



# CLIFTON DIOCESE

DEPARTMENT FOR  
SCHOOLS & COLLEGES  
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**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. 91**

**September 2007**

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 for you, your family and your school.

## **Welcomes**

We are pleased to welcome the following colleagues to new positions as Headteachers of Diocesan schools. We wish them fulfilment and satisfaction, both professionally and personally, as they undertake this challenging, but rewarding, Church ministry in education.

**Matt Condon**, Headteacher, St Joseph's, Fishponds, Bristol

**Michael O'Keefe**, Headteacher, St Edmund's, Calne

**Rosy Savory**, Headteacher, The Rosary, Stroud

**Sarah Wembridge**, Acting Headteacher, St Joseph's, Nympsfield

**Dominic Whyte**, Headteacher, St Thomas More School, Cheltenham

## **Congratulations**

We are delighted that **Mary Regan** (Chair of Governors at Pius X and Chair, former Acting Head, Deputy & long-serving member of staff at St Bernadette Secondary) and **Gordon Nicholas** (former Head of Holy Family and Our Lady of the Rosary, former member of the committee for Schools and Colleges, Chair of Governors of St Bede's and administrator of Catholic school appeals in Gloucestershire since he retired) have each been awarded the Benemerenti Medal by Pope Benedict for their outstanding contribution to Catholic education in the Diocese.

We also offer congratulations to all associated with the opening of **Christ College, Cheltenham** which comes into being on 1 September, replacing St Benedict's Catholic School and Sports College. The creation of this joint Church school is the result of a number of years of deliberation and planning by a working party established by our Bishop and the Bishop of Gloucester in 2000, and much hard work by the governing body and the senior managers of St Benedict's. The mission of the school is to be fully Catholic and fully Church of England, and policies for its realisation are based on the celebration of all that the two traditions share and can contribute to the common good as Christians together with an acknowledgement of, and mutual respect for, those areas where there is not yet a united view. The dioceses have been asked by the DCSF and the Local Authority to explore the possibility of Christ College becoming an Academy in

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Primary Schools Adviser: Mrs Trisha Antolik BA DipEd, Secondary Schools Adviser: Mrs Ann Fowler BSc MA  
Administrator: Mrs Jennifer Fitzgerald

2011 and this is the subject of further discussion at present. Bishop Declan and Bishop Michael of Gloucester will officially open Christ College on Friday 28 September.

### **Joint Pastoral Letter on Catholic Schools**

Please find as an appendix a Joint Pastoral Letter on Catholic Schools issued by the bishops of England and Wales on 2 September. Please feel free to quote from it in your publicity materials and newsletters to parents. You may also wish to draw it to the attention of local clergy.

### **Succession Planning**

As Bishop Declan explained to you in an email at the end of last term, the Diocesan Trustees felt unable to make an appointment to the post of Director of the Clifton Diocese Department for Schools and Colleges to replace us in September. In the interim, we have both agreed to stay on until the end of December 2007 but not beyond.

### **Admissions**

Please remember that each governing body of a voluntary aided school is required by law to **review its admission policy and agree the policy for September 2009 by 15 April 2008**. Consultations with the maintaining LA and other schools in the relevant area (as determined by your Admissions Forum) must be undertaken by 1 March 2008 and then the policy agreed by 15 April 2008. The agreed policy should then be sent to those with whom your school is required to consult. Failure to follow this whole process will render your admissions policy invalid and you could therefore be required to admit every child who applies for a place at your school regardless of your accommodation or financial circumstances.

A suggested timeline is given below

- Governors' Admissions Committee review existing admissions policy in light of circumstances and the new Code of Practice – Sept to Nov
- Full Governors' meeting to agree draft policy for consultation - Dec/Jan
- Draft admissions policy circulated to consultees (LA will provide list and may circulate for the governors) – late Jan/early February
- Deadline for replies – 1 March 08
- Governors meeting to consider representations and finalise policy – between 1 March and 15 April 08
- Final policy to be published and sent out to consultees – within 14 days of finalisation

**There is now a new statutory requirement, under the new School Admissions Code of Practice to consult with the Diocese as part of the process.** Many schools have done so in the past and we have, as a result, been able to avoid a number of misunderstandings and referrals to the adjudicator. This is an extremely time-consuming exercise for the Department but we are happy to do this as part of the service level agreement to schools.

