



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

February 2022

Dear chair

Welcome back to the second half of the Spring Term. With spring just around the corner and a glimpse of those first daffodils, things are looking more positive, but challenges remain.

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

NEW DATE *Commissioning of Foundation Governors by Bishop Alan*

I really enjoyed meeting so many of you at the very special 2020 commissioning events to recognise the contribution made by Foundation Governors in support of Catholic education across the Diocese of Brentwood. Foundation Governors were commissioned directly by Bishop Alan, who they represent on governing bodies of Catholic schools, and received a certificate commemorating their commissioning.

Sadly, further commissioning events were postponed due to the pandemic, but [we are delighted that a further commissioning event has been arranged for Foundation Governors and MAT Trustees who were unable to attend a previous commissioning event in 2020. This will be at Brentwood Cathedral on Monday 16 May 2022 \(18:30-19:30\).](#)

Please note that Bishop Alan wants to meet and commission all Foundation Governors who are currently in post. Other governors serving in our Catholic schools who would like to attend are also very welcome to be part of this unique event. We look forward to welcoming you together with governors and trustees from your school. To book your place please [complete this form](#)

Section 48 Inspections

While Section 48 Catholic School Inspections are an important part of maintaining the high standards of Catholic education and distinctiveness in our schools we made the decision not to inspect schools at the beginning of this term in line with guidance from the CES.

I can now confirm that Section 48 inspections in Brentwood Diocese have resumed. Please remember currently, under our existing framework schools are given 5 working days' notice (including the day of the call) and inspections are for one day.

BDES has developed [a helpful checklist for governors for Section 48 inspections](#) carried out between February-July 2022. This will be updated for September to reflect the new Catholic School Inspection Framework.

Draft Directory for Prayer and Liturgy in Catholic Schools

Please note the proposal for important changes to prayer and liturgy in schools with the publication of the [draft Directory for Prayer and Liturgy in Catholic schools](#).

The consultation on this draft text has been extended to Monday 14 March 2022 with full compliance with the final published directory required by September 2025. [Here is the link for submitting responses](#)

An important role of the governing body will be to ensure compliance, including the need for a prayer and liturgy policy. You will also need to ensure that planning and training for the provision of prayer and liturgy in school is in place and have a plan for the review of effective provision. The Diocese of Brentwood will be supporting you with these changes once the Directory for Prayer and Liturgy in Catholic Schools is finalised.

Church Marketplace - extra support for procurement in Catholic Schools

Additional procurement support is available for Catholic schools ensuring compliance in terms of Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Catholic life of schools. Watch the short [welcome video here](#).

Offering frameworks and DPS agreements on business services, contract catering, cleaning and more, you can make use of their free self-serve options with access to template tender documents, e-procurement portal, buying guides and a dynamic contracts register, or for larger projects, consultancy support is available (fees apply). Register for free at www.educationbuying.com/cmp or get in touch with Joanne for more information at joannehill@churchmarketplace.org.uk

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (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. Legal duties concerning SEND are set out in:


- The Children and Families Act 2014
- Statutory guidance, the SEND code of practice, 2015

Schools and trusts must also have regard to duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Reflect:

- Is your SEND policy published on the school's website? This should be a description of the vision and values underpinning the school's approach to SEND
- The SEND Information Report should also be published by the school on its website and reviewed annually. This should clearly communicate how the school implements its SEND policy
- [Are you familiar with Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice](#) (Jan 2015) including the four broad areas of need?
- Do you ensure SEND and Pupil Premium receive similar coverage at governing body meetings? What are the outcomes for pupils with SEND? What funding is available and how is this spent?

- When did governors and trustees last receive training on their responsibilities and accountabilities for SEND? [Please note the new webinar on 4 October 2022](#)
- Do you have a governor with lead responsibility for SEND?

