



Birmingham Diocesan Education Service Newsletter

An Easter Message from Fr Jonathan

Dear Colleagues in Catholic education

Christ is risen!

During the Easter Season the Church joyfully proclaims this message, which is at the heart of our Catholic Faith. It prompts us to remember that if Christ had not been raised from the dead there would be no point in our proclaiming the Gospel and our apostolic work of education would have no real meaning. But Christ has been raised from the dead and he has restored us to life. He promises us the gift of eternal life and calls us to live this life on earth to the full. He is the cornerstone of everything we build, alive in the gift of the Holy Spirit we are able to live as His disciples. As Catholic educators this must be our constant message and the reason that drives us forward to provide the best possible Catholic education. If we lose sight of the Risen Christ and His call to live life to the full with Him, then our mission becomes empty and meaningless.

Eastertide provides us with a wonderful opportunity to turn again to the Risen Lord and to welcome his presence in our lives. It is a great moment to rededicate ourselves to being active disciples of Christ and to call others to share in His life.

This term we will look forward to our Leadership Conference at the ICC on Friday 30th June. It will be a day with inspiring speakers and opportunities to reflect on our mission as a family of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

This term we will celebrate the Solemnity of SS Peter and Paul on Thursday 29th June. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. It is the expectation that on Holy Days of Obligation there are opportunities for school communities to celebrate Mass together. I am also conscious that there may well be a need for Vigil Masses to be celebrated on the previous day. This will also apply to the Solemnity of All Saints that will be celebrated on November 1st.

Thank you for your commitment to the work of Catholic education. Please be assured on my prayers and best wishes for you and the school communities that you serve.

Fr. Jonathan Veasey
Director
Diocesan Education Service

Important Updates on the Diocesan Academy Strategy

During the last term DES Officers have been engaged with over 100 Schools and almost 400 Governors in discussions/briefings/information evenings on the Diocesan Academy Strategy and what it means to become Academy Ready. These discussions are supporting Schools to understand the local context and what it means in terms of moving forward.

Submission from Chairs

A recent email has been sent to all chairs to notify them that the Academy Strategy Form is now ready for completion and submission by **31/5/17**.

It must be completed by the **chair of governors or chair of the board**, with the support of the Headteacher or Principal Accounting Officer where necessary and can be found on the website at the top of the home page listed as the 'Academy Strategy Form': <http://www.bdes.org.uk/>

Academy Project Manager

The DES is pleased to welcome the support of Mark O'Connell as the Academy Project Manager who will be working for the DES in supporting schools through the conversion process as part of the Diocesan Academy Strategy. Any groups of schools seeking his advice or support can contact him through the DES offices by phone or by emailing him at: academies@bdes.org.uk

Due Diligence Guidance

This is now available on the DES website at: <http://www.bdes.org.uk/academies.html>
Any further help with the due diligence process is available by contacting John Dwyer at the DES.

Submission for Approval

There are now a number of schools that are wanting to move forward with the academy conversion process. When ready to do so the chair and the headteacher need to submit a form for approval by the DES. This is available on the website at: <http://www.bdes.org.uk/academies.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

A comprehensive list of questions with answers about academies and the conversion process and all aspects of the Diocesan Academy Strategy is available on the website from Monday 15 May at <http://www.bdes.org.uk/academies.html>

We would recommend that all headteachers and governors take time to have a look at these.

DES Services

We would encourage you to look at the updated list of services now offered by the DES on the home page of the website by following the link: <http://www.bdes.org.uk/> These services are provided to all schools as part of the DES annual charge.

Forthcoming Events and Training

All future bookings for all events and training will be listed on our website from Monday 15th May at: <http://www.bdes.org.uk/forthcoming-events-and-training.html>

This will include all the details of the event including suitable audience, date, venue, times, content and presenter along with the online booking form.

Please note that these events will be open to all diocesan schools regardless of what part of the diocese they are in or whether they are VA or academy. This will allow a greater freedom for schools to choose dates and venues that are convenient for them, and allow different schools from different parts of the diocese to meet and work together on these days.

Please note that in future all training and events will be organised and delivered by the DES for all schools and academies. The cost for all training and events is included in the DES annual charge.

DES Annual Charge

We can inform you that there will be no change to the DES annual charge to schools for the next two years. This should help all schools with their budget planning over the forthcoming years.

Please ensure that your school has completed the form for next year's DES annual charge by using the following link:

<http://w.pfrms.co/q0ufo>

MACs that wish to explore payment on a monthly basis may contact the DES finance department directly to discuss this option further.

