



**To: Heads,  
Clerks and  
Chairs of Governors**

(by email to heads who are asked to ensure that the two hard copies forwarded by post are received by the Chair and the Clerk)

**NEWSLETTER NO. 87**

**June 2006**

Dear Colleague

## **1. Advisory Support for Primary Schools**

We are pleased to report that **Trisha Antolik**, our primary school adviser, has now successfully undergone two major hip operations and is recuperating well. She has asked us to thank all those individuals and schools who have sent her cards, letters, flowers, gifts etc. She has been very touched by everyone's kindness and consideration. Trish hopes to be back 'on the road' in September and will be in touch with schools early in the new term.

## **2. Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges**

The Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges met on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2006 and

- ◆ received reports from the Co-Directors and Primary and Secondary Advisers
- ◆ received reports from the Summer 2006 meetings of the eight sub-committees
- ◆ discussed the increasing number of local authorities discussing the withdrawal of denominational transport
- ◆ discussed the concerns raised by schools which were unable to attend the Primary Leavers' Mass and agreed that the Department should survey schools asap to identify potential numbers for 2007
- ◆ discussed perceptions raised of variable standards of support from the Hookway Partnership, and agreed to consider a revised service level agreement to be prepared by The Hookway Partnership, in consultation with the Co-Directors, at its next meeting.
- ◆ approved the proposal to introduce a five day course leading to a Diocesan Certificate in Catholic Secondary Education for senior managers in our schools and colleges, to complement the established five day course leading to the Diocesan Certificate in Catholic Primary Education
- ◆ discussed concerns about the erosion of the provision of school masses on holydays in the summer term as a result of the increased number of public exams and agreed to encourage the CES to register this concern with the examination boards
- ◆ was briefed on:
  - ◆ the Diocesan Central Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) Scheme
  - ◆ the progress of the Education & Inspections Bill in parliament

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. Building Projects**

May we remind you that all applications for capital projects for 2007/8 not funded entirely from the school's devolved formula capital should be submitted to this office by no later than Friday 14 July 2006.

As you will be aware, the Department for Schools & Colleges, in partnership with the Diocesan Finance Team and the Hookway Partnership, has developed a Central DFC Scheme in order to support those schools who would like their DFC spending monitored and accounts settled centrally. The scheme has been designed in such a way that it does not undermine the autonomy of the governing body with regards to spending decisions nor does it incur additional charges. The school's DFC is paid into the Diocesan Schools Account where a separate cost centre is established for each school in order that its spending may be monitored and reported back to the governing body. The Hookway Partnership has established a VASIS-like system of its own and will regularly email each school in the scheme (and the Diocese) with the amount spent and committed and the DFC balance. They are also able to tell schools their available balance at anytime. We believe that this system will be transparent and auditable at any point, and the required DfES returns can be conveniently prepared from the information. Details of the scheme are attached.

As part of improving our professional partnership with schools and with the Hookway Partnership, we have been working to build quality assurance procedures into our systems. The Hookway Partnership has agreed to develop its specification of the level of service that can be expected if they are used by a governing body or the Diocese to support a capital project into a service level agreement to be agreed between the school and the Partnership at the outset of each project. The Co-Directors are to work with Jim Corrigan to produce a draft which will be shared with colleagues at the autumn round of sub-committee meetings and form an agenda item at the next meeting of the Committee for Schools and Colleges in November.

### **4. Denominational Transport**

The provision of transport to denominational schools is an issue which is being reviewed in a number of local authorities within the Diocese. It is likely to arise shortly in others. We felt it might be helpful to present schools with some information on the legal background of the matter in case they are asked any questions by parents, parishioners etc.

As you will be only too aware, the provision of home-to-school transport on denominational grounds is central to ensuring access for many families to a Catholic school. The discretion to offer such transport or not rests with the local authority (LA) in which the family is resident but the discretion of the LA is fettered by some aspects of legislation.

