



CALLED TO BE a people of

HOPE



contact Ian McNiff
Director

Department for Schools and Colleges
0117 902 5593
ian.mcniciff@cliftondiocese.com

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE no.102 January 2011

Welcome back

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2011.

I hope all of you were able to enjoy a restful and holy Christmas with your families and friends.

I trust that the weather did not cause too much disruption.

A warm welcome is extended to the following who have taken up new roles: Sarah Wembridge becomes the new head of St Mary's, Chippenham. Hugh Bradley will take up the post of acting head at St Joseph's, Nympsfield.

School information

At the start of the autumn term the Department of Schools and Colleges requested a range of information from schools.

This information is required to enable us to support you in our work with local authorities. As you know local authorities are currently in a period of great transition, so all information we receive is vital to enable all schools to receive the support they need. This includes SIP or local authority reports on the schools. It is particularly important for the school's safeguarding information to be up to date and for the diocese to know the name of the safeguarding link governor. If you haven't already done so please let either myself, Jenny or Sandra know the contact details.

'Unfolding Wisdom' - Year of Catholic Education

As you know this year has been designated the Year of Catholic Education. 'Unfolding Wisdom' is the theme of this year in our diocese.

Bishop Malcolm McMahon, Chairman of the Catholic Education Service, announced 2010 to 2011 as the Year of Catholic Education at 'The

Big Assembly' during the Holy Father's visit.

Our theme 'Unfolding Wisdom' reflects the prayer which Pope Benedict XVI prayed at the beginning of 'The Big Assembly'. 'Unfolding Wisdom' also reflects the Pope's address to teachers when he said: "As you know, the task of a teacher is not simply to impart information or to provide training in skills intended to deliver some economic benefit to society; education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full - in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the Creator, for 'both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts'."

'Unfolding Wisdom' prayercards and posters have been distributed to all schools and parishes. If you need more then please do not hesitate to contact us. You can also download print quality versions from cliftondiocese.com. A prayercard for everyone in all our school communities has been printed and distributed.

We are richly blessed in the contribution which our schools and colleges make to the mission of the Church and we trust 'Unfolding Wisdom' will deepen our appreciation of Catholic education.

Further details of 'Unfolding Wisdom' can be found on cliftondiocese.com. You can also download high resolution photographs of your school's representative being presented with a special candle by Bishop Declan at the Thanksgiving Mass along with the prayercards and posters.

There is a new audio series 'Unfolding Wisdom with Our Saints' which started on cliftondiocese.com on Monday 3 January. Pupils from schools across the diocese will give their views on the patron of their school and what it means to be part of a Catholic school community. I would encourage all schools to let either myself or Tom Bigwood our Communications Officer know what your school is doing as part of 'Unfolding Wisdom' and other events in your school's life.

Future activities for ‘Unfolding Wisdom’ include: a pastoral letter from Bishop Declan, a prayer-book for all pupils in our diocese, theology for teachers handbook, and a day for governors led by Bishop Malcolm McMahon in May. Full details will be published on cliftondiocese.com.

Papal visit

Holy Father’s historic legacy.

You can obtain papal visit legacy resources at thepapalvisit.org.uk/legacy.

The official papal visit website still has all the papal events, including ‘The Big Assembly’, available to view on demand.

The website won the ‘people’s choice’ awards at the recent Christian New Media Awards. A well deserved honour for an excellent website.

Admissions policies

Please ensure that your admissions policy is sent out for consultation and allow for eight weeks prior to 1 March.

I would most be grateful if you would send in your policy for consultation to us during the consultation period.

The Code requires all determined policies to be sent to the diocese by 15 April for us to sign off your policy. The Schools Adjudicator will then require the diocese to send them a list of all schools whose policies have been signed off. FAQs and responses have been compiled as a result of the admissions meeting in November. These have been distributed to schools. I would be grateful if you could ensure these are shared with all governors and SLT together with the School’s Policy and Admissions Code.

Denominational transport

On 13 December Michael Gove made a written ministerial statement.

He said: “We want all families to be able to choose the right school for their child. We are therefore reviewing home-to-school transport so that we can better meet the needs of not only disadvantaged families, but all families, ensuring transport is properly targeted to those that need it most. In relation to the grant, which supports extended rights for free home-to-school travel, we will be announcing transition funding in the new year to enable local authorities to continue to deliver their duty in this area for the rest of this academic year, pending the outcome of the review.”

I encourage all school communities to continue to make contributions to the various consultations taking place within local authority areas on the issue of denominational transport whilst welcoming Michael Gove’s comments.

