

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

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**The great gift of Easter is hope-
Christian hope which makes us have the confidence in God,
in His ultimate triumph and in His goodness and love,
which nothing can shake.**

Cardinal Basil C Hume OSB

CSI Co-ordinator

Anglea Cox, Interim Director shares the following:

I am delighted to inform you that Colette Doran-Hannon currently a S48 inspector and headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary School in Bexleyheath has been appointed to the role of Catholic Schools Inspection (CSI) Co-ordinator for the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Colette who will be known to many of you joins the team in September 2023 for four days a week. I am grateful to the governors of the school and directors at SELCAT for allowing her to work with us for a few days to achieve a smooth handover as we move to the CSI framework after the Easter break.

My thanks also to Catrina who is generously sharing her expertise and continuing to support the inspections during next term.



Early Years Providers

Ofsted acknowledge that many nurseries and preschools are having problems in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff, alongside the large numbers of childminders leaving the sector. This may be caused, and is certainly compounded, by changes in parental preference, working patterns, and childcare requirements as well as cost of living pressures. Alongside this difficult working situation, helping young children catch up after the pandemic is an unprecedented challenge.

The report, along with Ofsted's research review [Best Start in Life](#), emphasised the importance of curriculum in the early years. In 2023, Ofsted will be publishing further parts of its research review for the early years. Subsequent reviews will explore the seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, taking into account that the areas of learning are all interconnected.

Ofsted will continue with its focus on communication and language. As Ofsted reported in the first part of its early years research review, if children do not develop these skills in their early years, it has a lasting impact on their educational progress. It underpins all future learning, and Ofsted will continue to emphasise its importance.

Early Year Inspections

The end of January saw Ofsted update its guidance on what schools (and registered early years providers) need to know about delivering the early years foundation stage (EYFS), and Ofsted inspections under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

The updated guidance can be accessed [here](#) and a summary of changes can be found [here](#). New questions asked by EYFS providers include:

- Does Ofsted expect me to use formal words with children?
- What should I expect from the 'learning walk'?
- How will leadership and management be looked at during my inspection?
- Can I leave the children alone with the inspector?
- How will inspectors get the views of parents?

Disadvantage Gap

New Report on the Disadvantage Gap

February 2022 saw the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) release a report looking at the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged primary school children. The report found that:

- In 2022, two in five pupils (41%) completed Yr6 without meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and maths (combined). In total, over 275,000 children left Yr6 without a secure grasp of foundational skills. These children then go on to secondary school ill-equipped to engage in further learning.
- In 2022, 57% of children from disadvantaged backgrounds left primary school without reaching the expected standard in these subjects.
- The attainment gap for primary school children now stands at its widest level in a decade.
- Whilst the pandemic added to education inequality, these gaps were evident even before Covid. In 2019, a disadvantaged pupil aged 11 was, on average, nine months behind their non-disadvantaged peers. Children living in persistent poverty were a whole year behind.



The CSJ report makes a number of recommendations for the Government to consider which can be grouped into three categories:

Seeing parents as partners in education

- The DfE should outline a National Parental Participation Strategy which creates a duty for all MATs and schools to establish parental engagement policies.
- The Pupil Premium Governor should become a mandatory rather than recommended Link Governor position for all schools.

Fixing the damage of Covid

- The DfE should appoint 2,000 school attendance practitioners to address the underlying causes of school absence and remove the barriers to engagement for persistently absent pupils.
- Schools should introduce an Enrichment Guarantee, offering weekly enrichment activities for all pupils.

Strengthening the school system

- The DfE should explore the feasibility of introducing an undergraduate level Degree Apprenticeship for primary school teachers.
- The DfE should introduce a ring-fenced fund for continuing professional development focusing on improving teachers' understanding of how to develop foundational skills in the classroom.
- The Department should outline plans to enable primary school teachers to better identify and provide support for SEND in the classroom.
- The DfE should review the free school meals eligibility threshold and the academic outcomes of children by the length of time that they have been eligible for free school meals.
- New National Professional Qualifications for Leading Numeracy and Leading Oracy should be introduced. It is recommended that oracy education is placed on an equal footing with literacy and numeracy through the introduction of oracy in the National Curriculum and piloting new Oracy Hubs, in the style of English and Maths Hubs.

