



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

April 2023

Dear chair

Welcome back to the summer term. I hope you have had a restful break and are still feeling the joys of Eastertide, coming back refreshed for the term ahead.

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

Diocesan Protocols on Governance

The [Diocesan Protocols on Governance](#) is an important document setting out our key principles and expectations:

Key principles

- To be Catholic, Schools must be controlled by the Catholic Church and be recognised as such by the Diocesan Bishop.
- The Diocesan Bishop is responsible under Canon law for any strategic decisions about Catholic Schools in his Diocese.
- Structural changes, including changes to governance arrangements, require both the consent of the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Trustees.
- The Diocesan Bishop has a duty to ensure that all the foundation directors/governors that are appointed to govern Catholic Schools in his Diocese have the necessary skills to perform the role and the personal commitment and skills required to fulfill their overarching duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the School(s) for which they have responsibility.
- As an integral part of its educational vision, the Catholic Church expects Governing Boards to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards. This requires effective and strategic governance arrangements.
- The Governing Board must endeavour to operate at a strategic level, leaving the School's senior leadership responsible and accountable for the operational running of the School.
- The three core strategic functions, of a Governing Board, are to:
 - ensure clarity of Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction;
 - hold the appropriate senior leadership to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the School and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of the School, including performance management of staff; and
 - oversee the financial performance of the School and make sure its money is well spent.

Diocesan Protocols on Governance

Here is a reminder of the 15 protocols for school governance:

Protocol 1	Governing Boards must ensure that their governance arrangements comply with the law
Protocol 2	Governing Boards must preserve and develop the Catholic character of the School(s) at each layer of governance and fulfil the three core strategic functions
Protocol 3	Governance and management structures and arrangements must be in line with any Diocesan policy that may be published from time to time
Protocol 4	Academy Trust Companies must use both the Model Articles for Catholic Schools and the CES Model Scheme of Delegation, (including the table of roles and responsibilities). Both of these documents may be subject to amendment by the Diocese and the Diocese will provide a version of these documents for use
Protocol 5	Governing Boards must use the information, guidance, resources and documentation relating to governance arrangements available on the CES website
Protocol 6	Governing Boards must conduct an annual self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for further development. Governing Boards should use the CES model skills audit and the CES model self-evaluation form for this purpose. Governing Boards must also engage with the Diocesan Schools Commissioner, on a regular and ongoing basis
Protocol 7	Governing Boards must adhere to Diocesan policy on Governance Statements and should consult the Diocesan Schools Commissioner before adopting the CES Model Governance Statement to ensure compliance with any particular Diocesan policy
Protocol 8	Governing Boards must comply with any requirements and directions issued by the Diocesan Schools Commissioner to address areas for improvement (including, in particular, any requirements and directions following a governance review)
Protocol 9	Governors must complete all Diocesan induction and other training that may be required by the Diocese
Protocol 10	Governing Boards must pay the diocesan contribution as stipulated from time to time by the Diocesan Bishop
Protocol 11	Governing Boards, as the employer of School staff, must ensure that CES model application forms are used, that CES model employment contracts are issued and that CES model workplace policies are adopted
Protocol 12	Governors must ensure that they make themselves available to attend meetings or that they send apologies when appropriate. Governors must ensure that they read all meeting papers in advance of meetings, that they declare any conflicts of interest and that they do not vote where there is a conflict (for example, in the appointment of family members). Governors must ensure that they respect the confidentiality of Governing Board discussions
Protocol 13	Governing Boards must ensure that all Governors sign a code of conduct at the beginning of each academic year. Governing Boards should use the CES Model code of conduct for this purpose
Protocol 14	Governors must use their position on the Governing Board to implement the Diocesan Bishop's strategic plans for Catholic Schools in his Diocese
Protocol 15	Governing Boards must provide the Diocese with any information requested, in the format required, and in a timely fashion, in order to ensure that the Diocese is able to perform its functions

New Religious Education Directory (RED)

The new [Religious Education Directory \(RED\)](#) for Catholic Schools is now available and all schools should have by now ordered a copy of the directory for each teacher. This directory replaces the 2012 RECD but **full implementation is not expected until 2025**. Training for governors is taking place on **27 June 2023**. See *Events* section for further details.

Bishop Alan would love to hear from you – important survey

Please see this message from Bishop Alan with the invitation to feedback your views through this important survey:

As we emerge from the global pandemic into a rapidly changing world, we as Church are ever more aware of our need to listen more deeply, more humbly and more widely to the experiences of all Catholics - for this is indeed where the Holy Spirit breathes and speaks.

