



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

Governor News – May 2025

This is a monthly summary to help Governors keep up to date with key themes of national education policy, the local Diocesan context, research and good practice.

DIOCESE NEWS

Pope Leo XIV

On the on Thursday 8th May 2025 after 2 days of voting a new Pope was elected. Robert Francis Prevost, aged 69, is the first North American to be elected to the role and he will be known as Pope Leo XIV.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/biography-of-robert-francis-prevost-pope-leo-xiv.html>

Multi-Academy Trusts in the Brentwood Diocese

As you are aware, the Bishop set up an Academies Working Group (AWG) which has been meeting on a fairly regular basis to discuss the future plans for growing and developing Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (CMATs) in Brentwood. The Bishop's vision for education has not changed; he wants all schools in the diocese to be part of a CMAT. This is in keeping with other Catholic Bishops across the country and a good number of dioceses already have full or nearly full academisation in their area. The original plan for Brentwood was to have 8 CMATs and we currently have 6 CMATs-although none are yet entirely full.

The AWG and the diocese recognise that the educational landscape has evolved and it is clear that MATs have to be a certain size in order to fully benefit financially and in relation to capacity to support improvement. In keeping with this, various CMAT models have been discussed. The group have recently been exploring models around 2, 3 or 4 CMATS. There has been a developing view that a smaller number of CMATS might be the most sustainable option. Further information will be shared as it becomes available and there is a planned CMAT Development Conference later in the year.

Catholic MATs frequently asked questions

[Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts \(CMAT\)](#)
[Diocesan Protocol 2020](#)

Appointment of a new Diocesan Director of Education for Brentwood Diocese

Dear All,

You have been made aware that after working with and supporting us for many years Rob Simpson is retiring in the summer. Thanks to Rob's work and guidance the education vicariate has changed almost beyond our imagination and hopes.

With the permission of the Bishop and the trustees of the diocese a recruitment firm called Emmaus Leadership was asked to help the process of finding his successor. The interest was very encouraging, and we were able to interview a very strong field of candidates. After a two-day process, the post was offered to Flavio Vettese, who is serving in East Anglia diocese at the moment. I am pleased to say that he has accepted the role and will be starting in September.

I very much feel that thanks to the work of Rob and the team that Flavio will taking the reins of a vicariate that is making a real difference to people's lives and outcomes.

There will be an opportunity to say farewell to Rob and the other members of the team that are moving on. Details will be sent out in the near future.

Yours in Christ,

Canon Stephen Myers

NEWS

Recruiting 6,500 new teachers represents a “significant challenge”, according to DfE officials [[Schools Week](#)] - [NAO Report](#)

Number of senior leaders aspiring to headship reaches record low [TES Magazine](#)

Unions demand greater scrutiny of how trusts manage school budgets. An investigation has found that schools are having up to 28% shaved off their budgets for trust central services [[Schools Week](#)].

NASUWT could ballot members for strike action within weeks. The teachers' union is proposing to ballot members for potential strike action as soon as the autumn term if the government fails to provide a “fully-funded” pay rise for next year [[Schools Week](#)]

UCL report reveals girls feel less safe in school

[Research](#) from University College London (UCL) revealed that since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a rapid decline of secondary students' enjoyment at school, sense of safety, belonging and their relationships with peers and teachers.

The most significant decline was found among year 9 girls. In 2023, the proportion of girls who strongly agreed they felt safe at school dropped by 22% compared to 2019, a much larger decrease than the 10% drop for boys. The researchers call for interventions to improve engagement, with a focus on supporting girls' sense of safety and their relationships with others.

[Essex County Council Governors update](#) – May 2025

Employment Rights Bill - What Does This Mean for Schools and MATs?

Since the ERB was first announced in October 2024, a significant number of changes have already been proposed. It is expected that more changes will follow before we arrive at a final position, and more likely than not secondary legislation will be required to give effect to some of the proposals. [Employment Rights Bill Updates March 25.docx](#)

Statutory Filing: Trusts must upload their audited financial statements, auditor's management letter and internal scrutiny summary report within the accounts submission coversheet. They must be in a PDF format and not password protected. Trusts must file these accounts with Companies House within 9 months of the end of the accounting period - for most trusts, this will be 31 May 2025. [Filing guidance](#)

[How to support your school](#) – lend support without giving money

GOVERNOR DEVELOPMENT

Governor Vacancies - Please see the list of current vacancies

Chair and Vice Chair - Please note that only **Foundations Governors** can be appointed as the Chair or Vice Chair of a Governing Board.

Foundation Governors - In respect of the school or college for which a person is or is to be a Foundation Governor, he or she must not at any time be:

- related to any member of the school or college staff, teaching, or non-teaching;
- related to any governor whether elected, appointed, or *ex-officio*, of the school;
- employed (whether as a teacher or otherwise) at the school.

A person (other than the parish Priest) will not be re-appointed as a foundation governor of a particular school or college if he or she has just completed three terms of office on that particular governing body.

This message appeared in a July 2024 Friday mailing, and it has come to our attention that some schools are still not adhering to this. We will now be making contact with individual schools to ensure the situation is rectified.

