping disadvantaged children access the school and its activities. Parents and students were aware of the benefits offered by the school, but not necessarily as being undertaken by the foundation. The school also developed relationships with donors and the local authority, who were made aware of the role of the foundation in supporting disadvantaged children. All staff were clear about the ethos of the school.

Effectiveness

- 6.1.20 The schools demonstrated that while the existence of a foundation did not necessarily enhance overall school performance, the influence of the foundation was a factor in a strong ethos, attractiveness to parents, and indeed the creation of a good learning environment, especially for vulnerable children or those from a disadvantaged background.
- 6.1.21 One school stated that students who were supported financially through bursaries from the foundation out-performed non-supported students, and were three times more likely to be a prefect. The school uses a 'carrot and stick approach' to offer foundation benefits as a reward for achievement or good behaviour. An example given was of a child who wanted to take up singing lessons at the school, but could not afford the fees. She had agreed a behaviour programme with the school, but had not complied with it. The headteacher advised her that she should make her request again at a later date when she had complied with the programme. The child returned at a later date, and offered a reference from her tutor to demonstrate that she had complied with the programme. She was then allowed to benefit from support.

- 6.1.22 Another school's experience was that the foundation's role was manifest through its involvement with the school's governing body. The foundation's limited financial support was overcome by its technical support to the governing body, provided by the foundation's nominated governors. The difference in backgrounds of the two sets of governors meant that the governing body had no single strategic view of the future, having a variety of views. There was some tension in this, with a conflict between nostalgia and progress. The governing body was united, however, although it did discuss differences of opinions.
- 6.1.23 The governing body was clear about its role, and was considered to be accountable and responsible. However, individually, governors were concerned about the level of their own responsibilities, as they held un-paid positions. The foundation governors brought external experience, and balanced the governing body's approach in a knowledgeable and balanced way. There was some concern that a different group of governors might interact in a different way if membership changed in the future.

Lessons and learning

- 6.1.24 The schools reported the following lessons and learning from their experience of their foundations' contribution:
- Governors with links with Higher Education would be useful, as would skills in person management.
 - Governors often do not have the skills in the educational field to make a positive contribution.
 - Governing bodies need people with an interest in making a pro-active contribution, not just the skills.
 - Parents give diversity to governing bodies. Class and race do not necessarily differentiate foundations governors from others.
 - Foundation / voluntary aided status can cause issues of accountability to the local authority, while it gives schools independence, it makes the relationship with the local authority more complicated. Local authorities are target driven with the targets set by central government. The headteacher is responsible to the governing body, not the local authority, so while he / she has to respect the governing body's views, he/she has to take a wider view.
 - Foundation support can provide additional resources to support disadvantaged children and enhance pastoral care. Taken to an extreme, well-funded foundations can add considerable value to schools' activities, generating seed-corn funding with which to leverage match funding from donors, trusts and business.
 - Well connected foundations, or individuals within foundations or governing bodies, can help identify funding sources, or generate links with higher education, business or industry.
 - Well resourced pastoral care can have a positive impact on the educational achievement of disadvantaged children.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Schools with a foundation

7.1.1 The population of schools with a foundation without a religious character is extremely small. Their often long histories and varied transformations over the centuries make it hard to define any common characteristics in terms of their nature, ethos and governance. However, they do raise some interesting issues of relevance to today's trust schools. Some of these issues are discussed below.

Longevity

7.1.2 Schools are often long lasting entities serving communities over many generations. While they may be rebuilt, renamed, change their location and their nature they still often retain some lasting identify. The average age of the schools and foundations surveyed was in excess of 200 years. Over that time the reason for the original foundation's existence may no longer be valid, its assets may have declined and its ability to support its school greatly diminished. In establishing trust schools, account needs to be taken of the expected life of the school and the ability of the trust to continue to support it over that time. Legislation enables governing bodies to remove a trust but there needs to be a willingness of governing bodies to take this action where it is clear a trust is no longer able to provide the support or interest in the school that it initially offered.

Governance

7.1.3 The effectiveness of foundation governors has been identified as a key strength. Depending on the nature of the foundation they are often able to appoint well qualified professionals with relevant expertise and skills. Foundation governors are often in place for a considerable period of time and help maintain the long-term ethos of the school. Other governors tend to be more transitory and often have shorter-term interests. There are sometimes tensions between foundation and non-foundation governors especially if the former has no connection with the school.

7.1.4 It is important that the trust appoints governors with the right mix of skills, that it regularly reviews the performance of its governors, and that it is able to provide long-term support to its governors, for example, legal and financial advice as appropriate. The foundation needs to work with non-foundation governors to prevent any development of an "us and them" mentality amongst the governing body. This can include hosting events for all governors and staff to promote a more cohesive relationship between the parties.

