



To: Heads, Clerks and Chairs of Governors

NEWSLETTER NO. 80

August 2004

Dear Colleague,

Welcome back to the new school year. Everyone here at the Department for Schools and Colleges hopes that you have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break and that the new academic year is full of successes.

1. 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 agreed procedure. The Department can provide you with guidance if required but the new 'Guide to the Law for School Governors', published in February this year gives full details. Can clerks please ensure that all Governors have a copy. Additional copies are available from the DfES Publications Centre, Tel: 0845 602 2260 or e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com, quoting reference GTTLVA2004.

It is also the time for the annual review of Governors' Committees, their terms of reference and membership.

2. Reconstitution of Governing Bodies

Those schools which have taken the decision to reconstitute under the new regulations from September 2004 should have received their new Instruments of Government from their LEA. The Instrument should not have been altered by the LEA in any way after the Bishop has given his approval on behalf of the Trustees. If any schools are concerned in this regard, please let us know.

All Governors appointed prior to the 1 September 2003 will serve out their remaining period of office. Where Foundation Governors have been appointed by the Bishop in the period between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2004, it has been decided that such Governors will be reappointed for a full four year term from 1 September 2004 unless

- They have decided that they do not wish to continue as School Governors
- The new Instrument of Governors requires a reduction in the number of Foundation Governors

Other Governors appointed between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2004 will need to be reappointed or re-elected.

This is an appropriate time to ask you to convey the thanks of the Bishop and the Department to all governors for the time, effort and commitment they give so freely to ensure that our schools and colleges operate effectively and efficiently.

Co Directors: Mr David W Byrne MSc & Mr Peter G Bradshaw MA
Primary Schools Adviser: Mrs Trisha Antolik BA DipEd, Secondary Schools Adviser: Mrs Ann Fowler BSc MA
Administrator: Mrs Jennifer Fitzgerald

3. Minor Authority representation on VA Primary School Governing Bodies

Under the new reconstitution regulations referred to in section 2 above, 'minor authority governors' in primary schools have been subsumed within the category of 'co-opted governors'. Then under the transitional provisions of the Constitution Regulations, co-opted governors effectively became 'community governors'.

It has been pointed out to the DfES by church representatives that VA schools do not have community governors and so, in order to deal with the issue in our schools, we have just received further guidance from them on the matter.

'Any 'co-opted governors' in VA schools (which would include former minor authority governors) appointed before 1 September 2003 must cease to hold office upon reconstitution (i.e. the adoption of a new instrument of government) under the new Constitution Regulations.

Upon reconstitution, or 31 August 2006 (whichever is earlier), a VA school cannot appoint as community governors candidates proposed by minor authorities'.

The DfES guidance goes on to suggest potential ways in which such candidates might be put forward for a place on the governing body including, for instance, such candidates being proposed by the LEA rather than the minor authority.

If this is an issue for your school, would the Clerk to the Governors please contact this office for guidance.

4. Heads Conference: 13 October 2004

We are fortunate to have secured Kevin Treston, a speaker of international repute, to lead the day. Would colleagues who have not yet returned their application forms please do so as soon as possible.

5. Sub-Committee Meetings:

The Autumn Term Sub-Committee meetings will be held:

Monday 4 October:	<i>Somerset (2pm)</i> at Ss Joseph & Teresa, Wells
Tuesday 5 October:	<i>Gloucestershire (2pm)</i> at St Joseph's, Nympsfield
Wednesday 13 October:	<i>Swindon (7.30pm)</i> at St Mary's, Swindon
Thursday 14 October:	<i>South Gloucestershire (4.30pm)</i> at St Mary's, Bradley Stoke
Monday 18 October:	<i>North Somerset (2.30pm)</i> at St Joseph's, Portishead
Tuesday 19 October:	<i>B&NES (10.45am)</i> at St John's Presbytery, Bath <i>Bristol (2pm)</i> at St Brendan's Sixth Form College <i>Wiltshire (4.30pm)</i> at St Augustine's, Trowbridge

6. Annual Parents' Meeting

Many Governing Bodies will shortly be considering whether or not to hold an Annual Parents' Meeting. May we remind Governors that under the Annual Parents' Meeting (Exemption) (England) Regulations 2003, the requirement to hold an annual parents' meeting has been maintained except where

- a. it refers to a residential or hospital special school
- b. the school has been inspected by OfSTED and a parents' meeting has been held to discuss the inspector's report before the governing body draws up its action plan;
- c. the governing body has held a meeting or a series of meetings to which all parents have been invited, which has or (as the case may be) have been attended by two or more governors, at least one of whom is not a staff governor, and parents have had the opportunity to discuss the performance and the past and future conduct of the school, or
- d. the governing body had given to parents with its annual report notice asking parents to respond within not less than 7 days requesting that the governing body hold the Annual Parents' Meeting and the parents of fewer than 15 registered pupils responded.

