



26th January 2024

Dear Colleagues

Supporting Catholic Academy Trusts

During last term, the three remaining Catholic Academy Trusts were established across the diocese providing the five trusts for the diocese alongside KCSP and SELCAT as agreed by the Diocesan Trustees. On Thursday morning this week, the Annual General Meeting of the Catholic Academy Trusts (a statutory requirement) was held when the Directors' reports of the last year and financial accounts were presented to the members of the trusts. The members are the Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishops, Vicar General, and area Episcopal Vicars including Canon Victor, which are the same in each trust. The CAT directors presented in the presence of each other to share the work they have done over the last year. The work of the schools converted and converting was celebrated.

The Archbishop and other members were proud of the achievements of the CATs in fulfilling the diocesan vision in bringing its schools together in families promoting Catholic education and offering more support for children and families. Archbishop John took the opportunity to thank those who are academy governors and staff for all their work especially with parishes and was pleased to see the consolidation of excellence in Catholic education. The diocese is immensely grateful to those who have come forward to be directors on the boards using their professional knowledge of education, business and governance to support Catholic education; they have generously given their time and expertise. Archbishop John mandated those present to go out and encourage all schools to fulfil their role in his vision and join a Catholic Academy Trust.

As schools in the diocese move towards academisation, it has become necessary to move to a Diocesan Education Service more able to support trusts and their academies. With the support of the Diocesan Trustees, a new structure has been introduced and staff from the Commission have been appointed to some new posts or retain their existing roles. Some staff have chosen this moment to move to pastures new. We are grateful to the whole team for the support they have shown and the professional manner with which they have engaged in the changes. Our sincere thanks to those who leave the Commission having supported Catholic education in Southwark and elsewhere for many years, their contribution is much appreciated. They are Patrick Harrison who will train as a CSI inspector, Claire Cottington who administered governor appointments and Susan Richards our finance administrator. We wish them well.

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The following structure becomes the Diocesan Education Service (not Commission) working more closely with other Curial departments such as property, finance and communications who also contribute to the support for education.

Episcopal Vicar for Education: Canon Victor Darlington
Diocesan Schools Commissioner: Angela Cox OBE
Director of Academies. Colette Doran Hannon.
Trust Relationship Officer 1: Daniel Coleman.
Trust Relationship Officer 2: To be recruited
Communications & Media Officer: Claire Williams
PA to DSC and Team administrator: Donna Gray
Chaplaincy and Staff Formation Officer: Susan Elderfield
Governance and Compliance Officer: Yvonne Epale
CSI Co-ordinator: Sharon Docherty

The new structure will come into effect over the remainder of the term. Colette will oversee the day to day support for academies and schools prior to academy conversion as well as leading specific projects. The Trust Relationship Officers will be the regular contact for the trusts and the schools in the areas advising on most matters such as reserved post recruitment, admissions, Catholic life and parish relationships as well as liaising to ensure meetings are held in a timely and appropriate way. They will work closely with Yvonne to ensure governor appointments are made effectively and all directors and governors are accessing professional development opportunities to allow them to carry out their roles effectively. Yvonne's role will extend across all governance and responsibilities including helping with complaints, hearings and governor training. Susan remains responsible for chaplaincy development, an area that will be taken forward within the CAT structures, and is currently supporting St Mary's University in establishing a level 6 chaplaincy and youth ministry apprenticeships providing a career pathway for those supporting formation in our schools as well as encouraging support for other aspects such as church music and national events like Flame. The CSI Co-ordinator role develops further with an ongoing need for inspectors especially as we work more across the SE Hub. Claire and Donna continue to support communications and conferences as well as all the admin that is needed on a local basis and nationally.

The current changes in Catholic education are happening across all dioceses. The issue of falling rolls is a national challenge but one that is being more keenly felt across London. With this model, we hope the Education Service will become more closely aligned to the issues facing schools and academies and assist with the evolution of our Catholic Academy Trusts as leaders in the sector both in Catholic Education and nationally.



One final matter is linked to falling rolls and some of you may be aware that we have recently alongside the Royal Borough of Greenwich started an informal consultation to close Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Kidbrooke. We ask for your prayers at such a challenging time for our community and those who are facing significant change. The decision has not been taken lightly and I ask if you have staffing vacancies to let Daniel Coleman know by email that where possible we can help those who are committed to working in Catholic schools to continue their vocation and apply for any places when you are recruiting.

With best wishes for a successful year.

Yours in Christ

Angela Cox
Diocesan Schools Commissioner

Canon Victor Darlington
Episcopal Vicar for Education