

# The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

**Edition 110**  
**February 2024**

## Reflection - Canon Victor Darlington

Beloved Friends, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I believe, like me, you will be thinking, where has January gone? We are already in February, and this year, we have an added day as we mark a leap year. The Weather also changes ever so slightly. For some, it is getting warmer; for others, it may still be on the chilling side.

Last month, I was happy to see many of you from our schools in the Cathedral to celebrate this year's racial justice Sunday. Thank you for attending and participating in our mission to be one in Christ and celebrate our diversity.

February has many significant feasts, such as the Presentation of the Lord on 2nd February, Candlemas, and the blessing of throats with the blessed candles when we celebrate the feast of Saint Blaise on 3rd February.

The high point of February begins the Lenten season with Ash Wednesday on 14th February. Ash Wednesday is a Holy Day of Obligation, and we are expected to attend Mass to receive Ashes. It is also a day of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. In your different ways, you will already have prepared for Lent, and making prayer the centre of all you do.

Give yourself time to attend the stations of the cross in your parishes and schools and try to find out for yourself which station is your favourite.

### **Canon Victor Darlington**

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

## New Guidance Issued by the DfE

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobile-phones-in-schools>

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## Voluntary-aided schools

With effect from 5th March 2024, the Diocesan Trustees of the Archdiocese of Southwark expect that all Diocesan voluntary-aided (VA) schools subscribe to Statlog. This is in order for the Diocese to comply with the expectation of the DfE's guidance in respect of Good Estate Management of Schools (GEMS). VA schools with unutilised 2021-22 VASCA funding for implementation of Statlog are reminded that these funds shortly expire, so will be withdrawn on 15th March 2024. Thereafter, these VA schools will be required to fully fund their own implementation of Statlog. The Diocese remains unable to support the VASCA funding process to schools outside of Statlog from 2022-23 onwards.

## Academies

The Diocesan Trustees also have this expectation of all Single Academy Trusts and there are currently on going discussions with the MATs whose schools will also be expected to subscribe to Statlog.

## Schools Causing Concern

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/659d064e614fa20014f3aa63/Schools\\_causing\\_concern\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/659d064e614fa20014f3aa63/Schools_causing_concern_guidance.pdf)

The Department for Education (DfE) guidance has been updated to reflect changes Ofsted has made to its inspection process in relation to a school judged Inadequate solely due to ineffective safeguarding. The updated text sets out that where a school is judged Inadequate for Leadership and Management, solely because of ineffective safeguarding (but judged Good or Outstanding in all other key areas), Ofsted will carry out a monitoring visit within 3 months of publication of the Inadequate judgement to determine whether improvements have been made. The monitoring visit will either confirm the school remains Inadequate or, if inspectors are satisfied that safeguarding is now effective and there has been no decline in the school's performance in other areas, regrade the school.

New text has been added to the guidance to help explain what kinds of data the Regions Group (RG) take into account when making decisions regarding schools causing concern. In line with previous commitments, RG will not use 2020 or 2021 assessment, test or exam results data to hold schools to account. RG will have regard to a range of information including:

- Assessment, test and exams results data
- Attendance and persistence absence data, based on the school census
- Exclusions data
- Information relating to the capacity and capability of leadership and governance, including the oversight and use of finances and the ability to deliver school improvement
- Any evidence relating to workforce recruitment and retention Parental preferences, in terms of the number of first-choice applications compared with the PAN
- Pupil destination data.

Where a decision has been made to convert or transfer a school, RG will follow the principles set out in the commissioning guidance when considering which academy trust a school will join.



## DfE Updates - Wraparound Childcare Guidance

The Department for Education has recently unveiled [guidance](#) to support schools in launching or expanding wraparound childcare services, as part of the national programme. This new directive advises on assessing demand, space availability, and the quality of current childcare offerings. It emphasises collaboration with local authorities, stakeholders, and partners for effective planning and delivery.

The guidance delineates clear roles for staff, governors, and trustees, ensuring strong leadership in childcare services. This initiative presents a unique chance for governing boards to boost parental involvement, aid working families, and enrich children's educational experiences.

Summary:

- Primary schools are encouraged but not mandated to provide wraparound childcare unless there's a reasonable justification, such as lack of space or demand. They should, however, help parents access local childcare.
- Wraparound childcare must not disrupt the learning environment, with schools responsible for ensuring it fits within permitted use of premises and safeguarding a high-quality teaching space.
- Schools must ensure wraparound care meets safeguarding standards, even if provided by external organisations, and is inclusive for all children.
- Childcare fees should be affordable, with schools encouraged to support government childcare subsidies and consider financial viability when setting prices.
- Childcare can be staffed by teaching assistants or volunteers but not teachers, with attention to staffing ratios for different ages and needs.
- Ofsted will inspect wraparound childcare as part of school visits if it's directly offered by the school and employs school staff, including where school pupils attend.

