



REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Venue: St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley

Date: 26 March 2025, 10.45am–12.45pm

Attendance

Members: Rev Mgr Canon Tony Barry (MgrTB) (Chair), Sarah Clayton (SC) *arrived 11:10am*,

Tom Collins (TC), Maria Cowler (MC), Finula Farr (FC), Michael Ferry (MF),
Dcn John Harman (DcnJH), Professor John Lydon (JL), Rev Canon Tim Madeley (CanTM),
Rt Rev. Richard Moth (+R), Julie Oldroyd (JO)

Teresa McNamara (TMcN) (in attendance) Tamsin Connick (Secretary)

1. Opening Prayer and Apologies for Absence

+R led the opening prayer.

Apologies for absence were received from Deborah Bligh (DB,) Pete Byrne (PB), Joe Davies (JD),
Sarah Kilmartin (SK), 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 20 November 2024 and matters arising

The report of the 20 November 2024 meeting of the Diocesan Education Committee was accepted as a true record.

There were no other matters arising not already covered in the agenda.

4. Governor Recruitment and Training

MC outlined the current governor recruitment and training provision that the Education Service offers (see accompanying slides)

- Governor application forms have been updated in line with CES guidance and will now feed into the DES management system. The DES can see the minutes from all academies on Governor Hub, and receive them from Clerks of VA schools so transparency is in place.
- DBS element has changed this year. The DBS for foundation governors now falls under the diocese workflow. This was a little bumpy to begin with as there is a lot to process, all but two schools now have someone who can verify identification.
- DES has worked hard to ensure potential governors understand the role and what it entails. They have to complete the code of conduct module on Anspear before +R appoints them. +R confirmed this is not just a rubber-stamping exercise, he personally processes all these appointments and checks / follows up if a Parish Priest raises any concern.
- Challenge of recruiting foundation governors. We are not alone as a diocese in needing to keep communicating the definition of “practising Catholic”. Some governors are willing to serve on more than one board to help fill vacancies in schools, but it is key to cap at two terms of office only unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- +R queried what the statutory ceiling is? Does the ceiling of being a governor at a maximum of three schools still exist and if so, is it across all committees?

JO responded that we suggest no more than two schools is acceptable given the workload involved.

- JO explained there will be a piece of work to do as schools academise, and governing boards reconstitute. Discussion around what the new scheme of delegation looks like at

Trust board level. Understanding of what sits at Trust board level and what sits at local level. The CES are working on re-drafting the SoD.

- JH commented that if finance/legal oversight moved to a higher skill set at Trust level and LGC's focused more on Catholic Life and Mission, this could be beneficial.

JO responded that there is a feedback loop for LGC back to Trust too, as there is a responsibility to hold the Trust to account. Xavier new model is in its infancy for the Trust, but the governance model could mirror that.

- MC presented Anspear data (see accompanying slides)
Anspear is bespoke for the Diocese, we have introduced an annual update for COG which has been very effective, and this will continue next academic year.
- Preparation for Ofsted is still in Anspear but we feel this might be better coming from the Local Authorities/Trusts moving forward. This is an important discussion for the DES, to establish which elements sit with us and which with schools/LA/Trusts.

Discussion took place:

- TC commented that as a Headteacher he would look to the Diocese to prepare him for CSI but not particularly for Ofsted.
- JL asked how this information is disseminated to individual governors?
- MC replied we are mindful of GDPR so it is mainly through Alpha Beta, the next addition of Alpha Beta we are hoping to hyperlink for reference. Clerks distribute the Alpha Beta to governors, distribution is mandatory not optional. MC adds it to Governor Hub.
- JO explained that the DES have tried to ensure Alpha Beta is the main communication channel so that schools do not receive lots of "drip feed" emails going out.
- Mgr Tony commented there was an opportunity for developing the link from +R to governors, perhaps +R could find space in the code of conduct to say that all governors will be given a school email and they must only use this. Providing clear guidance as to the requirement to read the Alpha Beta.

5. Chaplaincy Provision in School's (see accompanying slides)

Teresa McNamara provided some background on how she had started in Chaplaincy, explaining that she has now been at St Philip Howard, Barnham for the last 9 years. This year she is seconded to a post with the DES as Chaplaincy Co-ordinator for Schools. She is also working with Bosco, across SPH & St Pauls, looking at how to support the schools within the Trust & to develop Bosco's model of Chaplaincy teams.

