



Report of the Meeting of the Education Committee

Venue: St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley

Date: 29th November 2023 10.45 am–12.45 pm

Attendance

Members: Rt Rev Richard Moth (+RM), Rev Mgr Canon Tony Barry (MgrTB) (Chair), Pete Byrne (PB), Sarah Clayton (SCLay), Sarah Conrad (SCon), Maria Cowler (MC), Joe Davies (JD), Michael Ferry (MFer), Margaret Fraher (MFra), Sarah Kilmartin (SK), Tamsyn Lawlor (TL), John Lydon (JL), Rev Canon Tim Madeley (CanTM), Julie Oldroyd (JO), Simon Parr (SP) (Secretary), Steve Tindall (ST)

1. Opening Prayer and Apologies for Absence

+RM led the opening prayer. Apologies for absence had been received from Annie Sutton (AS).

2. Disclosures by members of personal or prejudicial interests in matters on the agenda

There were no disclosures.

3. Report of the meeting of 7 June 2023 and matters arising

The report of the 7 June 2023 meeting of the Diocesan Education Committee was accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising.

4. School Standards

MC provided a presentation covering a number of school standard areas and took any questions and comments from members.

Ofsted – following a break/the Covid era, Ofsted has returned to data leading their inspection enquiry points. Currently 98.4% of A & B schools are Good or Outstanding with one school Requiring Improvement. This position is significantly ahead of national outcomes (88% of schools are Good or Outstanding). It is important to be aware of the school's contextual situation e.g. the percentage of children with English as an additional language is higher in the

diocese than nationally, but deprivation and free school meal levels, in general, are lower. Contexts also change across the diocese.

Attainment – A & B primary schools are achieving better than nationally, with Xavier schools some way ahead of national levels and Bosco schools (in more challenging areas) achieving at approximately the same level as nationally.

Progress – A & B primary schools are generally above national levels; it is only in writing in some Bosco and VA schools where they fall below national levels. There are associated reasons for schools not performing, for example around the increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs and disability, and the number of associated staff available (links back to budgets and some of the schools finding it hard to recruit). Importantly, LAs are not raising concerns regarding our schools. Committee members understood that ‘real progress’ is not necessarily what appears in the tables/raw data.

At secondary, attainment in A & B at KS4 is generally higher than nationally. While a few A & B schools have below-national indicators regarding Ebacc, the context was again important. Some schools had made deliberate decisions (allowing access but not to mandate) and these affected the EBacc percentages. Schools have this decision scrutinised by Ofsted.

In terms of specific subjects, RE is closely monitored. Attainment and progress across the diocese is significantly above national levels. Two secondary schools were historically non-compliant with Bishops’ Conference requirements but are in the process of changing specifications. For KS5, the DES currently cannot access the full data set. However, the unvalidated data through the schools themselves continue to show excellent results across all A & B secondary schools.

CSI – Current CSI scores show opposite ratios to Ofsted scores in terms of Good and Outstanding (CSI: 67% Outstanding and 33% Good; Ofsted: 21% Outstanding and 77% Good). The new CSI framework is designed to ensure that inspections are sufficiently robust and carried out along the lines of Ofsted inspections. Schools have been informed which academic year that can expect a CSI inspection. This term two schools have been inspected and have their reports (St Francis and St Thomas a Becket). Both were judged Good. St Augustine’s has been inspected and is going through a quality assurance process). A fourth school, St Philip Howard in Barnham, is currently in the middle of their inspection. It is early days in A & B but nationally there has been, as expected, a shift of judgements (from Outstanding to Good). Nationally, the distribution curve is now more closely aligned to Ofsted inspections.

5. Recruitment and Retention

JO gave a presentation on this item. This subject was discussed by the Committee last year but the situation has not greatly improved; it remains a long-term concern for schools. Only half of the required number of trainee secondary school teachers in England had been

recruited by September 2023. Numbers in almost all subjects are below the Government recruitment target. The intense shortages are having an impact. JO referenced a June 2023 Teacher Tapp and SchoolDash report where key findings included:

- Job vacancy advertisements in secondary schools have grown by another 12%;
- Half of secondary leaders couldn't interview any candidates, due to weak fields;
- Fewer senior leaders now aspire to become headteachers (43% vs 56% pre pandemic);
- Half of primary teachers said at least one class in school were being taught by a temporary agency teacher;
- Science departments are still struggling with 33% saying GCSE science classes are being delivered by non-specialist teachers.

