

Schools & Colleges Newsletter
Summer 2024



*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love.
Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.
Let us pray.*

*O God, Who did instruct the hearts of Your faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation.
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

The message of unity reflected in the celebration of Pentecost is at the heart of our unity as Catholic schools in Clifton Diocese. It is the theme in our forthcoming Senior leaders' retreat and sits at the heart of our Diocesan strategy.

Our first termly newsletter aims to update you with all that has been going on in the Diocese since the turn of the year.



Firstly, we begin our new form of communication with schools, under the guidance of Bishop Bosco. You'll have received two photos to use in schools. This is an exciting time for us all. Our grateful thanks go to Bishop Declan, and we wish him a very happy retirement, and thank him for his dedicated service to all our schools. We look forward to working closely with Bishop Bosco, and supporting him in delivering his vision for the schools and colleges in the Diocese.

Appointments

It's always a very busy time of the year, from February to the end of April, for school and Trust leader appointments. Paul and I have been involved in a number of these processes, and we'd like to thank the governors, LA colleagues, and school teams for their time, commitment, and dedication in doing so. It gives me great delight to welcome some of our new (and not so new!) leaders.

- Nicole Pecchia has been appointed as the head of St Mary’s Bath.
- Ellen Croker has been appointed as the head at St Benedict’s Midsomer Norton.
- Alison Frost has been appointed as the head at St Joseph’s Bridgewater
- Nicola Tippen has been appointed as the head at St Gregory the Great in Cheltenham
- Charlotte Blanch has been appointed as Chief Executive officer for the Little Way Catholic Education Trust
- Katie Turner has been appointed as the head at St Thomas More in Cheltenham
- Kurt Doyle has been appointed as the head at St Peter’s Primary in Gloucester
- Charlotte Dunt has been appointed as the head at St Mary’s Bradley Stoke
- Kim O’Rourke has been appointed as the head at St John’s Trowbridge
- Jo Trickett is presently supporting St George’s Warminster as an interim head.

We wish all of them every success in their new roles.

Retirements

We wish our colleagues, Carol Baron (Head at St Peter’s Gloucester), and Tracey Sessions (Head at St John’s Trowbridge) a very happy and healthy retirement. Also, to Kate Saunders who retired from St George’s Warminster at Easter. We are enormously grateful to you all for your dedicated service to your schools and communities.

Headteacher/reserved post appointment pack

If your school is seeking to make a senior leader or reserved post appointment, remember to get in touch with Jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com to access the recruitment pack – it includes guidance, contract information, application forms, reference forms to aid the process. We also now have a suite of resources to use during the recruitment process.

Inspection outcomes

Our diocesan inspection processes continue, and we are grateful to all colleagues, both inspectors and school leaders for working so diligently to meet the expectations of the new framework.

Diocesan Inspection

School	Date of inspection	Outcome
Christ the King Catholic Primary Thornbury	18 – 19 October	2
St Bernadette’s Catholic Primary	8 – 9 November	1
St Joseph and St Teresa Catholic Primary, Wells	22 -23 November	2
The Rosary Stroud	24-25 January	2
St Joseph’s Bridgewater	24-25 January	2
St Francis Nailsea	20-21 February	2
Holy Family Patchway	26-27 February	2
Prior Park	27-28 February	3
Downside School, Stratton on the Fosse	25-26 April	1
Holy Cross, Bristol	25-6 April	1
St Thomas More, Cheltenham	1-2 May	2

OFSTED inspection

School	Date of Inspection	Grade
St John's Bath	Sept 23	2
Our Lady of the Rosary	Sept 23	2
St Gregory the Great	Oct 2023	2
St Peter's Primary	October 2023	2
St George's Warminster	Nov 23	3
St Rose's	Nov 23	2
St Edmund's Calne	Nov 23	3
St Joseph's College Swindon	Nov 23	2
St Edward's	Jan 23	1
St Joseph's Salisbury	Feb 24	3
St Osmund's Salisbury	March 24	2
Christ the King Bristol	April 24	2
St Augustine's Trowbridge	April 24	Pending
The Rosary, Stroud	May 24	Pending

Aquinas Education

Aquinas Education are delighted to partner the Clifton Diocese. Over the 16 years we have been very proud to work with Catholic Education across the country including London, East Midlands and Liverpool and are now proud to bring our unique selling points to schools across the diocese.

