



Birmingham Diocesan Education Service

Newsletter April 2016



An Easter Reflection from Father Jonathan Veasey

Dear Colleagues in Catholic Education,

I am delighted to welcome you to the new edition of our Diocesan Education Service Newsletter which is filled with important information on the work of the DES as we lead and support the provision of Catholic education across the Archdiocese on behalf of Archbishop Bernard Longley.

We continue to rejoice in the Season of Easter and this year we celebrate the season in the context of the Year of Mercy. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has invited the Church to embrace the opportunity of this jubilee to encounter the great mercy of God for us. The work of Catholic education is indeed a work of mercy. It strives to offer young people the opportunity to grow in their dignity as children of God, and to respond to Christ's call to

become the people they are meant to be. This is the framework within which the educational project of a Catholic school is situated.

We are constantly aware of the many challenges that children and young people face today growing up in an advancing secular culture. Many of them can lack what is essential for human flourishing and need all that we can provide for their intellectual, spiritual, moral and social formation. Our Catholic school communities should be places where Jesus Christ is readily found as the heartbeat of our work. I thank you for the opportunities that you have been taking to present the Year of Mercy as a time of renewal in our faith as we find in Jesus Christ the compassion and merciful love of God. Many of our schools have taken part, or will take part in pilgrimages to St. Chad's Cathedral or to other jubilee churches with a Holy Door for the Year of Mercy. These are indeed great opportunities to grow in faith and also commit ourselves to living out the great corporal and spiritual works of mercy in our lives.

This year our Catholic School Leadership Conference which is being held on Friday 17th June at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham is closely focused on the links between the Year of Mercy and leading a Catholic school. It will provide valuable insights for all of our school leaders. I look forward to welcoming many of you to this Conference.

In this newsletter you will find a welcome from our new Director of Education, Adam Hardy and much guidance from the DES team which I hope helps you continue the great work of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese.

As we now continue our Easter journey towards Pentecost, may the Holy Spirit strengthen you in your work.





A Message from the Director of Education - Adam Hardy

We will be using this newsletter as our means of communicating with headteachers, governors and directors in all of our schools across the Archdiocese of Birmingham. In these times of change within our education system it is essential that we keep our schools well informed and regularly updated.

You will notice that there will be information on all the different aspects of the DES role. We are seeking to develop and improve the service that we offer our schools across the archdiocese and communication will be a vital part of this process. With this in mind I would encourage you to take time to visit the updated DES [website](#) which provides the latest detailed information on our work. In future whenever possible we will be using the website to provide information to our schools.

We will be sending out a newsletter regularly throughout the year as a useful reminder of the current work we are undertaking and any significant developments that you need to be aware of.

In our next edition we hope to be able to let you know about key changes to our staff and our plans for the next academic year.



RE and Catholic Life

Primary RE

The DES was delighted to recently welcome Rebecca Brolly as a new adviser for the Primary Team. She has already visited several schools and will be able to meet more of you in the summer term.

The cluster group meetings took place during March, and further information on resources handed out at these meetings can be found [here](#).

Changes to the Rite of Confirmation

The Church has been going through the process of revising its translations of all liturgies, with changes to the Rite of Confirmation having been introduced at the Easter Vigil this year.

Please find on the [website](#) further information regarding these changes, which need to be shared with all Yr 6 teachers and catechists.

INSET- Sacrament of Confirmation (Birmingham Catholic Primary Partnership)

Please note all bookings and queries through BCPP.

Non-partnership schools: DBH Wed 18 May, Tillington Hall Fri 10 June, Woodland Grange Mon 20 June

Please refer to the [website](#) for dates of the Summer Cluster Group Meetings.

Secondary RE

A busy spring term has involved developments and activities affecting all levels of secondary education. The [website](#) contains further information on:

1. GCSE curricula among different exam boards
 2. A Level curricula
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3. Judaism- our schools' second religion
4. *People of God, Called to Serve*, The new Key Stage 3 framework
5. Spring PICCLS [partnership](#) meetings
6. The Sherrington Hollins working party

School Improvement

Teaching Schools

We are pleased to report ongoing progress in relation to the development of Teaching Schools with a strong Catholic character in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. 14 of our institutions have now obtained Teaching School status.

The key areas for which Teaching Schools offer support to schools are:

- School standards in teaching and learning
- Planning and leadership development
- Teacher training
- Action research projects

For further information on the activities of our 14 Teaching Schools, please go to our [website](#).

National Leaders of Education

Congratulations also to **Mark Hinton** (St Joseph's, Dudley), **Ian Beardmore** (Our Lady of Grace, Stoke-on-Trent) and **Helena Cusack** (St Mary's, Harborne), all of whom have recently been designated **National Leaders of Education** (NLEs). For a full list of NLEs in the Archdiocese, see our [website](#).

Academies

In accordance with our Mission of securing, protecting and improving Catholic Education across the Archdiocese of Birmingham, the Diocesan Education Service has continued to reflect on and support organisational structures which protect our schools for the future. There are currently 17 Multi-Academy Companies (MACs) in operation, consisting in total of 93 Academies. Some key information on these MACs is now included on our [website](#) and this includes:

- Monthly update on MACs, their formation and location
- Overview presentation on MACs in the Archdiocese
- Presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors
- Presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Academy Committee

The current position of the Archdiocese is that we will continue to support all our schools, whether they are in a MAC or not. In light of recent Government announcements on academies, we will continue to review our policy and directives in order to be in the best position to strategically protect and support all of our schools. The Catholic Education Service (CES) is currently considering a public statement on academies and we will be working closely with the CES to align our support accordingly.

Admissions and Governance

School Admissions

If you have not done so already, the school's determined admission policy for the academic year 2017/2018 must be sent to the Diocese to r.tonks@bdes.org.uk and to the local authority's school admissions team immediately.

All schools must have, by now, published the 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 admission policies on their website. All other versions of admission policies should be removed from websites.

The above are requirements of the School Admissions Code. Please make sure that your school has done all of the above so that you are not in breach of the Code.

If you require any further advice or guidance on school admissions, please check our website.

Governance

Application forms and documents for foundation governor positions are now available on our [website](#).

Leadership

During this summer term, school leaders across the Archdiocese can look forward to a day of spiritual renewal at our Annual Leadership Conference, which takes place on Friday 17th June at the ICC in Birmingham. Further details of the event can be found on our [website](#).

School Leaders are also actively encouraged to take 'time out' for spiritual nourishment by attending the 5th Annual Headteachers' National Retreat on the 23-24 June at Coombe Abbey Hotel, Coventry . This retreat is being organised by EducareM.

In accordance with a key DES priority, we are also continuing to develop leadership training opportunities for newly appointed Headteachers, and Deputy Headteachers. For information on DES plans for leadership in the future, please click [here](#).



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Diocesan Education Service





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