I have been working with local authorities on this issue and further information on various statements can be found on cliftondiocese.com. Bristol City Council has recently ended its consultation about this matter but you can still write to your local councillor and MP. You can find out more about what Bristol City Council are saying about transport to Catholic schools on their website at bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/press-releases/2010/nov/consultation-on-travel-to-faith-schools.en. Gloucestershire County Council is currently consulting about this matter. You can take part in their consultation online at gloucestershire.gov.uk/h2stransportreview.

The Gloucestershire consultation closes on Friday 14 January.

The importance of teaching: schools white paper

The importance of teaching: schools white paper sets out the Government’s reform programme for the schools system.

In particular it sets out: powers for teachers to improve discipline, and trialling a new approach to exclusions; the Government’s view of curriculum; school curriculum supported by rigorous assessment and qualifications; it’s plan to increase the number of academies and free schools; changes to school performance tables; and Ofsted inspections and governance details of the funding system including a pupil premium school-led school. It is important that all governing bodies are aware of this white paper and have the opportunity to consider the implications for your school community. If there are any particular issues or concerns then please do not hesitate to contact me. The white paper can be downloaded from publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CM-7980.pdf.

Academies

I am aware that schools are currently being bombarded with information on academies.

The Catholic Education Service is working with the Government. I can confirm that in our diocese we are working hard to ensure that next steps are for the benefit of all schools. Further information on the CES negotiations can be found at cesew.org.uk.

In our diocese we have established a working

party to look at all issues under the chairmanship of diocesan trustee Dr Giles Mercer. Membership includes: Simon Kingwell from St Joseph's, Burnham-on-Sea; Julian Clements from St Paul's Yate; Raymond Friel from St Gregory's, Bath; Catherine Hughes from St Bede's, Bristol, Phil Rush from St Peter's, Gloucester; Maureen Harries from St Joseph's, Swindon; Ann Fowler, Assistant Director, Formation and myself. I am currently working our diocesan trustees to develop a position paper and will be communicating with you very shortly. In the meantime, I am more than happy to work with and talk to governing bodies.

Catholic school census statistics and contribution to community cohesion

Many schools and governors ask for specific information which demonstrates both the context and success of our catholic schools, I hope the following is helpful in facilitating your discussions.

There are over 2,300 Catholic schools including sixth form colleges in England and Wales (10 per cent of national total). The vast majority of these are voluntary-aided (maintained) schools or colleges, and just over 150 are Catholic independent schools, including nine special schools. There are also three Catholic academies and 20 schools (including one academy) run jointly with other Christian Churches.

There are three Catholic higher education institutions in England: St Mary's University College, Twickenham; Trinity College, Leeds; and Newman College, Birmingham. There is also Liverpool Hope University which is a jointly owned Catholic-Anglican university college.

Catholic maintained schools and colleges in England and Wales currently educate nearly 800,000 pupils.

In 2008, the proportion of Catholic pupils in Catholic maintained schools was around 75 per cent in England and 65 per cent in Wales.

About three-fifths (58 per cent) of teachers in maintained Catholic schools and colleges in England and Wales are themselves Catholic. Analysed by phase, Catholic teachers make up 71 per cent of the teaching staff in maintained primary schools and 48 per cent in maintained secondary schools.

The rate of withdrawal from collective worship is negligible: 0.02 per cent of pupils in England, 0.01 per cent in Wales and 0.03 per cent in independent schools.

98 per cent of Catholic schools in England and 96 per cent in Wales require pupils to wear an agreed school uniform.

27 per cent of pupils at Catholic secondary schools are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared with 22.5 per cent in other schools.

Catholic schools exclude fewer pupils than other schools in England and Wales. The percentage of pupils permanently excluded in Catholic schools is 0.09 per cent, whilst the percentage for other schools is 0.11 per cent.

Catholic schools in England are close to the national average figure (0.36 per cent) regarding the number of pupils in care.

Almost identical patterns are shown in the distribution of pupils eligible for free school meals between Catholic and community secondary schools. Six per cent of Catholic schools have more than 35 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals. Nationally the figure is seven per cent.

In terms of overall standards, Ofsted inspectors judged higher proportions of Catholic schools to be outstanding or good than other schools. For the primary phase, 79 per cent of Catholic primary schools achieved this standard compared with 68 per cent of schools nationally. Similarly, 79 per cent of Catholic secondary schools were judged to be outstanding or good compared with 64 per cent of all schools inspected nationally.