Some of our unique points are:

- No introduction fees – Take staff permanently with no fee.
- Catholic teachers available from Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand
- Free interview trial days
- Exclusive rates for the diocese
- Talent pools of exclusive Aquinas staff
- Free advertising – take the pain of the TES away!

September Recruitment

As part of our Partnership with the Clifton Diocese, Aquinas Education are now actively helping schools with their September recruitment. If you would like support, they can assist with any roles you are trying to fill for the next academic year. They take a personal approach and visit every school they work with to understand their specific needs and requirements when finding suitable candidates. It can be another string to your 'recruitment bow' over the next few weeks and they have already helped many schools within the Diocese.

For more information, contact Sam Leggitt on 07810 551177 or sam@aquinaseducation.co.uk

Recent Testimonial

"Sam has been absolutely brilliant and has spent time getting to know us, which has really helped us develop a positive working relationship very quickly.

On the evidence of the work Aquinas have done for us so far, I'd definitely recommend them....to have an agency like this to support our recruitment is quite simply just a breath of fresh air."

Michael Ferry, St. Wilfrid's Catholic School

Churchmarketplace

Churchmarketplace is another organisation the Diocese is affiliated to. Their role is to undertake collective bargaining to achieve affordable costs for a wide range of school expenses – Including:

- Computers
- Telecommunications
- Photocopiers
- Fire, health & safety.
- Energy
- Legal services for schools
- School catering
- Transportation
- Human resources for schools
- Payroll services for schools

Churchmarketplace is owned and operated on a not-for-profit basis by the Catholic Church, as represented by the various Dioceses of England and Wales and is endorsed by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales.

At this point of the year when agreements are being reviewed in school, please look at what is on offer – see the link to the Churchmarketplace website below:

churchmarketplace.org.uk

E-teach

ETeach have been successfully awarded a contract to deliver a revolutionary mobile recruitment solution to Catholic Schools in England and Wales.

ETeach already work with 400+ Catholic Schools across nearly all Catholic dioceses providing recruitment advertising and candidate management software. All Catholic Schools can now benefit from preferred rates via Churchmarketplace. With the support of the Catholic Education Service, ETeach have created the first digital, mobile friendly Catholic application form. This is very timely as we know that 70% of job seekers are now using mobile devices to search, engage and apply for jobs.

We believe that by having this mobile friendly application form schools should see an increase in applications for roles via ETeach. We are very grateful that the CES will continue to work with ETeach to ensure any revisions to the form are updated by ETeach.

ETeach are now live on the CMP website. Please log in or register at www.churchmarketplace.org.uk

Forthcoming events

- Year 6 leavers' masses at the Cathedral on 13th and 14th June.
- Senior Leadership Retreat at Ammerdown on 25th June.
- Year 1 RED Day at St Dunstan's Parish Hall on 6th June.
- Year 4 RED Days at St Dunstan's Parish Hall on 28th June and 12th July.

Leadership mentoring programme

I'm delighted to announce the launch of our new headteacher mentoring programme.

This new support package aims to provide a mentor for those new to the role of headship in the Diocese and can be offered in the first three years in the role.

The mentor will be an experienced headteacher and someone with whom all the good (and bad) aspects of headship can be shared. The mentor will provide advice and support as well as being someone to talk through some of the more challenging dilemmas new headteachers face.

The mentoring will take the form of a mixture of face-to-face meetings and telephone and/or email support.

