



DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Application Pack January 2026

Introduction from Bishop Joanne the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Welcome to the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and to this information pack about our Diocesan Director of Education vacancy.



Thank you for your interest in the post. This is an exciting time in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Our diocesan vision is Growing in God and the Church of England's vision for education is Deeply Christian, serving the common good. Our schools and academy trusts are an important part of the work of the Church of England here in Suffolk.

As Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) you will play a major part in developing and supporting our vision, ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of our work. You will support the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) in its statutory role. We support all our schools to enable all pupils and adults to flourish as unique individuals made in the image of God alongside being places of academic excellence. The role of DDE carries significant leadership responsibility, but you will not be alone. As well as managing a small team, you will be part of the diocesan Senior Leadership Team and a member of the Bishop's Staff team working alongside a team of clergy and laity who are passionate to see our schools and parishes thrive.

To do all of this, you will be a person of humility and prayer, who works imaginatively and collaboratively whilst building trust. I hope that this pack inspires you to apply.

Rt Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

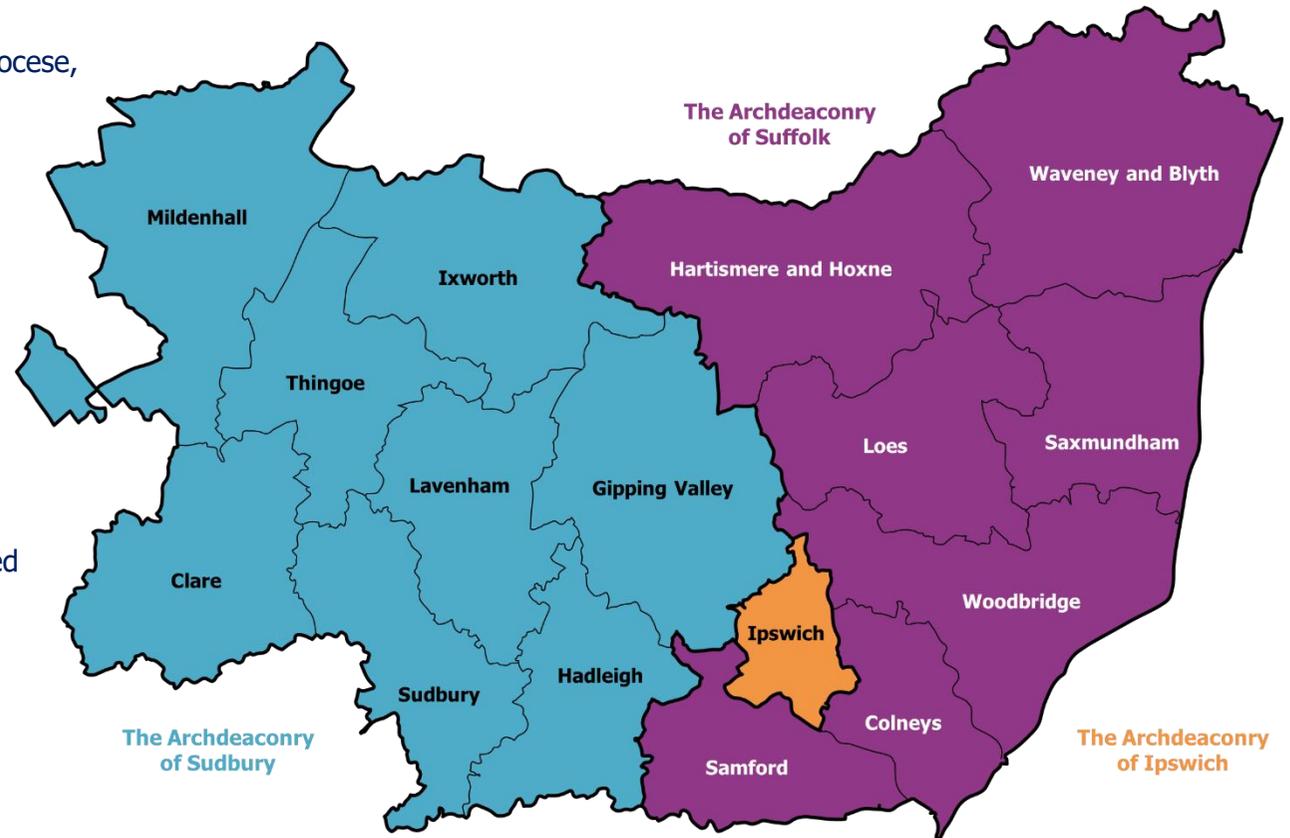
The Diocese

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich covers the county of Suffolk (excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east) and including one parish in Essex.