The full CSJ report can be accessed [here](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

2022 State of the Nation report: Children and Young People's Wellbeing

The fourth [State of the Nation report](#), focusing on trends in mental health and wellbeing over the 2021-22 academic year, has been published by the DfE.

The report looks at personal wellbeing, mental and physical health, education and skills and relationships. Bringing together a range of published information from various organisations, the DfE findings present a mixed picture, suggesting an inconsistent recovery of children and young people's mental and physical health towards pre-pandemic levels. While annual trends indicate that children and young people's subjective happiness and life satisfaction have recovered to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, anxiousness among both primary and secondary aged pupils appears to have increased and is higher than in 2020-21.

[Guidance](#) on how to support school attendance for pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues has also been published. The guidance includes a summary table of responsibilities, with a column dedicated to Trustees and Governors. These responsibilities cover:



- To regularly monitor and consider the approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing within the school to understand how it is working;
- Satisfy themselves that the building of emotional resilience is sufficiently delivered through the school curriculum and pastoral support, promoting a strong ethos and culture; and
- Support the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Academies

New Evidence Report: Transitioning to a MAT led system

The end of January saw The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) publish a report which explored the evolution of the school's system over recent years, looking at the progress and implications of a MAT-led system.

In March 2022, the Schools White Paper set out the ambition for all schools to be in a 'strong' MAT with at least ten schools or 7,500 pupils by 2030. It also outlined proposals to allow LAs to establish new MATs in areas where too few 'strong' trusts currently exist. This was followed by the introduction of a new Schools Bill to Parliament, intended to create the legal basis for regulating all trusts and the start of a regulatory review looking at how 'strong' trusts should be identified, how new trusts are commissioned and how trusts should be regulated. However, the Bill has now been dropped in its current form; whilst the current Government in place is committed to pursuing the ambitions outlined in the White Paper, it is not clear to what extent this will be supported by new legislation.

NFER's report argues that it would take a "significant period" for the Government's initial goal to be achieved, well beyond 2030. The NFER report also found that:

- Just under half of all mainstream schools in England have academised with c.53% of all mainstream schools remaining LA maintained. Only two-fifths of primary schools are academies compared to four-fifths of secondary schools.
- More than half of academies are in trusts of fewer than ten schools. Secondary academies (at 64%) are more likely than primaries (49%) to be in trusts with fewer than ten schools, including single academy trusts (SATs). One in four secondary academies are SATs.
- There are differences in the extent of academisation across regions. Most regions in England have academised over half of their schools. The exceptions are the North West, London and the South East, where the majority of schools remain LA maintained.
- The size of trusts that schools are in also varies considerably across the country. The East Midlands, the South West and Yorkshire and the Humber are the only regions in which more than half of academies are part of a MAT with at least ten schools. In comparison, less than a third of schools are in MATs with ten or more schools in London and the North West.
- Trusts are typically concentrated within a region. Most trusts (87%) with at least two schools have all their schools located in a single region. Only the largest trusts are more geographically dispersed, yet a third of MATs with more than 30 schools still operate in a single region.
- Most underperforming schools have now been academised. About 14% of schools in MATs have an Ofsted Inadequate or Requires Improvement rating, compared to c.7% of LA maintained schools. This reflects the fact that most underperforming schools have now been moved into MATs as per Government policy.
- Faith schools are a key group of schools yet to extensively academise.
- There is little precedent for trust mergers. However, more trusts may need to merge if the Government pursues ambitions for all schools to be in a MAT of at least ten schools.



