



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

January 2023

Dear chair

Blessings for the new term and a new year. I hope that over the festive period you were able to enjoy some well-deserved rest, relaxation and fun.

As we come to the start of another busy year, I would like take this opportunity on behalf of Bishop Alan, Father Stephen and Rob Simpson to thank you all for your significant contribution to the success of our Catholic schools.

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 aware, Catholic School Inspections in Brentwood begin again from 16 January 2023. [Documentation related to Catholic School Inspection](#) can be found on the diocesan website

The [link to the Catholic School Inspectorate website is here](#)

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.

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). If you are expecting the Catholic School Inspection (CSI) phone call the [CSI Checklist for Governors](#) is essential reading.

Religious Education Directory

The new RE Directory (RED) is currently being prepared for publication and is due for launch at the end of January 2023. Schools will have until the academic year 2025-2026 to fully implement this. In the meantime, schools compliance with the Directory will be measured against the requirements of RECD 2012.

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.

[Model Recruitment Documents & Guidance \(catholiceducation.org.uk\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk)

Please note that compliance with this guidance is a requirement in the model diocesan protocols on staffing and recruitment.

Secondment Guidance

Please see the Diocesan [guidance for Governing Bodies and Trusts when setting up a secondment agreement.](#)

Appointment and re-appointment of foundation governors

Following our recent audit of governing body membership, it has come to light that a small number of schools list foundation governors who have not been appointed or re-appointed by the Diocese.

Foundation governors are Diocesan appointments. They are appointed in the name of the Bishop and have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed.

Put simply, if a governor has not been appointed or reappointed by the Diocese they are **not** foundation governors.

Here is a reminder of the process that must be followed before foundation governors can be appointed or re-appointed at your school:

- A letter on headed paper requesting the appointment or re-appointment should be sent to Victoria Barnes at governanceappointments@dioceseofbrentwood.org
- This can be sent electronically but the letter *must* be on headed paper and be signed by the headteacher and chair
- Confirmation from the parish priest (primary schools) that they are in Victoria or you can ask her to do it for you
- A fully completed Disclosure Form for each appointment (or re-appointment) must accompany the letter sent to Victoria

Please remember that foundation governors can only stand as a foundation governor in any one school, for a *maximum period of 3 terms of office i.e. 12 years*; this is inclusive of any breaks between terms of office. **There can be no exception to this.**

If a foundation governor resigns, the letter of resignation should be sent for the attention of Victoria Barnes at governanceappointments@dioceseofbrentwood.org so we can update our records and thank the governor for their service to the school.

Church Marketplace- New Catholic Schools Energy Framework launched

Church Marketplace has launched their newest energy framework offering green, mixed and brown contracts as half hourly electricity, non-half hourly electricity, mains gas, biomass and oil supplies. Fully Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR15)

compliant, it is perfect for all Catholic schools, multi-academy trusts, colleges and universities.

Working together, they continue to strive, despite the present market challenges, to achieve energy decarbonisation of our Catholic schools. They have already achieved it with the vast majority of Catholic parishes and continue their work, started in 2017, to build a schools' buying group. [You can read more about the plan to go green here.](#)

Academy News

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) weekly updates
ESFA's [weekly updates](#) provide useful information for trusts.

Academies Planning Calendar 2022-2023

ESFA's planning calendar summarises [key dates and actions relating to academy funding, finance and trust compliance with their funding agreement](#)

Governor Development

Webinars

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](#)

NEW DATE: *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.](#)

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 26 April 2023 (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](#).

Face-to-Face Training

MAT Development Conference

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 shortly.

Clerks' Conference (Essex Clerks' Association)

The annual ECA Clerks' Conference has been arranged for **Thursday 11 May 2023** at the JobServe Community Stadium, Colchester from 9:00 until after lunch (which is included). This is a free event for clerks. Full details of the guest speaker and workshops will be circulated in due course but take the opportunity to mark the date in your diary and reserve a provisional place by sending 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.

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 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](#)

There are currently 200 active learners on Gift-ED with 5 governors completing all 7 courses.

Congratulations to the following governors who have completed at least 5 courses in the Gift-ED library and given permission for their names to be published:

Ann-Marie Born (all 7 courses) - **St Clare's Catholic Primary School, Clacton-on-Sea**

Nicholas Christie (all 7 courses) - **St Bonaventure's School, Forest Gate**

Deacon Tony Rowley (all 7 courses) - **Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Harlow**

Corinne Adams (7 courses) - **St Vincent's Catholic Primary School, Dagenham**

Sheila Underdown (6 courses) - **Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Harlow**

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 (debbibotham@dioceseofbrentwood.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.

Once you have appointed your new governor or trustee it is essential that you have an effective induction plan in place to welcome them into your school community and ensure they have the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The Diocese has developed a [model Induction checklist](#) which you are welcome to use or adapt as well as a comprehensive [jargon buster](#) to help new governors get to grips with key educational abbreviations and acronyms.

Safeguarding Update

Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts (DfE)

An important aspect of safeguarding, DfE has released a set of webinars to help schools and Multi-Academy Trusts to improve attendance and create an effective school-level attendance policy.

Watch the videos here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts>

Online Safety and Gaming

The use of the internet among young people is everywhere and as a new generation of young people start to use multiplayer games after Christmas, it is more important than ever to ensure pupils are aware of how to stay safe online.

How does your school teach pupils about online safety? The [SWGfL has published a pamphlet on how to best keep safe whilst using online software and games](#) and the Information Commissioners Office (the UK's information rights agency), has published [guidance on what to do when online relationships go wrong](#).