A rich and diverse county, it is a mainly rural Diocese, encompassing a large number of small villages, seaside resorts and market towns such as Haverhill, Beccles and Eye. It also includes the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic Abbey.

The county town of Ipswich is home to more than a quarter of Suffolk's population, Ipswich Town football team and the well-regarded University of Suffolk.

Also within our borders are historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, the world-renowned cultural destinations at Snape Maltings and Aldeburgh, and the Heritage coast, a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife.



What we do for a living

Suffolk's agricultural landscape reflects the foundation of a rural economy that has had a significant role in shaping not just the landscape but our culture and values over many centuries. While agriculture now accounts for less than 2% of the working population, an estimated 10% are employed in 'food to fork' businesses. A vast number of food producers and breweries, both small and very large, are based here.



Suffolk is understood as a county of opportunity. Transport and logistics firms are major employers along the A14 corridor and Felixstowe boasts the UK's largest container port. Energy is set to become a significant growth area for Suffolk over the next decade with the arrival of the new Sizewell C nuclear plant. Thousands of new jobs and apprenticeships are expected to be created at the site and in supply chain companies. Advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, ICT and finance are also significant employers in the county. Tourism brings well over £2bn to the local economy each year, with tens of thousands employed in the sector. Sport, through the horse racing industry around Newmarket and Ipswich Town Football Club, and arts and culture, including the annual Aldeburgh and Latitude festivals – play a significant part in making Suffolk a destination county.

The Church across the Diocese

Suffolk Diocese has 481 churches and 87 church schools, and we serve 684,000 people. We have 443 parishes and 111 benefices, giving us the highest percentage of multi-parish benefices of any Diocese. The number of Fresh Expressions has grown considerably in the last few years and currently stands at 187. The Diocesan Bishop, Right Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell, lives in Ipswich, which is also where the Diocesan Office is based. St Edmundsbury Cathedral is in Bury St Edmunds.



Schools

Our work with schools is a strength. There are 14,000 pupils in our 87 church schools, 85 primary and two secondary. Of our 87 schools, 6 are Voluntary Aided (VA), 25 Voluntary Controlled (VC) and 56 are academies (64%). Three-quarters of our schools are or were formerly VC.

Our schools play an important part in the life of the Diocese with our Diocesan Director of Education a member of Bishop's Staff. We work closely with other Dioceses, regionally and nationally and with partner organisations like Christian Aid. Our RE teaching resource, the Emmanuel Project is widely used across Suffolk and in other Dioceses. Our Diocesan education team promotes a Christian vision for schools in which all can grow and flourish, and we promote excellence in the teaching of RE and in Collective Worship.

Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)

The DBE is a statutory committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance with particular functions and responsibilities for church schools, RE and Collective Worship and education in the diocese more widely. Our key priorities are:

1. to develop and support highly effective church schools and Headteachers
2. to equip and resource church schools to deliver high quality RE and Collective Worship
3. to support schools, governors and clergy in ensuring the Christian distinctiveness of church schools
4. to develop and strengthen effective links between churches and schools which enable faith to grow and to contribute to the Diocesan Growing in God strategy.

We have recently (in July 2025) updated our highly successful Emmanuel Project, moving to an online subscription model which will be easier for schools to access and for us to update-[The Emmanuel Project | Providing a complete set of enquiry-based units for teaching RE in Primary school](#)



Diocesan Education team

Our team is currently made up of 4.7fte staff. Together we:

- provide training and resources on RE and collective worship, spiritual development and SIAMS
- provide advice on admissions (to voluntary aided schools)
- administer funding for school building projects (to voluntary aided schools)
- support schools at their Ofsted inspection feedback
- help schools to develop a Christian vision
- provide wellbeing support, training and conferences for schools
- visit schools and host online forums for heads, chairs of governors and small schools
- deal with the appointment and resignation of foundation governors.



More information can be found on our diocesan website- <https://www.cofesuffolk.org/schools/>

There is a strong and supportive professional network of DDEs across the 42 dioceses in England. The National Society for Education provides support and manages SIAMS inspections- <https://www.nse.org.uk/>

Job Description

Purpose of the role

Working within the statutory context of the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021, the Director of Education will:

- Lead, manage and coordinate the work of the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Contribute to the strategic development of the Diocese and the outworking of the Diocesan Growing in God vision and the Church of England's vision for education.
- Promote and support the distinctive work and mission of the Church schools and academies of the Diocese.
- Ensure that the schools for which the Diocese is responsible are aiming to provide the highest possible quality of education.
- Support and promote religious education and religious worship in all schools and academies of the Diocese.
- Be an advocate for distinctive Christian education.
- Work collaboratively as a member of the diocesan staff team and Bishop's Staff.