	<p>SEND governor role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To monitor the school's arrangements for SEND• To provide a voice for the SENCO at board level and to ensure that the needs of learners with SEND are considered as part of strategic decision-making• To support and challenge all senior leaders ((including the SENCO) to verify that the needs of learners with SEND are being met effectively
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Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

As you know, the [new RSE curriculum was mandatory from summer 2021](#)

A reminder that your RSE policy **required parental consultation**, should include your school's mission statement, and must be in line with [model CSE documentation](#):

A model Primary Catholic RSE Curriculum
A model Secondary Catholic RSE Curriculum
Good practice in developing a Catholic school RSE policy
A quality standard for Catholic RSE

The [Diocese of Brentwood has a useful model RSE policy](#) that can be used as the basis of your own school's policy. You may also like to reflect on this [example of outstanding sex and relationship education in a Catholic context](#).

This [Governor Audit for monitoring RSE](#) and key questions will help governors monitor RSE provision in their school:

- Have all teachers in your school undertaken the [free recommended training](#)?
- What, if any, other training has been given to staff?
- Are staff confident about what they will be teaching?
- What resources are being used?
- What information has been provided to parents?
- Is your RSE Policy in line with model CES and Diocesan documentation?

Please note that Ofsted will report on RSE as part of the judgement on Personal Development. They will check your website to see what information is available and enquire about parental consultation. Typically, they may also ask about the training that staff have had, enquire about the rationale behind the curriculum, consider whether an understanding of respectful relationships is evident in school life and, for older children, ask how peer on peer abuse or sexual harassment is addressed.

Governor Development

Webinars

NEW Introduction for Chairs of Governors in a Catholic School

This new webinar on **Monday 7 March 2022** (17:00-19:00) will focus on supporting new and aspiring chairs to explore the practical demands of the role within a Catholic

setting and share good practice. Also suitable as a refresher for existing chairs, the webinar will cover:

- the responsibilities and powers of being the chair within a Catholic setting
- the skills needed to lead and develop the team
- the importance of building a good working relationship with the headteacher
- managing meetings and planning and organising the work

To book your place [please complete this form](#)

NEW DATE Induction – Being an Effective Governor in a Catholic School

The next Induction webinar will take place on **Monday 23 May 2022** (16:30-19:00). Especially useful for new governors, the webinar will also benefit governors wishing to refresh their knowledge about the role and will help governors gain confidence and knowledge of the 3 core functions of governance within a Catholic setting. To [book your place please complete this form](#)

NEW DATE Maintaining and Improving the Premises and Sites of Catholic Schools

Following this popular session last year, a premises webinar has been arranged for **Wednesday 8 June 2022 (17:30-19:00)**. This webinar is particularly useful for chairs and those governors responsible for premises issues, whether in a maintained school or academy. You can [book your place here](#).

NEW DATE Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)

The next *Safeguarding Children* workshop will run as a webinar on **Monday 26 September 2022** (17:30-19:00) and cover all the essential information needed to understand your statutory responsibilities. It is so important that all governors are aware of their responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding, especially new governors as part of their induction, and governors with a lead for monitoring safeguarding in your school. [You can book your place here](#).

NEW SEND – Responsibilities and Accountability of Governors and Trustees

All governing bodies [have important 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.

This webinar on **Tuesday 4 October 2022** (18:00-19:30) will explore the responsibilities and accountabilities of all governors and trustees, as well as the role of the governor with a lead responsibility for SEND, sharing good practice around monitoring SEND provision. Led by [Professor Adam Boddison](#), you can [book your place here](#).

Online learning through Gift-ED

There are currently 149 active learners with the Gift-ED library continuing to grow. As well as *Faithful Governance* (for new and reappointed governors), the library includes the following online courses, specifically for governors in the Diocese of Brentwood:

- Engaging with parents
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Curriculum for governors
- Appointing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
- Headteacher Appraisal (for members of the headteacher appraisal panel)

Each school has been allocated at least 5 Gift-ED licences so if you would like to request access to the Gift ED library of online courses for further governors, please advise Sophie Russell [by using this link](#)
NEXT for publication – Appointing Heads of RE

Governor Recruitment


Foundation governor vacancies are advertised through the Diocesan website. 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](#).

