



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish,
and Christ is made known to all.”*

June 2021

Dear chair

Welcome back to second half of the summer term. I hope you managed to take a well-earned break during half term. It is certainly lovely to see some sunshine!

This twice-termly chairs' mailing is part of our commitment to support you and keep you up-to-date with educational developments and good practice, both locally and nationally. I hope you will find it a useful summary.

Diocese of Brentwood News

Diocesan Protocol for VA schools and Academies in the Diocese of Brentwood

Next week we expect to publish a new document called the **Diocesan Protocol** which explains and exemplifies the relationship between the Bishop and the Catholic schools of the diocese. Bishop Alan approved this document for publication on 7 June 2021.

This document builds on the Memorandum of Understanding that has existed in the diocese for many years. It is based on a CES model document for use in dioceses and it provides clarity about what is expected from governors and school leaders in a variety of situations. The document is expected to be a 'go to' reference document that schools can use to help them to work closely with the diocese in order to maintain and preserve Catholic education.

It will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and all governing bodies/trusts will be required to confirm receipt and acknowledge their understanding of the importance of this document for how they should operate in relation to the Bishop and those who act as his agents. The protocol when published will come with a covering letter of explanation.

Governing Body Meetings for the remainder of term

Diocesan advice is that governing and trust boards should continue to take a pragmatic approach to meetings for the remainder of term, with most of the business of the governing body still being conducted remotely.

If any governors do need to meet in person, it is important that they comply with guidelines for safe working practices including a robust risk assessment by the school.

Taking Care of our Common Home

As many of you will know, Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a letter to primary schools for Pentecost 2021 which includes the following excerpt:

'Many of you will remember the letter Pope Francis wrote called Laudato si' asking all of us in the whole world to take care of our common home. Pope Francis says that climate change affects us all, but it is the poorest communities who will suffer the most.

We all have a responsibility to take care of our common home, and you can make that change through your choices as an individual in your home, school, parish and local community. Recycling materials correctly, reducing food waste, not wasting water, switching the lights off and thinking about the way you travel to school. Young people are passionate about making these important changes. Not only are you probably already doing them, but through your actions you are also educating others around you!

How 'green' is your school? Do you regularly discuss these issues and seek to improve your school's carbon footprint? The DfE have published [top tips for sustainability in schools](#)

Relationships and Sex Education

In a number of dioceses, letters have been received from the 'Coalition in Defence of Primary Educators' setting out the group's disagreements with the long-standing policy of the Bishops' Conference on Relationships and Sex Education. The letter refers to and includes a copy of an article in a publication called *Calx Mariae*.

If schools have concerns about the matters raised, they should refer to the FAQ document *Relationships and Sex Education in Catholic Schools* which sets out the position of the Bishops' Conference clearly and comprehensively in an accessible format.

Governor Induction

It is vital that new governors feel welcomed into the school community and have the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. All governors share in the strategic responsibility of promoting high educational standards and ensuring the school is conducted as a Catholic school.

[BDES has developed a model Induction checklist](#) giving good practice examples of the key information and support that new governors in our Catholic schools should receive. Please feel free to adapt the checklist to meet the needs of your own governing body.

Governing Body Effectiveness – annual reflection and self-review

An annual review of skills and regular self-evaluation and review of individuals' contributions to the governing body is essential to ensure the board continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective. This is an important part of succession planning.

BDES has developed a [model self-review tool](#) which aims to *governing bodies* assess the contribution of governors and to ensure the board makes best use of the skills of governors/trustees. You can adapt this for use by your own governing body.

Section 48/Catholic School Inspections

Section 48 Inspections in the Diocese of Brentwood will resume under the current framework in late October 2021. The schedule will begin with those schools overdue for inspection (ie more than 5 years since the previous inspection) before moving on to those which would have been due this academic year. Inspections, as usual under our current framework, are for one day with 2 Inspectors for Secondary schools and one inspector for Primary schools, although any inspection may be shadowed. Schools are given a maximum 5 working days' notice of inspection.

The new Catholic Schools Inspection (CSI) Framework comes into force from September 2022 and all inspections will then be for 2 days with a minimum of 2 inspectors. Schools will be given 2 days' notice.