As we are sure you are aware a new Admissions Code of Practice came into force on 28 February. The terms of the new Code are now mandatory and no longer just guidance. You can download the new Code by right clicking the link [school admissions code of](#)

[practice](#). Please make sure your governors' admissions committee have copies of and have read the code prior to meeting to review your admissions policy.

The Department has reviewed its model primary admissions policy in light of the provisions of the new Code and this is available for your information on the Diocesan website and can be downloaded by right-clicking the following link [model admissions policy](#). Because secondary school policies are so different we have not produced a model but we are happy to advise on an individual basis. Please remember admissions policies must give clear first priority to Catholic looked after children. Our advice remains that other baptised Catholic children within the catchment area of the school should be given second priority and then other looked after children should be placed ahead of all other non-Catholic children (including siblings) in the oversubscription criteria. LAs have been instructed by Secretary of State to refer any admission policies they believe to be breaching the Code of Practice to the Adjudicator.

### **Background Information for School Improvement Partners (SIPs)**

There is no legal requirement that SIPs attached to Catholic schools will be familiar with Catholic education, though most local authorities are sensitive to the need for a SIP to have some empathy with a Church school. Some authorities have provided the opportunity for us to contribute to the induction programme of SIPs. Attached is a sheet providing background information about Catholic schools which was distributed to SIPs in Gloucestershire recently. We request that each headteacher in the Diocese gives a copy to her/his SIP.

### **Suggested Pro-Forma for Admissions Appeals**

This year has seen an increase in the number of admissions appeals, particularly in the primary sector. Local authorities provide guidance to parents about making an appeal together with a form that can be used. We have adapted a LA form and guidance to meet the circumstances of Catholic VA schools. Governors may wish to use these and copies are therefore attached to this newsletter.

### **Governor Training**

As reported in the summer sub-committee meetings, attendance at governor training sessions in different venues away from Alexander House has been very disappointing and a number have had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest. As a result we are proposing a different delivery model as part of the service level agreement this year. We will be offering the schools in each Diocesan Sub-Committee area one governors' training session at a venue of their choice from a menu of topics relevant to the governors of Catholic schools. By group agreement, one school will be asked to host the event, another to issue invitations, co-ordinate numbers etc. The topics available include:

- The Role of the Church School
- The Role of the Governor in a Catholic School
- The Role of the Governing Body and the Headteacher
- The New Admissions Code of Practice
- Community Cohesion and Section 48 Inspection Arrangements
- Every Child Matters and the Extended School
- Integrating Christian Values into the Catholic School
- Capital Works in Catholic Schools

In addition, we will continue to offer some training here at Alexander House where attendances have, by and large, been good.

**The first of these sessions, from 7.30 - 9.00pm on Tuesday 2 October 2007, will be on, and directed at, recently appointed/reappointed governors and at clerks to the governing body.**

**The Role of the Governor in a Catholic school.** Peter Bradshaw will lead this session which will explain the responsibilities associated with governing a Catholic school and highlight the ways in which each governor can help to ensure the effectiveness of their Church school. The session will be of value to parent, staff and LA nominated governors as well as to foundation governors appointed by Bishop Declan.

**The Role of the Clerk to the Governing Body.** David Byrne will lead this session exploring the key role that clerks have in facilitating the work of the governing body. The Clerk's responsibilities now extend far beyond the minuting of meetings. The session will review these, highlight key tasks and procedures, and illustrate best practice

**We would be grateful if Clerks would circulate information about the 'Role of the Governor' session to all governors, seek an indication from those who propose to attend, and return the attached booking slip to Jenny in the office by no later than Wednesday 26 September in order that we may cater appropriately.**

### **'Seeking the Face of Christ'**

Bishop Declan is very grateful to those schools who have already responded to his consultation document, **'Seeking the Face of Christ'**. Although the official date for replies has now passed, the Bishop would still 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 before. If you need further guidance, please contact Ann Fowler at this office.

### **Determined Admissions Policies for 2008/9**

Most governing bodies remembered to send their draft 2008 admissions policy to give us the opportunity to comment and advise as is required in the Admissions Code of Practice, but few have sent us the final version approved by the governing body. Would **ALL** schools please email to [schoolsandcolleges@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:schoolsandcolleges@cliftondiocese.com) the approved 2008 Admissions Policy.

