



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

March
2006
2/06

To: Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies

Items marked do not apply to independent schools*

From the Director of Education

The Education Bill

The long-awaited Education and Inspections Bill 2006 was at last put before Parliament on 28th February. I shall not attempt a full summary here, but there are a few points that come across from an initial look at the Bill.

First of all, we now know what the White Paper's so-called 'trust schools' are. They are a particular form of foundation school, which were first made possible under the 1998 Act, but have not proved popular. Rather like the reverse of a voluntary school, this type of school has a foundation body, or 'trust' which has been established by the school; a sort of cart-before-the-horse affair. The good news is that these particular reforms do not affect voluntary aided schools. The political danger is that this particular form of school might become seen in the future as a 'one size fits all' model for all schools. Given the provisions relating to staffing, religious education and foundation majority on the governing body, it is unlikely ever to be suitable for a Catholic school. The name 'trust school' does not appear in the Bill, and we need to be clear that, as Lord Adonis pointed out last year, all our schools are already 'self-governing trust schools'.

The continuing trend to erode the rights of dioceses and voluntary aided trustees is taken further in this Bill. The current voluntary arrangements for School Improvement Partners are to be made statutory. The Bill makes it clear that these will be LEA appointments and they will be agents of the LEA. Once again, no role seems to be envisaged for the dioceses or trustees of schools. The removal of the statutory requirement of an LEA School Relations Code of Practice will get rid of the last official document to recognise those roles properly, and the abolition of School Organisation Committees will replace decision making by local partners, including the Church, with decisions made by the LEA alone.

For schools, possibly the most keenly felt reform will be the proposal to require admission authorities to 'act in accordance with' the Code of Practice on Admissions. Such a change effectively gives any future Secretary of State the power to abolish Catholic schools at the stroke of a pen. It is a worrying development.

The Education Service - Update

It is with great pleasure that I am able to let you know about three new appointments to the Service. In September, Mrs Valerie Pye will be joining us as Education Officer (Primary) to replace Sr. Sheila. Valerie is a serving Catholic head teacher with eleven years experience of headship in Catholic schools. We have also appointed two new Advisers for Catholic Education within the primary team: Mrs Helen Andrews, who will be joining us at half-term and Mr Stephen Hawkes will be joining the Team in September. Both are experienced practitioners in religious education with broader experience and relevant postgraduate qualifications.

Paul Barber

Teacher Recruitment

Please find enclosed a list of prospective teachers for our Catholic schools. The majority are newly qualified teachers looking for posts from September. Some indicate that they are available sooner.

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

Seminar for Chairs and Clerks of Independent Admission & Exclusion Appeals Panels*

Information for School and College Governors (ISCG) and the Council on Tribunals are hosting a seminar for chairs and clerks of independent admission and exclusion appeal panels on Tuesday 4th April 2006 at 81 Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1BQ.

The aims of the course are: - to provide a forum for the discussion of good practice and ways of improving appeal hearings based on natural justice and the law and guidance from the DfES: - to raise issues about the rigour and fairness of hearings.

For further details please contact iscg@governors.fsnet.co.uk.

Re-Constitution*

This process is not progressing in line with the dates as published due to a variety of factors. There was much pressure on governing bodies in the Autumn term to concentrate on staffing restructure which meant that many were not in a position to meet and agree their model/draft instrument within the given timeframe. From the diocesan perspective the sheer volume of work, coupled with a very high level of individual queries and discussions, meant that our resources were and still are heavily over-stretched.

To date not all schools, within each wave, have returned the model pro-forma or the governing body approved draft instrument. These need to be received as soon as is possible please. We are now in the process of dispatching approved instruments to LEAs, from schools in the first wave. The actual date of reconstitution will be the date made on the instrument by the LEA. We would also hope to be in a position to dispatch those in the second wave by the end of term. Apologies to all those governing bodies, where a delay in the timeframe given, has caused any inconvenience or a need to hold an extra meeting.

Contact Ian McGibbon 0207 798 9005 or email ianmcgibbon@rcdow.org.uk for any update or general enquiries about the reconstitution process. Other reconstitution queries contact Maureen Roe 0207 798 9005 or email maureenroe@rcdow.org.uk

Admissions*

Thank you to all those governing bodies that sent their admission policy to the diocese as part of the consultation process. The majority of these have now been responded to with appropriate guidance and comments. All other admission policies received before 1st March, for consultation, will be responded to with comments by Friday 17th March. This should then allow governing bodies enough time to determine their final arrangements for admissions 2007 -2008 by the due date of the 15th April 2006.

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

'The Truth about Catholics & the Bible'

How did we get where we are? Why did the Bishops want *The Gift of Scripture* written? Principles for understanding Scripture. A look at the Promised Land – what does the bible say to politics today?