In 2009 Ofsted rated 51 per cent of Catholic schools compared to 37 per cent of national schools as outstanding, excellent or very good with regard to the extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The promotion of community cohesion has been enshrined as a statutory duty for schools since September 2007. Despite criticism that schools with a religious character (or "faith schools") do not do well in measures of community cohesion, a range of statistical data clearly shows that these statements are unfounded, with such schools showing exemplary practice in this field.

In a 2009 report into Ofsted inspections of community cohesion in schools commissioned by the Church of England, Professor David Jenson from the University of York concluded that: "It is very clear that faith schools stand out as providing many exemplars of good practice as identified by inspection evidence collected over the past six months. This provides a useful corrective to some misguided assumptions about the roles that Faith schools play within their communities. Those who wish to maintain the fiction that has characterised much media comment in this area would do well to look at this evidence produced by the independent inspection regime which entirely discredits those opinions."

This University of York research shows that schools with a religious character are given a higher grading in Ofsted inspections of community cohesion, than other schools nationally.

Focusing specifically on the Catholic sector, Catholic schools in England and Wales are generally diverse and score highly in inspections of community cohesion. Ofsted inspection data analysed from September 2005 to July 2009 shows that 41 per cent of Catholic secondary schools in England made outstanding contributions to their communities, compared to 24 per cent of all schools.

Forthcoming events

For your diary.

Wednesday 19 January seminar on wellbeing for head's and governors run by Mac Jeffrey 10am to 12.30pm at Alexander House, Bristol.

Monday 24 January academies working party 10am to 12pm at Alexander House.

Monday 24 January governor induction training for all new governors 7pm to 9pm at Alexander House.

Monday 31 January representatives on diocesan committees 12pm to 2pm at Alexander House. This meeting is open to all who represent or wish to find out more about representing the diocese on various local authority committees. These committees include scrutiny committees, admission forums and children's trust boards. Buffet lunch included.

Friday 4 February admission appeal panel members 10am to 3pm at Alexander House. All existing panel members should attend but the training is open to people considering being members.

Friday 4 March head's retreat 10am to 3pm Ammerdown Conference and Retreat Centre, Radstock near Bath.

Please let us know of your attendance at any of the above events.

Sub committee meetings

Coming soon.

BANES to be confirmed

Bristol to be confirmed

Gloucestershire Wednesday 16 February 2pm
Christ College, Cheltenham.

North Somerset Tuesday 25 January 2pm
St Joseph's, Portishead

Somerset Thursday 17 February, 2pm
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wincanton

South Gloucestershire Tuesday 8 February 2pm
St Mary's, Bradley Stoke

Swindon to be confirmed

Wiltshire Thursday 10 February 4pm

St Augustine's, Trowbridge

cliftondiocese.com

Our internationally award-winning website.

As I mentioned in my letter of 21 December letting you know about our new podcast series 'Unfolding Wisdom with Our Saints', I continue to encourage you to take the opportunity of using cliftondiocese.com to let the wider community, in our diocese and beyond, know of your positive news and activities. Just email your stories and pictures by clicking the links on the website.

Recently our website has featured positive stories about St Bede's College in Lawrence Weston, Bristol; Holy Family Primary in Swindon; St Pius X Primary in Withywood, Bristol; St Paul's Primary in Yate; St Bernadette's Primary in Whitchurch, Bristol; St Teresa's Primary in Monks Park, Bristol; All Saints Academy in Cheltenham; St Francis Primary in Nailsea; Our Lady of the Rosary Primary in Lawrence Weston, Bristol; St Anthony's School in Cinderford and St Peter's Primary in Gloucester.

Sister Monica Mary

Rest in peace.

Sister Monica Mary of the La Sainte Union died on 29 December in Bath.

For many years Sister Monica Mary was the primary school adviser in our diocese. Many schools will be grateful to her for her advice and guidance in catechetics.

She produced her own work programmes and liturgical materials which were widely used throughout the country.

Throughout her religious life Sister Monica Mary showed a dedication to the spiritual well-being of young people and support of teachers.

Please remember her in your prayers as well as the La Sainte Union community in Bath.

Sister Monica Mary's Requiem Mass will be celebrated in St John the Evangelist Church, South Parade, Bath BA2 4AF on Monday 17 January at 11.30am.

And finally...

All the best.

Many thanks for all you and your colleagues do for children and all who make up our local school communities.

Following the Holy Father's historic visit last year, and as we continue 'Unfolding Wisdom' in the Year of Catholic Education, I wish you a very happy, enjoyable and successful new year.