### **Headteachers' Conference 2007**

The Annual Headteachers' Conference will be held on **4 and 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 and of *Rev Daniel O'Leary*, priest, author and teacher at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, to deliver the key-note addresses. *Bishop Declan* will be with us for part of the conference and will lead a reflection. The cost is £225 and includes overnight accommodation and all meals, coffee etc from lunch time on 4<sup>th</sup> until lunchtime on the 5<sup>th</sup>. We frequently remind Chairs that the conference is an essential component of the support that the Diocese arranges for its headteachers and they should

ensure that funds are available for it. If you are able to come but have not yet completed a booking form please contact Jenny immediately.

### **Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for, and Rededication to, Catholic Education in the Diocese – Tuesday 9 October at 19.30 in the Cathedral**

All associated with the Church schools and colleges in the Diocese are invited to this annual mass, at which Bishop Declan will be the chief celebrant. Each Headteacher should have received an invitation which we have asked be copied to all teaching & support staff and to all governors. The mass will include the opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to the mission of Catholic education. Unfortunately in our first correspondence to schools on this matter, we mistakenly identified the date as Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> rather than Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

### **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 guidance if required but the new 'Guide to the Law for School Governors', published in June this year gives full details. Would clerks please ensure that all Governors have an updated copy. It is available by right clicking on the following link: [www.governor.net.co.uk/linkAttachments/A\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_Law\\_for\\_School\\_Governors.zip](http://www.governor.net.co.uk/linkAttachments/A_Guide_to_the_Law_for_School_Governors.zip)

It is also the time for the annual review of Governors' Committees, their terms of reference and membership as well as the governors' scheme of delegation. This is a very important exercise and is vital to the smooth operation of the school in the forthcoming year. Where difficulties arise between the governors and the senior leadership of a school, it is invariably because there is not a sufficiently robust scheme of delegation in place. A model scheme of delegation is available from the Department on request.

### **Guidance on duty to promote community cohesion**

In late July the new Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS) published guidance on how schools can contribute towards community cohesion. The guidance is intended to support schools in implementing the new duty to promote community cohesion when it comes into effect in September 2007. Many schools, including Catholic schools, are already working with their pupils, and with the wider community, to support community cohesion. The DCSF wants to build on the best of that practice and from September 2007 there is a new duty on schools to promote community cohesion.

Guidance to support schools in implementing the duty has now been published and is available at [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion). The guidance defines what is meant by community cohesion, how this relates to the role of schools and outlines the work that many are already doing.

The guidance explains how schools contribute to community cohesion through their approach to:

- Teaching, learning and the curriculum: to promote discussion about common values and diversity
- Equity and excellence: to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils to succeed at the highest level possible, by removing barriers to access and participation
- Engagement and extended services: to provide opportunities to interact and build links with parents, communities and other schools locally, nationally and internationally

Contributing to community cohesion will be a feature of Section 48 inspections from now onwards although OFSTED will not inspect this aspect of a school formally until September 2008. The Department is providing training for Headteachers' on this topic at Alexander House on Tuesday afternoon, 11 September. Heads will have received details last term.

### **Faith Schools and Social Cohesion – Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?**

'Chance Your Arm' – an education and training provider with the declared aim of 'respecting diversity and promoting cohesion' is organising a national conference in Leeds on the topic above on Friday 12 October 2007. The keynote speakers include Rt Hon John Battle MP, Tony Blair's envoy to faith communities, Rev Jan Ainsworth Director of Education for the Church of England and the distinguished Catholic writer and educationalist, Professor Gerald Grace. Further details and a booking form can be accessed through the hyperlink: [faith schools and social cohesion.pdf](#).

### **The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007 - Guidance for schools**

In parallel with Part 2 of the *Equality Act 2006: Discrimination on grounds of religion or belief*, to which we referred in our last newsletter, *the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007* also came into force on 30 April 2007. They make discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful in a number of areas, including education in schools. In addition, they provide individuals with the right to seek damages and redress through the civil courts if they believe they have been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation.