Recruitment of Inspectors for the new CSI Framework

Under the new national framework there is a robust process for the recruitment of CSI inspectors and the Diocese has held a number of briefings for headteachers, Executive headteachers, those who lead RE and other senior leaders who are interested in becoming Catholic School Inspectors. Our recruitment process will start begin in June and July 2021, continuing into the autumn term, by advert and by direct invitation.

Applicants must be willing and able to undertake a minimum of 3 inspections a year with at least 1 inspection per term, as well as undertaking mandatory and ongoing training at Diocesan, national and regional level. For those serving in school, the payment of £500 per day for Lead Inspectors and £300 per day for Team Inspectors will go directly to the school.

Please note that the Diocese will require the written consent of the chair of governors or chair of directors for the applicant to undergo all mandatory training and accreditation and to undertake inspections before they can be appointed.

[Book your place on the Governor Conference on Monday 5 July](#) for the latest information on what governors need to know about the new CSI Framework.

2021 School Admissions Code – CES Guidance

You may be aware that DfE has recently published the [2021 version of the School Admissions Code](#). The 2021 version of the code remains subject to parliamentary approval which should be given in early July and we are also expecting some associated guidance from DfE to be published at around the same time.

[CES have produced guidance which provides information about the changes that have been made to the code](#) and the action that admission authorities may need to take in response to those changes in order to ensure that their admission arrangements are compliant from 1 September 2021.

Some of the changes will require variations to published admission arrangements and the CES model admission arrangements will therefore need to be amended. We will circulate amended model arrangements as soon as we can once the relevant guidance has been issued and the 2021 version of the code has received parliamentary approval.

In the meantime, admission authorities should review this guidance and the 2021 version of the code, and ensure that they schedule meetings to approve any variations to their published admission arrangements in time for 1 September 2021.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

All governing boards have legal duties in relation to pupils with SEND including monitoring to ensure the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role effectively.

Is your SEND governor attending the SEND webinar as part of our virtual conference on 5 July 2021? Led by Professor Adam Boddison it will explore the responsibilities and accountability of governors and trustees.

Governor Development

Webinars

Diocese of Brentwood Zoom Conference for Governors

Don't forget to remind your governors to book their place on the July 2021 Governors' Conference via Zoom. With a choice of essential workshops over 2 mornings, governors are able to **book for either or both mornings** - [Friday 2 July](#) and/or [Monday 5 July 2021](#)



Friday 2 July 2021	
9:15	Welcome: Rob Simpson Director
9:30	Webinar: Holding school leaders to account (Rosemary Lovatt, NLG and NLG Advocate for East of England and NE London)
10:45	Break
11:00	Webinar: Supporting staff wellbeing – some practical suggestions (Cathy McKenna, Secondary Link Adviser and BCCS)
12:15	Address by Bishop Alan
12:30	Close



Monday 5 July 2021	
9:15	Welcome: Rob Simpson, Director
9:30	Webinar: SEND – Responsibilities and Accountability of Governors and Trustees (Professor Adam Boddison, Chief Executive at the National Association for Special Educational Needs)
10:45	Break
11:00	Webinar: The New CSI (Catholic Schools Inspection Framework) – what governors need to know (Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director)
12:15	Closing Address: Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director
12:30	Close

Delegates are able to book for either or for both mornings, but please note that places are limited to 100 delegates and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To [book Friday 2 July 2021](#)

To [book Monday 5 July 2021](#)

NEW *Exclusion – the role of the governing body*

The decision to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Only the head teacher of a school can exclude a pupil but the governing board must consider the reinstatement of an excluded pupil within 15 school days of receiving notice of the exclusion if:

- the exclusion is permanent;
- it is a fixed-period exclusion which would bring the pupil's total number of school days of exclusion to more than 15 in a term; or
- it would result in a pupil missing a public examination or national curriculum test

This is a very important role and it is vital that all involved are clear about the procedures and protocols that must be followed. This webinar, led by Julie Keating, Education Access Manager at Essex County Council on **Monday 15 November 2021** (17:30-19:30) will look at the [statutory guidance relating to exclusions](#) and explore the legal responsibilities of the governing body.

