



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

October 2022

Dear chair

Welcome back to the second half of the autumn term. As always, there are plenty of changes including our [fifth Education Secretary in four months!](#) 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.

Diocese of Brentwood News

Catholic School Inspection (CSI)

As you are already aware, the new, national, Catholic School Inspection framework came into place on 1 September 2022. No Catholic School Inspections will take place in Brentwood Diocese during this autumn term in order to allow our schools time for preparation and training.

We can now provide further clarity in relation to the start of the new inspection process. Catholic School Inspections in Brentwood Diocese will commence from January 2023. Under the new framework no inspections take place in the first week of January (or the first 2 weeks of September) so inspections can commence from 8th January '23. Inspection notification is 2 working days (including the day of the call) and inspections take place over a 2-day period. Therefore telephone notifications will take place on Mondays or Tuesdays with inspections on Wednesdays-Thursdays or Thursdays-Fridays. It is vital that schools have their Catholic School Self-Evaluation documents ready as these will need to be sent to the Lead Inspector after their initial telephone call.

In order to assist schools, the decision has been made to give schools an indication of their 'inspection window'. Schools in the Diocese of Brentwood which were last inspected under Section '48 in June 2016 - March 2017 can expect to be inspected between January 2023 and July 2023. (Please note this may be subject to change if inspection administration circumstances outside of our control dictate).

Diocesan Protocols – revised October 2022

You will recall that last year we published the Diocesan Protocols for the first time. This document brought together information about the role and the expectation of the bishop in relation to Catholic schools and education in the diocese of Brentwood and was developed to exemplify the Bishop's Memorandum of Understanding for trustees, governors and school leaders.

The [revised 2022 version of the Diocesan Protocols](#) for maintained schools and academies, formally launched at the Diocesan Headteachers' Conference in October 2022, sets out the principles governing the relationship between the diocese and those responsible for running Catholic schools. The CES guidance makes it clear

that the protocols are not provided for approval by directors/governors, but that they are issued to directors/governors in order that they are clear about the expectations of the diocese. Please ensure that these are shared with your governors and trustees and ensure compliance.


Religious Education Directory 2022

The final version of the document is not yet ready to share with schools and it is anticipated the final formatted and published version will be ready after Christmas. A formal launch of the document has been planned for January 2023.

As previously advised, schools should treat the remaining terms of this academic year as planning terms once the final text is shared, with a three year roll out beginning in September 2023. Full implementation will be required by September 2025.

Bishops launch new edition of environment document 'The Call of Creation'

20 years after its initial publication, [The Call of Creation](#) has been updated and re-released - stressing that each of us has a responsibility to promote the common good and is called to repair our own relationship with the environment. Although Catholic parishes, schools and universities already contribute to caring for God's creation it is clear that more needs to be done.

	<p>Reflect: How 'green' is your school?</p> <p>Do you regularly discuss these issues and seek to improve your school's carbon footprint?</p> <p>Has your GB made a 'Greener Governance' pledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduce carbon at your school or trust• put your school's or trust's contribution to environmental sustainability on the agenda• ensure a climate action plan is developed to make this happen <p>How are children and young people helped to better appreciate lasting things of beauty rather than what is disposable and temporary?</p>
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Updated Guidance on the Recruitment of Staff for Governing Boards

[The CES has updated its guidance on the recruitment of staff for governing boards.](#)

As well as a more general update, the document has been reviewed in light of the new requirements in the 2022 version of Keeping Children Safe in Education to undertake online searches of shortlisted candidates.

Compliance with this guidance is a requirement in the model diocesan protocols on staffing and recruitment. [CES model recruitment documents can be found on their website](#)

Supporting new governors and trustees

Many of you will be welcoming new volunteers to your governing board at this time of year. A well-planned induction will help new governors and trustees feel welcomed into the school community and have the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence and the Diocese has developed a [model Induction](#)

[checklist](#) which you are welcome to use or adapt. Please note especially the importance of including safeguarding training as part of governor induction, now an explicit requirement in KCSIE 2002.

As well as in-school induction, it is important that new governors attend Induction training to gain confidence and knowledge of their role within a Catholic setting. Diocesan Induction training consists of two modules and the expectation is that governors attend both to complete their induction training:

Module 1: The Distinctive Nature of Catholic Schools – Wed 14 December 2022 (17:00-18:30)

This module explores the distinctive ethos of church schools and the role of governance within a Catholic setting. [To book your place](#)

Module 2: An Introduction to the Roles and Responsibilities of Governors – Mon 23 Jan 2023 (17:00-18:30)

This module will help governors gain confidence and knowledge of the 3 core functions of governance and share good practice [To book your place](#)

Re-appointment of Foundation Governors

A reminder that participating in appropriate Catholic governor training is an expectation of all governors regardless of length of service and experience –we have developed a range of [online courses](#) and [webinars](#) to support governors in their role.