- Fr Stephen Ortiger provided a very strong foundation for Chaplaincy within A&B diocese. We are therefore in a healthy situation in secondary schools within the diocese, in that most have a chaplaincy provision.
- In primary schools many staff are already filling the gap (LSA's, DHT'S) but do not have the job title of Chaplain, or fundamental understanding/training. The qualifications / experience is different for every Chaplain in the diocese.
- Chaplaincy apprenticeship through St Mary's is a real opportunity for formation, all apprentices are supernumerary to the structure, they don't fill a chaplaincy vacancy until qualified and are fully supported until then.
- +R enquired what the cost of the apprenticeship course through St Mary's is?
- JL will obtain the answer from St Mary's. TMcN explained that if a school is paying into the Trust apprenticeship levy, they will already be covered cost wise for the apprenticeship. However, if a school is stand-alone they will have to find this themselves.
- TMcN noted that we must ensure the Pastoral Plan is done well and fully, not just quickly.

Discussion around things to consider/potential barriers to developing a chaplaincy model across the diocese:

- TMcN - There are currently no set pay scales/bands thus meaning no consistency; should we tackle this? There is a challenge, balancing the pastoral side in relation to this.
- JO stated that Nottingham Diocese have been working on this, looking at what the chaplaincy structure should be like for Trusts, CPD, and pay grades reflecting qualifications. Earlier slide spoke about professionalism, for example someone moving from one school to another. Differences are already apparent especially in some secondary schools,

implementing new scales could potentially disrupt the equilibrium we currently have. The reality is the diocese can give guidance but does not have the capacity to fund it.

- MF stated that implementing set pay scales could mean a potential issue with pay awards. Smaller schools would not cope with the financial pressure.
- +R commented that it raises some very important points, the CES should be engaged in any work around this matter.
- Mgr Tony commented that the number of priests within the pastoral plan and new parishes will probably reduce in coming years meaning availability for school visits and interaction with pupils will be less.
- +R commented that we are seeing an increase in diversity within the parishes across the diocese. Need to factor this in when constructing chaplaincy teams.
- MC said she has asked schools to consider in their APOP (Annual Plan of Provision) how often they have Mass etc.

TMcN summarised that this links into how chaplains support as a team, across lots of schools. How many schools could one chaplain potentially take on? Size and scale are relevant; we must go where pastoral need is highest at the time and this is often difficult to plan for. Jesus never sent anyone out on their own, so why would we do that in a school environment?

MgrTB thanked TMcN for her contribution and thanked Trustees for making it possible for TMcN to undertake this seconded post.

6. Diocesan Education Service Updates (see accompanying slides)

St Joseph's School Brighton:

See accompanying slides.

JO provided an update regarding St Joseph's and its proposed closure.

There are 64 pupils still at the school. The consultation concluded and the statutory notice went live on 24 February and closed on 24 March; no representations were received. The final decision will be made by the City Council on 22 May 2025 and if approved closure will happen on 31 August 2025.

There will be lots of practicalities regarding safeguarding, storage and transfer of records etc. The LA have to be involved in this

SC commented it was a shame a lot of pupils haven't moved to another Catholic school. She gave her support to Gill Foan stating how positively she had presented both herself and the school throughout this process.

Update on RE teachers and Recruitment initiative:

See accompanying slides.

JO stated that the CES are about to recruit someone to look at this specific area as part of their job role.

Prayer and Liturgy:

See Accompanying slides.

RED Resources, St Mary's University:

See accompanying slides.

St Marys website is averaging about 2.5k hits from people viewing our resources. We are the only diocese who can now evidence impact to verify resource quality & assessment as we are now in our 3rd year.

Anna Flood and Emma Sharp are now part of the national CES group looking at assessment

The DES is very grateful for all St Mary's University support.

School Singing Programme:

See accompanying slides.

Choirs are now at Mass on Sundays, the equity of opportunity for children is tremendously positive.

Billie Robson and Fraser Ellson are looking at doing a choir for the Diocesan 60th anniversary event.

+R commented that it was encouraging to see the growth of the SSP.

Catholic Education Trust Growth plans & Academy Conversions:

See accompanying slides.

BOSCO had an SRMA Audit, the report is positive, and growth is being managed at an appropriate pace.

In Brighton and Hove, JO is due to meet with Georgina Clarke-Green and Richard Barker for a more facilitated approach in the spirit of transparency.

Other Updates

See accompanying slides.

Model Admission policies.

+ R raised the issue of Surrey local authority and the planned West Sussex/East Sussex devolution, discussion around this

8. Future meeting dates for the Education Committee

Summer: 4 June 2025; Time: 10.45 – 12.45

Autumn: 19 November 2025; Time: 10.45 – 12.45

25 March 2026

3 June 2026

9. AOB

Update from JO regarding independent schools in diocese, as two will no longer be designated as Catholic schools by September 2025. Effective and appropriate communication with the diocese throughout their respective processes from both St John's Beaumont, Old Windsor and Rydes Hill Prep, Guildford.

The meeting closed at 12:50pm.