

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

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Director's Message

A sincere Happy New Year to you and all in your school.

This term promises to be equally as tricky as the last few. We will wait for any further guidance that emerges this week but wish all secondary colleagues well in dealing with the challenges of pupils wearing masks in lessons. I am more than happy to support you in resisting this or any other 'mitigation' that is impossible to enact in your school – particularly those of you caused to have to put classes together in bigger spaces.

We will be as clear as we can be about Catholic School Inspections this term, and next. Unless it is impossible to do so, we will continue with the planned pilots this term for the new framework. That means we will be ready to undertake all inspections from September under the new framework as planned, bearing in mind that we are already a year behind. The only change to that will be if government legislates to pause all inspection activity while the latest surge works its way through. Our cycle is inextricably tied to Ofsted's. This matter will be addressed in the three drop-ins on Zoom scheduled for 24 and 31 January and 2 February 2022. Please book attendance at these and remind your Chairs that there are sessions for them too.

To help us better understand the impact of Covid on schools please send updates to patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk



Dr Simon Hughes
Diocesan Schools Commissioner

Decree from Archbishop John Wilson

Please use the link below to view a Decree from Archbishop John stating that the appointment of a Chair of Governors in any voluntary-aided, academy or Independent school in the Archdiocese of Southwark must be a Foundation Governor.

[Decree](#)



Covid Workforce Fund for Schools

The Covid-19 workforce fund has been re-introduced to provide financial support to eligible education settings with the greatest staffing and funding challenges. The fund will cover the cost of workforce absences experienced from 22nd November 2021 until the 2022 spring half-term.

Funding is available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, as well as Alternative Provision settings, that provide education to all pupils who are required to be in compulsory education.

Schools can only claim for covering the absences of permanent staff who are on their payroll or those employed on a long-term contract, for example, maternity cover or long-term sick cover. Schools cannot claim for temporary staff.

To cover teacher absences, schools can claim for:

- Employing, through agencies or directly contracting, supply teachers, or supply support staff;
- Increasing the hours of part-time teaching staff or increasing the hours of part-time education support staff. Schools should ensure staff are happy to temporarily increase their hours and consider staff workload and wellbeing; and
- Making necessary amendments to support staff terms and conditions to enable them to take on additional responsibilities.

To cover support staff absences, schools can claim for:

- Employing supply education and non-education support staff through agencies or directly contracting; and
- Increasing the hours of part-time education and non-education support staff. Again, schools should ensure staff are happy to temporarily increase their hours and consider staff workload and wellbeing.

Schools, however, are not permitted to claim for expenditure which enables schools to maintain their reserves above the 4% annual limit set out in the financial reserves criteria or for capital costs to support staff delivering education remotely.

The full guidance can be accessed [here](#)

School Uniform: Statutory Guidance

November 2021 saw the DfE update its statutory guidance on school uniform. The key points from this guidance (which can be accessed in full [here](#)) include:

- Parents should not have to think about the cost of a school uniform when choosing which school(s) to apply for. Thus, schools need to ensure that their uniform is affordable.
- In considering cost, schools will need to think about the total cost of school uniforms, taking into account all items of uniform or clothing parents will need to provide whilst their child is at the school.
- Schools should keep the use of branded items to a minimum.
- A school's uniform policy should be published on the school's website, be available for all parents, including parents of prospective pupils, and be easily understood.



- Schools should ensure that their uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment).
- Single supplier contracts should be avoided unless regular tendering competitions are run where more than one supplier can compete for the contract and where the best value for money is secured. This contract should be re-tendered at least every 5 years.
- Schools should ensure that second-hand uniforms are available for parents to acquire. Information on second-hand uniforms should be clear for parents of current and prospective pupils and published on the school's website.
- Schools should engage with parents and pupils when they are developing their school uniform policy.

Governing Boards are required to be compliant with much of this guidance by September 2022. The exceptions to this would be where:

- Compliance would breach a pre-existing contract or informal agreement with a uniform supplier; or
- A school will need to run a competitive tender to set up a new contract for their uniform.

In order to ensure compliance by September 2022, schools and Governing Boards will need to ensure that the following actions happen before parents purchase uniform items in the summer of 2022:

- Changes to the uniform policy which do not fit with these exceptions, such as removing an unnecessary branded item;
- Publishing the uniform policy on the school's website and ensuring it is easily understood; and
- Making sure that second-hand uniforms are available to acquire (either from the school directly or from an established scheme).

Ofsted Inspections

Inspection Results

Ofsted's latest data on school inspections carried out since the start of the 2021/22 academic year to 30th November 2021 highlights that the overall grade profile for schools has improved in comparison with the period prior to the pandemic.