[You can book your place here](#)

Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)

This *Safeguarding Children* workshop will run as a webinar on **Monday 14 June 2021** (17:30-19:00) and cover all the essential information needed to understand your statutory responsibilities. Suitable for all governors, but essential for those with a key responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, [you can book your place here](#)

Face to face workshops

NEW *Clerking Specialist Committees*

The role of the clerk is crucial to governing board effectiveness. This half-day workshop on **Tuesday 5 October 2021 (9:30-12:00 noon)** at Cathedral House in Brentwood, will help clerks in Diocese of Brentwood and Diocese of Chelmsford schools understand their key responsibilities around clerking specialist committees such as exclusions, disciplinary and complaints.

Facilitated by Anne Whelpdale, an experienced clerk in these matters, [you can book your place here](#)

Online learning through Gift-ED

Governors who already have an access code for *Faithful Governance* can access the following courses as part of the Gift-ED library. Each are suitable for both governors in maintained schools and academies:

- Faithful Governance (for new and re-appointed governors)
- Engaging with Parents
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Headteacher Appraisal (for members of the headteacher appraisal committee)

The next course to be released will be *Curriculum for governors* at the end of June followed by *headteacher/deputy headteacher recruitment*, which is due for release in September.

Each school has been allocated up to 10 Gift-ED licences so if you would like to request access for further governors, please advise Sophie Russell of the governors you are nominating for your school [by using this link](#)

Governor Recruitment

Since we are currently unable to hold a face-to-face governor recruitment event, we are advertising vacancies online for foundation governors. We also work with local parishes, *Inspiring Governance* and *Governors for Schools* to look for suitable governors for our schools.

We have asked clerks to advise us of [foundation governor vacancies](#) but if your school is not shown and you need support in filling a foundation governor vacancy please [get in touch](#).

Academy News

CMAT News

The [summer term CMAT News](#), which shares information about MATs and academies across the Diocese of Brentwood, is now available.

Vision for multi academy trusts

The Education Secretary '[renews vision for all schools to be part of a strong multi-academy trust](#), after pandemic highlights benefits of trust model'

[DfE has recently issued new guidance in relation to building strong academy trusts.](#)

This is important to share with you because in the Diocese of Brentwood we have a diocesan academy strategy which is based on Bishop Alan's vision for Catholic education that has already been shared widely.

The CES was provided with an opportunity to comment on the DfE guidance prior to its publication and you will see that there is wording throughout the document which seeks to make it clear where the process / considerations are different for Church schools / academy trust companies. A few notable examples are as follows:

- A footnote has been included to make it clear that for Church academies the term "academy company" is preferred to "academy trust".
- Reference is made to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department and the Catholic Church and separate advice is provided for Church schools to make the position of the diocese in conversion and growth discussions clear.
- Paragraph 11 provides a specific reference to the Department supporting dioceses to work closely with RSCs to implement the diocesan academy strategy.
- There is a separate section on the conversion of VA schools and there is a note at the beginning of the section on conversion to alert schools to the fact that the conversion process for Church schools is different. You will see that the section on conversion is clearly written for non-Church schools and we have tried to make sure that Church schools are alerted to the difference in process at the earliest point possible so that they do not attempt to follow a process and / or begin discussions without seeking the input of the diocese.
- Paragraph 27 makes specific reference to diocesan strategy and makes it clear that Catholic schools will be required to join Catholic academy trust companies and that they should work closely with the diocese in this regard.
- Paragraph 29 makes it clear that the diocese should be consulted when schools are considering establishing a new academy trust company and there is also a

reference in this paragraph to the Diocesan Trust Formation Pilot.

- Paragraph 37 makes it clear that any growth of academy trust companies can only happen within the context of the wider diocesan strategy.
- Paragraph 42 makes reference to Church schools with academy orders and the need for conversations to take place between the RSC and the diocese in accordance with the requirements of the MOU.
- Paragraphs 64 and 74 reinforce the point that schools and RSCs should work with dioceses and factor in broader diocesan strategy for trust expansion and school conversion. It is made clear that the strategic fit of an academy trust company within a region is not a factor in Church academy trust companies.