Please note that we will now be looking for evidence of personal commitment to governor development before approving the re-appointment of foundation governors.

School budget pressures – the role of governors

The task of governance is to approve a balanced budget but this is becoming an increasing challenge; key drivers for financial concern include:

- unfunded teachers' pay award
- unfunded support staff pay award
- energy cost inflation
- inflationary pressures
- government grants not keeping pace with inflation
- fluctuating birth rates

Doing nothing is not an option - it is important to start planning now and seeking advice where necessary.

	<p>Questions to ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do governors have a clear understanding of the school's current financial position?• Where will you be at the end of the current fiscal year?• How realistic are the assumptions that your three-year forecasts are based on?• Have you considered the options open to you? Can you increase revenue or income? Do you need to reduce costs?• What is the cost of every staff position? Could you organise staffing differently?
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Academy News

Congratulations to the following school who became an academy in a Diocesan Catholic Multi Academy Trust on 1 October 2022:

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Trust
St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Loughton

Governor Development

Webinars

NEW: *Catholic School Inspection (CSI) for Governors - webinar*

How do you as governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school, RE and collective worship-prayer and liturgy?

[This webinar](#) on **Monday 28 November 2022** (17:30-19:00) will outline the key information governors need in order to develop their understanding of the Catholic School Inspection (CSI) process so that they can effectively play their part in preparing for inspection and during inspection.

Facilitator: Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director of Education. [To book your place please complete this form.](#)

NEW: *Creating Good Partnerships with School Leaders*

The success of all governance is dependent on developing strong working relationships. This webinar, run in collaboration with the Diocese of Chelmsford on **Monday 13 March 2023 (15:30-17:00)**, will explore what that might look like in terms of a professional relationship of trust and how a non-confrontational coaching style of questioning will enable good and effective accountability and decision-making.

All governors and trustees are very welcome; especially useful for chairs and headteachers. [To book your place](#)

NEW DATE: *Role of Trustees in a Catholic MAT (CMAT)*

This webinar on **21 March 2023** (17:30- 19:00) is a short course intended for those new to the trustee role within a Catholic MAT (CMAT) or as a refresher for trust boards as part of their ongoing training requirements.

The training will cover:

- What are the basics of good governance?
- How Trust Boards work
- The core functions of a Catholic multi academy trust board

Facilitator: Stephen Adamson, Diocesan MAT Development Officer
[To book your place](#)

Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)

The next *Safeguarding Children* update will run as a webinar on **Monday 27 March 2023** (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.](#)

Face-to-Face Training

NEW: *Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference 2022*

[This full day conference](#) is open to school leaders and governors and is taking place at The County Hotel, Chelmsford on **23 November 2022** (9:30-15:00).

The keynote speaker is David Torevell who will be looking at cultural influences on the emergence of anxiety in a secular age. Our second speaker is Roisin McEvoy from the Anna Freud National Centre for young people and families, who will be speaking on emotionally based school avoidance.

The topics to be covered will include:

- Catholic Theological traditions and mental health
- Mental health and young people
- Sharing good practice from a range of Diocesan schools.

The cost of the conference (including lunch) is £60. [To book your place](#)

NEW: *Making Effective Governor Visits*

This face-to-face workshop in Brentwood on **23 November 2022** (16:00-17:30) will look at some of the practical applications of governor monitoring for school improvement, with a focus on governor visits. Governor visits are not the only way that monitoring by the governing body is undertaken, but it plays an important part. **Facilitators:** Catherine Harwood, Primary School Link Adviser and Debbi Botham, Diocesan Governance. [You can book your place here.](#)

Save the Date!

We are running our first MAT Development Conference on **21 April 2023**. The expectation is that all head teachers will attend with their chairs. Further details will follow soon

Online Learning

NEW: *Sign up now! Spaces available on Liverpool Hope University's Improving Church School Governance programme*

[Run by Liverpool Hope University](#), the *Improving Church School Governance* programme is designed for both governors and trustees (Directors) in Catholic and Anglican schools to further develop their skills and knowledge, providing the opportunity to engage professionally with others and to study online in their own time, whilst benefitting from access to personal tutors and group reflections.

Particularly suitable for chairs, vice chairs and those aspiring to become chair, the aim of this part-time course - which takes place over a 6 month period (**starting in January 2023**) - is to raise awareness of the changing expectations of governing boards and support the development of leadership skills. [This leaflet gives an overview of the course and feedback from past delegates.](#)


There is currently a subsidised rate of £50 for this course, but the Diocese of Brentwood is interested in sponsoring a small cohort of chairs, vice chairs or prospective chairs. If you are interested in taking part in this programme please contact debbibotham@dioceseofbrentwood.org

Gift-ED

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 us by using this link

These are the modules currently available:

- Faithful Governance (for new and re-appointed governors)
- **Engaging with parents**
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Curriculum for governors
- Appointing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
- Appointing Heads of RE
- Headteacher Appraisal (for members of the headteacher appraisal panel)

	<p>Reflect:</p> <p>When did you last review arrangements for communicating with parents and carers?</p> <p>How well does the school involve parents and carers in school life to help them support their children at school?</p> <p>Our <i>Engaging with Parents</i> online course, suitable for all governors, will provide governing bodies with ideas and strategies to improve parental engagement.</p>
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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.

