



To: Headteachers, Clerks, Chairs of Governors and Parish Priests

NEWSLETTER NO. 83

July 2005

Dear Colleague

1. Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges

The Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges met on 30th June 2005 and

- ◆ received reports from the Co-Directors and Primary and Secondary Advisers
- ◆ received reports from the Summer 2005 meetings of the eight sub-committees
- ◆ received the finalised capital building programme for Diocesan schools, 2005/6

Amongst the issues arising from the reports was the sad but expected decision of the Bristol Schools Organisation Committee to close St Thomas More Catholic Comprehensive School with effect from 31 August 2005 after fifty years distinguished service to Catholic Education in the city. Serious concern was also expressed about the failure of Bath and North East Somerset to provide a suitable site for the replacement of the St John's, Bath split site. Congratulations were offered to the governors, Headteachers, staff and pupils of Holy Family Primary School, Swindon and to St Pius X Primary School, Bristol for being removed from Special Measures, both well ahead of schedule.

The likely new arrangements for Section 48 (previously Section 23 inspections) were outlined to the committee. Since it will no longer be possible to arrange these inspections to coincide with OFSTED inspections due to the short notice given, the Diocese, on behalf of school governing bodies, will attempt to arrange the inspection within the same school term. In order to facilitate the new arrangement, it was agreed that the Diocese should seek to identify 2 primary and 1 secondary inspectors to undertake the Section 48 inspections for Diocesan schools in a structured way. There are likely, under the new schedules, to be up to 25 inspections in an academic year. Schools will receive the Section 48 self-review documentation and guidance for completion in September.

2. Building Projects

May we remind you that all bids for capital projects for 2006/7, not funded entirely from the School's devolved formula capital, should be submitted to this office by no later than Friday 15 July 2005. Sadly we understand that the new Primary Schools Initiative, which was reported to us at our briefing with the DfES in London in March and on which we reported to Diocesan sub-committees in the summer, has been discontinued. The government has announced that it will instead begin a major building programme, along the lines of the secondary 'Building Schools for the Future'

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initiative, in 2009 in order to transform the environment and building plant of primary schools nationally.

3. Use of school premises by other groups, particularly Pre-Schools

May we remind Headteachers and governors that no other group should be allowed to use school premises without a proper agreement (a lettings agreement or lease) being in place. Our experience in one school has demonstrated that informal agreements made in good faith with external providers can prove to have distressing and expensive consequences. As stated in our previous newsletter, *occasional hirers* should be required to sign a *lettings agreement*. A model is available from the Department and will be placed on the Diocesan website. Such groups must produce evidence of their own public liability insurance cover. Previous experience suggests that it is wise only to let to recognised established groups.

Use by others on a long term basis (e.g. for *pre-school groups* or *free-standing after school groups*) should be subject to a *lease agreement*. We have approached the Diocesan solicitors, Stone King, about producing a template for schools to customise when drawing up such an agreement. This is likely to include a lease agreement which will deal solely with property issues (e.g. length of tenure, area hired etc) and a protocol which will define the relationship between the provider and the school. The latter will be subject to review by the school and provider within the agreed lease period. We will ask schools to return these to the department after they have inserted the individual conditions for their own school. The agreements will need to be checked by Stone King before being finalised and signed. We suggest that legal costs should be borne by the group who are leasing the premises but, failing that, then the governors of the school must bear them. Such groups must produce evidence of their own public liability insurance cover.

4. Foundation governor appointments

We are still very concerned that a number of schools and Parish Priests have not contacted the department with nominations for those vacancies for foundation governors which need to be filled for September. We had hoped to ensure that Bishop Declan was able to appoint/re-appoint foundation governors before schools break up for the summer. Indeed Jenny has been systematically processing nominations as they have arrived here in the office. It is vital that we receive this information urgently so we would be grateful if you could give this task your highest priority.