The data shows that:

- during the 3-month period to the end of November, 83% of schools were judged good or outstanding. This compares with 77% of schools rated as such between September 2019, when the new education inspection framework was introduced, and March 2020, when inspections were suspended.
- schools previously judged requires improvement or inadequate have done particularly well in the autumn 2021 term; 72% of previously RI schools have attained a good or outstanding grade since September 2021 compared with 56% during the 2019/20 period, while 56% of those previously rated inadequate have improved to good or outstanding, compared with 40% last year.
- for the first time since the exemption was lifted on inspecting outstanding schools, the data includes the new grades for those schools visited this term. With Ofsted currently inspecting previously exempt schools that have gone the longest without an inspection (over half of those inspected in autumn 2021 had not been inspected for over 10 years), many have not retained the top grade.



- at the end of November 2021, 87% of all schools in England were rated either good or outstanding. This is similar to the 86% reported in August 2019, prior to the EIF being introduced and before the pandemic began.

The raw data supporting the above analysis can be found [here](#)

Inspections This Term

At the end of the Autumn term, Ofsted confirmed that it will not be inspecting secondary schools during the first week of term in January as schools undertake on-site pupil testing. Only urgent concerns, such as safeguarding, would prompt an Ofsted inspection.

For a temporary period, from the start of January, Ofsted will not ask school leaders who are also Ofsted inspectors to undertake inspections. Inspections will be done largely by the HMI workforce which will limit, but not pause in their entirety, the number of inspections taking place. In addition, Ofsted will also proactively encourage schools who are significantly impacted by Covid-related staff absence to ask for their inspection to be deferred.

These measures will be kept under review.

Schools graded Good

Most schools graded Good will continue to receive an ungraded (s8) inspection. A risk assessed proportion of schools will receive a graded (s5) inspection. All good schools will be inspected around 3-5 terms later than they would have been because of the pandemic.

In 2021/22, Ofsted will inspect schools last inspected in the 2016/17 academic year.

Schools that receive a 'good improving' or 'good declining' assessment will still receive a s5 inspection around a year later.

Schools graded Outstanding

In September 2021 Ofsted began inspecting Outstanding schools that were formerly exempt from routine inspection. These inspections will continue. Outstanding schools have been split into two groups: schools that were graded outstanding prior to September 2015 and schools that were graded outstanding after this. Ofsted are inspecting both these groups simultaneously, starting with the oldest inspection judgements in each group:

- Those inspected before 2015 will receive graded (s5) inspections.
- Those inspected after September 2015 will receive ungraded (s8) inspections.

A school that receives a 'declining' assessment in their s8 inspection will receive a graded inspection around a year later.

Schools graded Requires Improvement and Inadequate

Prior to the pandemic, these schools could expect their next inspection within 30 months of receiving their grade. Now, these schools can expect an inspection approximately 5 to 6 terms later than they would have done.

Monitoring inspections, however, will continue in the usual way.



The Education Inspection Framework and the EYFS Framework

December saw Ofsted update its guidance on the revised EYFS framework which came into force on 1st September 2021. With respect to the EYFS Framework in schools, Ofsted have expanded its guidance with respect to the following questions practitioners have asked:

- Will Ofsted expect to see curriculum maps for every area of learning in the early years?
- Will Ofsted expect providers to show the progress of a child tracked against the revised non-statutory guidance, 'Development Matters'?
- When carrying out deep dives, will inspectors want to see national curriculum subjects, rather than EYFS areas of learning, being taught in Reception?'
- Does Ofsted expect the national curriculum in a primary school to start when children first join in the early years?'

Additional information has been added which considers:

- Does Ofsted expect schools to use the government's non-statutory guidance, 'Development Matters', when developing and shaping their EYFS curriculum?
- How will inspectors consider progress?
- When should schools start teaching early reading?

The full guidance on Inspections and the EYFS Framework can be accessed [here](#)

Academy Updates

Financial Performance

- The net statement of consolidated expenditure/income for 2019/20 has moved into a net deficit; there was previously a net surplus in the prior year. This reduction has been driven by:
 - *a significant reduction in conversion gains, in turn the result of lower numbers of academy conversions into the sector during the year;
 - *other non-cash items including the actuarial loss on the defined pension scheme, which in turn is a result of lower returns on LGPS pension assets, the negative impact on the market because of Covid and changes in actuarial assumptions, in particular a reduction in the discount rate; and
 - *the revaluation gain on land and buildings has been reduced in the current year compared to the prior year, again partly reflecting market uncertainty as a result of Covid.
- During the year, the value of cash and cash equivalents held by the sector has increased by £543M. £61M of this increase is attributable to cash brought into the sector by schools converting to academy status. That said the majority of the cash increase is generated by Academy Trusts as part of their day-to-day operations.
- The net assets of the sector have remained consistent at £49.6Bn as at 31 August 2020 (£49.7Bn as at 31 August 2019). Whilst the land and buildings asset value has increased due to the schools converting to academy status, this has been offset by an increase in the pension deficit.



- The Statement of Financial Position shows that the sector is reporting a net revenue surplus. However, there are a number of Academy Trusts in a net revenue deficit position. There were 227 Trusts with a surplus greater than £3M, which represents 8.5% of Trusts with a surplus/deficit reported in the year. There were 110 Trusts with a cumulative deficit, which represents 4.1% of Trusts with a surplus/deficit reported in the year.
- The total aggregate cumulative revenue deficit for 2019/20 has reduced from 2018/19, as has the number of Trusts in cumulative deficit.

