

Chair of the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board Diocese of Newcastle

Diocese of Newcastle
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 **THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

 **Seeking.
Sharing.
Sending.**

Role of the Chair of The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board

The Role

The role of Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) is a voluntary one, being an opportunity for a person to offer a significant Christian service to the life of the diocese: its Church of England schools and academies; parishes; and organisations. The DBE Chair has an important role in communicating with the wider diocesan family; acting as an advocate for our Church of England schools and academies and being a spokesperson for the DBE.

The DBE Chair plays a key role in the strategic leadership of the Diocese, especially through working with the Bishop and Diocesan Synod to ensure the work of the Board aligns with Diocesan strategic priorities. The Chair of the DBE is an ex officio member of Diocesan Synod. The role is that of a non-executive working at a strategic level. The relationship between the DBE Chair and the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) is an important one. It is expected that the DBE Chair will work collaboratively and in support of the DDE; holding the Director to account but enabling them to lead the Education Team in the development and implementation of the Board's agreed strategic policy and priorities.

The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board (NDEB) has formed a partnership with the Durham Diocesan Education Board (DDEB) and together we fund and manage a Joint Education Team. The partnership is governed through an incorporated body registered as a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP). The LLP is wholly owned by the NDEB and the DDEB. The role therefore involves working in partnership with the DDEB and co-chairing of the LLP.

We are seeking a new DBE Chair during a time of continued change and financial pressure in the Education sector and the growing need for the Diocese to respond to changing needs with regards to the level and ways in which we support our Church schools and academies and children and young people in our communities.

The Diocese

Framed by the Rivers Tyne and Tweed the Diocese of Newcastle is the Church of England's most northerly diocese. This Diocese is in the 'land of the Northern Saints' and was formed in 1882. It comprises 169 parishes across 2,110 square miles. The Diocese covers the local authorities of Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside and also small parts of County Durham and Cumbria. The 12 deaneries within 2 archdeaconries serve a population of about 800,000 people across a variety of communities ranging from sparse rural to large urban areas and includes areas of significant rural and urban deprivation. The Diocese is led by the Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley.

The Diocesan Board of Education

The role and purpose of all Diocesan Education Boards is set out the **DBE measure 2021** which is the statutory instrument which gives the overarching requirement for each Diocese to have a Diocesan Board of Education and sets out the core functions and powers. Diocesan Synod in each Diocese designate a DBE for the Diocese through an approved Scheme under schedule 3 of the Measure. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2021/1/section/2>. General functions set out by the Measure/Scheme include overarching and wide-ranging duties to:-

- (a) promote or assist in the promotion of education in the Diocese that is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England;
- (b) promote or assist in the promotion of religious education and religious worship in schools in the Diocese;
- (c) promote or assist in the promotion of church schools in the Diocese;
- (d) promote co-operation between itself and other persons concerned with education in the Diocese.

The Measure/Scheme also set out how the Diocesan Education Board should be constituted and set out various specific functions in respect of giving advice, directions and consents to Church Schools and to promote, assist and co-operate with youth work in the Diocese. In Newcastle Diocese the Newcastle Diocesan Education Board is an incorporated charitable company (a legal entity in its own right). This means that all board members are both company directors and charitable trustees with legal obligations including to always act in the charity's best interests, act in compliance with the law, to always act with reasonable skill and care and to ensure responsible and accountable management of its resources. The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board owns many of its Church School Buildings on trust for use as Church Schools (the governing body is the managing and responsible body for the site). The NDEB also owns a small number of other buildings (e.g. school houses) with oversight for rentals and management.

Our Schools and Academies

Two hundred years ago, the Church of England pioneered education for all, building a network of church schools across the nation that served their local communities. While education has changed almost beyond recognition, the original vision is still held and the Church of England retains a large investment in teaching and learning, notably in this Diocese through its 49 schools and academies.

Across our three local authorities there are 47 primary or first Church of England schools/academies. There is one secondary academy and, and within the areas that operate a three-tier system, one Church of England middle school, deemed secondary. In all, over 7,000 children and young people attend Church of England schools/academies across this diocese. Around 500 people serve as Foundation Governors/Trustees in Church schools/academies and many more church members serve as Governors/Trustees in Community schools/academies.

Multi Academy Trusts

In the Newcastle Diocese there are 3 'Mixed MATs' (Pele, Cheviot and NEAT) with an overarching governance structure that is designed to protect both the ethos of the Church Schools and non-Church schools within the Trust. Over time the Diocese has developed a strong and trusted relationship with the Mixed MATs and as such continues to support their growth with Church of England Schools where they are the best solution for those schools.

In addition, Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is a Church of England Academy Trust within the Diocese which comprises 8 Church of England Schools and a Special School. The Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust also operates across both Newcastle and Durham Dioceses and contains 21 Church of England Primary Schools including 4 within the Newcastle Diocesan area.

The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board acts as Diocesan Corporate Member on several of the MATs across the Diocese which includes oversight, consent and advice functions under the model Academy Company documents agreed nationally between the Department for Education and the National Society. It also nominates additional Members to all of the MATs.

Joint Education Team

The Newcastle Diocesan Education Board has entered into formal partnership with the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance (acting on behalf of the Durham Diocesan Board of Education) to establish the Joint Education Team (JET) LLP. The Joint Education Team LLP is the legal entity through which the joint staff team carry out the majority of their functions working to support the Church schools across both Dioceses. Joint working has been in place across both Dioceses since Summer 2014 and the JET LLP has been formally operational since 1 September 2023. Oversight of the JET is through the JET LLP Management Committee which includes the Chair of both Newcastle and Durham's Diocesan Education Boards and other nominated members.