The DfES has provided governors and Heads with guidance on how the law applies to schools. The regulations make it unlawful for a school to discriminate against a person:

- In the terms on which it offers to admit him or her as a pupil
- By refusing to accept an application to admit him or her as a pupil
- In the way in which a pupil is afforded access to any benefit, facility or service
- By refusing access to any benefit, facility or service
- By excluding him or her
- By subjecting him or her to any other detriment

All maintained, special schools, academies and independent schools in England and Wales are covered by the regulations. The responsible body in maintained schools will be the governing body and in independent schools it will be the proprietor. As a Diocese we oppose any unfair or discriminatory behaviour based on an individual's orientation and would expect that homophobic bullying is taken as seriously and dealt with as firmly as bullying on any other ground. The regulations should have no effect on teaching and the curriculum in schools. Protection in the area of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief and the right to manifest one's religion or belief has already been addressed in part 2 of the Equality Act 2006. The law recognises that many religious beliefs oppose certain sexual practices. We are assured by the guidance that Catholic schools should still be able to teach the importance of traditional family values. The guidance also states that *'if a faith school (or indeed any school) teaches that the Christian and Muslim faiths decree that same-sex sexual activity is a sin then the school will not be acting unlawfully. Similarly, if a pupil asks a teacher his views on homosexuality and the teacher gives his view, then again, that teacher will not be acting unlawfully'*. However, the

subject *must be dealt with appropriately* and haranguing or harassing a particular student or group of students would not be considered an acceptable way to convey a belief within an educational context, and such behaviour could constitute unlawful discrimination.

### **New powers to discipline pupils**

Schools now have new statutory powers to discipline badly-behaved pupils. These measures form part of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and represent the first major change to teachers' guidelines on discipline for a decade. Prior to the Act, teachers were allowed to restrain pupils under common law, with the same authority as parents. But teachers have complained that the previous guidelines on discipline were not clear enough and they did not always know if they had the law on their side.

The new measures include:

- the legal right to confiscate inappropriate items from pupils such as mobile phones or music players;
- statutory powers to discipline pupils who behave badly on the way to and from school, for instance when travelling on buses and trains;
- greater legal scope and flexibility in giving pupils detentions, which may include after-school and Saturday detentions;
- a legal duty on schools to make provision to tackle all forms of bullying.
- strengthened legal powers for teachers and other school staff to use 'reasonable force' to prevent pupils from committing a crime or causing injury, damage, or disruption.

Legislation in the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 allows head teachers to search groups of pupils if they suspect one of them is carrying a knife. Heads are also entitled to use metal-detector arches and wands to carry out random, non-intrusive searches of pupils for weapons. These powers came into effect in May 2007.

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

The Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges met on 26 June 2007 and

- ◆ received reports from the Co-Directors and Primary and Secondary Advisers
- ◆ received reports from the Summer 2007 meetings of the eight local authority area sub-committees and also the independent schools sub-committee
- ◆ discussed the situation regarding denominational transport in three LAs
- ◆ received updates on progress towards rebuilding St John's School, Bath and on discussions with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester Diocese and the DCSF concerning a Church Academy in Cheltenham
- ◆ considered the implications of the new duty on schools to ensure 'community cohesion' and on Section 48 inspections
- ◆ discussed the celebration in schools of the major feast days in Church's year. It was noted that in 2009 the 'Easter holiday' for many schools would not include Easter itself, but this was seen as an opportunity for each school community to travel with Christ through Holy Week to the joy of the resurrection. Bishop Declan made it clear that he was happy for the holydays which have been transferred to Sundays to be marked in schools on weekdays providing this was not seen to separate them from the celebrations of the whole Catholic community in this country which now take place on the designated Sundays.

## **Diocesan Sub-Committee Meetings**

When dates for the Sub-Committee meetings were arranged for the autumn, our primary concern was to ensure that the meetings could be undertaken by a single individual (i.e. the new Director). We did not take into consideration our own personal commitments since we had assumed that by then we would both be retired! For this reason a number of sub-committee meetings have had to be rearranged and e-mails have been sent out to members of those sub-committees for comment.

The confirmed dates are as follows:

<b>Bristol</b>	<b>Tuesday 9 October '07 at 2.00pm in Alexander House</b>
<b>Gloucestershire</b>	<b>Wed 10 October '07 at 2.00pm in Christ College, Cheltenham</b>
<b>South Glos</b>	<b>Thursday 11 October '07 at 2.00pm in St Mary's School, Bradley Stoke</b>
<b>Swindon</b>	<b>Wednesday 17 October 07 at 7.30pm in St Mary's School</b>

Provisional dates for the remaining sub-committees are:

<b>B&amp;NES</b>	<b>Tuesday 2 October '07 at 10.45am in St John's Presbytery, Bath</b>
<b>North Somerset</b>	<b>Wednesday 3 October '07 at 2.00pm in St Joseph's School, Portishead</b>
<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Monday 1 October '07 at 2.00pm in SS Joseph &amp; Teresa School, Wells</b>
<b>Wiltshire</b>	<b>Thursday 18 October '07 at 4.00pm in St Augustine's Catholic College, Trowbridge</b>

It was agreed in the meeting in May that the next meeting of the Independent Schools Sub-Committee would be held before summer half-term next year at St Mary's, Shaftesbury.