7.1.5 The literature review highlighted other important issues relating to effective governance and lessons for trust schools. Effective governance occurs where there is interest in the work of the school, in its community and local involvement. Again there is a balance with trust appointed governors having the requisite expertise but also a knowledge or at least an understanding of the local community's interests and concerns. In this context the research suggests that it is beneficial for the trust appointed governors to reflect the diversity of the community from which the school draws its pupils.

Involvement in the school

- 7.1.6 While pupils, parents and staff appreciate the ethos of schools with a foundation they are often unaware of the role of the foundation.
- 7.1.7 Trusts should be willing to become actively involved with the school well beyond the appointment of governors. They should ensure that pupils, parents and staff are aware of the trust's involvement in the school. It should be represented at school events (beyond just having its governors present) and support the school through appropriate means. These can be provision of financial support to staff and pupils, providing links to further education and or work, offering facilities and expertise that can enrich the curriculum, and providing volunteers to help in the school.

Resources

- 7.1.8 Though the foundations studied were often long established, they were not always well-funded. This affected the level of support they were able to provide to their schools. Regardless of financial support available, a key resource that influences the effectiveness of a foundation and, by association, its schools, is human capital.
- 7.1.9 This not only relates to the quality and commitment of the governors appointed by the foundation to support the school, but also to the headteacher or other key personnel within the school. Energetic, committed and innovative personnel are essential in building relationships with partners and funders. Effective foundation governors, when these have experience and connections to industry, the education sector, government or financial institutions, can relieve the pressure on headteachers in respect of fundraising and business development. They can also provide targeted skills and experience, and develop productive funding relationships themselves. Effective headteachers are also an important ingredient in capitalising on what foundations have to offer. An enterprising and innovative headteacher can optimise the value of the foundation's funding through leverage, using the ethos and achievements of the foundation as a promotional tool. Trusts need to recognise the value of human capital, and provide support to both headteachers and governors to enable them to operate effectively.

Key findings and recommendations

- 7.1.10 The report's key findings are set out below:
- Schools with a foundation have few common characteristics in terms of location, size, pupil diversity or deprivation. They are however predominantly secondary schools with a significant over-representation of grammar schools amongst them.
 - Good governance generally has a positive impact on school development and improvement. As foundations appoint governors they have an important role to play in supporting good governance and hence school development. Schools reported that foundation governors were more or at least equally as effective as their other governors.

- Foundation governors made up a quarter of all governors in responding schools and in only 15% of cases did they constitute a majority. Sixty percent of foundation governors were male and there was a 6% vacancy rate amongst foundation governors.
- The techniques used by foundations in selecting new governors ranged from use of the “old boy network” to undertaking a rigorous needs assessment. Former pupils were often sought out to provide a degree of continuity.
- The changing nature of the foundation’s school sometimes led to anomalies in choice of governors. For example, some foundations were originally faith related and this meant that either faith organisations were still involved in the selection of governors or that governors were selected on the basis of their faith or role in the faith community. There were, for example, instances of local clergy automatically being appointed as foundation governors.
- There were sometimes tensions between foundation and other governors. This was sometimes down to foundation governors having very different backgrounds than parent, staff and local authority governors but also because of the different time horizons they often considered. Foundation governors often took a long-term view while parent and staff governors had shorter-term perspectives.
- Self-governing schools are most effective where the governing body reflects the diversity of the community it serves. Over a third of schools stated that their foundation governors did not reflect this diversity as they were more likely to be male, older (often retired), from a higher social class and less likely to be from an ethnic minority. A quarter of foundations also reported that their governors did not reflect local diversity.
- Half the foundations monitored the performance of their foundation governors. This ranged from checking attendance at meetings to reviewing minutes through to an annual presentation by the foundation governors to the foundation.
- The role of foundations in the life of their school was heavily dependent on the nature of the foundation. Some foundations have effectively come to the end of their life. In one case the foundation governors were the foundation and there was no back-up support or resources to call upon. In other cases the foundation was backed by a substantial organisation and funds.
- Foundations and schools reported that the foundations’ main involvement in the school was financial. This level of financial support ranged from significantly funding the rebuilding of the school to the provision of prizes and bursaries to students. Some of this smaller scale funding was seen as a key element in maintaining the tradition and ethos of the school.

