



Archdiocese of Westminster
Education Service
Dedicated to Lifelong Growth of the Whole Person in Faith
BULLETIN

January
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1/06

To: Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies

Items marked do not apply to independent schools*

From the Director of Education

Voluntary aided schools are different to schools established by LEAs. Those differences are not accidental, but are there to ensure that the school is able to remain true to the mission of those who founded it. For us, those differences, particularly the legal ones, protect very reasons why our schools exist. The latest edition of the DfES Guide to the Law for School Governors has been published. It follows a long-standing trend at the DfES, which is to adopt a 'one size fits all' approach to different categories of school. It is a natural inclination for bureaucrats to attempt to diminish what seem to be awkward or inconvenient distinctions, yet for us, those differences are vital. And of course, the 'one size' which they seek to impose is always that of the most numerous category of school, the community school. This trend, which has already caused us problems in areas such as governance and staffing, encourages the increasing lack of awareness of the VA sector in some LEAs and, even more so in newer bodies such as LSCs. VA schools are not just an inconvenience – the VA sector has the right to exist, and we need to celebrate those differences and resist and reverse this trend if we are to continue the Church's mission in Education. We need to bear this in mind as the proposals in the White paper are transformed into concrete legislative proposals.

Turning to more domestic matters, this term we have great pleasure in welcoming Nigel Spears, who will join the Service on 1st February. Nigel, who is currently Deputy Director of Schools in Plymouth Diocese, will take over the post of Education Officer (Capital Strategy) from Sally Livesey. Sally, who went part-time two years ago, will be retiring at the end of January. Sally has been with the Service for five years, and in that time has brought a welcome strategic approach to a particular and very technical area of our work. The time, care and professionalism which Sally brought to her work was valued by heads and governors involved in building projects, and is reflected in the increased quality of our bids, leading to our unprecedented success in securing capital funding in recent rounds. Sally leaves this particular aspect of our work in much better shape than she found it. There will be a small amount of overlap so that Nigel, whose post is full-time, can benefit from Sally's experience as he settles in.

Since the last Bulletin, Rita Price was appointed as Diocesan Schools Commissioner in the Diocese of Wrexham, as from 1st January this year. I take this opportunity to congratulate Rita on her appointment and wish her every success leading the Education Service in her new diocese. Rita has made lasting contributions to the Service in her four years with Westminster. In particular, Rita pioneered the successful introduction of the Self-Evaluation model in our schools over the last three years, something which has proved its worth in the context of the new OfSTED framework. Arrangements have been made to ensure that inspections take place this term: please contact Mike Pittendreigh in the first instance. Longer term arrangements will be made in due course.

In the Primary Advisers' Team, we are pleased that Pam Singh has agreed to assist us this term to cover a temporary vacancy in that Team.

Paul Barber

Accessibility Plans - Regulations

Please note that regulations came into force on 31st December 2005 to prescribe the date by which schools must prepare accessibility plans and the periods the plans must cover. Accessibility plans were introduced by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (which amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). They set out how plans to:

- Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum;
- Improve the physical environment of the school in order to increase the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and associated services provided or offered by the school; and
- Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information (provided in writing to other pupils) in other more suitable ways, taking account their disabilities and their or their parents' preferences, within a reasonable time

will be implemented.

Governing bodies must prepare their plans by 1st March 2006, for implementation from 1st April. Subsequent plans will have to be prepared at three yearly intervals.

Contact Sally Livesey or Mike Pittendreigh on 020 7798 9005 sallylivesey@rcdow.org.uk or mikepittendreigh@rcdow.org.uk

Admissions*

The Conference for Secondary Schools on Admissions planned for 11th January had to be postponed due to lack of numbers. The Conference was aimed at Chairs of Governors and Head Teachers. As the topic is so vital to the continuation of our Catholic Schools the Conference has been re arranged for 9th May 2006 (see attached flier). All schools should be represented. One of the topics for discussion will be the School Admissions Codes of Practice. As colleagues are aware consultation has taken place on proposals to revise the School Admissions Code of Practice (diocesan response enclosed), the School Admission Appeals Code of Practice, regulations relating to looked after children, admission by aptitude and admission appeals.

Generally it seems the Codes were welcomed, but there were some issues on which opinion was evenly split, especially concerning the use of first preference admission arrangements and parental preferences in areas with selection.

The government intends to lay the regulations on looked after children and on admission by aptitude shortly, as planned. However given the large number of responses received, many more than in previous consultations on the Code, Ministers are taking time to consider these in detail. Revised Codes of practice will be published in due course. In the meantime the current Codes will remain in force.

The Conference will also consider the publication of a Catholic Secondary Schools prospectus for our Catholic Community for School entry 2007.

Reminder-All admission authorities have to consult other admission authorities on their admission arrangements for school entry 2007 by 1st March 2006 and to determine their arrangements after consultation by April 15th. All schools are to send a copy of their proposed 2007 Admissions Policy to Maureen Roe, when it has been reviewed so that the Diocese is part of the consultation process. All policies received in the Autumn term will be responded to by half term.