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 Diary Dates**

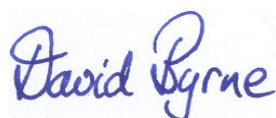
### **September**

Tuesday 11 Community Cohesion Training day for Headteachers  
Monday 17 Induction Day for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)  
Tuesday 25 Induction for New & Acting Headteachers

### **October**

Tuesday 2 Governor & Clerk Training  
Thur 4&Fri 5 Heads' Conference  
Tuesday 9 Catholic Education Mass

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) by no later than Wednesday 26 September.

**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 Alexander House on Tuesday 2 October 2007 at 19.30**

Names .....

.....

.....

.....

**The following Clerk to the Governors will be attending the training session for Clerks to the Governing Body at Alexander House at 19.30 on the same evening.**

Name .....

Thank you

**Signature** .....

**Date** .....

## Clifton Diocese

### School Admission – Notice of Appeal

If you want to appeal, complete this form (block letters please) and return one copy to The Clerk to the Governors, c/o the Catholic school to which you applied for your child's admission. If appealing for more than one child, please complete a separate form for each child.

<b>PARENTS NAMES:</b>	<b>Parent 1</b>	<b>Parent 2</b>
<i>Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Other</i>		
(First Name)		
(Family Name)		
<b>ADDRESS:</b>		
e-mail:		
<b>TELEPHONE NOS.</b>	<b>Home:</b> <b>Mobile:</b>  <b>Work:</b>	<b>Home:</b> <b>Mobile:</b>  <b>Work:</b>
<b>CHILD'S FULL NAME</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>PRESENT SCHOOL</b>		<b>SCHOOL YEAR:</b>
<b>SCHOOL TO WHICH THIS APPEAL IS BEING SUBMITTED</b>		
<b>SCHOOL ALLOCATED</b>		
<b>IS THIS YOUR FIRST APPEAL?</b>		<b>YES/NO</b>
<b>HAS YOUR CHILD A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?</b>		<b>YES/NO</b>

**I wish to appeal against my child's school allocation for the following reasons:-**  
(e.g. any reasons for wanting the school preferred or not wanting the school allocated; if your child has a disability, whether you think this has affected the allocation of a place; disputing the explanation given by the County Council on behalf of the governing body) Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Are you submitting any additional documents Yes/No. If yes, please give details and ensure such documents are received one week prior to your hearing:**

**I wish/do not wish to attend and speak when the appeal is considered**

**I would like to be represented by (name and address):**

**SIGNED:**

**DATE:**

# SCHOOL STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORK ACT 1998

## DIOCESE OF CLIFTON

### SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS

#### GUIDANCE NOTES FOR APPELLANTS

##### 1. THE APPEAL SYSTEM

All Diocesan schools have Voluntary Aided status. This means that each Governing Body has its own Admissions Policy and the control of admissions to its school. Because it is the Admission Authority it has a duty to establish a Panel to hear appeals against its decision to refuse a place at the school. If you exercise your right to appeal, the Governing Body asks the Diocese to set up an independent panel which will consider whether your reasons are strong enough to overturn the decision.

The **Appeal Panel** is made up of three people to include:

- Persons who have experience in education, are acquainted with educational issues or are parents of registered pupils at a school and
- Lay members who should have no personal experience in the management or provision of education in any school (otherwise than as a governor or in any other voluntary capacity).

All panel members have attended training sessions and are independent of the Governing Body.

Also present will be a **Clerk** who will take notes of the proceedings and offer guidance on the conduct of the appeal if necessary. There will also be at the hearing a **Presenting Officer** for the Governing Body who will explain why admission to the school was refused.

**1.1 Purpose of Appeal** - The choice of school for your child is obviously very important to you. The governing body, working with the Council's Children's Service Department, will have tried to satisfy your preference; if this was not possible you may want to have this decision reviewed by a body which can act independently and which has the power to overturn the original decision if it believes it right to do so. That is the purpose of the School Admission Appeals System.