- Foundations were also able to appoint governors with particular skills to support the school, in particular in finance and law and less often education. Where the foundation was backed by a high profile organisation it was also able to lever in additional financial support for particular projects and obtain access to key decision makers at local, regional and even national level.
- Foundations were, less often, also able to help obtain access to major employers for pupil work placements and links into universities.
- In some cases foundations owned or had access to external sites such as residential centres or camping sites which the schools had access to, which greatly enriches the curriculum.
- Overall half of school respondents stated that their foundation had a significantly beneficial effect on their school, around a third reported a marginal beneficial effect and the balance reported that it had no effect.
- In the vast majority of cases it was felt that parents and pupils were not aware of the role of the foundation.

7.1.11 The study's findings provide some clear messages for trust school policy, some of which have already been addressed in the enabling legislation.

- Longevity is an important factor, with many of the schools having had a link with their foundations for over 400 years. Over that time the nature of the schools and foundations has changed but this has not always been reflected in the nature of relationship between them.
- Organisations wishing to support schools need to consider that they are entering a very long-term commitment. That commitment has to take on board that there will be future changes in both how the school and its trust will develop. There is a need to continually review the relationship between the school and its foundation/trust and to encourage governing bodies to be pro-active in ending a relationship (as the legislation allows) if the trust is no longer able to play the role originally envisaged.
- Given the importance of good governance it is vital that trusts/foundations appoint governors with the right skills and attributes and who are prepared to make a long-term commitment to the role. This requires a rigorous needs assessment, selection and monitoring process.
- While it is important to have the right mix of skills on the governing body it is also important that it represents the diversity of the community served by the school and is conversant with the local community's issues and aspirations. Selecting the right balance of foundation governors is a major challenge for foundations/trusts.
- The ability of the foundation/trust to provide support to its governors can greatly improve the working of governors and give them greater confidence in their work. It is important for the trust/foundation to take an active interest and provide adequate support to its foundation governors.

- The ethos of a school, which is strongly influenced by its foundation/trust, is an important factor in parental choice. Yet the role of the foundation is often not known or misunderstood. It would be beneficial for foundations/trusts to raise their profile with parents, staff and pupils.

- The ability of foundations to support their schools is very dependent on the resources available to them and the nature of the foundation. Given the generally positive view of foundations it would be beneficial if foundations / trusts are able to be involved in the life of the school beyond just appointing governors. Where foundations are most appreciated is where they can bring something additional to the school, whether that is financial resources, the ability to open doors into higher education or employers or provision of specialist advice.

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Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Investigating Non-Religious Schools with a Foundation

Foundation Survey

Colin Buchanan and the University of Warwick are undertaking research for the Department for Children, Families and Schools on non-religious schools with a foundation.

To help us understand foundations and the schools they relate to, please complete this short questionnaire and return to us in the enclosed pre-paid envelope **by 20th December 2007**, or electronically to sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk.

All information provided in this questionnaire will remain confidential to Colin Buchanan, and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. No information will be published that will reveal the identity of any individual or school.

If you would like this questionnaire electronically, or have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact Sorwar Ahmed on 020-7643 5635 or e-mail Sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk.

(If the Foundation/Trust is responsible for more than one school please copy and complete a separate questionnaire for each school that you are responsible for).

CONTACT DETAILS

Name of Foundation/Trust		Contact telephone number	
		E-mail address	
Name of person completing the questionnaire		Position/Job title of person completing questionnaire	
Name of school for which you are the Foundation/Trust			

Q1. What is the nature of the Foundation/Trust? (please tick all that apply)

Educational establishment	[]	Community group	[]
Charity	[]	Commercial business	[]
Other (please specify):			

Q2. How many years (approximately, if long standing) has the school had a Foundation/Trust? []

Q3. How does the Foundation/Trust identify suitable candidates to be appointed as Governors?

Q4. What characteristics does the Foundation/Trust look for in a Governor?

Q5. Does the Foundation/Trust have difficulty in finding suitable candidates to act as Governors? If so, what are these and how does it try to overcome them?

Q6. Does the Foundation/Trust monitor the performance of the people it appoints as Governors? (please tick one box)

Yes If yes, how?

No

Q7. Do the backgrounds of the Governors appointed by the Foundation/Trust reflect the make-up of the community from which the school draws its pupils (in terms of social status, ethnicity and diversity)? (please tick one box)

No If no, in what way are Governors' backgrounds different?

Yes

Q8. Besides appointing Governors, in what ways, if any, does the Foundation/Trust become involved in the life of the school? (tick all that apply)

- Has no other involvement
- Provides financial assistance to the school
- Provides goods and services to the school free or below commercial rates
- Provides expert skills or resources to the school in particular areas (e.g. ICT, music, languages)
- Provides sponsorship/bursaries to pupils
- Provides sponsorship/bursaries to staff
- Provides strategic advice and support to the Governing Body
- Provides work experience opportunities to pupils
- Provides volunteers to help in the school
- Provides links with other educational organisations
- Provides links with potential employers
- Other (please specify):

Q9. Is the Foundation/Trust satisfied with how it interrelates with the school? (please tick)

No If no, what improvement would it like to see?