If either criterion (b) or (c) above is met there is no need to hold the meeting. If neither criterion (b) nor (c) is met then criterion (d) applies, ie if the parents of more than 15 registered pupils respond within the notice period, requesting it the meeting should be held.

7. Service Level Agreement

As reported in the last newsletter (79), the Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges, at their meeting in June 2004, considered a Departmental Organisational Plan incorporating a draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) drawn up by the Department for Schools and Colleges. This was drafted following consultation last year at all School Sub-Committee meetings on the recovery from schools of some of the costs of running the Department. The SLA envisaged an annual charge based on phase and pupil numbers for core services provided to schools and colleges and a fixed scale of charges for additional services requested by schools. The Committee decided to implement charges for additional services requested by schools and colleges from the beginning of September 2004. **Details of these charges are given on the enclosed attachment.** Charges for core services will begin in the calendar year 2005 and invoices will be sent to schools and colleges in April 2005 to allow for appropriate budget planning. The SLA will be explained and discussed at each of the Sub-Committee meetings to be held this term.

8. CES Model Procedures

The CES has recently (09.06.04) updated a number of its model procedures for the use of the Governors of Catholic VA schools. This includes:

- Capability Procedures (Teachers and Headteachers)
- Disciplinary Procedures (All staff)
- Grievance Procedures
- Sickness Absence Procedures

All are available to download on www.cesew.org.uk/publications/index.htm

9. Christmas Cards 2004

Although you have just returned from your summer holidays and Christmas seems a long way off, the Department is thinking about commissioning a Christmas Card and we would like to involve our schools in the process. We are therefore inviting schools in the Diocese to help design the card for us.

If your school would like to submit a design for the card will you please send it to Jenny Fitzgerald by 20 October 2004. A small donation will be given to the school fund of the school which designs the card which the Department decides to adopt and the artist will be acknowledged on the cards.

10. LCVAP Projects 2004/5

We wrote in July to those schools who have had projects involving an LCVAP contribution agreed for this year (04/5). May we remind those schools to report this information to their governing body and inform us in writing of their agreement to the proposal by the end of September 2004.

May we also remind all schools that, whenever the Diocese has agreed to fund the 10% of any element of a school condition or improvement project, the Diocesan Trustees insist that the Hookway Partnership, of St Nicholas House, Lawfords Gate, Bristol, BS5 0RE act as their agent in reclaiming the grant. In the event of Hookway's not acting for you in supervising the work, your project manager must liaise with Jim Corrigan of Hookway's on 0117 955 4545 as soon as you have received final approval for the project from the DfES.

11. Admission Appeal Panels

As you will be aware the Department for Schools and Colleges undertakes the bulk of the work for Schools Admissions Appeals on behalf of the schools in the Diocese and is happy to continue to do so. Unfortunately, because of recent retirements and withdrawals, we have reached a critical stage in the recruitment of panel members.

In May we wrote to those schools for which we have organised many appeals in the past for their help in this regard. We asked each of them to nominate a Governor, parent or friend of the school who would be prepared to give up some time to be trained in the appeals process and prepared occasionally to sit on panels to hear appeals for other schools. Since we are an extremely small team, based in Bristol, we simply do not have the resources or contacts on the ground to find enough such people on our own.

Sadly the response was extremely disappointing and, if we fail to recruit additional panel members, we will find it difficult, if not impossible, to continue to undertake this responsibility on behalf of the Governing Bodies of our schools.

We are thus extending our appeal more widely through this newsletter and before the 'appeal season' begins again in earnest. If you are able to give up some time for this vital task or to nominate someone who is prepared to be added to the present (very short) list, could we please ask you to telephone or email Jenny Fitzgerald at our offices with his or her name, address and contact number? Training for panel members will be provided in January 2005. Reasonable expenses are available to panel members. Thank you.

Bristol & Bath Primary Schools June
Co-ordinated by (volunteer please)

Primary schools' leavers' mass July
Co-ordinated by Department for Schools & Colleges

We would hope to co-ordinate features from other areas for publication during the 2005/06 academic year.