- NFER's survey found that LAs are largely in favour of being able to establish their own MATs, despite generally being ambivalent about the Government's White Paper academisation plans.

NFER's full report can be accessed [here](#)

Staff Salaries

As part of its evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), the Government has stated that a 3% pay rise for most teachers from September 2023 will be "affordable" and keep salaries "competitive". The DfE has also admitted there could be "more headroom" for a greater rise if energy costs fall.

While the STRB is independent, the Government sets the parameters within which it has to operate. This year's remit letter from the Government stated that the STRB's recommendations should "strike a careful balance, recognising the vital importance of teachers and other public sector workers, whilst [...] not increasing the country's debt further, and being careful not to drive prices even higher in the future".

The STRB recommended a 3% pay rise for most teachers and leaders from September 2023 in its report last year, having been asked to make recommendations for two years in a row. However, the Government only implemented its recommendation for 2022-23, which worked out as 5% for most teachers and an 8.9% rise in starting salaries. This pay settlement has become the subject of an official pay dispute with the National Education Union, the NASUWT teaching union and NAHT school leaders' union, leading to the current strike action.

The DfE has stated that its 2023-24 proposal for a 3% rise for most teachers and leaders, and an increase in starting salaries to £30,000 amounted to a 3.5% increase overall. However, official inflation predictions suggest the DfE's proposal will amount to another real terms cut in pay.

The DfE has also stated that such a rise would be "manageable" within school budgets in 2023-24. According to the DfE, each 1% increase in staff pay costs schools collectively around £270M per annum. In its latest predicted schools' costs document, the DfE said it anticipates that schools' spending nationally "could rise by a further £2.1Bn in 2023-24 before they would face a (collective) net pressure on their budgets". Energy costs, however, still present an unknown. The DfE have said that these would cost the sector an extra £600M for every 100% increase in bills (DfE meetings with schools have heard of cost increases of between 100% to 300% to previous contract rates in 2022-23 alone).

Exposure to Online Pornography

A recently published report by the Children's Commissioner has found that:

- The average age at which children first see pornography is 13. By age nine, 10% had seen pornography, 27% had seen it by age 11 and half of children who had seen pornography had seen it by age 13.
- Young people are frequently exposed to violent pornography, depicting coercive, degrading or pain-inducing sex acts; 79% had encountered violent pornography before the age of 18.



The report found that frequent users of pornography are more likely to engage in physically aggressive sex acts.

- Pornography is not confined to dedicated adult sites; the report found that Twitter was the online platform where young people were most likely to have seen pornography. Fellow mainstream social networking platforms Instagram and Snapchat rank closely after dedicated pornography sites.

The report has led to concerns over the normalisation of sexual violence in online pornography and the role that it will play in shaping children's understanding of sex and relationships. Those surveyed expressed concern about the implications it may have on their understanding of what may or may not be harmful.

The Commissioner's report can be accessed in full [here](#)

Protecting Children and Young People Online

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has called on the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to take urgent action in improving protections for children in Britain. The report, [Children's rights in Great Britain: submission to the UN \(2023\)](#), highlights areas for concern, including the lost learning caused by the pandemic and the importance of tackling online abuse of children.

The recommendations for the Government include ensuring that the education recovery programme has a focus on challenges faced by different groups of children during, and as a result of, the pandemic, including children with SEND and additional learning needs (ALN).

Pupil Attendance in School

The latest attendance data release by the DfE covers the academic year to 10th February 2023. This includes the 1st February when a national teachers' strike took place and for which no attendance data has been input into the dashboard. The data release highlights:

- The attendance rate was 92.6% across all schools in the week commencing 6th February 2023. Thus, the absence rate was 7.4% (4.9% was approved, 2.5% was unauthorised).
- The overall absence rate for the academic year to date was 7.6%, 5.4% of which was authorised and 2.3% unauthorised.
- Across the year to date, 23.4% of pupil enrolments missed 10% or more of their possible sessions and were therefore identified as persistently absent. By school type, the persistent absence rate across the year to date were:
 - 19.5% in state-funded primary schools;
 - 27.8% in state-funded secondary schools; and
 - 40.3% in state-funded special schools.
- The 23.4% persistent absence rate represents a fall from 25.1% in the Autumn term with illness towards the end of the Autumn term driving the persistent absence rate.

