



The Diocese of Brentwood

Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AT

A five year vision for Diocese of Brentwood Education Department 2017 - 2022

A key challenge for Catholic Education today is to be true to the mission of the Catholic Church and to respond appropriately in order to preserve and develop our Catholic Schools in the changing educational world in which they exist. Underpinning our educational vision are a number of overarching aims of Catholic Education which need to be promoted by the Diocesan Education Department and by our Catholic schools and Academies. Consequently we are committed:

1. To proclaim and promote Jesus Christ as the foundation and centre of the school community and of its evangelising mission within the Church's overall pastoral mission. (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* 121,134,265; *Dominus Iesus* 15).
2. To believe that all are created in God's image and likeness, are children of one God and part of one sacred family as brothers and sisters sharing a common humanity and for whom the Spirit "is mysteriously present in every human heart" (*Redemptoris Missio* 29). (cf. *The Catholic School* 85).
3. To promote the common humanity that binds us together by building a sense of belonging, community and interdependence within our schools for the common good. (cf. *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third Millennium* 18; *Evangelii Gaudium* 24).
4. To affirm and respect that one's religious beliefs are an important element in a person's identity to which one has an inalienable right. (cf. *Declaration on Human Rights* 18; *Nostra Aetate* 2; *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* 6; *European Convention on Human Rights*, art. 9).
5. To provide for and respect that one's religious beliefs need support and challenge in order to confirm one's identity within and commitment to such beliefs. (cf. *Catholic Schools and Other Faiths*, Part II, par 1)
6. To promote a spirit of respectful dialogue of "finding and sharing a 'mystique' of living together" (*Evangelii Gaudium* 87) in contexts of religious diversity in which one is led to recognise, understand, value and affirm the religious traditions, beliefs, practices and wisdom of others whilst anchoring one firmly in the beliefs, traditions, practices and wisdom of one's own religion. (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* 238, 28; *The Church in the Modern World* 92; *Decree on Mission* 41).

7. To give priority to recognising, valuing and providing for the highest quality learning about the various beliefs, values, practices and traditions of major world religions (religious literacy) and of other life stances independent of religious beliefs. (cf. Code of Canon Law, canon 806:2; The Catholic School 85).
8. To create, develop and promote our schools as safe hospitable spaces in which all our children can thrive and be raised to distinction, respecting their dignity, rights and freedoms, protected from fundamentalism of any kind, free from sectarian sentiment of any sort, “in an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom” (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School 25). (cf. Declaration on Christian Education 8, The Church in the Modern World 38).
9. To foster a climate of learning and enquiry about, excitement in and engagement with life’s Big Questions in a spirit of freedom and of the search for Truth (cf. Declaration of Religious Liberty 3; Lay Catholics in Schools 28; Pope Francis Address to Congregation for Catholic Education, Feb 2014).

In the light of significant new structural changes to education, the Diocese of Brentwood Education Department must develop a strategic plan that is fit for purpose that will meet the new needs of our Catholic schools as the educational landscape develops. It must also ensure that it retains a relevant and meaningful role in our schools and indeed work to develop new roles as opportunities arise. There is no question that we are at an important juncture and the next 5 years will be critical for schools and the Diocese of Brentwood Education Department itself. The following areas of work are likely to come in to sharp focus in both the near and longer term. This document attempts to set out examples of success criteria which describes a set of desired outcomes. For each strategic priority there is a rationale and a suggested process to achieve the desired outcome.

Strategic Priorities 2017 – 2022

1. Building the education team
2. School improvement and support
3. Responding to the Governments Multi Academy Trusts Agenda
4. Governance
5. Leadership investment
6. Establish Business Support Services
7. Working with clergy and parishes
8. Marketing and communications development.

Priority 1 – Building the education team

Success Criteria

A team of experienced diocesan advisers will be fully in place. This team will include people with relevant OFSTED/S48 and Headship experience and there will be an appropriate level of administrative support. As a consequence the team will be well placed to work with schools and will have both credibility and capacity. The team will work supportively alongside schools and will be

able to challenge accurately in an informed way when the need arises. The team will work to establish a positive relationship with all schools, frequently going the extra mile in a spirit of generosity to develop excellent relationships both personally and on behalf of the diocese.

Why?

The diocese needs to be able to operate in a professional way in relation to all schools across the diocese, providing guidance, training, expertise and support. The DfE expects the diocese to accurately understand their schools, to act on information they are able to generate themselves and to provide a perspective and articulate credible solutions for difficult issues when they arise. We need to put ourselves in a position where we can enter in to a constructive partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) so that we ensure that the diocese is taken seriously and is able to uphold a strong position in relation to protecting our Catholic schools within the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DfE and CES. We need to do all that we can to ensure that our schools are protected and that they continue to be successful.

How?

- Review roles and responsibilities of those currently engaged in working with schools for the diocese.
- Identify areas of strength and interest that could be built on and developed going forward.
- Continue with the Steering Group and consultant input until new post holders have been appointed and taken up roles within the diocese.
- Establish a common approach and way of working across the team that does not stifle creativity and individual relationships but ensures a clear focus, a common approach and teamwork.
- Introduce appropriate central information system to record each interaction, advice, data and inspection outcomes with every school.
- Develop Brentwood Diocesan Board of Education and termly reporting structure in order to keep Diocese and Bishop Alan fully informed. This will also help to hold DDE to account and will support and structure working relationship between DDE and relevant Office Holders.
- Work closely with Finance Board.
- Work closely with EV for Education.
- Establish fully costed strategic plan.
- Identify strengths and good practice within schools. Look to build support structures and opportunities in and between schools.
- Promote and develop School to School Support (S2S).