Schools can receive copies of the Clifton Catholic News direct on a regular basis. The only cost is for delivery - a flat rate of just £6.00 per month for up to 150 copies. To arrange your delivery please contact John Clawson at Bellcourt Ltd. Tel 01636 613341. Email belcourt@btconnect.com.

15. Clifton Diocesan Directory 2005

Tom Millington, the Editor of the Diocesan Directory, has asked us to thank those who contributed to the updating of the Schools section. Schools will be contacted by Tom again in the spring of 2005 and asked to complete an amendment form which must be returned by 30 June 2005 in order to be considered for publication in the 2006 Directory.

16. Voluntary Aided Schools: Insurance

All LEAs seem now to have put in place suitable insurance arrangements for voluntary aided schools, the cost of which is met by LEAs either through centrally retained funds or through governing bodies buying back from devolved funds. These policies cover the 10% governing body liability in relation to buildings together with full governing body public liability and employer liability in relation to all activities under the auspices of the school or the governing body. The Diocese takes out cover for use of school premises by parishes. Schools are reminded that other external users should be required to take out their own public liability insurance and provide evidence of having done so. We can supply a model school lettings procedure if required.

17. Rotary Club of Bristol Breakfast Popular Music Festival

The Rotary Club of Bristol has cordially asked us to invite the Catholic secondary schools and colleges in Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Swindon to participate in a festival of popular music at the Fleece and Firkin in Bristol at a date yet to be fixed. Each band will be asked to play 3 pieces of popular music, one of which must be a composition by the band or a member of the band. In order to select the bands to appear at the festival, interested schools will need to submit an application form and a taped recording of the material they intend to play to Rotarian David Ashwell, 39 Henleaze Gardens, Henleaze, Bristol BS9 4HH by 1 December 2004. A copy of the application form is available from our office on request.

The Rotary Club of Bristol also runs a Christmas Shoebox Appeal for disadvantaged children in Eastern Europe. On their behalf we have enclosed a newsletter and flyer in the mailing to secondary schools in the areas above.

18. CAFOD Schools' Volunteers Scheme

Conscious of the tremendous work already done by our schools and colleges for the Third World, CAFOD is hoping to recruit a number of volunteers to visit Catholic schools and colleges within the Diocese in order to deliver a lively presentation about CAFOD's work and mission. Expenses will be covered, training provided, materials supplied and on-going support given to all volunteers. Please publicise this scheme to your governors and parents and if anyone is willing to undertake this important role can they please contact Elizabeth Smith, CAFOD South West Schools' Liaison Co-ordinator on 01823 338903 (tel & fax) or email: bsmith@cafod.org.uk.

19. Early Years Education

We have received a large number of enquiries recently from governors, headteachers and parishes about 'Catholic' Early Years Education. In order to provide consistent and good quality advice to those considering the provision of Early Years education, we have been drafting a briefing paper on the issue on which we intend to consult widely in the near future.

We are holding a meeting to discuss the paper, which we will circulate to school shortly, at 2pm on Friday 8 October at Alexander House, Bristol. We have invited existing practitioners along to provide practical advice on the matter. Any school considering pre-school provision on their site should be represented at this meeting.

20. Supply Teacher

The Department has been contacted over the holidays by Mrs Sonya Crooks, a graduate Catholic teacher from Australia who is living in Lyneham, near Chippenham. Mrs Crooks would like to offer her services as a supply teacher to Catholic schools within a reasonable travelling distance. Further details and Mrs Crooks' c.v. are available from the office on request.

21. Congratulations

Congratulations and best wishes to

Raymond Friel	(St Gregory's, Bath),
Teresa Gilpin	(Acting Head, St Benedict's, Cheltenham),
Paul Hughes	(St Joseph's, Salisbury),
Shelia Jones	(Wardour, Tisbury) and
Basia McLaughlin	(St Bernadette, Bristol)

who take up their Headship appointments on 1 September.

Peter Bradshaw
Co-Directors

David Byrne

ADMISSIONS TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

I will / will not be attending the Training for Governors.

The venue I will attend is:

Alexander House, Bristol

on Tuesday 16 November at 7.30 p.m. —

St. George's Catholic Primary School, Warminster

On Wednesday 17 November at 7.30 p.m. —

Name

School
(Please indicate the area of your school as we have several schools with the same name)

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