



**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. 90**

**April 2007**

Dear Colleague

Welcome back to everyone after what was, we hope, a joyful Easter holiday for you all.

### **Governor Training**

As part of our on-going commitment to governor training we are continuing with our policy of delivering the training in different venues away from Alexander House.

**Tues 8 May 19.30 - 21.00 at St George's School, Warminster**

**Wed 9 May 19.30 - 21.00 at St Augustine of Canterbury School, Taunton**

Governors will be able to attend one of the following workshops:

- a) **The Role of the Church School** – Church schools are valued by the present government but their existence is increasingly challenged by others in our increasingly secular society. This session will explore the way in which the role of Church schools has developed in recent times, enable governors to reflect on the mission of their own school and equip them to respond to those who question the existence of Church schools. This session will be led by **Peter Bradshaw**, **but this workshop will only be available on 9 May in Taunton.**
- b) **The New Admissions Code of Practice – Implications for Catholic Schools** – A new and very different School Admissions Code of Practice came into force on 1 March. The status of the new Code is mandatory rather than statutory guidance. This session will deal with the main elements of the new Code and consider its particular implications for Catholic schools. It will be led by **David Byrne**.
- c) **Social Cohesion and Section 48 Inspection Arrangements** – In persuading the government to drop the proposals on admissions quotas in the recent Bill, the CES agreed that, as part of Section 48 inspections, the contribution that individual Church schools make to social cohesion would be included in the inspection framework. **Ann Fowler**, who is responsible for the co-ordination of Section 48 inspections within the Diocese, will lead the session and discuss how schools and governors might approach this issue.

**We would be grateful if Clerks would circulate this information to all governors and return the attached booking slip to Jenny in the office as soon as possible in order that we may cater appropriately.**

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

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

The Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges met on 20 March 2007 and

- ◆ received reports from the Co-Directors and Primary and Secondary Advisers
- ◆ received reports from the Spring 2007 meetings of the eight sub-committees
- ◆ approved the schools' capital programme for 2007/8
- ◆ recommended to the Trustees no change in the schools' core subscription to the SLA (since confirmed)
- ◆ reported the situation regarding denominational transport across the Diocese in 2007/8 to the committee

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to **St Joseph's Catholic College** in Swindon on the official opening of its new buildings by Bishop Declan on 19 March. The new College has been built at a cost of more than £20 million and provides wonderful educational facilities for the Catholic and wider community in the town. Our thanks and best wishes go out to the governors and Headteacher of the school.

## **Liverpool Hope University**

Liverpool Hope University received its Charter in July 2005 and is thus one of the newest universities in the country. However its history stretches back over a century and a half, to the foundation of three Church teacher training colleges which in 1980 joined in an ecumenical federation under the holding title of the Liverpool Institute of Higher Education (LIHE). The late Archbishop Derek Worlock and Bishop David Sheppard wrote of this as being "a sign of hope" (Better Together).

Liverpool Hope University is unique in having an ecumenical Christian Foundation. It is committed to providing opportunities for the well-rounded personal development of Christians and students from other faiths and beliefs. It is a national provider of a wide range of high quality programmes including the education, training and professional development of teachers for Church schools.

We were approached by the University to explore ways in which it could strengthen its mission to the Catholic community. As a result **Liverpool Hope is offering 5 Foundation Scholarships of £500 a year to students currently studying in Catholic Sixth forms and Sixth Form Colleges in Clifton Diocese.** The criterion for judging the recipients will not be academic, but rather in recognition of how those individuals demonstrate a clear commitment to the Christian faith by their actions and how they interact with fellow students and parishioners. These scholarships are in addition to a range of other financial support and scholarships that Liverpool Hope offers to lower income families and for high achieving students.

We have visited the university and been very impressed by the manner in which the University is pursuing its Christian character in an inclusive and compassionate manner without sacrificing intellectual rigor. Its main campus in the leafy Childwall district has impressive learning and accommodation facilities and a large and beautiful chapel and the University is currently developing a Performing Arts faculty in Everton.

