

A witness of my faith

Bryan Wong is a Foundation Governor at St Andrew's School Church of England Primary School, Bath.



Bryan Wong, Foundation Governor at St Andrew's School, Bath

Why did you become a governor?

I wanted to support the school and I wanted to serve God. I also wanted to help the students here in the school.

What's the best thing about being a governor?

The best thing is fulfilment. To be involved in the school governing body and to chair committees, to support the leadership of the school, to visit the students and see how they're doing in class - all these are very, very meaningful to me.

Does it take up all your spare time?

No. I find my colleagues and the school leadership very understanding. They keep reminding me that I need to put my family first. So, if I cannot finish the meeting because I need to pick up

my child then I will be excused.

What would you say to someone who's thinking of becoming a governor?

I think it's a very meaningful job. Apart from serving the community, it keeps me very up to date with the knowledge and dynamic development about the education system in this country. I feel inclusivity and diversity are very much celebrated here and that helps me to make better sense of how this could be translated into other spheres of my life.

How did your faith inform your decision to become a governor?

My faith was actually the cornerstone of my decision to join the governing body. I was invited by the former headteacher here. It was approved by my parochial church council. So I always see my role here as a foundation governor as also a witness of my faith to the school community. This is to me the most important thing. Hear more from Bryan at bathandwells.anglican.org/foundation-governor ■

Follow us on



Supporting our schools

In Bath and Wells we are blessed to have 182 Church of England schools. While each supports their children in their own unique way, their values are underpinned by the Church of England's values of wisdom, hope, community and dignity. Supporting of our schools with their own unique talents are our school governors.

Ed Gregory, Director of Education for Bath and Wells says, "Governors are an essential part of the leadership team in a school or trust. You don't need to be an expert in education, the strength of a governing board comes from skills and experiences each person brings. While we have some amazingly supportive governors, we also have many gaps to fill, particularly Foundation Governors and Trustees, so if you feel this is something you are called to do, why not find out more about how you could help? It doesn't take much of your time, we provide lots of support and I have no doubt you will find it extremely rewarding."

Headteacher Jayne Rochford-Smith, St Andrew's Church School Bath, says



"Governors are what I would call 'critical friends'. They bring advice, they help us to move the school forward, and they also help us to make the right decisions."

Foundation Governors are appointed as Governors and as 'Champions' for the preservation and development the religious character of our Church of England schools, a responsibility of the entire Governing Board. They can be from any walk of life and any age, over 18, and be a practising Anglican or a member of another Christian denomination within the Churches Together movement. If you'd like to be a governor, even if you don't have a current church connection, if you have the support of the school and church community and are passionate about ensuring that the religious character of the school is flourishing, we'd still be keen to talk to you so get in touch.

bathandwells.org.uk/governors ■

News in brief

'Green' school security

In what's thought to be the first project of its kind in the UK, Kilmersdon Church of England Primary School has created a 'green' security hedge to keep the children safe, instead of a wire fence. The school wanted to construct something which reflects their vision to care for and manage God's creation. Headteacher, Steve Bamford said, "The children are really proud of this solution to our need for site security. We are excited about what animals, birds, insects and plants might make their home at Kilmersdon in and around our hedge as it grows, adding to the considerably diverse existing wildlife on site!"

A visible presence

The Church Tent has been at two of our largest gatherings in the diocese this year, the Bath and West Show and Glastonbury Festival. The tents were manned by ecumenical teams and served a steady flow of visitors. At the Bath and West Show the Yeast Scrapstore from Glastonbury created a display on the theme of The

Tackling modern slavery

The latest course for Hidden Voices Somerset, the joint initiative between Bath and Wells and Clewer to tackle modern slavery, is underway at St Francis Church, Bridgwater. Sian Owens, the local coordinator for Hidden Voices Somerset, says, "Despite people's expectations, modern slavery is happening across our diocese. It is not just to people trafficked from other countries but also vulnerable local people, young and old." Find out how you can play your part in tackling Modern Slavery at bathandwells.org.uk/modern-slavery ■

Find more on this story and others at bathandwells.org.uk/news



Servant King and prompted people passing by to add their thoughts, comments and prayers to a board outside the tent ■

What a joy!

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

In response to God's immense love for us we seek to be God's people living and telling the story of Jesus.' In conversations with people about our vision in recent months, we have talked of all the different ways that we can serve the communities in which we are based - how we can enable the life of the whole of the people of God.

One of the community connections that many of our churches nurture is with their local school, in particular with our church schools where day in, day out teachers and their support staff reflect God's love and teachings with the pupils in their care. As rewarding as that role is, it is a tough one. The long summer holiday may be in sight but anyone who knows a teacher or member of school staff will tell you how much that is needed as well as how much work is done during that 'break'. They truly need our support and love and prayers. We should also give thanks for those working in our schools during the summer, cleaning, building, or preparing for the new academic year.

Not all of us are blessed with the gifts to teach, but many of us have

other gifts that can help our school communities. For some it is the gift of storytelling, sharing the teachings of Jesus as an Open the Book volunteer, others serve as chaplains. Some will simply live out their Christian faith by volunteering in classrooms or in the playground, or by praying for the school community. All of these roles are valuable to our schools, and rewarding for those who fulfil them.

What our schools and Academy Trusts need in particular are governors and trustees. There are many opportunities, especially for foundation governors and trustees who have a distinct responsibility for championing the Christian character of our schools. That may sound daunting, but that responsibility isn't held alone as there is support locally and from our excellent education team. And if you do take on that role, what a joy to know that you are playing your part to support and nurture our young people in the way of our Lord who said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3 John 1:4 ■

Bishop Michael