



To: Head Teachers
Clerks to Governors
Chairs of Governors

NEWSLETTER 96 Autumn Term

September 2009

Dear Colleagues

Welcome back to the new school year. Everyone here at the Department for Schools and Colleges hopes that you have had a very relaxing and enjoyable summer break and that you are ready, invigorated and excited in anticipation of what the new academic year holds for you, your family and your school community.

The post of Primary Adviser will be advertised this month but in the meantime I am grateful to Colleen Collett and Steve Riley who will continue to work with us to ensure there is no gaps in support for our primary schools.

Secondary schools will continue to receive high level support from Ann who is fit, fully recovered and ready to go.

1. Welcomes

We are very pleased to welcome the following colleagues to new positions, either as head teachers or acting head teachers. We wish them every success and assure them of our support and prayers in the coming weeks and months to face whatever challenges they meet

Carol Baron	Head Teacher	St. Peter's Primary in Gloucester
Lizzie Christopher	Acting Head Teacher	St. Joseph's Primary in Malmesbury
Maureen Harries	Head Teacher	St. Joseph's College in Swindon
Gerald Kloska	Head Teacher	Our Lady of the Rosary Primary, Bristol
Tony McAteer	Head Teacher	Holy Rood Junior in Swindon
Marion Morgan	Acting Head Teacher	St. John's Primary in Trowbridge
James Murphy O'Connor	Head Teacher	Prior Park College in Bath
Amanda Pritchard	Head Teacher	St. Teresa's Primary in Bristol
Rachel Tucker	Head Teacher	Corpus Christi Primary in Weston-Super-Mare

2. Changes to Governing Bodies

I have written separately to all schools asking them to keep the Department for Schools and Colleges informed of any changes to the governing body. This includes the name and contact details of newly elected chairs, vice chairs and clerks.

It is also important for clerks, chairs and heads to check if any governor's term of office is due for renewal. Whilst the Department has processed a large number of new appointments over the summer, we are aware that some governing bodies have not yet submitted applications for the posts of governors whose terms of office expired at the end of August or September 2009.

We would also be most grateful if you could advise us which members of your governing body are not seeking reappointment or who are coming off.

It does make communication much easier if we could have contact details, including the e-mail address of chairs, vice chairs and clerks.

3. First Meeting of the Governing Body

At the first meeting of the school year the governing body should elect its chair and vice chair for the coming year in accordance with the agreed procedure. We can of course provide guidance and support but it is important that all governors have the latest updated copy of 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors'. This can be obtained from www.governornet.co.uk and is available in a variety of formats. This guidance covers all areas of governance for all governing bodies but in particular for governing bodies of voluntary aided schools. The areas covered by the guidance include constitution, parish duties and procedures, supporting training for governors, admissions, inspections and other policies and documents that are required to be provided by governors.

It is also important at the first meeting that all governors have sight and reflect upon the Instruments of Governance and the Trust Deed which governs our Catholic schools. The first document will enable governing bodies to ensure that they are properly constituted and the second will outline clearly the responsibility of foundation governors who are appointed by the Bishop. The Trust Deed clearly outlines the Bishop's policies and it is those policies which foundation governors should familiarise themselves with.

At the first meeting it would be helpful if all those newly appointed or reappointed governors could confirm that they have replied to their invitation from the Department for Schools for training in the Autumn Term.

4. Safeguarding and Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

I have attached to this newsletter a copy of a letter circulated to all Dioceses from the Legal Officer of the Catholic Education Service. This letter clearly advises that the responsibility of insuring CRB checks for foundation governors is the responsibility of the head teacher. The letter from Christine Fischer, the Legal Officer, outlines the background and details of the requirements. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information.

Directors: Mr Ian McNiff
 Primary Schools Adviser: Appointment Pending; Secondary Schools Adviser: Mrs Ann Fowler BSc MA
 Administrator: Mrs Jennifer Fitzgerald

5. Calendar

Attached to this newsletter is the calendar for the forthcoming academic year. This calendar will also be posted on the Diocesan website. Obviously dates are subject to change. I would particularly draw attention to the following dates:

- **Annual Head Teachers' Conference** which will be held at Tortworth Court – details have been sent separately to head teachers. Our two guest speakers are Archbishop Vincent Nicholls and Kevin Treston, who will be joining us from Australia.
I am delighted that we have such high calibre speakers and have been equally delighted with the response of head teachers. We look forward to welcoming you to the Conference.
- **Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for and Rededication to Catholic Education** in the Diocese – This Mass will be held on 26 November at 7.00 pm at Clifton Cathedral. All associated with our Catholic schools and colleges in the diocese are invited to this annual Mass at which Bishop Declan will be the chief celebrant. Each head teacher will receive an invitation which we have asked be copies to all teaching and support staff and to all governors. This Mass provides the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the mission of Catholic education.
- **Sub Committee Meetings for the Autumn Term**
 - North Somerset 22 September
 - Bristol 23 September
 - Somerset 29 September
 - Wiltshire 1 October
 - Gloucester 1 October
 - Swindon 14 October
 - Bath 6 November
 - South Gloucestershire To be arranged

6. Training for New Appeal Panel Members

I would like to draw your attention to training for new panel members for appeals which will take place on 17 September from 10 am until 3 pm at Alexander House.

7. Service Level Agreement (SLA)

We are currently reviewing our SLA which is the agreement of the support that the Department provides for all our schools. We would like to review this in collaboration with schools and therefore are inviting a representative from each sub committee area to form part of a working group. The first meeting of this working group will be on the 24 September at 10 am at Alexander House in Bristol. I would be most grateful if you could confirm your attendance. (Please use reply slip attached to the bottom of this newsletter).

There are other dates on the calendar which I would ask you to draw to the attention of staff and governors as appropriate and these include Theology for teachers, NQTs' day, Day for Deputy Heads and training for Clerks to Governors and also training for new and

reappointed governors.

8. Training for All Governors

At the end of last term I circulated a letter to all chairs of governors advising and offering a range of subjects on which we were willing to train governors.

It is always helpful if neighbouring governing bodies can collaborate. The Department is always willing to provide bespoke training courses in any part of the Diocese providing that a minimum of 15 people attend. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further details.

9. Pastoral Letter to All Catholic Schools and Colleges from Bishop Malcolm McMahon

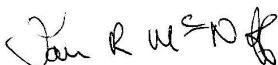
Bishop Malcolm McMahon is the new Chair of the Bishops' Department of Catholic Education and Formation. I attach to this newsletter a copy of Bishop McMahon's first letter to schools. Also attached is a letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education to which he makes reference. I would be most grateful if you could ensure that this letter is available to all members of your school community.

10. Relics of St. Teresa of Lisieux

At the request of Cardinal Cormack Murphy O'Connor and the Bishops of England and Wales the relics of St. Teresa of Lisieux are coming to England and Wales from France as part of a world wide tour and will be on display in more than 20 churches. To help pupils and students know more about St. Teresa and encourage them and their families to visit the relics when they are in their area, the CESEW has produced a special PowerPoint presentation for schools in the hope that it will be used in assemblies in September at the start of the new academic year. This PowerPoint is available from the CES or www.CESEW.org.uk. The relics will be in Clifton Diocese on 18 September at St. Teresa of Lisieux Parish in Taunton and on the 23 September at St. Teresa's Church in Bristol.

11. Let the Department Know

Please note that schools must let the Department for Schools and Colleges know when a **reserved post becomes vacant** at the point resignation is received or is created by reorganisation of management structure. These posts include Head, Deputy, Head of RE/RE Coordinator and Assistant Heads.



Ian McNiff
Director