1st July 2006 at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney. Keynote speaker **Fr. Adrian Graffy** Director of Brentwood Diocese RE Service and author of *Take & Read-The Gospel of Mark*.

The day is open to all – priests, teachers, catechists, for anyone involved in the liturgical ministries (readers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, musicians) More information to follow, but do keep the date free !

Contact: Anthony Curran 020 8202 3611 or e mail anthonycurran@rcdow.org.uk

CCRS Study Day

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 020 8202 3611 or e mail moirawilson@rcdow.org.uk

Open The Doors

The diocese is looking to the weekend of 14-16 July 2006 as a weekend where everybody in the diocese does something special to reach out to the wider community. Schools are invited to think how they might contribute, either in the week leading up to the weekend or during the weekend itself.

Further details at the diocesan website www.rcdow.org.uk

Lent Materials

The diocesan Lenten programme 'Christ Among Us' is proving very effective for small groups and individuals in parishes. It provides a short piece of material for each day which could well be used in the daily act of worship in the classroom or whole school assemblies.

For further information, contact Catherine MacGillivray either by email on cathmacgillivray@rcdow.org.uk or by phone on 020 7931 6064

Pray As You Go

The English and Irish Jesuits have cooperated to produce a website where there is an mp3 lasting a few minutes for each day of Lent which can either be listened to online or downloaded onto your ipod or mp3 player.

The link is www.pray-as-you-go.com

Changes to Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) arrangements*

Once again I would like to take the opportunity to say hello to everyone I have not yet had the pleasure of talking to or meeting. On 27 February, I sent an e-mail to all schools concerning the DfES announcement about changes to the way DFC is paid. I understand that this email failed to reach a number of colleagues. Please accept my apologies if you are in this number. If you would like a copy of this email, please send a blank email with DFC Update 01 in the subject line to nigelspears@rcdow.org.uk

I have received numerous queries concerning the options offered to governing bodies and I am endeavouring to return calls and emails as quickly as possible. As a result of conversations with head teachers and governors, some schools are electing to have their funds credited to a diocesan account whilst other are opting to have funds directed into a local held governors account. At this juncture, it is most important to ensure that you return the mandate, signed by Headteacher and Chair, to the DfES before the deadline of 24 March. This will ensure that you have access to DFC during 2006/07.

As stated in my original email, I want to consult widely with school and diocesan colleagues before offering options for cooperative working. I have already been invited to a number of meetings of groups of heads, bursars and governors to begin this process. If you would like to facilitate a meeting in your area, Greeny and Carol have full access to my electronic diary and will be more than happy to arrange appointments on my behalf. They can be contacted on 020 7798 9005.

By now, many of you will have realized that I am out of the office more often than I am in. However, I can be contacted in a number of ways.

- Emails to the above address are automatically forwarded to my Blackberry 'Phone.
- You are also welcome to call my mobile number (07738183828). Voice messages can be left if I am unable to take the call for any reason.
- In addition, you can leave messages with Greeny and Carol. Any messages taken in the office are also forwarded to my Blackberry Phone.

There are a number of matters that have to be addressed quite quickly, for example: until now, diocesan trusts across England and Wales have viewed receipt of DfES documentation as appropriate notification of capital works on trust properties. Now that this documentation is to be withdrawn, we will need to explore with governors how this obligation can continue to be met. I am looking at various models and will be happy to discuss these with colleagues whenever the opportunity presents.

Current Questions from around the Diocese:

- Can DFC be used to pay for ICT leasing contracts, broadband subscriptions etc? No, both of these are revenue items and you are unable to use capital funds to meet revenue costs.
- Can DFC be paid into the same account as my delegated budget? No, DFC must be paid into a governor or diocesan account and must be kept separate from other school funding.
- Can governors' accounts be included in local authority Audits? No, governor accounts are separate and distinct from school accounts. The LA will have an interest in ensuring that schools are financially sound but they are exceeding their authority if they endeavour to audit governor accounts. Governing bodies must make separate arrangements for their accounts to be audited and must meet the associated costs.

I think that is more than enough for one bulletin. I look forward to meeting many more of you over the next few weeks.

Contact Nigel Spears 020 7798 9185 or 07738183828 (mobile) or e mail nigelspears@rcdow.org.uk

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!)

St Charles Primary School, Ladbroke Grove has been named as a particularly successful school by OfSTED as well as receiving notification from Lord Adonis that the school is among the top 100 in the country in terms of the value added measure; **St Michael's Catholic Grammar School, Finchley** was also included in OfSTED's list of Particularly Successful Schools and Colleges; **Our Lady of Lourdes School, Stonebridge** has been successful in gaining the Investors in People award.

Well done !

Please send your 'good news' to Greeny Longville

Email greenylongville@rcdow.org.uk

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