Yes

Q10. How does the Foundation/Trust see its role in the life of the school changing in the future?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it by **20th December 2007**, either electronically to Sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk, in the reply-paid envelope or to:

FREEPOST, F.A.O. Sorwar Ahmed, Colin Buchanan, Newcombe House., 45 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 3PB

Investigating Non-Religious Schools with a Foundation

School Survey

Colin Buchanan and the University of Warwick are undertaking research for the Department for Children, Families and Schools on non-religious schools with a foundation.

To help us understand foundations and the schools they relate to, please complete this short questionnaire and return to us in the enclosed pre-paid envelope **by 20th December 2007**, or electronically to sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk.

All information provided in this questionnaire will remain confidential to Colin Buchanan, and will be used solely for the purpose of this research. No information will be published that will reveal the identity of any individual or school.

If you would like this questionnaire electronically, or have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact Sorwar Ahmed on 020-7643 5635 or e-mail Sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk.

CONTACT DETAILS

Name of School			
Name of Headteacher	Contact tel. number		
	E-mail address		
Name of person completing the questionnaire	Position/Job title of person completing questionnaire		
Name of school's Foundation/Trust			
Address of the Foundation/Trust	Contact name		
	Contact's position / role		

Q1. What is the nature of the Foundation/Trust? (please tick all that apply)

Educational establishment	[]	Community group	[]
Charity	[]	Commercial business	[]
Other (please specify):			

Q2. Does the school have regular contact with the Foundation/Trust other than through its appointed Governors? (please tick)

Yes (please specify in Q3)	[]	Q3. What is the nature of the contact you have?	
No (go to Q4)	[]		

Q4. How many years (approximately, if long standing) has the school had a Foundation/Trust?

	[]
--	-----

Q5. What is the composition of your Governing Body as set out in your Articles of Association/constitution? (please enter number of Governors per category)

Staff (including head teacher)	[]	Local Authority	[]
Parents	[]	Foundation/Trust	[]
Other (please specify):	[]	Community	[]

Q6. What is the gender breakdown of the Foundation/Trust governors? (please enter number of each)	
Female []	Male []
Q7. Across all its responsibilities, on a scale of 1-4, how would you rate the effectiveness of the school's governing body? (1 is not at all effective; and 4 is very effective)	
[]	

Q8. Collectively how would you compare the effectiveness of your Foundation/Trust appointed governors with the other governors collectively on the Governing Body? (please tick)				
Markedly more effective	Slightly more effective	No difference in effectiveness	Slightly less effective	Markedly less effective
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Q9. Do the backgrounds of the Governors appointed by the Foundation/Trust reflect the make-up of the community from which the schools draws it pupils (in terms of social status, ethnicity and diversity)? (please tick)	
No	If no, in what ways are they different?
[]	
Yes	
[]	

Q10. Besides appointing Governors, in what ways, if any, does the Foundation/Trust become involved in the life of the school? (tick all that apply)	
Has no other involvement	[]
Provides financial assistance to the school	[]
Provides goods and services to the school free or below commercial rates	[]
Provides expert skills or resources to the school in particular areas (e.g. ICT, music, languages)	[]
Provides sponsorship/bursaries to pupils	[]
Provides sponsorship/bursaries to staff	[]
Provides strategic advice and support to the governing body	[]
Provides work experience opportunities to pupils	[]
Provides volunteers to help in the school	[]
Provides links with other educational organisations	[]
Provides links with potential employers	[]
Other (please specify):	

Q11. In your view, are parents fully aware of the role the Foundation/Trust plays in the school?	
Yes []	No []

Q.12. Overall, in your opinion, does the Foundation/Trust have ... (please tick)				
A significantly beneficial effect on the school?	A marginally beneficial effect on the school?	No impact on the school?	A marginal disbenefit to the school?	A significant disbenefit to the school?
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

Please add any other comments you wish to make about the role of the school's Foundation/Trust.

Finally, as part of the study, we want to explore in more detail the role that foundations/trusts play in the life of schools and the perceptions of that role by pupils, parents, teachers and governors. Would your school be willing to be involved or learn more about this element of the study? (please tick)	
Yes []	No []

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it by **20th December 2007**, either electronically to Sorwar.ahmed@cbuchanan.co.uk, in the reply-paid envelope or to:

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W11 3PB

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