**1.2 The purpose of this guidance** – is to explain the appeal system. If you decide to appeal every effort will be made to help you. Please do not be put off from making an appeal because of doubts about your ability to present your case. The Panel will be interested in the reasons for your choice of school, not your skill as an advocate!

The governing body wants to ensure that you have a right of appeal as the legislation intended.

**1.3 Legislation and Code of Practice** – It is necessary to have some basic rules for dealing with appeals (e.g. setting a final date for notice of appeals helps the Panel to deal with all appeals in the fairest possible way). The procedure that will be followed is based on the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and a Statutory Code of Practice issued by the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCFS). The Panel also takes account of the Code of Practice on Admissions, also published by the DCFS. Copies of these documents are available on the web site of the Department for Children, Families and Schools. The Panel is also subject to supervision by the Council on Tribunals.

**1.4 Further Information** – If you decide to appeal please read this guidance carefully. The appeals are organised by the Clifton Diocese Department for Schools and Colleges (0117 902 5593) in partnership with the Democratic Services Unit of your local authority (tel no .....). If you need any more information you should ring one of these numbers.

**1.5 Appeals Covered by Leaflet** – This leaflet applies only to admissions to voluntary aided primary and secondary schools where you are objecting to a decision made by the governing body acting as an admissions authority. If you want to object to arrangements for the provision of special education for your child, further information can be supplied by the Special Educational Needs Team in the Local Authority's Children's Services Department.

## **2. WHEN TO APPEAL**

**2.1** Parents can ask for a child to be admitted to a primary school in any school term. Most appeals however concern the choice of first primary school, the choice of primary school when moving into a new area and also the choice of a secondary school.

**2.3** Generally appeals are made for entry in each school year. Appeals for school admissions in September 2008 should be made by ..... You can appeal even if you have missed the deadline for school admission - the final decision letter will indicate a specific deadline date. Appeals for admissions in other school terms (called ad hoc appeals) should be made within the time limit indicated in the final decision letter. If you intend to appeal you are strongly advised to give notice within the time limit if that is possible.

## **3. HOW TO APPEAL**

**3.1 Statutory Requirements** – The governing body must comply with any preference unless:

- (a) Compliance with the preference would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.
- (b) Admission arrangements for the preferred school are wholly based on selection by high ability or aptitude and the admission of the child would be incompatible with selection under those arrangements.
- (c) Admission would be incompatible with co-ordinated admission arrangements covering two or more maintained schools which have been approved by the Secretary of State.
- (d) The child has been permanently excluded from two or more schools and at least one of the exclusions took place after 1 September 1997.

Note (i) Prejudice of the kind referred to in (a) above may arise by reason of measures required to be taken in order to ensure compliance with the duty imposed by Section 1 (6) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (duty of Local Education Authorities and Governing Bodies to comply with infant class sizes.)

(ii) With regard to (d), the requirement to comply with parental preference does not apply for two years after the second exclusion. This does not apply to children below compulsory school age, or to pupils reinstated after exclusion. A permanent exclusion is regarded as taking effect from

the first school day the Headteacher has told the pupil not to attend the school. If your child is in this situation, please contact the Democratic Services Unit for further advice.

- 3.2 Deciding to appeal** – Your decision letter will explain the reasons why your child has not been offered a place at your preferred school. Consider those reasons carefully in the light of the statutory reasons for refusal (paragraph 3.1) and your reasons for wanting your preferred school. You should also have regard to the School’s Admissions Policy.
- 3.3 Notice of Appeal** - Your notice of appeal must be in writing, setting out the grounds on which it is made. You are requested to use the appeal form enclosed with this guidance.
- 3.5 Reasons for Appeal** - The statement of reasons for your appeal is important. It is not enough to state that the reasons will be explained at the appeal. Write down any reasons for your preference of school that you want the Appeal Panel to consider. You need not limit the reasons to those already given – this is the time to add any more if you want to do so. If you do not agree with any reasons conveyed by the Children’s Services Department on behalf of the governing body refusing a place at your preferred school you should add a statement to that effect.

If you have been refused a place under the implementation of the Infant Class Size Regulations you are strongly advised to bear in mind that the Appeal Panel can only decide in your favour on 2 grounds i.e.

- if there was a mistake made in the Admissions process which affected the allocation of a place to your child.
- or
- if the County Council as the Local Education Authority has not acted in a “reasonable manner” (using the legal definition of “reasonable”) in refusing to allocate a place at your preferred school.