TRAINING

For all training and events see Diocese website:

<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/events/>

Key Information for Governors - Documentation and Policies

<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/school-governance-2/diocesan-guidance-model-policies/>

Safeguarding 2024/25 online Workshop – Monday 16 June 2025 5.30 – 7.00pm

Schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

Are all your governors up to date with their statutory responsibilities around safeguarding? The statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) places an obligation on all governors and trustees to receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction and to ensure that their training is regularly updated.

This popular workshop will run as a webinar and cover all the essential information you need to understand your statutory responsibilities, focusing on the new KCSIE due to be published in the autumn term 2024.

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 their school.

Facilitator: Kathy Dee, HeadStart and 5-19 Children's Health Service Manager, London Borough of Newham

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

Chairs' Forum – Tuesday 17th June: 4.30pm - 6.00pm

This important termly Chairs' Forum for Chairs and Vice Chairs will cover key topics as well as advice on recent Diocesan and national educational developments.

Facilitators: Rob Simpson, Director of Education and Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director

[To book your place](#)

Governor Induction

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 – 3rd June (5.00pm – 6.30pm)

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 – 1st July (5.00pm – 6.30pm)

This module will help governors gain confidence and knowledge of the three core functions of governance and share good practice.

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

Gift-Ed - the Gift-Ed library of online courses, supporting Governors in their role, has been funded for 4 years but there is now a subscription for this valuable training tool. You will not be able to access Gift-Ed courses without a subscription. **Does your school subscribe?** Completed order forms should be returned to info@anspear.com
[Link to order form.](#)

CLERKS

Clerking Diocesan schools

It is important that full Governing Boards are clerked by a professional Clerk/Governance Professional rather than a school employee such as a Secretary, PA or Business Manager. We understand that there is a cost implication, but the Clerk carries out a significant role and where this is done professionally this will have real benefits for the Governors as well as avoiding any suggestions of a conflict of interest. As well as organising and minuting Governing meetings and supporting the Board with administrative tasks, such as record keeping, to make sure everything runs smoothly, a professional Clerk makes an important contribution to the efficient and effective functioning of a Governing Board by providing expert advice and guidance on a range of statutory and procedural matters to ensure efficiency and compliance. This includes working in partnership with the Chair to keep the Governing Body focussed on its core strategic priorities and providing independent advice on procedures, statutory guidance and policies and the annual tasks and decisions that need to be made.

Information:

[\(TZA\) v R, A Secondary School \[2025\] Court of Appeal - 4 March 2025](#)

Unsuccessful challenge to child's exclusion from school; 15-year-old black Caribbean boy with SEN permanently excluded for serious assault, decision of HT was not unlawful for failure to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Seriousness of the pupils conduct and/or harm of allowing them to remain will be such as to make no difference that they belong to a high-risk group or have received inadequate support in the past.

Supreme Court decision – legal definition of a woman – April 25

The Supreme Court argues that for the Equality Act to be consistent, the term woman has to mean a biological woman. That does not include biological males, even if they have certificates to say they have changed gender.

This means that where there are, for instance, women-only spaces, then a biological man who identifies as a woman cannot use them. That includes changing rooms, toilets, women's refuges, single-sex hospital wards and anywhere designated as for one sex only.

How much change that will mean in practice will be set out in detailed guidance. Until then, there remain lots of questions and some confusion - and that is challenging in an area where views are so polarised.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c74z04j23pwo>

https://supremecourt.uk/uploads/uksc_2024_0042_judgment_aea6c48cee.pdf

Winkworth Sherwood update

<https://wslaw.co.uk/case-study/supreme-court-ruling-in-for-women-scotland-ltd-v-the-scottish-ministers-what-schools-need-to-know/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission ("the EHRC") [Technical guidance for schools in England](#) (September 2023)

DFE Guidance 2023 – Gender questioning children

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/equalities-political-impartiality-anti-bullying-team/gender-questioning-children-proposed->

Transgender guidance from the DfE is to be released this year following Supreme Court ruling [Schools Week]

Equality and Human Rights Commission-Interim guidance - 25 April 25

The EHRC has swiftly issued an interim update on the practical implications of the UK Supreme Court Judgment in the case of *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers*. The update is fairly short, and it can be found by following this link:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/interim-update-practical-implications-uk-supreme-court-judgment>

As you will see, there are specific references to toilets and changing facilities in schools, and the following guidance is provided:

“Schools must provide separate single-sex toilets for boys and girls over the age of 8. It is also compulsory for them to provide single-sex changing facilities for boys and girls over the age of 11. Pupils who identify as trans girls (biological boys) should not be permitted to use the girls’ toilet or changing facilities, and pupils who identify as trans boys (biological girls) should not be permitted to use the boys’ toilet or changing facilities. Suitable alternative provisions may be required.”

The EHRC is working to update its guidance documents, and it will also be providing an updated code of practice. It is planning to conduct a consultation shortly to enable it to understand how the practical implications of the judgment may be best reflected in the updated guidance.

NEWSLETTERS

Past Chairs and Governor Newsletters:

<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/school-governance-2/governors-newsletters/>

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