Swimming and Water Safety

Has your primary school reinstated swimming lessons post pandemic?

Swimming and water safety are [national curriculum requirements](#) and essential life skills. The national curriculum requirement is that by the end of key stage 2, pupils should be taught to:

- swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres
- use a range of strokes effectively, for example, front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke
- perform a safe self-rescue in different water-based situations

You can use the [PE and sport premium](#) to train staff to support high-quality swimming and water safety lessons for their pupils and to provide additional top-up swimming lessons to pupils who have not been able to meet the national curriculum requirements for swimming and water safety - after the delivery of core swimming and water safety lessons.

Ofsted News

Ofsted's annual report

[Ofsted's annual report](#) reveals an 'improving picture' in schools but has warned of the lasting impact of lost education on both achievement and mental or physical health. As summarised by HMCI, Amanda Spielman 'the attainment gaps in this summer's exam results show us the scale of the task that lies ahead'.

In addition to insight into inspections that have taken place, the report provides an overview on key concerns affecting the sector including support for pupils with SEND, teacher development and retention and pupil attendance and behaviour, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Ofsted also shared some of their upcoming work which includes the publication of a report around the re-inspection of previously exempt schools, MAT summary evaluations and the introduction of a new [SEND inspection framework](#).

Want to know more? A [brief precis of the findings can be found here](#).

Ofsted Careers Advice Review

The government has asked Ofsted to carry out a [year-long thematic review of careers guidance for young people](#) in schools, and to make recommendations to improve practice. The review is due to be published in the autumn of 2023 and will consider both mainstream and specialist settings. The review aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in careers provision to inform schools and policymakers and share good practice. As part of the review Ofsted will conduct research visits to a sample of schools in the spring and summer of 2023 and will include conversations with leaders and teachers.

DfE News

Schools Bill

Gillian Keegan, the Education Secretary, has announced the end of the Schools Bill passing through parliament.

However, DfE remains committed to the objectives of the Bill and has indicated that it will prioritise elements when formulating the legislative agenda going forward. This will include removing barriers for faith school joining trusts and creating a register of children not in school.

Supporting schools to be more energy efficient

DfE has announced £500m of additional [capital funding](#) to help state schools improve their energy efficiency. The [Get help buying for schools service](#) is designed to support schools to buy energy efficiently, from energy audits, to liquid fuels and mains gas and electricity. The service is free and designed to help schools or trusts secure greater value.

The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation

The government has updated and redeveloped guidance for schools around the [Prevent Duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation](#) together with a [self-assessment tool to help schools review their responsibilities under the Prevent duty](#). This self-assessment tool has been designed to assist schools in reviewing their Prevent related responsibilities. Use of the tool is not mandatory but contains both requirements and recommended good practice activities to meet those requirements. The tool should be read in conjunction with the Prevent duty guidance and the Education Inspection Framework (EIF)

Careers support for secondary pupils

Secondary governors please note:

From 1 January 2023, legislation came into force through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act making it a legal requirement for schools to ensure all year 8- 13 pupils have at least six opportunities to meet providers of approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships

Do you have a governor with a careers lead? How do you monitor the quality of careers support in your school?

[Statutory guidance for schools on providing careers guidance](#)

Latest Research

Preventing hair discrimination

New guidance on [preventing hair discrimination in schools](#) has been published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) following [research](#) that found discrimination related to hair or hairstyles disproportionately affects pupils with Afro-textured hair.

How often do you review school policies? Do you have a policy review timetable? Schools and trusts have a duty to ensure that all policies relating to hair or hairstyles are designed and implemented in a way that does not discriminate against pupils from certain groups.


Mental health and cost of living research

A recent briefing by [COVID Social Mobility & Opportunities \(COSMO\)](#) looked at mental health following the disruption caused by the pandemic. The study, led jointly by UCL and the Sutton Trust sampled almost 13,000 year 11 pupils in 2021 and found that poor mental health has increased by over a quarter since 2017, with 44% of young people aged 16 and 17 experiencing mental health problems.

The study also found that half of the pupils from comprehensive or grammar schools rated their school's mental health support as 'not very good' or 'not at all good' compared to just a quarter of those attending independent schools.

In addition, [new NHS data](#) shows pupils with poor mental health are three times more likely to miss lessons than their peers. The study found that 11.8% of children with a probable mental disorder lived in a household where they had not been able to buy enough food, or had to use a food bank, compared with 4.4% of those unlikely to have a mental disorder. The impact of the cost of living crisis on learning is a growing concern among teachers, according to a new [report](#) by the Sutton Trust. It found that 38% of teachers said a third or more of their classes were living in families facing considerable financial pressures which are impacting on children's ability to

succeed in school. A further 38% reported an increase in children coming into school hungry, with 17% saying there was an increase in families requesting referrals to foodbanks. Other concerns raised included an increase in pupils unable to concentrate or tired in class, more behaviour issues and more pupils coming into school without adequate winter clothing.

	<p>Reflect:</p> <p>Disadvantage in education is consistently reported as one of the biggest challenges that schools and trusts face. Having a clear focus on meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils, who may need additional support to fulfil their potential, is fundamental to raising standards for all pupils in your school/trust.</p> <p>Look beyond pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. How do you support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and vulnerable children, including looked after children and young carers?</p> <p>How does your school address pupil mental health and wellbeing? Is there access to independent counsellors? Are you able to ring fence a proportion of catch up funding for mental health support?</p>
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Thank you for all that you do for your school.

Wishing you every blessing in 2023.

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.