



Report of the Meeting of the Education Committee

Venue: St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley

Date: 4 June 2025 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Attendance

Members: Rev Mgr Canon Tony Barry (MgrTB) (Chair), Deborah Bligh (DB,) Pete Byrne (PB), Sarah Clayton (SC) Tom Collins (TC), Maria Cowler (MC), Finula Farr (FC), Michael Ferry (MF), Dcn John Harman (DcnJH), Sarah Kilmartin (SK), Professor John Lydon (JL), Rev Canon Tim Madeley (CanTM), Rt Rev Richard Moth (+R), Julie Oldroyd (JO), Annie Sutton (AS),

Catherine Burnham (CB) Anna Flood (AF)

Tamsin Connick (Secretary)

1. Opening Prayer and Apologies for Absence

+RM led the opening prayer.

Apologies for absence were received from Joe Davies (JD)

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

There were no disclosures.

3. Report of the meeting of 26 March 2025 and matters arising

The report of the 26 March 2025 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. Schools Standards: OFSTED and CSI outcomes

Catherine Burnham (CB) outlined the current CSI framework and data within the diocese schools (see accompanying slides)

- CB explained that one purpose of the framework was to address the disproportionate number of outstanding grades awarded, which had the potential to discredit our inspection framework and therefore it was anticipated that grades should be more closely

aligned with Ofsted.

- This is the first year that our independent schools have been inspected as well as maintained schools.
- Summary of how the inspection works, and if something is not compliant then it becomes an area for improvement on the next report.
- There are no schools graded RI in the Diocese.
- The impact of the DES, its training and support for schools is becoming very clear. Catholic Social Teaching within schools has helped pupils respond well and to increase understanding, which is now being reflected in the outcome grades.
- RED teaching has also made a strong impact within the diocesan schools; the positive reception of this is consistently driving standards in RE higher.

Discussion took place:

- PB – are there any other reasons as to why CSI scores are now good and outstanding?
- CB – some of this is to do with the context of the schools. They have really stepped up and now have a deeper understanding of the RED and the Prayer and Liturgy Directory.
- AF – the focus visits have helped greatly. There is a clear message that 'good' is a strong outcome alongside other areas of the curriculum. To clarify, every one of our schools has achieved outstanding grading on Catholic Life and Mission.
- +R – once schools get into it, they realise there are very good resources to support them and delivering these is not as daunting as it might first have seemed.
- JO – the framework is embedded in Canon Law too, so it is more complex to change than Ofsted as the Bishops Conference would have to agree to any adjustments.
- CB – the point is there was a clear rationale as to why the national framework was brought in. Themes from inspections are drawn out and analysed by the DES and CPD is put in place to address these, where needed.
- JO – we are relieved for schools that there is no update to the CSI framework at same time as the proposed Ofsted framework, due in November 2025, and that schools don't have to try and embed both at the same time.
- TC – as a Headteacher it feels reassuring that the DES has its finger on the pulse and the training offer is responsive to the identified areas for development.

Ofsted slides were shown, illustrating the proposed new report card and gradings.

- Two diocesan schools have put themselves forward for the pilot, St Robert Southwell (Bosco CET) and The Marist (Xavier CET)
- A November rollout is planned for the new framework, but JO explained the likelihood of this date is optimistic given the fact that the consultation outcomes won't be shared until September. Expecting schools to prepare in two months and inspector training to take place is a stretch. Ofsted need to clarify if the reports are primarily for parents or for school leaders, to drive up school improvement.

- There is a concern that one-form primary schools will continue to be disadvantaged under the new framework.
- The CSI work is really helping to support the personal development grade in Ofsted within our schools.
- The CES is writing a document for Ofsted explaining how Catholic schools teach RSE, as some inspectors are not aware of how RSE sits within the Catholic school inspection.
- Discussion took place:
- PB – queried if all schools will want to wait for the new framework as Ofsted wrote to St Oscar Romero at Easter giving the choice of being inspected under the new framework (which would delay inspection for up to 5 years) or inspecting now under the existing framework. They chose the latter and achieved ‘outstanding’ in every category.
- SC – not aware of this as her two schools are currently awaiting inspection and have a week-by-week plan if the call comes in of how to manage this.
- PB – to forward copy of the Ofsted letter to JO and SC.
- Mgr Tony – has there been much pushback on the Ofsted single word judgements in relation to CSI?
- CB – the CES were quick to issue guidance, so it has generally been received well. Was news for a few days and then settled back down.
- MF – if Ofsted continue to write reports based on a reading age of 12, these reports can’t be useful for school improvement.
- JO – The Education Service has found that verbal feedback is often more useful for school improvement rather than the written report, this is why DES are present at every OFSTED feedback meeting along with the school / trust leaders.