Strategic Partners

The DES is continuing to develop a list of strategic partners covering a wide range of services and educational resources for schools which are now available on our website by following the link:

<http://www.bdes.org.uk/des-partners.html>

HR Training for Governors and Headteachers

As mentioned at the recent headteacher briefings, we will be offering a programme of training for headteachers and governors on a regular basis throughout the next academic year on all aspects of HR including all the CES policies and procedures being used by schools and academies. This will be delivered by HR professionals experienced in working with Catholic schools and with the Catholic documentation. Dates and venues for these training sessions will be published on our website shortly. The cost of this training is included in the DES annual charge.

RE and Catholic Life

Primary Update

Last term we focused on the suite of documents available from the CES on RSE which are available from their website. The audit tool for primary schools in the Archdiocese is available on re-live. Since we met the Bishops' Conference have published their document 'Learning to Love' which should be used in conjunction with all the other materials. This can be downloaded from their website

<http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications>

An introduction to Godly Play has been shared with the RE subject leaders. More information about this inspirational way of sharing Scripture can be found on re-live.

The Cluster Group Meetings will be taking place throughout June. Please check the website for dates, venues and time. We will be setting dates for next year at these meetings so please remember to bring your diary with you. <http://www.bdes.org.uk/cluster-groups.html>

Day 3 of the 3-Day Induction Course for NQTs are now taking place across the Diocese. Their enthusiasm and dedication is most heartening to see. It would be useful for RE subject leaders/mentors to go through the Induction Checklist with them. <http://www.bdes.org.uk/primary.html>

Dealing with Death in School

Following the recent headteacher briefings we will be arranging a half day training for headteachers on dealing with death within the Catholic school community. This will be arranged for later this term and details will be sent out to all headteachers in due course. Further information to follow.

Secondary Update

RE Partnership Meetings

The final RE partnership meetings of this academic year are due to take place this term. For the dates of the meetings please see below.

23/05/17 – Coventry and Area RE Partnership at Cardinal Newman, Coventry

25/05/17 – South Diocese RE Partnership at Blessed Edward Oldcorne, Worcs

06/06/17 – Stafford RE Partnership at Blessed William Howard, Stafford

07/06/17 – Birmingham RE Partnership at DBH, Coleshill

08/06/17 – Oxford RE Partnership at Blessed George Napier, Banbury

14/06/17 – Blackcountry RE Partnership at Stuart Bathurst, Wednesbury

In addition to these partnership meetings the final RE conference will take place at Don Bosco House as detailed below. This is an extremely important meeting as the diocese continues to provide INSET to enable RE departments to meet the demands of the new RE GCSE and A Level specifications.

22/06/17 – Heads of RE Conference at DBH, Coleshill

Leadership and School Improvement

Headteacher Briefings

Our next headteacher briefing days will be later this term, please choose one of the dates to attend:

Monday 19 June 2017

Wednesday 21 June 2017

Friday 23 June 2017

Monday 26 June 2017

And complete the following booking form which is currently on the home page of our website:

<http://w.pfrms.co/hcu7w>

Annual Leadership Conference for Heads and Chairs at the ICC on Friday 30 June 2017

All headteachers should by now have booked a place for themselves on the conference and invited their chair to attend with them. The theme of the Conference is ‘Putting into the Deep.’ The call and challenge of Catholic Education in today’s Church. We very much look forward to seeing you there. Further details about the conference will be forwarded to all those attending in June.

Bookings for the conference have now closed.

If you have not managed to secure a place and wish to attend please contact Jane Hatton in our offices on 01675 464755 extn 117

Please note that we will be unable to admit anyone who has not booked a place prior to the event.

S48 Inspections

All the latest information on Section 48 inspections including training, documents and the latest updates to the inspection framework can be found at: <http://www.bdes.org.uk/section-48.html>

Finance and Building

Insurance Update

We are pleased that both academies and VA schools are now reviewing their insurance providers (RPA for academies, D E Ford or Solihull MBC for VA schools) to ensure that they are achieving best value and many are making substantial savings.

Additional Funding for Schools

Schools should check for regular additional funding updates on our home page at:

<http://www.bdes.org.uk/>

Assistance with sources of funding and checking bids can be sought from Steve Baylis at

steve.baylis@rc-birmingham.org

Editor's Note:

This email has been sent to heads and principals, and to chairs and clerks of governing boards. Email addresses and personnel are continuously changing, so I would be grateful if heads and principals could check that their chair has received this and vice versa. Please contact me if you discover someone has not received this and give me their correct email address.

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