- There are many people in Brentwood and beyond, who were baptised Catholic, but for one reason or another have lost interest in what the Catholic Church has to say. **If you feel this way, then as your Bishop, I'd love to hear from you!**
- On the other hand, you may feel that you are still interested and are attracted to the Church, but you don't have time for Sunday Mass
- Or perhaps you find Church boring, or your local parish unfriendly; or maybe you haven't returned to the Church since the Covid pandemic. **If this is you, I'd love to hear from you**
- Sadly, there are some who feel alienated from the Church because it has harmed or rejected them in some way. **Again, if this is you, I would very much like to hear from you.**

[This survey](#) (which should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete) provides a space for your story and experience to be shared and heard, and seriously listened to by both me as your Bishop and our wider diocesan Church.

Please also ask your friends or family, your neighbours and colleagues who no longer come to Church to complete the survey so that we might hear from as many people as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts, your stories, and experiences.

Commissioning of Foundation Governors by Bishop Alan

Foundation Governors have a key role to play in helping the Diocese maintain and develop the Catholic character of our schools and ensuring that the school fulfils its proper, educational role in the life of the community.

This commissioning event at **Thursday 22 June 2022 (18:00 start) at The Most Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, Billericay** will recognise the contribution made by governors in support of Catholic education across the Diocese of Brentwood. This event is for new foundation governors and MAT Trustees as well as those who have been unable to attend a previous commissioning event. Other governors serving in our Catholic schools who would like to attend are also very welcome to attend this unique event.

Governors will be commissioned directly by Bishop Alan, who they represent on governing bodies of Catholic schools. They will also receive a certificate commemorating their commissioning. Following the event, you are warmly invited to join us in the hall for light refreshments.

Please note that Bishop Alan wants to meet and commission all Foundation Governors and MAT Trustees who are currently in post. We look forward to welcoming you.

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

Information relating to Cost of Catholic School Inspections and implications for the diocesan levy

Please find attached a document outlining how changes are being made from April 2023 to how Catholic School Inspections will be funded going forward for independent schools and any schools which are not up to date with their Levy payments.

Checklist for external speakers to schools

All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.

The CES website has a downloadable checklist to help ensure school leaders have enough information enabling them to determine whether speaker content is appropriate for the age and maturity of the children and young people to be present.

[Download the CES checklist for external speakers to schools](#)

The checklist for speakers should be completed by the appropriate officer in a school prior to making contact with external speakers (and any organisation they represent). This is to ensure that the Catholic character of the school is preserved and developed in the external speaker's communications with pupils and parents and carers. It is an expectation that the checklist is used. Booking inappropriate external speakers can become a reputational risk!

Admissions

Please note this important information about the use of Computerised school place allocation systems – status of the National Address Gazeteer.

Commercial organisations are giving presentations to local authority admission officers on computerised pupil allocation systems. We understand that some of those companies are stating that DfE 'requires' the [National Address Gazeteer](#) ('NAG') to be used to verify addresses for all families. **There is no such requirement.** Doing so would disenfranchise children and parents of no fixed abode, such as traveller families, refugee families etc. No one should be excluded from having applications processed by a computerised admissions system because they cannot provide an address or an address on the NAG. Otherwise, it is perfectly acceptable to use the NAG as a tool, so long as you understand its limitations.

Academy News

CMAT Development Conference

It was great to see so many of you at our inaugural Academies' Day and CMAT Development Conference on 21 April 2023.

This was an important opportunity to hear about the successes and challenges from some current CMATs, their journey so far and their plans for the future - as well as Bishop Alan who shared his own perspectives on the day.

The Regional Director for the East of England, Jonathan Duff, and the Catholic Education Service also gave thought provoking presentations.

Here are the presentation slides:

[Catholic Schools and Colleges – Building the Future together](#) (Catholic Education Service)

[Update from the Regional Director](#)

[Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust](#)

[The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust –Central Services and Finances](#)

Lost property!

A few pieces of lost property were left behind at Friday's conference.

A black pair of glasses with the branding Grandvision

A brown pair of glasses from Specsavers

A yellow A5 Pukka Pad

A white notepad with Data2Action branding on it

If anyone is missing these items then please contact Sarah Wilkinson at De la Salle swilkinson@dlsbasildon.org so she can arrange to return them.

Governor Development

Training Link Governor

Many governing bodies have found it useful to assign the role of 'Training Link Governor' to one of their governors, to promote governor development and to ensure governor training records are kept by the school. You may find our [model job description](#), which you can use or adapt, useful.

I also attach [a model template for reporting on individual training](#).

Webinars

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

This webinar, rescheduled for **Tuesday 2 May 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](#)

NEW DATES: *Induction - Being an Effective Governor in a Catholic School*

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 – Monday 12 June 2023 (17:00-18:30)

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

Module 2: An Introduction to the Roles and Responsibilities of Governors – Monday 3 July 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 a place](#)

NEW: Religious Education Directory (RED) Training for Governors

The RED is the new [Religious Education Directory \(RED\)](#) from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, with which Catholic schools must be in full compliance by September 2025. It covers Religious Education as delivered in primary schools and in secondary schools up to and including Key Stage 3.