To tackle the undersupply, the DfE announced financial incentives with a focus on the highest-priority STEM subjects. There is concern that this has not had a significant impact and an inquiry is underway looking at the DfE actions, including specific reforms. It is hard to be optimistic as it appears to be a long-term trend rather than a blip. Teaching is not now a career of choice for young people, particularly with more flexible working available in other sectors. Perceptions are not helped by one-sided reporting from some media outlets.

Retention is particularly difficult for small schools due to financial constraints. Schools risk losing really good people. A number of examples were given, such as the impact of teachers going through the threshold. Sadly, decisions are being made based on the balance sheet rather than the best education for children. This situation similarly applies to support staff. There is also a shift in the influence of agencies. JO outlined what Aquinas can offer, particularly as they are now working with Teach Southeast and are also positioning themselves as a recruitment agency specialising in the Catholic sector. Aquinas will attend the next School Leaders' Conference.

JO provided an overview of recruitment to reserved posts in the diocese. A trend was emerging around the number of Head of School and Executive Headteacher positions. This would indicate that the CET support for leadership models is working.

For secondary RE recruitment, training and supply, there is a similar situation with plenty of posts being advertised. The movement to more joined-up thinking with CETs is one development to address this. Another is the development of hub-working (CES' 'Formatio') and a 'One Church strategy'.

JO sought the views of the Committee in developing three particular workstreams:

- 1) Internship programme. Currently run by Teach Southeast, bursaries (e.g. for Maths) come from the DfE. The DES would like to develop for RE a 2 or 3 week internship for second/third year university students to go into our schools. A mechanism for funding needs to be found. While unlikely to match DfE bursaries it should at least be able to cover expenses.
- 2) Develop the current offer of a 2-day course for KS3 non-specialist RE teachers at Salesian

and possibly accredit that training at St Mary's.

3) Career converters – an untapped resource. Could possibly do this through parishes etc.

Feedback from the Committee included:

- St Mary's has a well-established scheme called 'Subject Knowledge Enhancement'. JL agreed to send information on this through to the DES;
- Should try to ensure that people who engage in these training courses actually come forward/apply for the applicable vacancies;
- Develop/facilitate opportunities for secondments - Identify which schools can offer this and ensure governors are aware of both the opportunities and potential impact;
- There were some doubts as to whether the career converter programme would work without a significant bursary. It was agreed that more research was needed;
- There is a need to also develop applicable programmes for primary.

6. DES Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2023-26

A copy of the latest SDP 2023-26 had been distributed prior to the meeting. Since the last meeting further details had been added to the workflow. From the previous agenda item, further details will also be added regarding the three specific workstreams.

Six key areas of the SDP are linked to the main reporting indicators (Leadership; Governance; Catholic Life and Mission/RE; Standards; Finance and Estates; Place Planning and Admissions. Performance Management is also cohesively linked to the SDP. A performance management cycle has just been completed by the DES and targets set (both an individual target related to a work area, and one related to the SDP).

JO invited comments/questions. The Committee agreed there was a suitable mix.

7. Diocesan Education Service Updates

- a. Catholic Schools Inspectorate – As reported above, there have been four inspections this term. The National framework has not lightened the load on dioceses; on the contrary it has significantly increased in terms of management, organisation, oversight, and quality assurance. MC and CSI Coordinator, Catherine Burnham, have done a significant amount of work to get this up to speed. Letters about the levy are going out to schools shortly. Schools know the year they will be inspected and focus visits are timed accordingly. CPD is ongoing, including self-evaluation for schools (covering e.g. the focus being on impact and documents limited in size), and for inspectors. Training has been very well attended.
- b. St Pancras – The East Sussex Lead Member confirmed this month that the school would close on 31 August 2024. All assistance from the DES and East Sussex is being given to the school to make the process as well managed as it can be for the remaining children/staff.
- c. Academy Trust growth continues – St Cuthbert's and St Joseph's Guildford will convert on 1 December 2023. St Robert Southwell has got an academy order. The process for St

Joseph's Redhill and St Francis is ongoing. The anticipation is that they go to the Advisory Board early in 2024. CET CEOs and JO are due to meet the Regional Director (RD) next term to discuss CET growth plans.