For the mentee it will be useful to know that there is someone on the other end of the phone to talk things through when necessary, and planned, termly face to face sessions will give them the opportunity to reflect on their role away from the busy day to day running of the school.

The programme is designed to support substantive head teachers, or those in interim or head of school roles.

The programme includes:

- Up to 6 half day face to face meetings with experienced Catholic headteacher mentors
- Contributes to the governing body's duty of care for headteachers' wellbeing.
- Enables headteachers to access support, which is confidential, friendly, and non-judgemental.
- Provides opportunities for networking and sharing good practice.
- Provides access to professional dialogue either face to face or via remote access.
- Will provide an opportunity to review and extend support if necessary.

In the first instance, your mentor will arrange to meet with you for up to 3 half days (one per short term). You will be able to decide the focus of the meeting, so that you can gain the support and help that you need. At the end of the 3 sessions, you can review with your mentor the next steps.

If you are interested in being involved in the programme, please contact Roisin Johnson Roisin.johnson@cliftondiocese.com

Partnerships:

The Little Way Partnership organised and held an SEN Conference at St Rose's Special School in Stroud for Staff and Governors of the partnership. Over 40 delegates listened to a keynote speech from Matt Couldrey from Hartpury University. The conference concluded with schools sharing their common experiences in working with children with needs.

Trust Developments

The Diocese continues to work with individual schools and governing bodies to move towards all our schools being part of strong Multi Academy Trusts. Our three-trust model enables us to fulfil our ambition to have all our schools in Trusts as soon as possible.

The Diocese continues to work with the Regional Schools Commissioner Lucy Livings and her team and Local Authorities to have an effective transition to one of our three trusts. Work is currently being undertaken to create a timeframe for our schools the Diocese, Local Authorities and Regional Schools Team. The timeline for engagement has been shared with

the Diocesan trustees. Meetings will be arranged with Governors and School Leaders throughout Term 6.

- Dunstan Trust -10 schools will grow to 26 schools.
- Newman Trust- 4 schools will grow to 20 schools.
- Little Way Trust- 6 schools will grow to 16 schools.

Trust Updates

Little Way Catholic Educational Trust

The last few months have been an exciting and busy time for the LWCET having launched on 1st January 2024 with six founding primary schools in Gloucestershire.

The first few weeks as a multi-academy trust were spent making sure the different stakeholders understood that each of our schools were now part of something bigger. We set up pen pal links between classes in different schools, shared virtual tours of each other's schools that were shown in assembly, publicised about successes in our schools in each other's parent newsletters and even ate some delicious birthday cake to mark the occasion! In the background we have been beginning to write shared policies and spending a good deal of time navigating the new financial system. We have also been putting new processes in place across the governance, administrative and business side of the Trust schools. The Trust executive have been bringing together all the visioning activities we've been doing over the last 18mths to produce a first draft of a formalised Trust strategy – this will help us to test success against what is important to us as founding schools.

The Trust Headteachers have been working closely together to identify strategic priorities within school improvement and setting up professional networks so that leaders across the Trust can start to work together, sharing best practice. We are excitedly planning for an away day together for all LWCET staff (all 247 of us) following the Whitsun holiday to share some fun times together and get to know each other better, making links between our schools and recognising how important every person is in the daily life of the LWCET: each with an important part to play in the mission of the Trust.

Charlotte Blanch, CEO, LWCET

The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust

The Trust has grown from six schools in March 2022 to ten schools.

In our first two years we have worked hard to develop and embed our Trust Vision and Values, this has been successful, and you can see our Vision and Values being lived out in all our schools, this has resulted in a Trust wide application to the CAFOD Live Simply Award.

In February this year we celebrate our 3rd Catenian Public Speaking Competition with eleven schools taking part each exploring a theme of Catholic Social Teaching.

