

5th September 2024

Dear Colleagues

I hope you return refreshed from the summer break and full of hope for the new academic year. One of the privileges of working across schools is seeing how colleagues underestimate the impact of their work especially where staff and pupils carry out daily acts of kindness and sacrifice that make such a difference to the recipient. There is an assumption that all schools behave in the same way but it is where virtues are lived that it becomes the habit and flourishes. In a world of celebrities on social media our young people can easily assume that success is measured by having hundreds of followers and we can lose sight of the life changing one-on-one encounters that take place in our schools. A single act can change the world as Jesus showed us. Let us take that forward on a daily basis during the new year.

I am pleased to welcome Sam Gower to the team. Sam was headteacher at St Peter Chanel Primary School and joins us as the Trust Relationship Officer for the West covering the Catholic academy trust areas of Christ the Redeemer and Sancta Familia and all the schools in the area. She will work closely with Daniel in developing the new role. James Roach has now left the diocese but Tim, Lyle and Graham continue to oversee all aspects of property.

Jubilee Year

A priority for the team this term is preparing for the Jubilee Year 2025 – A Pilgrimage of Hope that will begin for schools on 24th January 2025. On that day Archbishop John will share a message with all schools for you to use with pupils. There will be an online briefing on 9th October 2024 when we will outline Pope Francis expectations for the year, the plans for it and answer questions from your staff who are arranging events in the schools. To enhance your plans, candles will be distributed at the Beginning of Year Mass as well as pilgrimage passports. Susan Elderfield is organising events with the secondary school chaplains and we are grateful for their support. Do ensure someone from every school attends the briefing. It was exciting this summer to see all the work that was going on across Rome to prepare for Jubilee Year. Friday 21st November 2025 will be a day when all Catholic schools across the country will celebrate their shared journeys.

There are several other areas of change or to remind you of so please take the time to read the rest of this letter and to share it with governing bodies and staff.

For Action

1. The Well – Firm Foundations had become very expensive for the level of use so we have decided to end the subscription. Education Service staff have been working to create content for our Virtual Learning Platform for School Leaders and Governors/Directors. The Well will have short training sessions that will serve as an introduction, a reminder or a refresher on areas of School Leadership and Governance. Login details will be emailed to Foundation Governors from the 11th September 2024.

2. Professional Development - We are moving to a different approach to training this year, working more closely with our Catholic Academy Trusts. We will continue to host training with the Education Service staff, however our established CATs will also be hosting training more locally. Any training can be attended at a CAT centre, so whether you belong to a CAT or not you can attend the training. Administration of courses will be managed centrally by Claire Williams to ensure consistency.
3. Governor Appointments - We will be using an Information Management System - Diosys for appointments and reappointments of foundation governors. The system will send clerks notifications of which stage the application has reached.

A quick reminder that foundation governors/directors may only serve for a maximum term of 12 years i.e. 12 years at one school. After the 12 years those foundation governors/directors are welcome to serve in another school.

Foundation Governors are also expected to attend training delivered by the Education Service.

- Diosys – In order for us to keep our records up to date we ask if a member of your administrative staff could complete this form, [Click here](#)
- Admissions – any school that is not using the Certificate of Practice but the SIF forms will have to consult this year. Please note that there is a briefing on this on . If you have any queries please contact either Daniel Coleman danielcoleman@rcaos.org.uk or Angela Cox angelacox@rcaos.org.uk
- Results return – We are also asking for your examination results, this allows us to be informed of academic standards before meetings with Regional Directors and DfE. We ask that secondary schools please complete this form, [Click here](#) Primary schools please complete this form, [Click here](#)
- Nominate staff for Aspiring Leaders courses – if you have DHT or AHT who is aspiring to be a Headteacher or Deputy in the next 18 months please encourage them to attend the course on Tuesday 1st October here at the Education Service so we can support them in their interviews.

For Note

1. CSI Update – Updated versions of the CSI documents are now available on the CSI website [Inspection documents | Catholic Schools Inspectorate](#) . Please disregard previous versions of the documents. Inspections will begin in September. Please see Appendix 1 from the CES.
2. Some of you may remember Aisha Thomas speaking at our Headteachers Conference last year. They will be delivering a Fireside Webinar on the 9th September from 6pm – 7pm, free to educators to attend. It will be discussing the riots and events of the summer and how it impacted our communities. To sign up for the Webinar please use the following link <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/ec0aaa00-cf5b-4769-a703-f92636934023@76ebb395-e782-453e-9bbe-e35f4e5230bd>

Finally, whatever this year brings both locally and nationally, I wish every school success. If there is anything that you are concerned about, please do not hesitate to contact the team.

Our regular newsletter will return next week.

Yours sincerely



Angela Cox OBE
Diocesan Schools Commissioner

Encls.

Cc: Canon Victor Darlington
Paul McCallum