**If any school or college with a sixth form has a potential candidate for a Liverpool Hope Foundation Scholarship, would they please forward to David or Peter, by 1 July 2007, the name and contact details of the student together with the course they hope to pursue at Liverpool Hope and a school (or parish) supporting statement outlining how the student meets the above criterion.**

### **Admissions Appeals Panel Members**

In order to help ensure that the governing bodies of our schools are seen to be fair, just and impartial in discharging their responsibilities for school admission appeals, the Diocese nominates independent appeals panel members to hear admissions appeals for many of you. Unfortunately a number of panel members have recently had to give up or curtail their involvement in admission appeal panels, which has left us with a severe shortage of nominees. Because of the increasing popularity of our Catholic schools, particularly in the secondary sector, the demand for panel members has also increased

We would like, through this newsletter, to ask for new appeal panel members to put themselves forward. The time commitment is not huge and is largely seasonal and many enlightened employers are happy to release people for this type of activity in the public interest. Reasonable expenses are paid to appeal panel members and the Diocese or an LA will provide training.

May we respectfully suggest that those schools which generate a large number of appeals look to nominate at least one potential appeal panel member to help out in other schools in a similar situation? If you or a colleague are willing to undertake this important role or, if you know someone who is willing and able, would you please contact Jenny Fitzgerald on 0117 9025593.

### **Dulverton Residential Centre**

Dulverton Residential Centre, a large self-catering facility sleeping groups of up to 36 people in the centre of Dulverton, on the edge of Exmoor, belongs to the Diocese and offers a subsidised rate for Diocesan schools and colleges. Last year it underwent a major programme of refurbishment in response to the considerable increase in the number of school and other groups using it. However it is underused by the Catholic community and Fr Miller, the Warden, would warmly welcome more of our schools to the centre since it was primarily established for the benefit of the young people of the Diocese. Leaflets are available from the Centre at 6, High Street, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9HB – phone and fax 01398 324217.

Bishop Declan is saying a special Mass at the Centre on 2 May. If you would like to be invited to the Mass and/or to visit the Centre, which we warmly recommend to you as a first class educational facility, please contact Fr Miller at the address above.

### **Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)**

As you will be aware, the DfES recently contacted your governors to ask for details of how the school spent or has committed its DFC funds for 2006/7. We have been informed by the DfES that most of our school have now done so. We are contacting those schools that have not yet submitted their return, reminding them that they must do so by 30 April otherwise they will not receive DFC funding for 2007/8.

A substantial number of schools joined the central diocesan DFC scheme last year and will have benefited from the fact that this bureaucratic task was undertaken for them by the diocesan finance team and the Hookway Partnership working together. The central scheme was well-received but, not surprisingly given the speed with which it was established, one or two problems on all sides have emerged.

We recently held a meeting with the diocesan finance team and Hookway to review the first year of the scheme and we will shortly be writing to you all to suggest some small revisions. If you are not a member of the scheme but wish to consider joining it, please let David or Peter know.

### **School Organisation Committees**

As you are probably aware, statutory School Organisation Committees have been abolished from the beginning of May and all school organisation matters are now firmly in the control of LAs. There are safeguards in place with regards to openings and closures involving voluntary aided schools and the right to appeal to the Schools Adjudicator still remains in place where governors, diocese and LA cannot agree. However the Catholic community, as school providers, has lost the right to a meaningful say in the wider educational provision in an area – a fact which, in our view, is to be regretted.

May we thank, on behalf of the Diocese, all those of you who have served on School Organisation Committees with such distinction and made such a helpful contribution to strategic planning in your particular LA.

### **‘Seeking the Face of Christ’**

In preparation for the introduction of new diocesan pastoral guidelines, the Bishop has produced a consultation document, **‘Seeking the Face of Christ’**. All schools should have received a copy of the guide for schools.

Bishop Declan would appreciate the views of your school community on this vital document and is particularly interested to know the views of the young people. Could we please ask you, through your school council etc., to consider a response. If you need further guidance, please contact Ann Fowler at this office.

### **Headteachers’ Conference 2007**

The Annual Headteachers Conference will be held on **4/5 October at the Menzies Waterside Hotel, Widcombe, Bath**. The theme of the Conference will be *‘Values, Culture and the Transmission of Faith’*. We are fortunate to have secured the services of *Rev Michael Holman SJ*, Provincial of the Society of Jesus and former Head of Wimbledon College, to deliver the key-note address. *Bishop Declan* will lead a reflection and a further speaker is still to be finalised.