It is helpful if your grounds for appeal explain your views on these two areas.

- 3.6 Documents** – If you want the Panel to consider any letters or documents you should enclose a copy with your notice of appeal (or if the document is bulky, explain what it is and indicate what relevant information it contains). If you want the Panel to consider a document that is in the governing body or the Council’s possession (perhaps a letter which you have written to the Children’s Services Department without keeping a copy) please give enough information to allow it to be identified and copied. The Panel will only consider documents put forward by you or by the governing body. It will not have read any files of correspondence between you and the Children’ Services Department or individual schools.
- 3.7 Supporting Evidence** – Consider whether any of your reasons for appeal need to be supported in some way. For example if you believe that there are medical reasons for allocating a place at your preferred school consider whether you should ask your doctor for a letter commenting on your claim. The Panel will consider any written evidence you provide.
- 3.8 Attendance** – It is in the interests of all concerned for parents to attend hearings if that is possible. A friend may accompany you or you can ask someone to represent you. Please

let us know if you intend to do this. However it is not appropriate for you to be accompanied by a teacher from your child's current school.

If you are not present the Panel will consider the case very carefully on the basis of any written representations that you have made when giving notice of your appeal together with the statement from the School's governing body, any documents supplied by either of you, and the School's published Admissions Policy on school admissions. However the Panel members will not be able to ask you questions about your case and you will not be able to question the governing body.

- 3.9 Special Needs** – If you have special problems in attending the hearing (perhaps because you have a disability) or if there is any other information that you think is relevant, please include the information in a separate letter.
- 3.10 Sending the Notice** – When you have filled in the appeal form send one copy of it to The Clerk to the Governors, c/o the School. A second copy of the form should be completed and retained by you for your records.
- 3.11 Delay** – Please send in the notice of appeal as soon as possible. If there is an important document which is not available do not hold up your notice of appeal but add a note of the document you are waiting for and (if possible) when you expect to be able to supply it.

#### **4. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPEAL HEARING**

- 4.1 Date and Place** – Most school admission appeal hearings will take place for during June and July. Appeal hearings are also arranged regularly throughout the year. If you are making an ad hoc appeal, you will be offered an appointment for the next available date. This may occasionally be more than four weeks from when you lodge your appeal. All hearings will be during normal office hours and if possible held in a place that is reasonably accessible to you.
- 4.2** A letter will be sent to you two weeks before the hearing telling you when and where it will be held together with further information about the form of the appeal hearing. Every effort will be made to deal with appeals on the date allocated. It is difficult to rearrange appeal dates without affecting the timetable for other appeals. However, if you want to be present but are genuinely unable to attend on the date allocated, you should tell us as soon as possible.
- 4.3** A copy of your notice of appeal together with copies of any documents supplied by you will be sent to the governing body. A week before the hearing date you will be sent a copy of the statement from the governing body and any documents that the Panel will consider.
- 4.4** If there was any document that you are unable to supply with your notice of appeal, please send a copy as soon as it is available so that the Panel members and the governing body can read it before the hearing. It is much more difficult to consider documents produced for the first time at the hearing and the hearing may be delayed.
- 4.5 Contacts with the School to which you have been allocated** – While you are waiting for your appeal to be heard please do not miss any chance to visit the school that has been allocated. The visit may provide helpful information and it will not prejudice your case in any way.



**CLIFTON  
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## **Background Information for School Improvement Partners working with Catholic Schools**

The Department welcomes the work of School Improvement Partners and the contribution they can make to the success of our Catholic schools. Across England and Wales the Church has a network of over 2,500 maintained schools and colleges serving some 800,000 pupils/students. The vast majority of these enjoy voluntary aided status which gives each governing body (rather than the local authority) control over the mission of the school, its religious character, admissions, the employment of staff and the curriculum.

The network of Church schools was expanded in the 1950s and 60s primarily to provide places for the children of Catholic families. During the last 20 years, in an increasingly secular world, Catholic schools have increasingly welcomed those of other denominations and faiths seeking an explicitly Christian education. It is therefore important to recognise that the success of a Catholic school is to be judged on the extent to which its distinctiveness as a Church school permeates all that it undertakes rather than the proportion of its pupils that are Catholics. The Catholic bishops of England and Wales have stated that Catholic schooling should be based on five principles:

- The search for excellence
- The education of the whole person
- The uniqueness of each individual
- The education of all
- Moral principles

The Catholic Education Service pack of materials, 'Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School' exists to assist schools in self-evaluation. In working with headteachers to identifying key development targets, we would expect that at least one of these was related to the distinctive character of the school as a Church school.