The two most significant aspects of law are Section 509:4(b) of the Education Act 1996 (*'In considering whether or not they are required ..... to make arrangements in*

*relation to a particular person, a local education authority shall have regard ..... to any wish of his parent for him to be provided with education or training at a school or institution in which the religious education provided is that of the religion or denomination to which his parent adheres')* and the Human Rights Act 1998 which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into English law. Protocol 2, Article 1 of the Convention stipulates that *'in the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.'*

How far this legislation fetters the discretion of LAs with regards to denominational transport is largely untested in law. Counsel's opinion recently commissioned by the Department and by the Catholic schools in B&NES suggested that legislation gave LAs little scope for discretion although, in response, the LAs have suggested that they have received contrary advice from their Counsel. The new Education and Inspections Bill, referred to above, places new duties on LAs with regards to home-to-school transport viz: fair access will also be supported by an extended duty on local authorities to provide free transport for the most disadvantaged families and by a new duty to provide advice and assistance to parents in expressing a preference for a school for their child. The government has recently signalled that it will extend the range originally published in the Bill substantially beyond six miles where one of these schools is the appropriate denominational school. The Bill does not undermine the existing legal provisions relating to denominational transport in any way.

The Department, in light of Counsel's Opinion, contacted the CES to ascertain whether the organisation felt it was time to mount a legal challenge to a LA to clarify the matter once and for all. Their view was that there was still too much to lose nationally if an unsuccessful challenge was mounted that set an unfavourable legal precedent. However, in the West Country at least, it is clear that there is now considerable momentum towards the undermining of the traditional view on the issue, viz: that a Catholic school was the appropriate school for a Catholic child and that transport policy should be based on that maxim. It is now being seen by many officers and elected members as simply an expression of choice.

## **5. Headteachers' Conference 2006**

We have already notified heads of the Annual Diocesan Headteachers' Conference which will be held on **Thursday 5 & Friday 6 October at the Menzies Waterside Hotel, Widcombe, Bath**. The theme of the Conference will be *'On the Way to Life'*. Whilst the document, written by Frs. James Hanvey SJ and Tony Carroll SJ, and described by the CES as *'an interpretative essay'*, was commissioned by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales largely for the benefit of fellow theologians, it has many implications for Catholic schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we intend to explore these at the conference. We are fortunate to have secured the services of *Kevin Quigley*, former Head and Sixth Form College Principal, who has established an international reputation for facilitating and contributing to conferences concerning Catholic Education. *Bishop Declan* will provide a personal and Diocesan perspective on this seminal document.

Following the success of the two-day format at last year's event, we have negotiated a package which includes overnight accommodation and all meals including and between lunch on the first and second days plus the speaker's costs. The cost is £240. The Department is conscious of pressures on school budgets but we 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 – Tuesday 19 September**

There have been a large number of changes in the leadership of our schools this year and the Department is organising induction training for all new Headteachers and Acting Headteachers here at Alexander House on Tuesday 19 September. There will be no cost for the training. Further details will follow but will new permanent and acting heads please put this date in your diary. May we please ask governors to ensure that their Headteacher/Acting Headteacher is 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. Planning and Funding Extended Schools – a Guide for Schools, LAs and their partner organisations**

The Government has just published a guidance document giving much useful advice for schools considering broadening the range of activities they provide. It deals with possible sources of funding, the role of LAs, the Core Offer, Childcare and Community Access as well as a range of technical advice. It should be read in conjunction with Diocesan Guidance (which is available on our website).

The guidance is available on

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/9843/Planningand%20fundingextendedschools.pdf](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/9843/Planningand%20fundingextendedschools.pdf)

## **8. Clifton Diocese Peru Appeal**

Bishop Declan has asked us to draw to your attention the Diocesan Peru Appeal and to encourage you to include it among the charities that your school/college supports during the coming academic year. A leaflet about the appeal is attached/enclosed.