- d. West Sussex has confirmed that St Oscar Romero can open a new sixth form. PB was congratulated for his and the school's work to successfully achieve this good news.
- e. RE Directory – The bishops met the week before last. Delay until September 2026 compliance for primary schools was agreed. Secondary school compliance remains at 2025. Anna Flood and Emma Sharp have produced resources and are leading training for Years 1 and 6. A & B has shared resources with some other dioceses and have started liaising with a national resource provider. Dave Legrand is currently leading Year 8 training. All training has been well attended. Margaret Carswell's training (embedding scripture) was particularly well received.
- f. Prayer & Liturgy Directory – Members of the DES and Formation teams attended national training in October. The revised document has a different tone to the consultation version. Compliance is September 2025 which has an implication for those being inspected from 2025-26 onwards. There will be 4 briefings in spring term. The DES is working to ensure that schools are well supported to embed the Directory and are fully aware of the workload for schools with this alongside CSIs and the RED. A key action will be the identification of a P & L Coordinator in every school. +RM made reference to the new lectionary. This is going to print after Easter and be available in October. It will need to be used by next Advent. The DES will explore if it will be possible to source funding so that every school can have a copy.
- g. RSE – This is an area that continues to challenge schools given that the DfE guidance is still awaited. A group of secondary RSE leads have started meeting termly to share best practice and resources. They have raised that Ten:Ten resources are currently insufficient for secondary schools. Ten:Ten will be speaking at the annual RSE Conference in March and will present their new secondary resources then. They will also explain their approach and rationale around LGBTQ+. The DES and Ten:Ten want a two-way conversation to ensure resources are useful and relevant to secondary students. Primary resources are generally well received.
- h. School Leaders' Conference – This year the School Leaders' Day is a day of reflection, led by Fr Luiz Ruscillo. Next year, for enhanced networking, it will be an overnight conference (lunchtime to lunchtime) on 28-29 November 2024. The invited speaker is Raymond Friel. The theme will be Catholic Life & Mission with a focus on Catholic Social Teaching.
- i. Puer Iesus College – JO and +RM have been looking at this organisation that promotes itself as a Catholic school for those wanting to home educate. There are number of potential risks around this. JO has sought advice from the CES and will visit this term and seek to answer three initial fundamental questions:
 - Are they a 'school' pursuant to English law, or an out of school setting?
 - How are they regulated, for example regarding safeguarding?
 - Are they a Catholic school in canonical terms?

- j. Team news – Now 14 members with three seconded posts, two choral directors and an Education Service Administrator. Ann Baldwin has returned on reduced hours (0.6). SP retires at the end of February - recruitment is ongoing, with interviews next week. A 'connected' team event has been organised at Wintershall in December. Mgr TB asked members to keep Peter Hutley (founder) in their prayers. Peter died in November 2023.

8. **Meeting date for the Education Committee – Autumn 2024**

The Autumn 2024 meeting date was agreed for:

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| Autumn 2024 | Wednesday 20 November 2024 | 10.45am–12.45pm | SPHC |
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The next two meetings of the Committee (previously agreed) are scheduled for:

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| Spring 2024 | Wednesday 20 March 2024 | 10.45am–12.45pm | SPHC |
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| Summer 2024 | Wednesday 5 June 2024 | 10.45am–12.45pm | SPHC |
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9. **Any Other Business**

- i) As it was his last meeting as Secretary to the Committee, SP was thanked for his service to the Committee and to the DES. MgrTB referenced his legacy of developing, in a digital form, the boundaries of the parishes and deaneries of the Diocese. Linked to this he was presented with a gift from the Committee. SP was very appreciative and thanked the Committee for their kindness.