Reporting To

The Diocesan Director of Education is appointed by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and is responsible to the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Education in matters relating to education, and to the Diocesan Secretary in matters relating to terms and conditions of service.

Key Connections

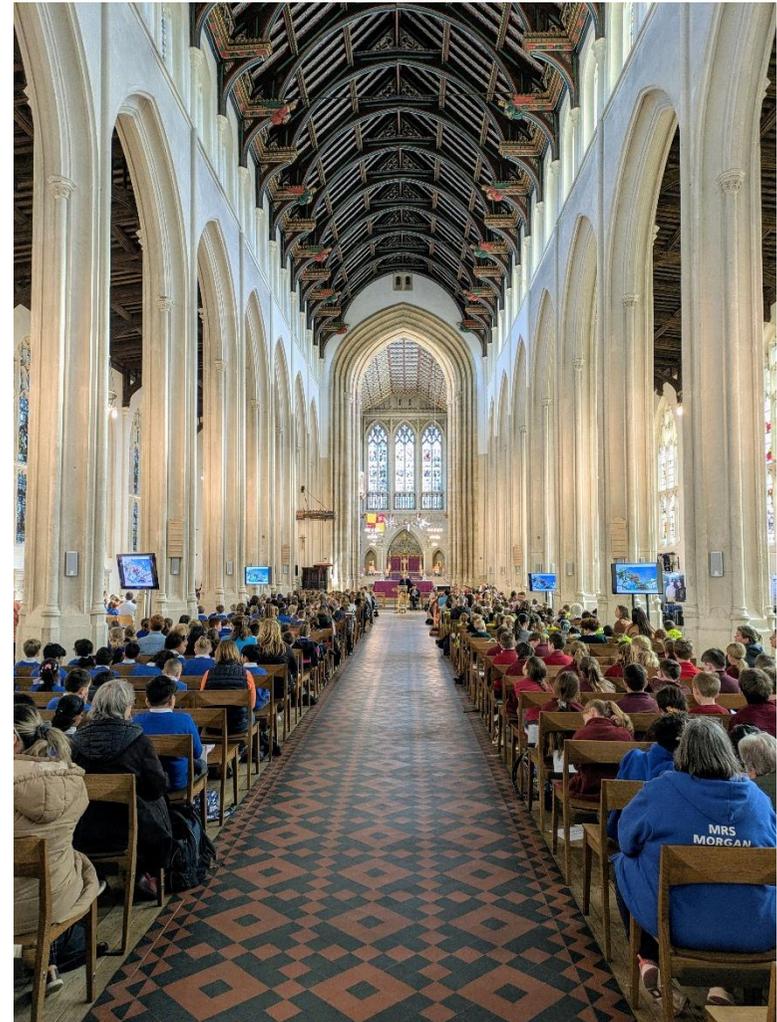
The Director will seek to develop collaborative relationships and ways of working with other diocesan officers as appropriate. Other key connections include the Bishop's senior staff, ministry officers, parish officers, the Local Authority, and other contacts working in schools and national organisations. The DDE will also seek to develop relations with the DBEs and staffs of the dioceses of Ely, Norwich, Chelmsford and St Alban's within the umbrella of ChurchschoolsEast.

Internal

- The Bishop and the Bishop's Staff
- The Diocesan Board of Education
- Schools and Multi Academy Trusts (especially Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and CEOs)
- Key Diocesan Staff (e.g. Director of Mission and Ministry, Director of Finance)
- Cathedral staff

External

- Department for Education
- Regional Director
- National Society for Education
- Suffolk County Council officers and members
- Diocesan Directors of Education (especially in Norwich, Ely, Chelmsford and St Alban's dioceses)



Key Tasks / Responsibilities

1. As Secretary, and as directed by the Board, to ensure the implementation of the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 2021 and any associated subsequent legislation by:
 - developing a diocesan strategy for church schools by providing strategic vision and direction
 - providing educational advice, support and training for people involved in diocesan church schools
 - leading, through collaboration, the diocesan education staff team
 - close co-operation with the LA
 - representing the diocese in all matters relating to church schools
 - serving as Secretary to the Diocesan Board of Education, and seeking to enable full use of the gifts of the members of the Board
2. To bring to the attention of the Diocesan Board of Education and, through the Diocesan Secretary, the Bishop's Staff and the Bishop's Council relevant matters relating to church schools and the church's involvement in education, ensuring that they have a high profile in the life of the diocese and that appropriate policies and strategies are developed and implemented. This will include, as appropriate, attending meetings, reporting to and making presentations to these bodies as well as annually to the Diocesan Synod.
3. To work closely with the Director of Finance in the preparation and control of the Board's budget and to encourage the development of other sources of funding.
4. To undertake regular appraisal of the DBE staff and, as appropriate, to encourage their professional development and training.
5. To co-ordinate and support those representing the diocese on statutory bodies such as SACRE in providing advice and support to all schools on their religious education and collective worship.