Schools looking to recruit Foundation Governors may also be interested in [our flyer](#) to distribute to parents and the local Catholic community. [Get in touch](#) if you would like a word version so you can adapt the flyer for your school.

Safeguarding Update

Updated Safeguarding Checklist

Safeguarding should be the number one priority for all schools. Everyone shares the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, but governing bodies have a strategic leadership responsibility for their school's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure they comply with their duties under legislation.

How confident are governors that the school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding? We have [updated our safeguarding checklist](#) to support you in meeting your statutory responsibilities.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Guidance

Please note that DfE has withdrawn the standalone document 'Sexual Violence and

Sexual Harassment' as the content is now part of the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance. You should ensure that policy and procedure documents no longer refer to the sexual violence and sexual harassment guidance, but instead to KCSIE Part Five.

HSE School Asbestos Inspections

A reminder that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have started to visit schools to check on their arrangements for managing asbestos. It is crucial that the **school's asbestos management plan** clearly identifies the duty holder (normally the headteacher) and sets out how asbestos containing materials in the school are managed. It is also important that consultants and contractors sign the sheet at front of plan to confirm they have been shown the asbestos register before work is carried out. The duty holder should attend a duty holder course. Other staff (school business managers, site managers, etc.) and governors with responsibility for health and safety should also attend asbestos awareness courses.

Any questions, call David Gatheral on 07857 718351 or email davidgatheral@dioceseofbrentwood.org

Ofsted News


Monitoring Attainment

[KS1](#) and [KS2](#) attainment data has now been published and this should be shared with the governing body. National data shows that attainment at KS1 has fallen across the board in the first set of tests since 2019, with poorer pupils falling further behind than their better off peers. Attainment at KS2 has increased slightly in reading but fallen in all other subjects compared to 2019 at both the expected and higher standard.

[KS4 performance data](#), focussing on GCSE results, has also been recently published.

Ofsted will look at pupil achievement and how this is reflected in the results of national tests, particularly for the most disadvantaged.

How did attainment for your school compare with national and regional data?

	<p style="text-align: center;">Questions for the governing board to ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your school doing to close any gaps?• How has your school been using the catch-up and tuition funding?• How are you checking that this has made an impact?• How do your minutes record governor questions and challenge around pupil attainment?
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Thousands of year 7s struggle with reading

Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, has written about the [importance of reading – and the need to help struggling readers as they start secondary school](#), as well as older children in primary school so they don't start behind next year.

DfE News

Updated accountability measures guidance published

Updated guidance on [secondary accountability](#) and [primary school accountability](#) has been published as DfE stress the need to move back to publicly available data

about exam results. The updates explain how measures are calculated and provide information about policies that have been announced for the 2022-23 academic year.

The updates also include information about how the DfE will calculate KS2 and KS4 MAT measures for the academic year 2021-22.

In line with the plans set out last September, Ofqual has [confirmed](#) a return to pre-pandemic grading in 2023.

Federations: Guidance on the governance processes

DfE has updated its non-statutory [guidance on the governance of a federation](#), including the creation, running, and dissolution of a federation. A federation is defined in law as two or more maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body.

Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – New Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England

As previously advised, DfE has recently published [revised statutory guidance on permanent exclusions](#). There are some important changes including more emphasis on taking a pupil's views into account and involving them in the process. Where relevant a pupil should be given support to express their view, including through advocates such as parents or, if the pupil has one, a social worker.

If you missed our webinar led by Theresa Kerr at Winckworth Sherwood you can find a link to the recording of the webinar here:

<https://vimeo.com/752445004> Password : BDES0922excl

New School Admission Appeals Code 2022 and Updated Non-Statutory Guidance
The new [School Admission Appeals Code 2022](#) has been published and came into force on 1 October 2022.

The new Appeals Code includes changes to allow appeal hearings to be held in-person or remotely by video conference, and in certain limited circumstances, by telephone. The Appeals Code also allows for hybrid appeals, which are a mixture of appeals held in-person and remotely. [Updated guidance for admission authorities, clerks and appeal panels, and parents and guardians has also been published](#). It reflects the changes made to the Appeals Code regarding remote or hybrid appeals, including guidance on how such appeals may be set up.