Contact Maureen Roe 0207 798 9005 or email maureenroe@rcdow.org.uk

Teacher Recruitment

Please find enclosed a list of prospective teachers for our Catholic schools. It was heartening to see at two recent teaching recruitment fairs, held at St Mary's and Roehampton, large numbers of trainee teachers keen and eager to work in Catholic schools across the diocese.

Contact Maureen Roe 0207 798 9005 or email maureenroe@rcdow.org.uk

A Guide to the Law for School Governors

The 2006 edition has been published. It has been revised and updated to include changes created by the introduction of the Education Act 2005, which were current at 1 September. Distribution to schools will take place during the fortnight commencing 30 th January. Schools will receive a box of 15 copies addressed to the Chair of Governors. Schools requiring additional copies can order them from Prolog, email: dfes@prolog.uk.com. Schools that don't receive its guides can email guidetotheLaw@prolog.uk.com. This address should not be used for any other purpose.

The new single version guide as indicated in the last bulletin contains guidance relating to **all categories** of schools. The main text refers to community schools and is mostly generic for all categories of schools. Where paragraphs refer only to specific categories of schools, they are 'flagged' in the margin.

VA (voluntary aided) appears in colour in a box.

Contact Maureen Roe 0207 798 9005 or email maureenroe@rcdow.org.uk

Selecting Leaders for Catholic Schools

A Chair of governors must ensure that, where advisory rights have been accorded to the LEA and the Diocese he/she must notify the Diocesan Schools Commissioner and the Chief Education Officer of their LEA about a vacancy for a headteacher or deputy headteacher before taking any action, including appointing an acting headteacher or advertising the vacancy.

Paul Barber as the Director of Education and Diocesan School Commissioner for the Archdiocese of Westminster wishes any notification about vacancies for the posts mentioned above to be communicated to Maureen Roe Deputy Director of Education, on his behalf. Maureen will then coordinate Diocesan representation in this process.

Assistant Headteachers

A number of our schools, particularly Primary schools are appointing Assistant Head teachers instead of appointing deputy head teachers. This is for a number of reasons, amongst them, recruitment difficulties, financial issues or to enable promotion for colleagues who are not Catholic who cannot hold the key leadership positions of Deputy and Head in a Catholic school.

This has real implications for the future of Catholic education not least the recruitment of future Catholic leaders, particularly heads.

The diocese and the LEA do not usually have advisory rights for the post of Assistant Head teacher. To help the diocese to ascertain the SLT position in our schools across the diocese we would be grateful if you could complete the attached pro forma.

Secondments:

Many Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers, across the diocese, would I am sure from time to time welcome the opportunity to support and develop another Catholic school on an interim basis. Not only is this good professional development it is an opportunity to support the wider interests of Catholic education.

Most secondments are for a term's duration, according to the particular needs of each school. Because most interim headships, in particular, are needed at short notice valuable time is often lost in contacting 'possible candidates'. It would be helpful therefore if we could build up an information base of possible secondees. In building this it is important that the governing body at the school, as the employer, is consulted before any names are put forward. Deputy Heads would obviously have to discuss this with their head teacher as well. There will be no guarantee of a secondment as many factors have to be taken into consideration and appropriate consultation undertaken.

Please refer to the enclosed pro forma.

Contact Maureen Roe on 020 7 798 9005 or email maureenroe@rcdow.org.uk

Education Sunday

Education Sunday falls on February 12th 2006. The ecumenical theme for it is 'Prizes that Last'. The CES is publishing a Powerpoint presentation as well as other resources for use during the week leading up to Education Sunday. It is not yet decided whether it will be sent to you as an attachment to an email or on a CD with the other Education Sunday materials. For ideas and suggestions from other Christian churches, 'Google' Education Sunday 2006.

Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies

From Easter, Anthony Curran will take over lead responsibility for the CCRS within the Service from Anthony Clark. There is an important conference in March of all the CCRS directors and administrators from England and Wales to review the CCRS structure and delivery. If you have any points or suggestions for the future development of the CCRS, do send them to Anthony Curran at anthonycurran@rcdow.org.uk

The next CCRS Study Day is the module on Morality at 10am on Saturday 13th May 2006 at Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, London SW1. The cost is £15.00 for the module, £6.50 for the day only. Prior registration is encouraged though people are also welcome to register on the day. Current students are specially asked to register in advance. See the website for further details at www.rcdow.org.uk/education and look under heading of Catechist Support. (Contact Moira Wilson on 020 8202 3611 or email to moirawilson@rcdow.org.uk)

Continuous Professional Development

Please find enclosed the training booklet for this and next term. Please encourage all members of staff to avail of training where they need it, it keeps raising standards and enables us to keep Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the School as high priority. Some flyers for impending courses are also included with the training booklet.

