



## Brentwood Diocesan Education Service

Dear Colleague.

As we approach the end of term I would like to thank everyone for all the hard work and commitment that has been shown to maintain the excellent standard of Catholic education across the Diocese of Brentwood. It has been a busy term but that is always the case especially leading up to Christmas. Thank you for the endeavour you have shown in order to keep Catholic education safe and making our schools better than they were when you started working in them. We can look to the future with positivity and hope. Something which Pope Francis has reflected on especially at this time of year:

“Advent is a journey towards a horizon of Hope. For the great human family it is necessary to renew always the common horizon toward which we are journeying. The horizon of hope! This is the horizon that makes a good journey. During this time of Advent we begin again and return to the horizon of hope, a hope that does not disappoint because it is founded on the Word of God. The journey is never finished. Just as in each of our lives, there is always a need to restart, to rise again, to recover a sense of the goal of one’s existence.”

*[Pope Francis - ‘Vatican City, Dec 1, 2013 / 09:09 am - The Pope’s Sunday Angelus message for the start of Advent focused on the importance of hope during the liturgical season dedicated to preparing for Christmas.’]*

### Conferences:

As promised in my September 2019 update we are looking to run several free or minimally costed day conferences for school leaders this year and the dates and topics are as follows:

Date	Conference Title	Cost/Suitable for
29 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Companies Day	<b>Free for up to 2 people</b> from each school – Headteacher, Business Manager, Finance Governor
6 <sup>th</sup> February 2020	Mental Health & Well Being	<b>Free for up to 2 people</b> from each school – Mental Health and Well-Being Lead, Senior Leaders, Chair of Governors
April 30 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Leadership/MAT Development	<b>Free for up to 2 people</b> from each school – Head, Business Manager, Chair of Governors

We will shortly send out the booking link and a conference programme to all schools (Headteacher & Chair of Governors) for the first two conferences so that you can see the format and outline of what will be taking place. More details of the April conference will then follow in January. There is a limit of 200 delegates on these conferences and places will be offered on a first come, first served basis. If more places are required by an individual school we will hold a waiting list for each conference should more space become available. As far as the Companies day is concerned we have been looking to identify companies that might provide services to our Catholic schools and MATs that may be offered

at a preferential rate. In addition, we have taken in to consideration the feedback we have received directly from schools in the recent survey we carried out. The planned venue for these conferences is Mulberry House Hotel.

**Our Recent School Survey:**

Thank you to all the schools that responded within the requested time frame to our recent school survey. We have collated the information that we have gathered and are able to share the following perspectives with you. There were 56 responses in the time we allowed for schools to respond and any schools that have not responded can still do so if they wish to using the Pro-Forms link that was provided. If there are any further responses, we will of course update the summary picture. After 6<sup>th</sup> January the link will become unusable. Responses have been collated as a percentage. Sometimes with rounding up the total may not be exactly 100%.

<b>In the last 18 months, have the services your school can access from the LA:</b>	
Increased in range and extent	18%
Decreased in range and extent	43%
Remained the same	39%
<b>In the last 18 months, have the services your school can access from the LA:</b>	
Increased in cost	43%
Decreased in cost	5%
Remained the same	52%
<b>In the last 18 months, have the services your school can access from the LA:</b>	
Increased in quality	11%
Decreased in quality	20%
Remained the same	70%
<b>Do you currently use a school improvement provider from outside of the LA?</b>	
Yes	68%
No	32%
<b>Where does your school/academy access its clerking services from?</b>	
LA	46%
Private company	36%
Internal school staff	18%
<b>In the last 18 months, numbers of pupils/students in my school/academy have:</b>	
Decreased by 20 or more pupils/students	13%
Decreased by 10 or more pupils/students	23%
Remained stable	39%
Increased by 10 or more pupils/students	13%
Increased by 20 or more pupils/students	13%
<b>Are you aware of an increase in the diocesan offer for Governor training?</b>	
Yes	88%
No	13%

### **The Conservative Government:**

Since my last update we have of course had a General Election and obviously we will be looking carefully at how Government Education policy develops as we move in to 2020. Brexit has dominated things for quite a while and it remains to be seen how it plays out in Parliament in the coming months. I do however feel that it is very likely we will have to respond to new Education Legislation in due course.