Safeguarding Update

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – consultation for Sept 2022 version DfE are [seeking views on proposed changes to the statutory KCSIE Guidance](#) with a view to making changes for September 2022 – the consultation closes on **8 March 2022**.

The [proposed revisions can be found here](#).

	<p>Although you are not expected to make any changes to your policies or current practice until KCSIE 2022 is published, there are a few new ideas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the biggest proposed change is that the stand-alone non-statutory guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment is fully merged into KCSIE. As part of this change, the phrase 'peer-on-peer' abuse is to be altered to 'child-on-child' abuse• one of the most significant changes is a proposal to make it explicit that all governors and trustees should receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction, and to require that the training should be regularly updated• Recognising that people's online behaviour may indicate something of their personality and attitude, the DfE say that schools should consider online searches as part of their due diligence checks on shortlisted candidates. They say that 'this would explore anything that is publicly available online which may be worth testing at interview'.
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Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions from the Governing Board (UK Council for Internet Safety)

The UKCIS curated this [useful document for governing bodies and trustees in 2019, with questions to ask, good practice tips and signs to look out for](#).

Although reference is made to KCSIE 2019, the questions remain relevant and appropriate today.


Ofsted News

Good attendance: listen, understand, empathise and support

A new report by Ofsted '[Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence](#)' looks at different aspects of pupil attendance and how schools tackle the current challenges they face. There is recognition that some new attendance challenges have emerged due to the pandemic - such as parents not understanding the latest rules about isolation, being generally cautious, or more taking holidays in term time -

but there continue to be many reasons for persistent non-attendance that are not linked to the pandemic at all.

Some school leaders with improved attendance in their schools said they worked with their governing body to change mindsets and raise expectations, with the report acknowledging the influential role of governors and trustees in this process. However, an HMI survey in the autumn term 2021 found that *‘those responsible for governance were not consistently setting a clear direction for leaders on promoting attendance and challenging absence’*. Only around a quarter of inspectors identified that in most or all of their inspections, those responsible for governance had done this.

	<p>The report finds that those with successful attendance strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• do not dismiss pupils’ anxieties or parental concerns. These are sensitively addressed• have high expectations for every pupil’s attendance at school and express these clearly, firmly and consistently to parents and pupils• explain to parents and pupils why good attendance is important – pupils who aren’t attending aren’t learning• listen to parents carefully to find out why their children are not attending. This includes challenging parents who do not make sure that children attend, and offering support where needed• ensure attendance is always recorded accurately and analysed for patterns and trends to help target action• understand that good attendance does not happen in isolation – there is a relationship between attendance and the quality of the school’s curriculum, ethos, behaviour and inclusivity
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DfE News

School attendance: improving consistency of support

DfE have said its ‘top priority’ is supporting children to attend school and college and are seeking views on [proposals to improve the consistency of school attendance management](#). These are:

- Requiring schools to have an attendance policy, and have regard to statutory guidance on the expectations of schools, academy trusts and governing bodies of maintained schools on attendance management and improvement.
- Guidance on the expectations of LA attendance services.
- A clearer more consistent national framework for the use of attendance legal intervention, including a new regulatory framework for issuing fixed penalty notices for absence.
- Bringing the rules for granting leaves of absence in academies in line with other state funded schools.

The [consultation](#) closes on **28 February 2022**

Proposed changes to behaviour in schools guidance and suspension and permanent exclusion in schools guidance - consultation

DfE are seeking views on [proposed changes to the behaviour in schools guidance and the suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#). The [consultation closes on 31 March 2022](#)

Changes to School Admission Appeals Code

DfE is seeking views on proposed changes to the School Admission Appeals Code. You will be aware that temporary regulations are currently in place which enable appeals to be held remotely where Covid-19 prevents face-to-face meetings.