The JET Team comprises:

- The Diocesan Director of Education
- PA to the Diocesan Director of Education/governance admin support
- 2 Assistant Directors (School Effectiveness)
- 1 Assistant Director (Legal and Governance)
- 1 RE Advisor
- 2 administrative assistants
- 1 SIAMS consultant (part time)
- 1 Finance and Operations Manager (currently recruiting)

Funding

The JET LLP is funded by grants made by both the NDEB and the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance acting on behalf of the DDEB, and income generated through charged services. The NDEB contribution to the cost of the JET has up until recently been funded through our income from investments. However, our contribution is becoming increasingly reliant on use of our reserves which is not sustainable in the long term. The NDEB is therefore working with the DDE to consider options for mitigating the risk of relying on use of one-off reserves.

Role Description

Post: Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education

Our vision

Our vision is set within the Newcastle Diocesan Vision of growing a younger and more diverse church.

We want our Diocese to be a place where children and young people encounter God's transforming presence in their lives through a high quality and fully inclusive education that is rooted in the Christian faith. Our focus is on supporting the education of the whole child by promoting their spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development. We want to support and nurture flourishing communities in our schools and parishes that enable all children and young people 'to have life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

The key aims of the NDEB

1. All church schools and academies are sustainable and provide the highest quality education for all pupils, enabling all individuals to flourish.
2. All church schools and parishes are empowered and equipped to work well together to offer a distinctly Christian and fully inclusive education.

Key purpose of the role:

- To work with the Bishop and members of the Board of Education and its committees, to shape the strategic purpose and direction for the future of the Church of England schools and academies within the diocese, and schools within the extended church school family.
- To ensure the NDEB strategic priorities align with and help deliver wider diocesan goals.
- To lead the Board in ensuring it fulfils its responsibilities set out in the DBE Measure (2021)
- To represent the Board within the wider Diocese to ensure the work of the Board is at the heart of Diocesan structures and mission.
- To work in partnership with the Diocesan Director of Education to ensure the strategic direction agreed by the Board is translated into appropriately resourced activity, thus achieving the mission of the organisation

Accountable to: Diocesan Bishop

Time commitment and support:

The workload is not spread evenly through the year, but the main commitments are as follows:

- Diocesan Synod: 3 meetings per year
- Board of Education: 3 meetings per year
- Board of Education Finance and Property Committee: 3 meeting per year
- JET LLP: 6 meetings per year
- Attendance at other committee meetings as agreed or required
- Meetings with Bishop and Director of Education: arranged on an informal basis as required
- School, Deanery and Parish visits: as and when required

The Chair will have the time and capacity to fulfil the role based on an assumption that this is likely to take around 30 days per year.

Key relationships:

Director of Education and members of staff within the JET

Diocesan Bishop

Members of the Board of Education

Newcastle and Durham Diocesan Secretaries

Chair of Durham DBE and members of Durham DBE

National Church of England education leads

Regional central and local government leads

Specific Responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the Board sets strategy and policy objectives for the short, medium and long term, in consultation with the director and staff
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with the DBE Measure (2021), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and making sure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in the DBE Measure.
- Ensuring that appropriate resources (personnel, financial, material) are secured and deployed effectively in order to effectively fulfil the Board's objectives, goals and values
- Ensuring the Board's finances are managed well and provide value for money
- Ensuring probity and due diligence in financial transactions
- Playing a key role in the recruitment of the DDE and holding the DDE to account
- Leading on the monitoring of progress of the organisation in light of its objectives and strategic direction
- Chairing the Board and ensuring the effective functioning of the Board, its committees and subsidiary companies
- Ensuring that the Board annually reviews its structure, role, relationship to staff and implements agreed change as necessary
- Co-Chairing the JET LLP and maintaining good communication with Durham DBE
- Providing oversight of risk management, ensuring that key strategic, operational, financial, reputational, and safeguarding risks are regularly identified, assessed, monitored and appropriately mitigated.

Representation role

Internally

- To represent the Board of Education and when necessary be the 'public face' of the organisation
- To be present where appropriate at relevant Diocesan events
- To visit schools, academies, deaneries and parishes from time to time

Externally

- To attend national and regional events and meetings alongside the Diocesan Director of Education where relevant and appropriate

Person Specification

The Chair will have a committed and mature Christian faith and will:

- Have a strong commitment to church schools and academies, the work of the DBE and the values, aims and objectives of the Diocese
- Have a good understanding of the changing world of statutory school education
- Be a person of integrity who acts fairly and impartially in the interests of the Diocese and the DBE, using independent judgement and confidentiality as appropriate
- Be committed to promoting diversity, equality and inclusion
- Be committed to promoting robust safeguarding arrangements
- Have a good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the Board and trustees
- Be able to chair meetings well, encourage debate and facilitate decision making
- Have strong relationship-building and communication skills
- Be able to think strategically
- Be able to understand financial information and take sound financial decisions
- Have a grounding in local parish life
- Have a professional background in education, business or public sector work
- Have experience of working with a charitable company
- Be used to working collaboratively with both staff and volunteers

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How to Apply?

To apply please supply a covering letter detailing your expression of interest in the role, along with either a CV or details of your church record, and details of two referees, to the Bishop of Newcastle's PA: d.botha@newcastle.anglican.org.

Closing date for applications: Monday 29 September 2025.

For wider information about the Diocese visit: <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/>