## DfE Updates - Data Protection in Schools

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its [guidance](#) on data protection for schools, including multi-academy trusts. This essential toolkit is designed to assist school staff, governors, and trustees in:

- Complying with data protection laws
- Developing robust data policies and processes
- Understanding which staff and pupil data should be retained
- Implementing best practices to prevent personal data breaches

Targeted primarily at maintained schools and academies, independent schools may also find the guidance beneficial. This update underscores the importance of safeguarding personal data within the educational sector.

## DfE Updates - Launch of Teaching Apprenticeship

In an innovative move, the DfE is set to introduce a new apprenticeship pathway into teaching for non-graduates, starting in 2025. This initiative, beginning with a pilot for 150 maths trainees, aims to offer a practical solution to the teacher supply gap and make use of the apprenticeship levy funds within schools, trusts, and councils.



The Teacher Degree Apprenticeship launches in 2025 to utilise apprenticeship levy funds more effectively and address teacher shortages. It offers a new path for non-graduates, particularly teaching assistants, requiring GCSEs in English and maths, with an additional science requirement for primary educators. The four-year programme leads to a Level 6 degree and Qualified Teacher Status, blending 40% study time with 60% classroom teaching. Delivered by universities and other training providers, it's subject-specific and underpins the ITT core content framework. While apprentice salaries are under review, the scheme has sparked union concerns over maintaining training standards, yet the Department for Education assures its commitment to quality.

### **Next Steps and Funding:**

The pilot phase recruitment will commence this autumn, focusing initially on secondary maths. While the pilot is government-funded, subsequent iterations will require schools to utilise their levy funds or find alternative financing.

This new route into teaching represents a significant shift towards more accessible and varied pathways into the profession, aiming to bolster the teaching workforce and provide more flexible opportunities for aspiring educators.

## **DfE Updates - Updated Ofsted Inspection Guidance for Schools**

Ofsted [guidance](#) for maintained and academy schools, along with the 'Leaflet for schools' PDF, has been updated. This revision aims to provide schools with a comprehensive overview of what to expect during an Ofsted inspection and outlines the necessary steps schools need to take.

For detailed insights and to ensure your school is fully prepared for an upcoming inspection, we encourage reviewing the updated guidance and resources provided by Ofsted.

## **Academy Updates - DfE guidance for Academy Trusts Planning to Make Organisational Changes**

The Department for Education has updated its [guidance](#) for academy trusts planning significant organisational changes or closures. This guidance clarifies the procedures for making substantial adjustments that could impact the local educational landscape, including changing the number and type of school places or their locations.

Significant changes must follow a process similar to that of local authority maintained schools, with decisions typically made by the Regional Schools Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Academy trusts are required to submit a detailed proposal for any significant change, following either a 'fast track' or 'full business case' route, depending on the nature of the change and the trust's eligibility for fast tracking.

## **Academy Updates - How Trusts Can Support Schools To Adopt AI Safely**

Some trusts are actively exploring how to safely adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in schools, balancing the potential benefits with the risks. With the emergence of generative AI platforms like ChatGPT, there's a heightened interest in harnessing these tools for improving efficiency,



enhancing learning experiences, and increasing accessibility, while mitigating concerns over plagiarism and ethical issues.

Trusts have adopted a cautious yet open approach, neither blocking AI sites outright nor endorsing specific platforms. Instead, they focus on guiding staff and students in the responsible use of AI, including caution against sharing personal information. This approach is part of a broader strategy to integrate AI into existing educational platforms, ensuring any adoption aligns with academic integrity policies and pedagogical goals.

To support staff in navigating these new technologies, some trusts have developed AI toolkits and training modules, highlighting tools that promise the most significant impact on teaching and learning. The adoption of platforms with AI features, like Canva, alongside existing tools such as Adobe Express and Google Workspace, illustrates a commitment to enhancing educational resources and practices through AI.

ImageTrusts are actively evaluating new AI tools for co-pilot support for teachers, resource creation, and independent learning, with an emphasis on integrating AI into current systems to bolster pedagogical approaches. The rapid pace of technological development presents challenges, but also opportunities to advance educational outcomes, provided that the adoption of AI tools remains thoughtful, focusing on safety, system security, and ethical considerations.

## Courses & Events

### **For Governors – Religious Education in the Catholic Schools Inspection Framework**

Tuesday 19th March 2024 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.