This new webinar on **27 June 2023** (17:00-18:30) about the directory will enable effective and informed monitoring of Religious Education in coming years. We will be looking at the requirements and the structure of the directory, at content and pedagogy, and at implementation and timelines. Our aim is to give governors an informed and strategic understanding of the Directory.

Facilitators: Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director of Education and John Adams, Secondary RE Adviser

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

NEW DATE: *Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)*

The next *Safeguarding Children* update will run as a webinar on **Monday 2 October 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. Booking available shortly.

Face-to-Face Training

Clerks' Conference (Essex Clerks' Association)

The annual ECA Clerks' Conference has been arranged for **Thursday 11 May 2023** (9:00-13:30) at the JobServe Community Stadium, Colchester. Lunch is included. This is a free event for clerks working in Essex, Southend and Thurrock schools.

The keynote speaker will be Amy Wright, Clerking Development Manager at the NGA and there will be a choice of 3 workshops. To reserve your place please send an email to bookings@essexclerks.org

Online Learning

Gift-ED

Informative and easy to follow, our library of online courses are designed to support governors in our Catholic schools in their role. This training is currently FREE and can be completed using multiple devices in short bite-sized chunks.

There are now 222 active learners on Gift-ED and 216 courses have been completed.

These are the modules currently available:

- Faithful Governance (for new and re-appointed governors/directors)
- 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)

Each school has been allocated at least 5 Gift-ED licences. To request access to the Gift ED library of online courses for your governors, please get in touch (debbibotham@brcdt.org)

Governor Recruitment

Foundation governor vacancies are advertised through the Diocesan website. As you may know, we have recently run a foundation governor recruitment campaign through the local parishes and we also work with *Governors for Schools* and *Inspiring Governance* to identify 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 (debbibotham@brcdt.org).

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

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

DfE has published [guidance for schools on how to support school attendance where there is a pupil experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues.](#)

Building on the 'working together to improve school attendance' guidance the document summarises responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and provides examples of effective practice.

The guidance relates to any pupil displaying a social, emotional or mental health issue affecting their attendance, not just for pupils with a diagnosed disorder, disability or special educational need. The summary of responsibilities on page 16 highlights the expectation that governing bodies and academy trustees should:

- regularly monitor and consider the approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing within the school to understand how it is working

- satisfy themselves that the building of emotional resilience is sufficiently delivered through school curriculum and pastoral support, promoting a strong ethos and culture
- support the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing

Falling Trees and Risk - Healthy and Safety Executive

Most schools enjoy grounds in which their pupils can play and take a break from their schoolwork. However, it is vitally important that these grounds remain safe for children and young people - falling trees or branches in particular need regular monitoring.

[This guidance from HSE](#) is useful.

Ofsted News

Ofsted Subject Reviews

Are your governors and subject leaders keeping up to date with this information? Ofsted's new series of subject reviews are based on evidence collected through routine inspections carried out in various school types.

Science education

There are some important messages about the quality of Science education in OFSTED's latest report <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-science> highlighting the common strengths and weaknesses of science in the schools inspected and considering the challenges that science faces.

Findings show that most pupils are accessing an ambitious science curriculum despite the impact of the pandemic, however there is not always a clear plan on how teacher knowledge of science is developed. Overall, the evidence gathered as part of this report identifies some significant strengths in relation to science education in England's schools. The report also makes several recommendations for improvement in relation to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and systems at subject and school level.

Art and Design

See also the [latest from their inspections about Art and Design](#) which sets out some of the key principles for teaching a high quality art curriculum.

The subject review recognises that while there is no single way to provide a high quality education in the subject, the content of what a high art and design curriculum looks like is key.

The report recommends school leaders support teachers and subject leaders with training and support that is "attuned to the curriculum" in the recognition that a high-quality curriculum in art, craft and design enables pupils to develop "sophisticated knowledge about subject content, as well as love of a subject".

Governing boards have an important responsibility to ensure their school or trust offers pupils a broad and rich curriculum which includes diverse and wide-ranging art forms and cultural experiences

DfE News

New standards for equal access to sports

New standards which ensure that girls and boys are offered the same sports during PE and extracurricular time in schools have been announced. Schools that successfully deliver equal opportunities for girls and boys will be rewarded through the School Games Mark, which will assess parity of provision in PE and extracurricular sport.

