

The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

Edition 106
September 2023

Reflection from Canon Victor

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Welcome back to school. On Sunday this week, I joined Catholics all over the country to pray for you as we celebrated Education Sunday. "The theme for 2023 is "Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them." Taken from Matthew 18:20.' ..." The Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales said: "Education Sunday falls on the second Sunday of September (10 September, in 2023) just as the new academic year starts and is one of the oldest Days of Special Prayer in England and Wales, established 175 years ago in 1848. It provides an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks to all involved in making Catholic schools places of enlightenment, as well as to look forward in anticipation of the year ahead."

September is a beautiful month. Although it may not seem like it, we are now in the season of Autumn. In some parts of the country, the leaves have started to change their colours, and although it has been sunny of late, the days are getting darker. In the Church's liturgical calendar, we remain in ordinary time. We have already celebrated the birthday of our Mother Mary, on the 8th, and on the 14th, we will celebrate the Exaltation of the Cross. The Entrance Antiphon for that day is taken from Saint Paul's letter to the Galatians Chapter 6 Verse 14, where he said: We should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection, through whom we are saved and delivered. '

On the 29th, we will celebrate the feast of our three Archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, and many of you have particular devotions to them. Happy Feast Day to anyone called Michael, Gabriel or Raphael. On that day, we thank them for their constant intercession for us before the throne of God.

In a way, I like the idea that September ends with the celebration of Saint Jerome on 30th; he was a Priest and Doctor of the Church. It was Saint Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin.

Saint Jerome, Patron saint of translators, librarians and encyclopedists, pray for us.
God bless.

Canon Victor Darlington

Episcopal Vicar for the Southeast Area,
Commissions for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion,
Education and Director of Caritas, Archdiocese of Southwark

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Seminar - Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion 28th October 2023

On October 28th 2023, the Commission for Racial Justice and Cultural Inclusion is planning a Seminar titled "Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion in Our Parishes, Schools and Communities". This Seminar will be held at Amigo Hall, St George's Cathedral, Southwark from 9.30am to 4.00pm.

The main speakers on that day will feature, Archbishop John Wilson, Canon Victor Darlington, Fr. Richard Nesbitt, Susan Elderfield, Nana Churcher, Andrea Fernandes and a host of other contributors who would share our diversity and promote the values of our cultural heritage in the diocese.

Though the date falls within the School Holidays, this programme is special one of its kind since the topic is of interest to our schools and institutions. However, to incorporate these, the Seminar will be streamed while online participants will be registered to connect to the event via Team or Zoom.

As soon as we roll out the links to the streaming and online participation registrations, they will be promptly communicated.

[Further details](#)

Changes to Admissions Arrangements

As you may be aware, changes have been made to the guidance on school admissions. The key changes are around how Catholic practice is evidenced. The diocese have moved away from a Supplementary Information Form and moved to a diocesan Certificate of Practice. The purpose of this is to achieve greater consistency across the diocese. Under the new arrangements schools that are not or have no realistic possibility of being oversubscribed may drop this particular criterion and evidence Catholic applicants by way of a baptism certificate. This is intended to reflect the current situation in the diocese, with particular regard to falling pupil numbers. Copies of these documents were sent to headteachers, chairs of governors and parish priests, earlier this week.

Please [click here](#) to view the documents. For further information please email [Daniel Coleman](#).

RAAC - from the Directors letter sent to Headteachers and Chairs of governors

It has been all over the news but the summer started with all the issues regarding RAAC and just kept going. The diocese has been receiving reports from surveys on schools regarding the model of school build and although the Catholic sector is significantly affected across the country, to date, only three schools in the diocese have confirmed RAAC. They are:

St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School, Swanley
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Brixton
St Thomas More Comprehensive School, Eltham

St Bartholomew's has the hall out of use and the KS2 classes at Corpus Christi have been relocated to St Martins in the Fields, School for Girls, Tulse Hill. St Thomas More has the hall and kitchens

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situated above gym, boiler house and SEND rooms out of bounds, mobile toilets and kitchens will be appearing on site. If as a local school, you can assist by offering accommodation such as occasional use of a hall for parent's evening etc, please do. I am grateful to staff in these schools who gave up time over the school holidays to ensure relatively smooth transitions to new working procedures. My thanks to Lyle and James in our Property team who continue to work on resolving the longer-term problems of removing the RAAC and commissioning rapid high level RAAC surveys. If anyone has any queries, please email Donna, donnagray@rcaos.org.uk who will assist with a response. If schools have not been surveyed but have a suspicion that they may have RAAC, please let us know urgently. We have a team of surveyors doing this work but on a prioritised schedule depending on the information we hold. All academies should have arranged surveys by now, if you require one and want to use the diocesan commissioned team, please contact Donna but there will be a charge of approx. £800 for academies, please update the DfE portal when you have the results. For schools, property can update the portal.