6. To work to develop links between deaneries, PCCs and schools, promoting best practice and communication and encouraging clergy and PCCs to use the opportunities schools present in advancing the mission of the Church.
7. To ensure that Foundation Governors are appointed and trained, admission policies and procedures are reviewed and operative, admission appeals organised, school documents legally written, and appropriate new staff appointments made including statutory advisory rights for the appointment of head teachers.
8. To provide support and advice for head teachers, chairs of governors and other governors on such matters as staffing, curriculum, agreed syllabus, standards and legislation.
9. To assist governors with the appointment of head teachers and headteacher performance management.
10. To visit schools on a regular basis.
11. To provide support to church schools in relation to Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.
12. To lead on strategic planning and action including bids for new schools, the creation of partnerships and federations, and academy conversions.
13. To liaise with national, regional and local bodies such as the Department for Education, the Regional Director, National Society for Education, the Association of Anglican Directors of Education (AADE) and regional DDEs.
14. To be a co-opted member of Suffolk's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee



Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust And Other MATs

The DDE is also a trustee/ director of the Diocesan Multi- Academy Trust. He/she also represents the diocese as a member of all of the church school-led MATs, and attends AGMs for each of the All Saints Schools Trust, Tilian Partnership, Thedwastre Education Trust, Elveden Schools Trust, Heart of Suffolk Education Trust and our stand alone trust, St Mary's Church of England Academy Trust (Mildenhall).

Trusteeships

The DDE is a trustee of the Keswick Hall Trust and the Elizabeth Walter Trust.

Annual Performance Review

The Director will be involved in a process of regular review and appraisal for professional development in line with the DBF process for related staff.



Person Specification

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Knowledge and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of curriculum and leadership in the primary phase. • Successful experience as a senior leader in the primary phase. • A proven track record of improving performance and delivering results. • Good understanding of the Ofsted framework and school improvement planning. • Proven track record of accurate lesson observations. • Awareness of the SIAMS inspection framework. • Awareness of current developments in education. 	Experience as an Ofsted inspector or SIAMS Inspector.
Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified teacher status. • A degree or equivalent qualification. 	
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of accurately analysing school data and using for successful school improvement. • Ability to plan, organise and prioritise effectively, in order to achieve targets and meet deadlines. • Excellent written and verbal communication skills. • Well developed interpersonal skills and ability to established good working relationships with a wide range of people and organisations. • Good ICT skills. 	
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to being a member of a team. • A self-starter, able to take initiatives and see them through. • Commitment to continuing professional development. • Flexibility and resilience in adapting to change and challenge. 	

Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to Church of England schools. • The ability to travel regularly throughout the diocese. • The ability to work outside normal office hours. 	
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Please note: The post-holder will be expected to support schools at times outside normal office hours and to travel as a part of his/her everyday work.

This is a post to which an Occupational Requirement under paragraph 1 of Schedule 9 to the Equality Act 2010 applies, the requirement being that the post holder is a practising Christian.

The current main duties and responsibilities of this post are outlined in the job description. The list is not meant to be exhaustive. The need for flexibility, shared accountability and team working is required. The post-holder is expected to carry out other related duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities, commensurate with the post's banding and whenever reasonably instructed. The role description may be amended over time, in full consultation with the postholder, to meet the needs of the Diocese.

We are an equal opportunities employer and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Salary	£75k-£79k per annum
Pension provision	Membership of the Church of England Pensions Board Pension Builder 2014 Scheme following completion of probation period.
Hours of work	35 hours per week TOIL (time off in lieu) is applicable for evening and weekend working (which is limited), to be agreed with the line manager.
Holidays	25 days pro rata paid leave in addition to the usual public holidays plus Discretionary days (at Easter and Christmas).

Probation Period	Six months during which time progress is regularly reviewed and the period may be extended.
Notice period	During probation 2 weeks and thereafter 3 months.
Place of work	Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ.

Applications

For an informal discussion about the post, please contact Jane Sheat, Diocesan Director of Education on 07884 232231 or jane.sheat@cofesuffolk.org.

For an application form, job description and further details, please see our website-<http://www.cofesuffolk.org/vacancies>

Applications marked 'Confidential Application' should be sent to: HR at HR@cofesuffolk.org or by post to Diocesan Office, St Nicholas Centre, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ.

Please note: Applications will only be accepted via our application form. Please do not apply directly from online jobsites or send CVs.

Closing date: 9th February 2026 at 5pm

Interview date: 2nd March 2026

TOGETHER WE ARE



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**

SUFFOLK