As a group of schools, we have joined together to work on various projects to improve the provision for our pupils, these include our Trust wide approach to writing and our joint planning and moderation of RE both of which have raised outcomes for our pupils across all the schools. We have also established our Learning Sets for staff and governors, these are running for English, Maths, RE and SEND with safeguarding and Health and Safety due to start in Term 6. We are committed to ongoing training and support across the Trust from our Chairs, Clerks and Head's forums, to running our own NPQFlex for Leading Teaching.

Helen Taylor, CEO DCET

The Newman Catholic Trust

The Trust is delighted to share the positive strides made during the Spring Term of 2024.

School Improvement:

With a steadfast commitment to school standards and advancement, the Trust has diligently established a robust school improvement framework. Leveraging internal strengths and collaborating with external experts from Ofsted and EYFS, our efforts have borne fruit. We're thrilled to announce that St. Francis School achieved a "Good" rating with "Outstanding" features in their recent Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) inspection. This remarkable feat underscores our unwavering dedication to academic excellence across all our schools.

Expansion:

Aligned with the Bishop's Vision for Catholic education, the Trust is actively pursuing expansion opportunities. Engaging discussions are underway with St. Joseph's Primary School (Portishead) and St. Patrick's Primary School (Redfield) regarding potential membership within our Trust. This strategic collaboration aims to fortify Catholic education in the Diocese. As we navigate this exciting phase, the Trust remains committed to shaping the next chapters of our strategy in close partnership with the Diocese.

Community Efforts:

Our schools are the backbone of our community engagement efforts, embodying values of charity, stewardship, and solidarity. Throughout Lent, our schools demonstrated their dedication to social responsibility through various charitable activities. Notably, our ongoing fundraising for the Emmaus Project showcases our commitment to effecting positive social change and nurturing a community that actively contributes to its betterment.

We look forward to updating the Diocese on our future progress and success.

Danny Doyle, CEO, NCET

Governance

Foundation Governor Vacancies

Currently we have a total of 117 vacancies for Foundation governors across the Diocese, and 7 vacancies for Trust Board Directors. There are 13 new applications in process.

The number of vacancies has significantly reduced since July 2023, and this was partly due to some governors making an appeal for new governors at Mass on Education Sunday last September. Please would you consider making an appeal this September?

Training

The **Admissions** session on **Saturday 18 May** (10.00–11.30am via Teams) was expanded to also cover Exclusions and is open to school staff as well as governors/directors. It will be repeated in the autumn. Visit to book a place [Events – Calendar | Clifton Diocese Schools and Colleges](#)

There is an **Induction** session for new governors on **6 June**. Both sessions are 18.30-20.00 via Teams.

We aim to introduce a new session just for Directors of our Catholic Educational Trusts, during the 2024-25 school year.

Admissions

Following the vote in favour of introducing new oversubscription criteria (for children of other denominations/faiths and for children of staff), all primary school admission authorities will have to undertake a public consultation on their admission arrangements for the **2026-27**

school year. Guidance on the consultation process will be issued to schools/trusts in the coming autumn term.

Remember the dates!

The annual '**Education Mass**' will this year be celebrated by Bishop Bosco for the first time. It is for everyone involved in education within the Diocese and it is on Thursday 27 June 2024 7.00pm at Clifton Cathedral – everyone is welcome.

There will be a '**Governors Conference**' for all governors/directors on Saturday 10 May 2025 (venue tbc) Further details will follow nearer the time but please keep the date free in your diary.

New School Year

Just a reminder as the new school year approaches, that it is not compulsory for the appointment of the Chair to be considered every year at a **VA school** (unless otherwise stated within a governing body's own arrangements), although it is good practice and many schools do so. The Chair does **not** have to be a Foundation Governor. However, as stated in their constitutional documents, **academies** must at their first meeting of the year, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and these must be Foundation Governors (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise by the academy Members).