Contact Sheet - from the Directors letter sent to Headteachers and Chairs of governors

Below is a link to a form for completion by the schools and academies so we have up to date information on key posts such governing bodies. please ensure that the Governance Professional (Clerk) in your school completes it.

Thank you in advance for assisting with this.

Governor Information: <https://forms.office.com/e/1AVLeJXRwc>

Property - from the Directors letter sent to Headteachers and Chairs of governors

I was surprised last year to see some of the issues that the property team are managing that are due to schools carrying out inappropriate work. A couple of years ago the Archdiocese circulated a property document setting out the grounds on which a school occupies diocesan premises. It appears to have been largely ignored and schools have made changes to their buildings without permission, not sought the correct planning permission for work, entered negotiations to purchase land or allowed subletting. None of this is acceptable and does lead to serious issues as the diocesan assets are held by the diocesan charity with oversight by the charity commission. It is taking significant time and expense to correct many of these issues. A governing body **MUST** seek approval for any capital works over £2,000 before any work commences or contracts are entered into no matter how it is being funded. I do not want to be in the position of another diocese who required a school to reinstate the original building at the school's expense. We will work with schools to deliver what is appropriate. The source of funding makes no difference to these requirements. If you think there may be an issue we need to resolve regarding your school site, please contact me. To make approvals quick and simple, there will be a form on the Commission website to complete that is automatically sent to the property team. Most requests will be responded to within 48hours.

For Schools Only (not Academies)

I am concerned that in some schools, meeting room doors do not have a viewing panel but are all wood. In order to protect staff where such rooms are used for one:one meetings with children, the Education Committee have agreed that VASCA funding is used to replace two doors in a school to



ensure safeguarding and to protect staff from accusations. If you believe you have this situation, please contact Lyle or James who will assist. Funding is limited.

STATLOG

This year showed a need for the diocese to hold the latest plans and full building information on every school site. The diocesan Trustee require all schools and academies to be on an approved estate management system such as Statlog. The system is also important in fulfilling your H&S compliance as it will remind you of what checks need to be done, when and how. Training can be provided for superintendents and business managers. There is a small annual cost. Property will be in touch with schools not on the system to arrange a meeting to introduce Statlog and its functions, this will be later in the term.

Governors Code of Conduct, Occupation of Premises and Protocol documents - from the Directors letter sent to Headteachers and Chairs of governors

Please use the following link for the relevant documents for governance of a Catholic school: <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003629-codes-of-conduct-for-governors-and-directors>

Local authority versions must not be used as they do not support the ethos of our schools. It was disappointing to have to support several headteachers where the governors were acting inappropriately. It is important to have a full complement of governors so we need clerks to inform us as soon as there is a vacancy. We have changed the appointment process so only the parish priest at the church where a person worships needs to sign the application forms. We want to establish a pool of governors who can be appointed to any local vacancies. Please encourage your clerk to attend the online update meetings held termly so they are able to support your governing body fully. All governing bodies are now deemed to have received these documents and must follow the protocols.

Courses & Events

Being a Foundation Governor – What you Need to Know

Tuesday 3rd October 2023 4-5.30pm. Free, Zoom. [Book](#)

How do Governors Monitor and Evaluate the Catholic Life of the School

Wednesday 11th October 2023 5.30pm-7pm
Free, Zoom. [Book](#)

To Know you More Clearly- What do Governors need to know about the New Religious Education Directory?

Thursday 12th October 2023 5.30pm-7pm
Free, Zoom. [Book](#)

Governors – Keeping Everyone Safe in your School

Tuesday 17th October 2023 5.30pm-7pm
Free, Zoom. [Book](#)

Chairs of Governors Drop in Session (1)

Wednesday 18th October 2023 4pm. Free, Zoom [Book](#)

Chairs of Governors Drop in Session (2)

Thursday 19th October 2023 5.15pm. Free, Zoom. [Book](#)

Introduction to a MAT for Governors and Headteachers

Tuesday 7th November 2023 5.30pm-7pm
Free, Zoom [Book](#)



[This page](#) contains the dates and links to book onto the next series of sessions on Considering becoming a Foundation Governor or Foundation Director. This page also contains 2 A4 posters that can be used to encourage practising Catholics to become foundation governors or directors.