The consultation seeks views on the following proposals:

1. Allowing a panel of two to **continue** to hear appeals where the third member of the panel has had to withdraw and where to postpone or re-organise the appeal would cause unreasonable delay
2. Allowing admission authorities to decide whether to offer in person hearings, remote hearings or allow appellants to choose between the two
3. Allowing written evidence to be provided in the event that either the appellant or the presenting office is unable to attend a hearing

[The consultation document can be accessed here](#)

Register of children educated at home

DfE has [responded to a consultation which ended in 2019, and says that it will now take forward the proposal that there should be a register of children who are home-educated](#).

The government's consultation response outlines their intentions to legislate at the earliest opportunity to implement a duty on local authorities to keep a register of all children of compulsory age in their area who are not registered pupils at a state or independent school. There will be a similar duty on parents to report their intention to home school to the local authority. Plans to implement these changes will be 'at the earliest opportunity', although detailed plans have yet to emerge.

The reading framework - Teaching the foundations of literacy

Proficiency in reading is fundamental to pupils' success and [DfE have published guidance for schools to meet existing expectations for teaching early reading](#)

Political Impartiality in Schools

DfE has published [new guidance explaining the existing legal requirements relating to political impartiality in schools](#). Governing bodies have a duty to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum, ensuring all pupils receive high quality teaching whilst preserving the Catholic character of the school. As part of this, school leaders and staff need to have the confidence to facilitate political discussions in rounded, safe and appropriate way.

Grading of GCSE and A Levels in 2022

National exams are going ahead this year across the UK, for the first time since the pandemic began. Although grades will be awarded normally, grade boundaries will be more lenient to make up for the disruption the pandemic has had on learning. They will be set at a "mid-point" between the 2019 pre-pandemic boundaries and the grade levels used in teacher assessments in 2021. Ofqual chief regulator Dr Jo Saxton believes this will provide a "safety net" for students.

Secondary Accountability Measures

DfE has published [guidance on accountability measures for 2021/22 at secondary school level \(including Progress 8 and Attainment 8\)](#). The documents explain how secondary accountability measures are calculated and give more information about announced policies that apply to accountability measures for the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

First aid in schools, early years and colleges

Please note that the non-statutory [first aid in schools, early years and further education guidance](#) has been updated. The guidance focuses on the duties of governing bodies in relation to first aid issues on their premises and off-site. Governing bodies should ensure that they are familiar with the guidance and the strategic functions that relate to the governing body to ensure that the necessary resources, policies and procedures are updated and in place.

Latest Research

Investigating the changing landscape of pupil disadvantage

NFER have published a [report investigating the changing landscape of pupil disadvantage](#). Transitional arrangements introduced to smooth the roll out of Universal Credit and the Covid-19 pandemic have significantly increased the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) – a key measure of disadvantage in schools. This pattern is set to continue over the next decade.

[What are the implications for your school?](#)

State of the nation 2021: children and young people's wellbeing

The [annual report commissioned by DfE on the wellbeing of children and young people \(2020/2021\)](#) shows some signs of recovery in personal wellbeing in 2021, although evidence for a recovery in measures of mental ill-health was less clear-cut, with children with SEND, those eligible for FSM, and those with long-term physical health conditions being of particular concern. The data also indicated potential pandemic impacts on other measures of health and wellbeing, including increased loneliness and poorer physical health as measured by obesity rates. Evidence was also found for a link between family connectedness, problems with family functioning, and mental health problems in children and young people, suggesting that disruptions in one domain could lead to poorer outcomes in another.

Teacher wellbeing

Teaching union NASUWT has published the results of a [survey](#) into teacher wellbeing, with 91% of teacher reporting that their job had adversely impacted their mental health in the last year. Governing bodies have a direct responsibility for the wellbeing of their school staff and staff wellbeing should always be a consideration when taking decisions.

Is staff wellbeing a regular agenda item? The Diocese of Brentwood has a [model policy on staff wellbeing](#) you can use or adapt and the Mental Health and Well-Being page on our website has [a wealth of links to useful resources](#).

Thank you for all that you do for your school.

With best wishes and prayers

Debbi Botham
Diocesan Governance Development Officer