Academies - Briefing Note from the ESFA

The final quarter of 2021 saw the ESFA publish a briefing note highlighting some of the key themes identified from its work conducted in the 2020/21 assurance year. This can be broken down into:

Management Accounts

- These were not shared with the Trust Board as required;
- These were not produced at all;
- Inadequate financial information being presented as part of the MI pack to the Board.

Financial Management

- Payments were made without appropriate approval;
- There were either no or inaccurate bank reconciliations;
- Concerns about value for money;
- Lack of authorisation for payroll transactions.

Governance

- The Get Information About Schools service was not updated on a timely basis;
- Financial statements were not published on Trusts' websites, either at all or in line with the Academy Trust Handbook requirements.

Related Party Transactions

- Prior approval was not sought from the ESFA for Related Party Transactions greater than £20K;
- The 'At cost' requirement for Related Party Transactions was not adhered to;
- Failing to both identify conflict of interests and document those conflicts appropriately.

Academies - School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT)

The SRMSAT for 2021/22 needs to be completed by all Trusts which had an academy open on the 31st December 2021. The completed SRMSAT needs to be submitted to the ESFA by the 15th March 2022 (and not the previously advertised date of 15th April 2022).

In previous years the SRMSAT was a combined submission of both the completed checklist of self-assessment questions and the self-assessment dashboard. For 2021/22, Trusts will only be required to submit their self-assessment questions. That said, Trustees will still need to consider the results of the data dashboard (which has now been moved to the DfE's Schools Financial Benchmarking website) before finalising their submission.



The 2021/22 self-assessment checklist will be available for Trusts to begin completing later this month; as a reminder, this checklist is intended to help Trust Boards to:

- Check they have appropriate financial management and governance arrangements in place and embedded;
- Check that Trusts are meeting the right standards to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management; and
- Identify any areas for change to ensure resources are used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for the Trust’s pupils.

Academies - Updated Suitability Checks for Academy Trust Chairs

The DfE has updated its statutory suitability check guidance for Academy Trust Chairs:

- The details of the new Chair of Trustees must be added to the Get information About Schools (GIAS) service within 14 days of the Chair’s appointment.
- A suitability check application form must be completed and submitted to the ESFA along with the required supporting documentation.
- The ESFA will conduct an identify check of the new Chair via Microsoft Teams.
- Verifile will carry out an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The new enhanced DBS check will be carried out regardless of checks previously performed by other organisations or how recently these took place. No cost for the check will be incurred by the Academy Trust or the new Trust Chair.

The updated DfE guidance can be accessed [here](#)

Updated Pupil Premium Allocations

Pupil Premium allocations for 2022/23 will amount to c.£2.6Bn, up from c.£2.5Bn in the previous year; these are split on a per pupil basis as follows:

	2022/2023 (per pupil)		2021/2022 (per pupil)	
	Primary School	Secondary School	Primary School	Secondary School
Pupils eligible in last 6 years	£1,385	£985	£1,345	£955
Adopted from/left care	£2,410	£2,410	£2,345	£2,345
Looked after by the LA	£2,410	£2,410	£2,345	£2,345

All schools should have published their Pupil Premium Strategy Statements on their school website by 31st December 2021; the statement should also include how the school intends to use its Recovery Premium. As a reminder, as part of the PPG allocations and conditions of grant, schools are now required to:

- Demonstrate how their spending decisions are informed by research evidence; and
- Use the DfE’s strategy statement templates to publish their pupil premium strategy.



Clerks to Governors Forums

Please use the links below to view more details and book onto the free Clerks to Governors forum. These drop in sessions are being offered in the spring term.

[Clerks to Governors Forum 1](#)

Wednesday 2nd February 2022

Free Zoom

[Clerks to Governors Forum 2](#)

Thursday 10th February 2022

Free Zoom

Courses & Events

Admissions: The Challenges Ahead for Governors

Saturday 29th January 2022 9.45am-2.30pm

Zoom £50

[Book](#)

Chairs of Governors Drop in Sessions

Tuesday 1st February 2022 4pm-5pm or Wednesday 2nd February 2022 5pm-6pm

Zoom Free or

[Session 1 book](#) or [Session 2 book](#)

Catholic Life and Mission in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework

9th February 2022 6pm-7.30pm

£25 Zoom

For: Governors

[Book](#)

Collective Worship in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework

2nd March 2022 6pm-7.30pm

£25 Zoom

For: Governors

[Book](#)

Religious Education in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework

8th March 2022 3.30pm-5pm

£25 Zoom

For: Senior Leadership Team and Religious Education Link Governor

[Book](#)

Religious Education in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework

16th March 2022 6pm-7.30pm

£25 Zoom

For: Governors

[Book](#)