In their evaluations colleagues once again expressed their support for a two-day format in order to provide space and time for networking and sharing good company. As previously, 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. The cost is yet to be finalised but is likely to be in line with last year. 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. **Full details and a booking form will be issued shortly – Please return promptly!**

### **Promoting disability equality in schools - primary workshop**

The DfES is holding a series of regional workshops for primary schools in the summer term explaining to schools how they can develop their disability equality schemes which are now statutory. Attendees could include members of schools' senior leadership teams and governors. The workshops are free and lunch will be provided, but delegates will need to meet all other expenses, such as travel.

It is suggested by the DfES that delegates should bring their current accessibility plans with them and details of any early work on their disability equality schemes. During the workshops, delegates will have the opportunity to use criteria to assess the extent to which their school is meeting the requirements of a scheme. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions. Clips from the DVDs in the resource *'Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in Schools and Early Years Settings'* will also be shown.

To register, visit the Paul James Associates website, using conference code 975837 and password pdes. For more information email the conference organisers at [pdes@pauljamesassociates.co.uk](mailto:pdes@pauljamesassociates.co.uk) or telephone 0115 943 5589.

The West country venue offered is 11 June 07 at the Holiday Inn, Taunton but if you are unable to make this date other venues outside the region are offered.

### **Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief**

Part 2 of the *Equality Act 2006: Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief* comes into force on 30 April 2007. The provisions make discrimination in the area of goods, facilities and services on grounds of religion or belief unlawful.

For schools this is likely to impact on issues such as admissions, benefits and services for pupils and the treatment of pupils. Therefore the matter needs careful consideration by governors and senior leadership teams in schools generally.

The government has recognised that, due to the nature and history of religious content in relation to school education, there should be exceptions from the provisions in certain areas and these, together with the responsibilities under the provisions, are fully explained in the DfES guidance document which is available to download below.

[Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief - Guidance](#) Of particular importance to Catholic schools, both maintained and independent is the section on page 7, Exceptions for Schools of a Religious Character. This section makes it clear that *'It was never the intention of part 2 of the Equality Act to undermine their (Church Schools) position'*.

In summary, the exceptions mean that maintained schools which have a religious character and independent schools which have a religious ethos (and are registered as such) are not subject to the provisions relating to admissions and pupils' access to benefits, facilities and services. This means that faith schools will still be able to give priority in admissions to children on the basis of their faith. Schools can also restrict certain services and benefits that they offer to pupils sharing the faith of the school, or can offer them in a different way to pupils of different beliefs or religions - or none. However, it remains unlawful for a maintained faith school to leave places unfilled where

there are fewer applications than places available. Undersubscribed faith schools must admit all children who apply regardless of their faith. Similarly, where a school gives priority to a proportion of children not of the faith and there are insufficient applicants in this category, places must not be left open and must be filled by children of the faith (and vice versa).

The law also makes it clear that, once pupils have been admitted, schools may not exclude them or subject them to any other detriment, on grounds of their religion or belief, or lack of it, or that of their parents. Since to do so would be counter to the Christian nature of our schools, we are confident that this would never happen in our Catholic schools.

In the matter of religious education, the guidance states that *'there is a broad exemption in the Act for anything to do with the content of the curriculum. This is to ensure that all schools can continue to deliver the broad-based and inclusive curriculum to which all children are entitled without fear of challenge based on the religious views of particular parents or children'*. The exemption covers anything done by schools in connection with the content of the curriculum. It accordingly covers the National Curriculum, together with elements such as RE which is not part of the National Curriculum but which is required by law to be taught in maintained schools. It includes elements such as the provision of school library books, which are aimed at the delivery of a broad-based and balanced education to pupils. **It also extends to independent schools, which do not have to teach the National Curriculum.**

In maintained schools, including voluntary aided Church schools, parents retain their right to withdraw their child from religious education and acts of worship and, in sixth forms, students may now also withdraw themselves from collective worship but not religious education lessons.