## **9. Ofsted & Section 48 inspections**

Congratulations to all the diocesan schools inspected under the new frameworks this academic year. All the reports have been positive and three schools – Our Lady of the Rosary, Bristol, St Peter's High, Gloucester and Ss Peter & Paul, Bristol – have been judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted this term.

Schools who receive 'the Ofsted 'phone call' next term are reminded of the need to let this office know immediately as Ofsted do not always inform us.

## 10. 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:

**Terry Cooper** is moving to another headship in Ealing.

**Maria Lockey** has a new headship in Gloucester.

We would also like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the following Locum Headteachers who have served the Catholic community so well in this difficult and challenging role

**Susan Theobald** Bristol, St Pius X

**Bill Kelly** Bridgwater, St Joseph's Primary

**Maisie Foster** Wells, SS Joseph & Teresa

### Retirements

The following headteachers are retiring this summer. We wish them health and happiness and offer sincere gratitude for the work they have undertaken whilst with the Clifton Diocese.

**Frank Toner** St Thomas More, Bristol

**Barry Hickey** St Joseph's, Devizes

**John Kilcline** St Patrick's, Redfield, Bristol

**Mick Walsh** Holy Family, Patchway, Bristol

All are long serving and have led their school(s) with distinction.

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

*Congratulations and best wishes to the following who have been appointed recently as Headteacher of the following schools:*

**Dawn Breeze** Holy Family, Patchway

**Karen Evans** St. Patrick's, Redfield (from January 2007)

**Molly Johnstone** St George's, Warminster

**Margaret Jones** St Joseph's, Bridgwater

**Jennifer Luzmoor** Wardour School, Tisbury

**Penny Steadman** St Joseph & Teresa, Wells

## 11. Departmental Calendar 2006/7

Please find attached the calendar of departmental events for the 2006/07 academic year in so far as it is complete 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

## APPENDIX 1

### CLIFTON DIOCESAN CENTRAL DFC SCHEME

This scheme has been established by the Department for Schools and Colleges, in partnership with the Diocesan Finance Department and the Hookway Partnership, in order to support those schools who would like their DFC spending monitored and accounts settled centrally. In no way does the scheme undermine the autonomy of the governing body with regards to spending decisions nor does it incur additional charges.

The basis of the scheme is as follows:

**Stage 1** – The school's DFC is paid into the Diocesan Schools Account where a separate cost centre will be established for the school in order that its spending may be monitored and reported back to the governing body.

**Stage 2** – The governing body makes decisions as to which projects it would like to undertake with its DFC and the timescale for doing so. The school reports these to the Department for Schools and Colleges and the Hookway Partnership (preferably electronically)

**Stage 3** - Initial costs are assessed (usually for bigger jobs where estimates are necessary) – Hookway will submit the initial project costs to the school and the Diocese to ensure that the school has sufficient DFC for the work and that VAT etc has been included in the costs.

**Stage 4** - Quotations or tenders are received and more accurate costs identified (for smaller works, where the school has obtained quotations itself, these should be sent to Hookway - for more major works Hookway will obtain them for the school). DFC balance will be checked again. The Diocese will invoice the school for the Governors' 10% contribution at this stage.

**Stage 5** – Work begins, invoices will be checked and approved by Hookway and passed to the Diocesan Finance Department for settlement from the school's DFC cost centre.

**Stage 6** - Additional projects costs arising from unforeseen problems associated with the project will be assessed. Hookway will keep the school and the Diocese informed of any rise in costs. (DFC balance will be checked again at this stage).

**Stage 7** - Final Costs will be determined – project file closed.

**Elaine Davis** of the Hookway Partnership will keep in regular telephone contact with the schools whilst a project is on site.

Hookway will establish a VASIS-like system of their own and will regularly email each school in the scheme (and the Diocese) the spent, committed and DFC balance. They will also be able to tell schools their available balance at anytime. Furthermore we anticipate that this system will be transparent and auditable at any point, and the required DfES returns will be prepared from the information.