There were, however, several points that we made that the Department have not addressed in this version of the guidance, and the CES will continue to press them to ensure that the guidance accurately reflects the position for Catholic schools, academy trust companies and dioceses:

- In paragraphs 2 and 5, there are references to the objects of an academy trust company being to advance education. This is not an accurate reflection of the objects for Catholic academy trust companies which are to advance the Catholic religion.
- In paragraph 3, there is a reference to the academy trustees overseeing the strategic direction of the academy trust company. The CES would argue that this statement fails to acknowledge the role of the Diocesan Bishop in setting the strategic direction for his schools. In the box included in paragraph 68 it is made clear that the board will not set the vision, ethos and strategic direction in a Catholic MAT.

Dioceses have been encouraged to review the guidance in full, but the following points may be of interest to a wider audience:

- The guidance is non-statutory and the Department plans to update it when appropriate, for example, following the publication of the outcome of the SEND review.
- The guidance sets out the “Department’s vision and design principles for the academies programme”. The guidance may therefore be useful in discussions as it sets out the government’s direction of travel in relation to the academies programme. Section one of the guidance also explains the benefits schools can access from being part of a strong MAT and there are links to further reading, case studies and examples of best practice.
- Paragraph 52 sets out clearly the expectation that the RSC should support diocesan strategies and that they should work closely with dioceses. This paragraph and others which link to the MOU may assist dioceses where there are conversations that need to be had with RSCs in terms of their relationship with dioceses and their support for diocesan strategies. This is further reinforced at paragraph 57.
- Paragraph 54 makes reference to the role of members of the Headteacher Board (HTB). It is worth noting that this paragraph states that “specific care should be taken when advising on diocesan academies and RSCs should consider introducing additional expertise to provide HTB advice on these decisions”
- Paragraph 71 provides that the RSC will first discuss school improvement with the diocese before communicating with the academy trust company and reference is again made here to the MOU.

Safeguarding Update

The COVID-19 pandemic increased safeguarding risks and Ofsted inspectors will pay close attention to how school leaders adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to ensure safeguarding procedures remained effective for those receiving remote education as well as those attending school, and that vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face to face education in school.

In terms of safeguarding the [updated School Inspection Handbook](#) has a new paragraph inserted:

'If inspectors cannot corroborate the evidence that they gather about the effectiveness of the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils, by talking to pupils on inspection, then safeguarding will likely be judged ineffective.' (paragraph 302).

Another change relates to inspectors ensuring effective safeguarding whilst children are learning remotely (paragraph 292).

New Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has now been enacted and will come into force over the next twelve months or so as legislation.

Key changes will:

- Recognise that a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse
- Extend the law to young people over the age of 16
- Create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse
- Extend the controlling or coercive behaviour to post-separation abuse
- Extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress to cover threats to disclose such material
- Place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme on a statutory footing, giving anyone a right to ask the police if they believe that they or someone they know is in a relationship with an individual that could be abusive towards them

Changes to the enhanced DBS check application process

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is no longer able to amend an applicant's personal information on the application form, once it has been submitted. Enhanced DBS check applications that are submitted with omitted or incorrect information regarding sections A, B and C will be withdrawn, and a new application will need to be submitted. If an application is withdrawn due to an omission or error in the personal information no refunds will be given.

The DBS will contact Registered Bodies with the aim of resolving the query, and only if an error or omission is confirmed, will the application be withdrawn.

Ofsted News

Updated education inspection guidance

As mentioned above, Ofsted have [updated the Education Inspection Framework \(EIF\)](#) with minor amendments to 'reflect the COVID-19 context that education providers are operating in and the disruption the pandemic has caused to them.' There is a new expectation that inspectors will agree safety protocols to ensure the inspection is completed in a COVID-secure way.

Revised guidance for the school inspection handbooks and non –associated independent schools handbook reflect the disruption and challenges caused by the pandemic.

Ofsted's Education Blog

Chris Jones, Ofsted's Director, Corporate Strategy, discusses the findings from the spring term monitoring visits - [Ofsted's education blog: Spring term monitoring inspections – moving forward, despite the challenges](#)

DfE News

[DfE have published an Education Staff Wellbeing Charter](#). Governors have a critical role to play in influencing the overall culture of the organisation – including ensuring a supportive environment for staff and placing wellbeing and mental health at the heart of their decision-making.

Taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges leads to improved pupil and student emotional health and wellbeing which can help readiness to learn. The [whole school or college approach](#), published by Public Health England (PHE), defines the behaviours that go with good mental health and wellbeing practice. These behaviours have been [summarised by DfE with links to support and resources](#) which are available to help develop or introduce a whole school or college approach.

Early Career Framework (ECF) statutory induction guidance change

On 25 March, DfE published [statutory induction guidance](#). The governing body should ensure compliance with the requirement to have regard to this guidance.

From September 2021, statutory induction for teachers will change as part of the ECF reforms. Early career teachers in England undergoing statutory induction will be entitled to 2 years of high-quality professional development and training.

Phonics in Primary School

[DfE is advising that 'Letters and Sounds' in itself is not enough](#) because the National Curriculum actually includes more sounds and words than that document. [There is a useful article on this here](#)

Awarding qualifications in summer 2021

DfE has published [guidance on what schools and students need to know about the arrangements for awarding GCSEs, AS and A levels, VTQs and other qualifications in summer 2021](#)

Key Stage 1 and 2 Assessments

[Following the cancellation of statutory national curriculum assessments due to be held in summer 2021 at key stage 1 and key stage 2](#), DfE will not publish any national, regional, local or constituency statistics for any primary school assessments for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

As in the 2019 to 2020 academic year, they intend to publish national, regional, and local authority level educational performance data for key stage 4 and 16 to 18 for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. They intend to also publish this information by pupil characteristic and school or college type. Arrangements for 2021/22 will be published in the autumn term.

National Behaviour Survey

A new National Behaviour Survey is being launched to give parents a termly snapshot of the state of behaviour in schools. It will not be an accountability tool, but will provide parents and stakeholders the data they need to build a picture of behaviour in schools over time and improve the government's ability to support schools with any challenges they are facing. Education secretary Gavin Williamson said the survey would look at low-level disruption, bullying and other incidents of challenging behaviour.

Latest Research

Research on the impact of lockdowns

There is growing evidence that the past year of lockdowns has had an impact on young children's language skills, according to research. Pupils will have made learning losses, as well as gains, during lockdowns – teacher assessment will be important in supporting recovery plans.

A survey by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) suggests measures such as social distancing, lack of contact with friends and family and the wearing of face masks have left children less exposed to conversations and everyday experiences with data showing an increased number of four- and five-year-olds needing help with language. [Evidence shows poor speech development can have long-term effects on learning.](#)

[Other research suggests the attainment gap between disadvantaged primary school pupils and their classmates has grown in mathematics](#) by one month since the onset of the pandemic.

Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year - interim findings

This [interim report carried out by Renaissance Learning and the Education Policy Institute \(EPI\) on behalf of DfE](#) is their first assessment of the learning loss experienced by pupils in England as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

They conclude that 'all year groups have experienced a learning loss in reading, ranging from 1.6 months to 2.0 months. The learning losses in mathematics were greater, in primary schools learning losses averaged just over 3 months. It has not been possible to provide an estimate for secondary schools due to small sample sizes'.

Forgotten. Left Behind. Overlooked – the experiences of children with SEND during the pandemic

A report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for SEND [Forgotten. Left behind. Overlooked](#), details the experiences of children and young people with SEND during the pandemic in 2020. Remote teaching was particularly hard to access for some SEND children, found the report, which includes recommendations for change from a raft of charities and children’s organisations.

Among those contributing was the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS), which said that remote learning options were not accessible for deaf children without additional communication support, such as speech to text software or sign language interpreters.

Richard Kramer, chief executive of the charity Sense, which also contributed to the report, said the last 12 months have “amplified” existing issues within the SEND system.

“Many children with complex disabilities have missed out on vital education over the last year, as well as the therapies, support and access to specialist equipment that they receive through school...No child should miss out on access to a quality education. We want to see a dedicated plan for children and young people with SEND, along with appropriate funding and resources, to support them to catch up on lost learning and receive the right care to meet their needs.”

Thank you for all that you do for your school. I would like to reassure you that the BDES team will continue to be available to support you by phone, email, on-line and in person where the government guidance permits.

With best wishes and prayers

Debbi Botham
Diocesan Governance Development Officer