All Catholic schools are subject to Ofsted inspection and, nationally, perform well in relation to the figures for all maintained schools. In addition, Church schools are subject to 'Section 48' inspections of their religious character and Religious Education. These inspections are arranged by the Diocese and use a separate self-evaluation form as a starting point. The form, and associated guidance notes, is available from this office.

The Diocesan Department for Schools and Colleges is a small team devoted to supporting governing bodies, headteachers and schools in those areas relating to their character as a Church school. We work closely with Local Authority officers who are, of course, the primary source of professional support.

**Peter Bradshaw & David Byrne, Co-Directors**

**July 2007**

## **Joint Pastoral Letter on Catholic schools (2nd September 2007)**

We, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, want at the start of this new school year to re-affirm our vision of Catholic education and our commitment to providing Catholic schools. We also want to highlight how successful our schools are and the contribution they make to society in general.

For a very long time now, the Catholic Church has been an important partner with public authorities in the provision of education for the children and young people of England and Wales. Schools with a religious character (which make up over a third of schools) are a sector of public education with proven success; they are diverse and they are much sought after each year by hundreds of thousands of parents.

Recent and current calls from some for the abolition of faith schools, or their curtailment, fail to take account of this rich history of co-operation between Church and State which has been to the mutual benefit of both. They also fail to take account of the current achievements of our schools. Independent research and inspection conducted by the Government's own offices demonstrate how well our schools perform, academically and in moral and social education; that they are catering for as wide a range of pupils as any other group of schools, whether the measure be ability, poverty or ethnic identity. They also welcome pupils from the wider community, beyond the Catholic Church, wherever there are places available.

Underlying these indications of the success of our schools is their distinctiveness. Catholic schools are guided in all they do by an important and coherent vision of education. This vision is based on the truth revealed by God about ourselves, our life together in community and our ultimate destiny with God. This gives rise to an educational endeavour centred on the person of Jesus Christ, who is our Way, Truth and Life. Over a long period of time, this approach to education has proved to be one that prepares children and young people well for whatever roles they take on in society or public life, as well as for their personal and family lives. The commitment of the Catholic Church to inter-faith dialogue and to working with other Christians provides a further basis for young peoples' contribution to peaceful social cohesion.

At times, this vision of education stands in contrast to a secular model of education, based on the values of the prevailing culture, which are often far from clear and not always shared.

Those who choose Catholic schools for their children are, in effect, seeking an alternative model of education. Despite the claims of those who propose a purely secular model for all schools, there is no such thing as a "value-free" education. Catholic schools are clear and robust in the principles which guide them and the moral framework within which they educate.

Schooling has been, and remains, an important part of the mission of the Church. The aims of our schools are to help everyone within the school community to grow in faith; to make the most of every ability they have been given; to achieve academic excellence and to prepare well for adult life in a modern and diverse society. These tasks are, of course, carried out in close cooperation with local and national government.

From time to time, bishops and diocesan authorities need to review school provision within specific areas, usually in response to population changes. This will bring about changes in the provision with occasional closures as well as the expansion or re-building of schools. Any such changes are always made after careful consideration of all the factors involved, including the impact on both the local Church community and the neighbourhood.

We urge all members of the Catholic community to value our schools. So we encourage Catholic parents to send their children to the local Catholic school and to be actively involved in its life. We encourage people to work in our schools as Catholic head teachers, teachers, classroom assistants or in other roles. We encourage people to serve as foundation governors to continue supporting and promoting the vision of education on which our schools are founded. We encourage teachers, at their union meetings, and parents or parishioners, in their dealings with politicians, to speak up positively, on the basis of evidence, about the achievements and nature of our schools. Funding our alternative model of education is a costly, but worthwhile, exercise and we thank all those who contribute to this.

As the new school year gets underway, we invite everyone in the Catholic community to join us in praying for all those who are involved in the life of our schools. May this be a good year for pupils and staff, parents and governors, and the local community in which each of our schools is set. May God bless our educational enterprise for the good of our society.

**Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor**

President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
Archbishop of Westminster

**Archbishop Patrick Kelly**

Vice-President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
Archbishop of Liverpool