### **Catholic MAT Development:**

Stephen Adamson, our MAT Development Officer has now been in place for nearly 6 months and is in contact with schools offering support as they are ready to move forward with MAT development. When we look across the Diocese there are five trusts that are currently in existence and one Mini MAT. For ease of reference, and in no particular order, these are: The Rosary Trust, Assisi Catholic Trust, Christus Catholic Trust, Good Shepherd Catholic Trust and Our Lady of Grace Catholic Trust. I inadvertently missed off Our Lady of Fatima in Harlow last time although this is a two school grouping has been in place for some time.

The MAT development process is one where we have worked supportively with our Catholic schools who have needed to, or have wanted to develop a Catholic MAT across local Deanery groupings. This requires Governors to pass a resolution to start the process of academisation and for the Diocese to provide conditional approval for them to proceed. We continue to learn from and share with everyone the experiences of these groupings as we attempt to make this process as smooth as possible. Bishop Alan's commitment to this process outlined in his Pastoral Letter from September 2018 makes his vision for Catholic education very clear. The emphasis for the BDES Team is on trying to support all schools with whom we have a direct canonical relationship. We want all schools to be as good as they can be and we want our Catholic MATs to be successful and help to improve outcomes for children, whilst maintaining supportive relations and conditions of service with all staff who work in them.

### **Training:**

We offer a growing range of courses and training opportunities. If you are happy for a course to use your school as a venue can you please let [mariashepherd@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:mariashepherd@dioceseofbrentwood.org) know about this so that we are aware and so that there is the opportunity for courses to be offered in different parts of the Diocese. Obviously this will be dependent on take up as all courses must be cost effective.

### **Advance Notification:**

We are aiming to run Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Residential Conferences in the 2020/21 academic year so that they cover both Primary and Secondary phases. We will share more details with you about this change in due course but the Headteacher Conference is planned for Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> and Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **Governance:**

It was great to see that 88% of schools who had responded to our recent survey had noted an increase in the diocesan offer for Governor training. A new updated offer will be out shortly with Chairs of Governors and Headteachers. I indicated in my last update that we would be launching a new APP that will allow access to training for governors of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brentwood. We have decided to combine the launch of the APP with the commissioning of Foundation Governors from across the Diocese. The dates, timings and venues are outlined below:

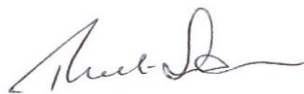
<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2020 6:30pm-7:45pm	Commissioning of Foundation Governors	Holy Family Parish Church, Oxlow Lane, Dagenham
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2020 6:30pm-7:45pm	Commissioning of Foundation Governors	Brentwood Cathedral

**FORMATIO:**

We are very grateful to those who have run the Aspiring Catholic Headteachers Course at St Bon's and at Cardinal Vaughan (Westminster) and to those from across the South East who have attended this training. It has been very well received and I can confirm from my own observation from one of the sessions that I attended that it is excellent. We are actively investigating other courses for Senior Leaders and Middle Leaders that we hope to bring on for the next academic year. We envisage that the Aspiring Headteachers Course will run again next year at the same venues, depending on take up. There is some interest in this being offered by another TSA in another Diocese as well in future. These sort of courses will be promoted by each Diocese within the South East Hub.

Finally, I wish you a peaceful and prayerful Christmas and thanks again for all you have done for the benefit of Catholic education within our Diocese. I trust that you will be able to relax over Christmas and enjoy some quality time with your families and friends.

Yours sincerely



Robert Simpson  
Director of Education