At your first meeting of the new year, it is appropriate for all governors/directors of any category to sign a 'Code of Conduct' which sets out the purpose of their governing body and describes the appropriate relationship between individual governors, the whole governing body, and the leadership team of the school. This is to protect all members and mitigate against any possible difficulties that could occur within governing bodies. Schools should use the updated Code of Conduct provided by the **Catholic Education Service** as it provides protection specifically for Catholic schools and is available at [Codes of Conduct for Governors and Directors \(catholiceducation.org.uk\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk)

RED Updates

After the trial earlier this term, Ten Ten have decided not to proceed with the proposed RE scheme, Knowing Jesus. Oxford University Press (OUP) are developing a resource to support the primary Religious Education Directory. I do not have any dates regarding trials yet possibly due to the fact the primary implementation has moved to September 2026.

Year 1

I have the RED scheme for Year 1 from Arundel and Brighton, which follows on from the EYFS pilot last year. Schools could consider Year 1 and 2 classes doing this next year and we can adapt the learning objectives/WALTs. This will be introduced on Thursday 6th June at St Dunstan's Centre in Keynsham. I will share background knowledge, planning and resources. For those of you unable to attend in person there will be a webinar on Monday 8th July 3:30 – 4:30pm. Webinars have been planned throughout the year and the dates are available in the course's booklet. The training will be repeated on Wednesday 4th September 3:30 – 4:30pm for new teachers.

Year 2

There are dates for Year 2 training for next year. Ann Fowler has written a scheme for Year 2. Arundel and Brighton are also writing a scheme. I would advise that only schools with a Year 2/3 mix look at the Year 2 scheme for next year, but I leave the choice up to you. I am waiting till I have both schemes to gather a working party together. I have set a webinar date for

Wednesday 10th July 3:30 – 4:30pm and Friday 6th September 3:30 – 4:30pm. Can you please let me know if your school is also interested in piloting the Year 2 scheme.

Year 4

Ann Fowler and Plymouth Diocese are writing the scheme for Year 4 next year. Ann has suggested that Year 4, 5 and 6 could all use the same planning next year and the learning objectives and WALTs can be adapted for the upper classes. The scheme will be introduced on two days at St Dunstan's Centre on the 28th June and the 12th July. There will be webinars on Tuesday 9th July 3:30 – 4:30pm and Thursday 5th September 3:30 – 4:30pm.

EYFS and Year 3

I have committed to provide training for new teachers next year and for schools who did not do the pilot. We have set dates for webinars next year, if any RE leads would like to the any of the training sessions can you please let me know.

RED Writing Groups

This year Clifton will be adapting the Year 1 and 2 schemes, Plymouth will be adapting Year 4. I have set some dates for working parties for this term if any RE leads or specialist year teachers would like to join me. We do provide refreshments and lunch. If you can come for part of the day, I would be very grateful. Teachers from EYFS and Year 3 have asked to meet to adapt some of the resources from last year.

Wednesday 19th June Year 1 writing group at Alexander House 9:30am to 3pm

Friday 21st June Year 2 writing group at Alexander House 9:30am to 3pm

Wednesday 10th July Year 3 writing group at Alexander House 9:30am to 3pm

Thursday 11th July EYFS writing group at Alexander House 9:30am to 3pm

Prayer and Liturgy Directory Updates

I sent out a Prayer and Liturgy model policy to schools and colleges on the 24th April. This is the policy that schools and colleges have been **advised** to use. If you have already worked on your own prayer and liturgy policies, you can of course keep those. Please compare the two policies and see if you need to change anything. There will need to be a Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator in place for September 2025 which could be the head teacher, RE lead or school chaplain. There will be training for heads, governors, RE leads and chaplains on the Prayer and Liturgy Directory next year.

Phonics Scheme

In the past year the schools and colleges department has been asked about 2 phonics books, 'The Pet Pug' and 'The Best Wedding.' We feel that both books are a representation of life in modern Britain. We do however feel that the teachers need to use their own professional judgement and knowledge of your school community when sending the books home. There may be members of your school community where the text/pictures may not be welcomed. We have a letter written by one of the head teachers in Clifton which will be extremely helpful when contacting parents.