### **Policies relating to Employment**

We have been asked to provide advice concerning whether governing bodies should adopt the model policies relating to employment available on the Catholic Education Service website ([www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk)) or those recommended by a local authority. Local Authority human resources officers, upon whom governing bodies usually depend for personnel advice and support, are familiar with their Authority's policies, as are local union officers. If the CES models are adopted and the procedures within them are very different confusion and suspicion can arise. Governing bodies may therefore prefer to adopt their local authority's policies **but should not so do without ensuring that they incorporate the clauses within the CES models that relate to conduct by an employee that is detrimental to the catholic character of the school.**

### **Diocesan Sub-Committee Meetings**

The next meetings of the nine Diocesan Sub-Committees are as follows:

<b>B&amp;NES</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 May '07 at 10.45am in St John's Presbytery, Bath</b>
<b>Bristol</b>	<b>Tuesday 15 May '07 at 2.00pm in Alexander House</b>
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	<b>Wed 16 May '07 at 2.00pm in St Mary's School, Churchdown</b>
<b>South Glos</b>	<b>Thursday 17 May '07 at 2.00pm in Holy Family School, Patchway</b>
<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>Monday 21 May '07 at 2.00pm in Corpus Christi School, W-S-M</b>

**Somerset** Monday 14 May '07 at 2.00pm in SS Joseph&Teresa School, Wells  
**Swindon** Wednesday 6 June 07 at 7.30pm in St Catharine's School  
**Wiltshire** Tuesday 22 May '07 at 4.00pm in St Augustine's Catholic College, Trowbridge  
**Independent Schools** Wednesday 23 May '07 at Prior Park School

May we remind you that **all headteachers and chairs of governors** are invited to these meetings and **are asked to ensure that every school is represented at each meeting.**

### **Other forthcoming events**

A Department calendar of 2006/07 events was issued to schools last July. The following are of importance to all schools in terms 5 & 6 (old summer term)

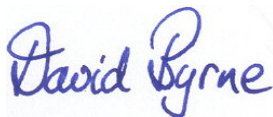
Tues 8 May	Governor training – 7.30 p.m. St George's Primary School, Warminster
Wed 9 May	Governor training -7.30 p.m. St Augustine's of Canterbury School, Taunton
Wed 9 May	Diocesan Secondary School Mass, Clifton Cathedral, 11 a.m.
Thurs 21 June	Diocesan Primary School Mass, Clifton Cathedral, 11 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.
Tues 26 June	Committee for Schools & Colleges – 10.30 a.m. at Alexander House
Weds 11 July	Secondary Schools' Conference at Alexander House, 'Faith & Identity – the Developing Role of Church Secondary Education'
Thurs 12 July	Catechetical Conference with Bill Huesbch at Alexander House

### **Succession Planning**

The Diocesan Trustees have advertised the Department Director's post. A copy is attached for your information:

With best wishes

Yours faithfully



David Byrne & Peter Bradshaw, Co-Directors

**TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Please return to Jenny Fitzgerald, Clifton Diocesan Department for Schools and Colleges, Alexander House, 160 Pennywell Road, Bristol BS5 0TX or e-mail to [jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com) as soon as possible

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

The following Governors will be attending the Training for Governors at **St George’s Catholic Primary School, Warminster** on **Tuesday 8 May** at 7.30pm.

Names .....  
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The following Governors will be attending the Training for Governors at **St Augustine of Canterbury School, Taunton** on **Wednesday 9 May** at 7.30pm.

Names .....  
.....  
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.....

Please enter the number of governors attending each session below

- The Role of the Church School (9 May only)**
- The New Admissions Code of Practice - Implications for Catholic Schools**
- Social Cohesion and Section 48 Inspection Arrangements**

Thank you

## Do you have FAITH in our children?

### Director of the Department for Schools and Colleges c. £60k

Based in Bristol, Clifton Diocese serves the Catholic communities from The Cotswolds in the north to the Somerset Levels in the south, including the cities of Bath, Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Taunton and Swindon.

We are looking to appoint a Director of the Department for Schools and Colleges to head up the team that formulates and delivers our educational strategy. Dealing with the DFES and local authorities, the Director will negotiate on behalf of our 70+ schools and colleges and advise the Bishop, Head Teachers, Governors and Trustees.

The Director will have a strong understanding of current educational policies and practices gained from beyond a school environment, and will have operated at a senior level of significant influence.

The Director will be an active member of the Catholic Church, or Church in communion with it, and be committed to the principles that underpin and distinguish Catholic education as something more than academic excellence.

For further details and an application form please contact:

Canon Robert Corrigan,  
Cathedral House, Clifton Park,  
Bristol BS8 3BX.

Telephone: 0117 973 8411.

Email: [robert.corrigan@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:robert.corrigan@cliftondiocese.com)

Closing date: Monday, 30th April.

[www.cliftondiocese.com](http://www.cliftondiocese.com)



**CLIFTON**  
**DIOCESE**