The meetings for Religious Education Co-ordinators are not included in the booklet as they have already been circulated. Reminder of dates (all meetings are 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.):

Feb 7 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – London Colney
Feb 7 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Westminster House, Hendon
Feb 8 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Vaughan House
Feb 8 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Hertford
Feb 9 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Vaughan House
Feb 9 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Letchworth
Feb 9 th	R.E. Co-ordinators' Meeting – Tottenham

Contact Margaret Theissl on 020 8202 2371 or email margarettheissl@rcdow.org.uk

Self Evaluation

Remember the focus for this year is the Curriculum. Support materials will follow as the working party completes them. Try to give regular slots to the self evaluation process at staff meetings and share good practice with colleagues where possible. If you haven't already, when completed remember to email your SEF48 to sef48@rcdow.org.uk

Contact Sr Sheila (Primary) or Peter Ward (Secondary) on 020 7798 9005 or email sheilamcnamara@rcdow.org.uk or peterward@rcdow.org.uk

On the Way to Life

Members of the Education Service have been involved in a programme of study and reflection of this important document, launched last September, in order to promote its use in schools and colleges in the diocese. The text of the document together with a series of peer reviews is available on the CES website. In addition, support material and a DVD have also been produced by the CES. Together these publications provide a challenging analysis of the world in which Religious Education is taking place. All schools and colleges are encouraged to use the publications as part of their own self-review of Religious Education. Further information available from link Advisers for Catholic Education or Peter Ward.

Contact Peter Ward on 020 7798 9005 or e mail peterward@rcdow.org.uk

DfES 14-19 Implementation Plan

In December the DfES published this plan on its website. It sets out ways in which it is proposed to put into practice the 14-19 White Paper published in February 2005. It is currently being studied to identify the issues of special concern it raises for Catholic schools. Further information available.

Contact Peter Ward on 020 7798 9005 or e mail peterward@rcdow.org.uk

Headteachers Conference – 9 – 10 February 2006

The annual Secondary Headteachers Conference is being held in Rome on 9-10 February. Further details from Ian McGibbon on ianmcgibbon@rcdow.org.uk

CES National Education Conference – London – 18 May 2006

The CES have recently announced that the keynote speaker at this conference will be the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Ruth Kelly. Further details including programme, venue, cost and application forms are expected on the CES website by 1 February 2006. Further information will be available from the CES website or Peter Ward.

Contact Peter Ward on 020 7798 9005 or e mail peterward@rcdow.org.uk

Sex and Relationships Education conference – 29 March – Vaughan House, Westminster

In Autumn 2005 the Archdiocese of Birmingham published a teaching programme that was part funded by the Department of Health. Entitled "All That I Am" the key aim of the programme 'is to provide a resource that is founded on a Catholic understanding of the human person and an appreciation that authentic human love is more than sexual expression, for the human person is made in the image and likeness of God and this dignity is inalienable.'

A presentation of this programme will be a key feature of the conference, full details of which are still to be confirmed. Further information available from link Advisers for Catholic Education or Peter Ward.

Contact Peter Ward on 020 7798 9005 or e mail peterward@rcdow.org.uk

Pax Christi – European Contest 2006

Please see enclosed flyer from Pax Christi regarding a contest they are running this year.

Good News Slot

(Please note: this section of the bulletin consists of pieces of good news which have been sent in from schools around the diocese. It may well be that others schools have achieved similar awards or success and, if so, we congratulate them too!)

Congratulations to: **St Peter and St Paul's Primary, Islington** for being included in the Sunday Times list of the top twenty 'best' schools in the country; **St Raphael's Primary School, Northolt** for receiving the 'Investors in People' award; **St Dominic's Sixth Form College, Harrow** for being included in the list of Particularly Successful Schools & Colleges 2004/5; **St Edmund's, Tower Hamlets** for being included in the DfES list of the 100 Most Improved Schools in the country and for achieving the Basic Skills Quality Mark in November 2005, as did **St Mary's Priory Infants School, Tottenham** in April 2005, and they were awarded 'Investors In People' in May 2005; **St Adrian's Primary School, St Alban's** for being included in the list of Particularly Successful Schools & Colleges 2004/5 published by OfSTED; **St Joseph's Waltham Cross**, for achieving the Hertfordshire Healthy Schools Award in October 2005, as did **Divine Saviour School, Abbots Langley**, who also were awarded 'Investors in People' in November 2005; **St Teresa's, Borehamwood**, have received the Healthy Schools Standard and also been awarded for quality ICT provision; **St Mary Magdalen Primary School, Willesden Green**, have been awarded the ICT Quality Mark and finally, **Our Lady of the Rosary, Staines**, was also included in OfSTED's list of Particularly Successful Schools and Colleges.

Well done !

Please send your 'good news' to Greeny Longville

Email greenylongville@rcdow.org.uk