As part of these standards, schools are being asked to deliver a minimum of two hours curriculum PE time with government support to schools through the upcoming refresh of the School Sport Action Plan. Alongside this work, Ofsted will be publishing a report into PE in the coming months, which will inform future inspections and set out what they believe is possible in terms of offering high quality PE and equal access to sports.

What schools should publish online

As you know, every school and academy must publish specific information on its website, including information about the governing body and trust board

Please note that a new section has been added encouraging schools and trust boards to collect and publish governing board and trust board diversity data:

Collecting and publishing governing board diversity data

Diversity is important and we want governing boards to be increasingly reflective of the communities they serve.

We encourage schools and academy trust boards to collect and publish governing board members' and trust board's diversity data. Information must be widely accessible to members of the school community and the public. Board members can opt out of sharing their information, including protected characteristics, at any given time including after publication.

Schools must ensure that individuals cannot be identified through the publication of data, particularly when board member levels are low. Read more about this in the [data protection toolkit for schools](#) and [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#).

There is no prescriptive way to collect diversity data from volunteers; this needs to be done on a voluntary basis. Schools and Trusts may prefer to adopt a similar approach to how they collate the diversity data of pupils.

[What maintained schools must publish online](#)

[What academies must publish online](#)

SEND and alternative provision improvement plan

The government has published its long awaited [Improvement Plan for SEND](#) and Alternative Provision (AP) following a public consultation on proposals in the [SEND Review](#) published in 2022, which focus on creating a more inclusive system by improving outcomes, navigation and use of resources.

The plan sets out a roadmap to transform the SEND and AP system:

- Establishing a single national system that delivers for every child and young person with SEND so that they enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes, and are well prepared for adulthood and employment
- Giving families greater confidence that their child will be supported to fulfil their potential through improved mainstream provision in their local setting
- Ensuring children and young people with SEND who do require an Education, Health and Care Plan and specialist provision get prompt access to the support they need, and that parents don't face an adversarial system to secure this
- Strengthening accountability across the system so that everyone is held to account for supporting children and young people with SEND.

Many of the proposed changes will be trialled initially with nine regional partnerships, meaning it will potentially be 2025 (at the earliest) before legislation is agreed.

Pupil Premium

DfE have updated their [non-statutory guidance on how to make the best use of pupil premium funding](#). The guidance is for school leaders and those involved in managing the use of pupil premium in schools, such as academy trust leadership, trustees and governors.

DfE recommends that schools develop a 3-year pupil premium strategy using the 'menu of approaches' on page 8 of the guidance. The [pupil premium strategy statement template](#) should help the governing body to develop this strategy, based on the challenges identified, the menu of approaches and the evidence of effective approaches.

Use of reasonable force and restrictive practices in schools: call for evidence

The Government has committed to minimising the use of restraint in all schools and in instances where restraint is necessary and lawful, to support school to use it as safely as possible.

They have launched a call for evidence to understand more about the use of reasonable force, physical restraint and restrictive practices in schools. Views gathered will help to inform revisions to existing guidance to ensure all schools are calm, safe and supportive environments in which pupils and staff can work in safety and are respected.

The current DfE non-statutory guidance, from 2013, states:

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder

- Schools should not have a 'no contact' policy. There is a real risk that such a policy might place a member of staff in breach of their duty of care towards a pupil
- It is always unlawful to use force as a punishment
- Every school is required to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. The governing body should notify the head teacher that it expects the school behaviour policy to include the power to use reasonable force
- There is no current requirement to have a policy on the use of reasonable force but it is good practice to set out in the behaviour policy the circumstances in which reasonable force might be used
- Any policy on the use of reasonable force should acknowledge schools' legal duties in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities
- It is current good practice for schools to speak to parents about serious incidents involving the use of force and to consider how best to record such serious incidents
- It is up to schools to decide whether it is appropriate to report the use of force to parents.

[Access the call for evidence](#)

Latest Research

Addressing disadvantage – the crucial role of the governing board

The rising cost of living has had a significant and wide reaching impact on children and their families, and the role schools and trusts have in the level of support they offer is growing.

In an [article](#) published by TES, a chair of governors from Surrey discusses the changing demographic of those impacted by poverty and what those governing can do to help, stating "if children are coming to school hungry, cold and worried, they just aren't ready to learn".

The article highlights the importance of governors and trustees working with school leaders to ensure they are picking up on the signs of families suffering as a result of the cost of living crisis.

Exploring school collaboration and workload reduction

[DfE has published a research report](#) which explores how school-to-school collaboration can affect teacher and leader workload. Although senior leaders acknowledged that collaboration can lead to increased workload, whether in the short, medium, or long term, the benefits of such approaches were generally reported to outweigh the drawbacks. These included shared planning reducing teacher workload and contributing to better pupil outcomes in the longer term, but wider research is required.

Thank you for all that you do for your school.

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.