5. Headteachers' Conference 2005

We have already notified Headteachers about Annual Headteachers Conference which will be held on 29/30 September at the Menzies Waterside Hotel, Widcombe, Bath. As with last year we have secured a speaker of international repute in *John Shea*. John is a writer and Roman Catholic theologian from Chicago who lectures internationally on topics including theology, storytelling and ministry. He is an inspiring and visionary speaker.

Responding to the request by the conference last year to make this a two-day event, we have negotiated a package which includes overnight accommodation and all meals between lunch on the first and second days plus the speaker's costs for £220. The Department is conscious of pressures on school budgets but would ask governors to understand the importance of this conference in ensuring the continuing professional development of our Headteachers, in facilitating the vital networking of Catholic school leadership and in reinforcing the central mission of Catholic education. It will be money well spent.

6. New Headteacher and Acting Headteacher Induction

The Department is organising induction training for all new Headteachers and Acting Headteachers here at Alexander House on *Wednesday 21 September*. There will be no cost for the training. Further details will follow but will you please put the date in your diary if it applies to you. Can we please ask governors to ensure that their Headteachers/Acting Headteachers are released for this very important opportunity in order for their colleague to familiarise him/herself with the nature of Catholic voluntary aided schools and their protocols as well Diocesan procedures and support mechanisms.

7. Travellers' Children Education

Bernard Brain, the Headteacher of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Filton, represents the Diocese on the liaison group dealing with issues regarding the education of children from the travellers' community. If you have any good practice to share or concerns about individuals or group from this community needing support in their education, please contact Bernard on 0117 903 0412.

8. St Edwards School, Melchet Court, Nr Salisbury

St Edward's is a residential special school for boys which is part of the educational provision for Clifton Diocese even though it is situated outside its borders. The staff and boys undertake an annual visit to the Somme battlefield and have gathered together an impressive collection of artefacts associated with WW1, many of which were unearthed as a result of their field archaeology in Normandy. The staff and boys have put together a travelling exhibition and presentation which they would be delighted to share with other schools.

The school is keen to build up its Diocesan connections and is willing and able to share its considerable expertise with others. It has a particular expertise in behaviour management and colleagues might find the school's input helpful on a staff INSET day. If you are interested in the WW1 exhibition or with linking with St Edward's in any other way, please contact the Headteacher, Larry Bartel at Melchet Court, Sheffield English, Romsey, Hants or on 01794 884271.

9. Comings and Goings

We thank and wish a fulfilling and happy future to the following Headteachers who are leaving their current posts at the end of this school year:

Jeanne Flanagan	Gloucester, St Peter's Catholic Infants
Anne Goddard	Swindon, St Mary's Catholic Primary
Ian Gouge	Bridgwater, St Joseph's Primary
Bill Kelly	Trowbridge, St John's, Primary
Kim Parnell	Malmesbury, St Joseph's Primary
Paul Spindler	Weston-Super-Mare, Corpus Christi Primary

We are very grateful for their service to our schools and to Catholic education in the Diocese.

May we ask you to convey the thanks of the Bishop and the diocesan community to other staff who are leaving Diocesan Schools for retirement or other reasons, for their service?

Congratulations and best wishes to:

Hugh Bradley (currently Head of St Peter's Junior School, Gloucester) on his appointment as Headteacher of the newly amalgamated St Peter's Primary.

Caroline Hostein (currently Deputy Head of St Mary's, Bradley Stoke) on her appointment as Headteacher of Corpus Christi Primary School, Weston-Super-Mare.

Ian Murphy on his appointment as Headteacher of All Hallows Preparatory School, Cranmore.

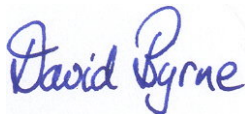
Kim Parnell on her appointment as Headteacher of St John's Catholic Primary School, Trowbridge

All three appointments are w.e.f. 1st September 2005.

10. Departmental Calendar 2005/6

We have attached the diary of departmental events in so far as it is completed at this stage. We will notify you all of any changes/additions at the appropriate time.

May we wish you all a very relaxing, enjoyable and refreshing summer break? If you do need to contact us, the office here should be manned for most of the school holidays.



David Byrne & Peter Bradshaw
Co-Directors