

Date: 11th May 2018

To: **Chairs of Boards of Directors and Governing Bodies, Accounting Officers and Headteachers in the Archdiocese of Birmingham**

Dear Leaders in Catholic education,

I am very pleased to publish on behalf of the Diocesan Education Service the consultation documents on the proposal for the appointment of Catholic Senior Executive Leaders to Multi Academy Companies in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

At a recent gathering of Chairs of MACs, I quoted some of the prophetic words of Pope John Paul II to the Bishops of England and Wales during their Ad Limina Visit to Rome in 1992.

“To those who question the continuation of a distinct Catholic school system, the Catholics of England must not fail to respond with clear and well-founded arguments, in order to raise the level of debate about education, to explain the Catholic point of view and to insist on the preservation of your schools as part of the exercise of religious liberty. While the cost of maintaining these schools is high, it must be recognized that they provide an incalculable service to the common good. In them, pupils learn to evaluate the affairs of the nation and the world in the light of that moral law which is the foundation of civic peace. They are taught that in playing out their particular roles in society they should act justly, temperately and courageously. The Catholic school is a witness to the truth that genuine education seeks to do more than simply impart knowledge, or train people to perform an economically productive task. All education worthy of the name seeks to bring forth as it were a full person, a person in whom moral excellence is no less developed than are theoretical or productive abilities.”

It is incredible to think that these words were spoken 26 years ago, and they are so relevant to the challenges that we face today. The Church has a moral duty to secure, protect and improve Catholic education and the establishment of Multi Academy Companies across the Archdiocese is the infrastructure which the Archbishop and Trustees have decided will be in place to achieve this for the long-term future. We treasure every school community that makes up our family of schools across the Archdiocese and the contributions that are being made at many different levels to secure their mission and purpose.

We have gained a much richer perspective on the needs of our diverse community of schools and academies since embarking on the journey towards embracing every one of our schools within the supportive environment of a strong Multi Academy Company (MAC). We have also seen at a national and international level what can happen when there isn't a united, collaborative approach taken. Collaboration doesn't mean we don't share the benefits of our diverse experiences and individual context and histories, but we use these to inform our debate and future collective efforts. We hold on to the key principles of solidarity and subsidiarity.

It is with this sentiment that I write to you all as Catholic leaders, crucial in sustaining and improving our treasured Catholic education provision, to engage you in developing an important aspect of our Diocesan Academy Strategy as we move into the future and that is achieving effective executive leadership as part of robust governance and accountability structures within our multi academy structures.

To this end, we have commissioned a research project to collect and review good practice in executive leadership, acknowledging the increasingly aggressive accountability faced by multi academies, with a view to the development of a role description and person specification of the 'CEO' or Catholic Senior Executive Leader.

The case for the need of such a post has been clearly set out. We have heard from our own existing MACs that they could benefit from enhanced clarity of executive accountabilities and we have had strong encouragement from external bodies to do so.

You will find further contextual information, references, and the proposed model role description and person specification on the DES 'MAC Executive Leadership' webpage [<http://www.bdes.org.uk/mac-executive-leadership.html>]. I would ask you to take some time to review this information.

It is becoming an increasing necessity for all MACs to introduce the role of a Catholic Senior Executive Leader in the short to medium term. However, it is understood that there will be several practicalities that will need to be addressed and that further thought, and engagement is required. A range of areas for further development have been identified and are set out in the contextual information available on the above webpage.

At this stage in development, we hope to harness the significant experience, expertise, and innovative ideas by our leaders across the Diocese. I am requesting that you review the information available as well as the provisional role description and person specification.

We are asking any feedback to be provided through a web form <http://w.pfrms.co/6f5o8> by 11 June 2018 to ensure that it is fully captured and reflected in the consideration as to how developments are progressed. You will see through the form you can also state whether you would be happy to be contacted to discuss these developments further.

Many thanks to all of those that have engaged already in discussions to move forward these developments. The faith, time and commitment that has already been contributed to securing the future of our Catholic schools is not underestimated nor is that which will be required in the future. As we work together to fulfil our mission in whatever vocation we are called to serve, we do this mindful of each and every child whose future is in our care and stewardship.

Yours sincerely,



Fr. Jonathan Veasey
Director Diocesan Education Service
Archdiocese of Birmingham