There may be unheard appeals lodged on or before 30 September 2022, when the previous Appeals Code (2012) and temporary COVID-19 regulations expire. These appeals must be held in accordance with the previous version of the Appeals Code. For this reason, the Department is continuing to publish the 2012 Appeals Code as well as the previous non-statutory guidance on admission appeals and I understand that these documents will remain available until it is likely that any appeal lodged on or before 30 September has concluded. The [previous guidance can be accessed here](#)

School Uniform Policy

Don't forget that your school must now have a uniform policy, which is published on the school website and you must also publish details of where second-hand uniform can be purchased.

There is an obligation on schools to ensure that required uniform items do not impact in an unfair way financially on some households. DfE [statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms](#) emphasises that parents should not have to think about the cost of a school uniform when choosing which schools to apply for, so schools must ensure their uniform is affordable.

If an item needs to meet specific requirements, for instance, smart black shoes, then this should be clearly stated. The published uniform policy should clearly state whether each item is optional or required. If the item is only used in some circumstances or at certain times of the year, then this should be made clear. The policy should also make clear whether a generic item will be accepted or if a branded item is required.

School teachers' pay and conditions: guidance 2022

An updated version of the statutory guidance on [school teachers' pay and conditions document \(STPCD\), for teachers](#) in England, has been published and is valid from the 1 September 2022.

DfE have also updated [guidance to help schools and governance boards develop their approach to teachers' and school leaders' pay](#).

Preparing for pupil premium strategy publication

As advised in the last *Chairs' News*, all maintained schools and most academies are required to publish a [pupil premium strategy statement, using the statutory DfE template](#), on their website. The purpose of the statement is to explain the decisions made by school leaders and governing boards regarding how pupil premium is spent and the intended impact of these decisions. The statement also serves as an action plan that governing boards can monitor.

As the deadline for publishing the statement (31 December) approaches, we recommend that governors and trustees discuss pupil premium spending plans with school leaders.

[EEF's guide to using pupil premium effectively](#) recommends that you 'focus on a small number of priorities each year in areas that are likely to make the biggest difference, with a focus on effective implementation'.

Latest Research

Good Childhood Report 2022

The Children's Society's [Good Childhood Report 2022](#) has been published. This year's annual report explores children's experiences of school and the impact of the pandemic and cost of living on children and their families. There are worrying findings around children's wellbeing; 1 in 16 children aged 10-15 are unhappy with their lives and almost 1 in 8 (12%) indicate they are unhappy with school.

Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young People in England, 2021 (NHS Digital)

[NHS Digital has recently published the results of a two-yearly look at young people's use of alcohol, smoking and drugs](#). Almost 10,000 secondary aged children (Years 7-11) answered questions on a range of topics including prevalence, habits, attitudes, and wellbeing.

Smoking - Although there has been a fall in young people smoking cigarettes, the proportion of children who describe themselves as current e-cigarette users has increased by 9% since 2018. More girls vape than boys with twenty percent of 15 year old girls described as current users.

Drug Use - There has also been a fall in the prevalence of lifetime and recent illicit drug use. Just under a fifth of pupils across Years 7 - 11 reported they had ever taken drugs (down from 24% in 2018). Sixty percent of children who used cannabis were given it by a friend, usually of their own age. Children who used drugs more than once usually obtain their drugs outdoors such as a park or on the street.

Pupils were most likely to have obtained helpful information about drug use from parents (70%) and teachers (66%). Other people from whom pupils got helpful information were other relatives (42%), friends (42%) and police in schools (38%).

The relationship between poverty and child abuse and neglect: new evidence (Nuffield Foundation)

Major reviews of children's social care in England and Scotland have shown that family poverty and inequality are key drivers of harm to children. Evidence shows that deep and persistent poverty, which have increased rapidly in the UK in recent years, affects every aspect of family life and is inextricably implicated in other factors which increase the risk of harm including domestic violence, poor mental health and substance use. You can read the [Executive summary](#) here

COSMO: Covid Social Mobility and Opportunities Study

A [new study by UCL and The Sutton Trust](#) has found that COVID-19 'severely widened existing inequalities' since schools in disadvantaged areas had slower access to online learning in both lockdowns and pupils from poorer households often lacked access to suitable devices and quiet spaces. Although catch-up support had more uptake from schools in deprived areas, the study revealed 39% of disadvantaged schools still did not take part in any at all. The report recommends the provision of devices for those in receipt of pupil premium due to the likelihood of online learning being a permanent fixture of schooling, as well as targeted pupil premium funding for post-16 pupils.

Thank you for all that you do for your school.

With best wishes and prayers

Debbi Botham
Diocesan Governance Development Officer

Diocesan communications are issued solely to support you to carry out your education functions as a Catholic school leader on behalf of your diocesan bishop. They may contain sensitive information and must be respected as private communications and not be shared with any third parties external to the diocese without written BDES consent.