5. The RE Directory – Primary RE (see accompanying slides)

Anna Flood (AF) provided a comprehensive summary on the teaching of RED in diocese primary schools. Examples of lesson plans, teaching materials and pupil work were extremely well received by the committee.

- By the end of Year 2, children in A&B will have followed the curriculum for 3 years, and anecdotal evidence shows that the spiral nature of the curriculum – in that children can connect & start using knowledge – is of benefit to the cohort, and the knowledge embedded will follow through to secondary school.
- We are the only diocese who can evidence impact to verify resource quality & assessment as we are now in our 3rd year.
- Resources are now used by a number of other dioceses & St Mary’s University continues to host them on their platform.
- Dave Legrand is continuing to scrutinise secondary RE provision. The CES have just appointed a national project lead to look at KS4 RE and DL is on the working party. The

group will report back to the National Board of Religious Advisers and Inspectors (NBRIA), of which JO is the current Chair.

- + R stated the Bishops Conference are undertaking a piece of work looking at how AI will sit with Catholic Social Teaching.

Discussion took place:

- +R – it seems that the RED has been generally been well received so what are the challenges?
- AF -workload, as it is asking a lot of schools and the approach is all-encompassing. The subject knowledge required is also very high.

MgrTB commended the work that CB, AF and ES are undertaking within our schools and thanked them for their contributions.

6. Academisation Updates (see accompanying slides)

Xavier has only 6 schools left to come into the Trust, one of which already has an academy order. Bosco has seen rapid progression this year with 13 schools now in the Trust and a further 5 with academy orders.

If we include those schools that have academy orders, 65% of schools within the diocese of Arundel & Brighton are now academised and in a Trust.

7. Diocesan Education Service Updates

St Joseph's School Brighton:

See accompanying slides.

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

The final decision to approve the closure was made by the City Council on 22 May 2025 and closure will happen on 31 August 2025. There are 64 pupils still at the school, with 9 still to place for September.

There will be lots of practicalities regarding safeguarding, storage and transfer of records etc which the LA must be involved in.

The DES is currently looking at the admissions policy for CNCS to ensure that any former pupils of St Joseph's school are not disadvantaged.

Prayer and Liturgy:

See accompanying slides.

Good Shepherd celebration

See accompanying slides.

The Good Shepherd celebration will take place on 25 June 2025 at Arundel Cathedral, the theme will be based on the Jubilee 2025, Pilgrims of Hope, with schools offering their Jubilee pledges.

School Leaders thanksgiving Mass

See accompanying slides.

This year's mass will take place on 3 July 2025 at Arundel Cathedral.

JO encouraged schools to sign up, as the number is currently quite low but numbers of those being nominated for long service are higher.

Education Service updates

See accompanying slides.

Details given regarding the collaboration with St Mary's University offering the Postgraduate Certificate in Religious Education for non-specialist secondary RE teachers.

School Singing Programme

See accompanying slides.

School Leaders Conference

This year's conference will take place on 20 November 2025 with Cardinal Timothy Radcliffe as the keynote speaker.

Education Service Team News

See accompanying slides for staffing updates.

8. Future meeting dates for the Education Committee

Autumn: 19th November 2025 Time: 10.45 – 12.45

25th March 2026

3rd June 2026

9. AOB

+R has launched a Christmas card competition. Full details will be given in the Alpha Beta.

As this was PB's last meeting, MgrTB expressed thanks to PB for all his hard work as part of the Education Committee and his chairing of the Secondary Heads.

The meeting closed at 2:00pm.

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