The full attendance data release can be accessed [here](#)



New Report on Anti-racism Training

Nine out of ten teachers want anti-racism training, with only 40% of school staff believing staff in their school understood the impact(s) of racial 'microaggressions' and racist incidents more generally. This is according to [findings published](#) by The Centre for Mental Health and the youth-led social action project NotSoMicro.

These findings follow the January publication of Education Support's findings in which teachers have called for much wider and proactive equality, diversity and inclusion training to create more inclusive cultures in schools. Education Support's [report](#) explores how the wellbeing of ethnic minority teachers compared with the wider teaching population. The results confirm that many of the drivers of stress in the teaching profession are the same irrespective of race. On top of this, Black, Asian and other ethnic minority teachers and leaders face specific challenges due to their race such as barriers to progression, tokenism and microaggressions.

School Cyber-attacks on the Rise

According to a poll carried out by the Government's National Cyber Security Centre and the charity National Grid for Learning (LGfL), more than a third of schools across England have highlighted that data leaks and email fraud is on the rise. It also found that only half of those that responded to the poll have contingency plans in place.

The National Cyber Security Centre have warned that cyber-attacks are likely to spike at critical periods during the academic year, such as exam periods. With an increase in data leaks and email fraud, it is important that Governing Boards are aware of cyber risks, have proportionate controls in place, as well as a robust contingency plan.

Defibrillators in Schools

Described as a "huge milestone" by the Education Secretary Gillian Keegan, the DfE has recently announced that all state-funded schools in England who are currently without a defibrillator will receive one by the end of the current academic year. The rollout will supply over 20,000 defibrillators to nearly 18,000 schools.

To give schools the tools and knowledge they need to use their new defibrillators, including how to make them available to the community, the Oliver King Foundation and other leading charities have supported the creation of updated [guidance](#).

Consultation on the Use of Restraint in Schools

The Government has committed to minimising the use of restraint in all schools and, in instances where restraint is necessary and lawful, to support schools to use it as safely as possible. As a result, the DfE has launched a call for evidence to understand more about the current use of reasonable



force, physical restraint and restrictive practices in schools. The views of schools will help to inform revisions to the existing guidance to ensure all schools are calm, safe and supportive environments in which pupils and staff can work in safety and are respected.

The consultation, which can be accessed [here](#), closes on the 11th May 2023.

Consider Becoming a Governor or Director

Please share the flyer from the bottom of [this page](#) with anyone considering becoming a governor or director.

[This page](#) contains the dates and links to book onto the next series of sessions on considering becoming a Foundation Governor or Foundation Director.

Courses & Events

RSE in Catholic Schools: Policy, Roles and Responsibilities for Governors

Thursday 4th May 2023, 5.30pm-7pm

£25, Zoom

[Book](#)

Clerk to Governor Forum

Tuesday 16th May 2023. 6-7pm

Free Zoom

[Book](#)

Induction for New Foundation Governors

Wednesday 10th May 2023 4pm-5.30pm or

Thursday 18th May 2023 5.30pm-7pm

£25, Zoom

[Book](#)

Clerk to Governor Forum

Wednesday 17th May 2023. 2-3pm

Free Zoom

[Book](#)

Buckingham University Courses for School Staff:

TA to BA by Buckingham University Online Course, Application deadline 31 May 2023. [Click here](#) for further details.

Postgraduate Apprenticeship for PGCE by Buckingham University Online course, Application deadline 30th June for 24 August 2023 or deadline 3rd November 2023 for 11 January 2023. [Click here](#) to view further details.