Some up-front investment is required to ‘pump prime’ this provision and to support the development of the department going forward. Clearly the cost of having an education department will depend on the number of posts involved and when and what schools pay.

In addition to the DDE, posts are likely to include in time (A) Assistant DDE [DSC], (B) Secondary Link Adviser [part-time], (C) 2 Primary Link Advisers, (D) Primary RE Adviser, possibly alongside an additional post covering (E) School Chaplaincy/Parish engagement or a Part time Secondary RE Adviser. There will need to be appropriate (F) Full-time Admin Support in the shape of a PA to the SLT and (G) a Data, Training and Inspections Manager. Thought will also need to be given to a (H) Buildings and Premises Officer as well as Website, Business Development and a Governance lead. Depending on the appointments made Website, Business and Governance may initially be covered from within the team until such time as demand requires it to be covered by a separate post.

In Year 1 from September 2016 the basic need will be DDE plus 2 full time Primary Advisers and 1 Secondary Adviser plus full time admin support. However this will need to be reviewed in light of a review of roles and responsibilities that currently exist. This (or something equivalent) will need to be in place from 1st September 2016 prior to schools contributing from April 2017 – The Steering Group and consultants will need to fill the gap. It would also be extremely useful to have a handover from the current consultants to the eventual post holders.

Priority 2 – School improvement and support

Success Criteria

A Diocesan Board of Education team of school improvement specialists/consultants will be working with schools and MATS to try to ensure that no Catholic school is in an OFSTED category and that increasing numbers are outstanding for both OFSTED and Section 48. The team will be known for the provision of high quality outcomes delivered with integrity and in line with our Catholic principles and values.

Why?

Any school less than 'good' is at risk of forced academisation where the diocese could have limited formal right of veto over MAT destination. We want to promote excellence in all our schools. Significant opportunities may emerge to support other school-led MATs outside of the Diocese of Brentwood as schools are likely to seek out great support from wherever they can get it.

How?

- Build adviser capacity within the diocese.
- Increase levels of support for schools and ultimately Service Level Agreement (SLA) buy-in.
- Identify menu of relevant services for schools that reflect skills, knowledge and expertise of those employed by the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Utilise additional consultants as required (Health & Safety, Safeguarding) and look to build a leadership network.
- Establish an effective CPD programme for all governors of Catholic schools and build active and effective networks for governors.

It is difficult to predict the amount of work which could be required here. Following the pump priming of the growth of the department (over say a 3 year period) we could reasonably expect the buy-in from schools to increase, particularly where they feel they are getting great support and services from the diocese. Obviously we will want a team that can cover demand, but in order to increase the buy-in we must also be able to provide speculative services. However in time many elements of this area could be self-sustaining.

Priority 3 – Responding to the Governments Multi Academy Trusts Agenda

Success Criteria

A 'carpet' of MATs will exist that covers all areas of the diocese. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Brentwood which have either chosen or have been required to convert will be in appropriate and effective MATS that protect the Catholic nature and promote school improvement. The MATS will be generally based around a deanery model and will retain Diocesan influence.

Why?

National government policy – All schools will be academies ‘in due course’; new players such as the academy chains are a potential threat; we need to retain strong Catholic school identity and presence within the education system. We need to retain and build positive relationships and influence with individual schools. Ultimately schools need our help with the ‘MATting’ process and if we do not move on this immediately, the threat of ‘losing’ schools, either literally or metaphorically, is significant. There is also an opportunity to do something that may enable us to strengthen our schools so that they can be seen beacons of excellence by the wider educational community and this could lead to further engagement and enrichment of what we are able to do for children.

How?

- We need to work to establish a ‘MAT Culture’ across the Diocese in order to ensure there is an appropriate academy solution for every school.
- The diocese does not wish to force schools to be part of a MAT.
- We need to identify ‘trailblazers’ and work with them and support them on their journey.
- We maintain and develop diocesan influence by providing high quality services to schools both via a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) to be written and additional services such as Headteacher Performance Management and governor training and support.
- Core package for individual schools (right of relationship) and enhanced MAT packages to be developed.
- Diocesan appointed Members, Directors and Governors to hold leaders in MATS at all levels to account. This is a really important area which may incur some costs but which is unlikely to be covered by any future SLA.
- Work with relevant legal advisers to ensure relevant guidance is available to Headteachers and Governing Bodies.

The issue with this work is, despite its significant potential, it is unlikely to be fully funded from income from schools. For example if the new team were to cover academy development meetings with individual schools and groups of schools this then becomes time which cannot therefore be used for other income-generating activities. It is possible that Winkworth Sherwood will play a significant role here as well which will have a cost.

Priority 4 – Governance

Success Criteria

The Diocese of Brentwood will provide the best possible training and support for all governors who serve within our Catholic schools. It will be broad, well planned, resourced and relevant. Working with governors will not be based around ‘one off’ events but will be part of a coherent programme that is offered across the diocese in different locations so as to make access easy. Governor training will be delivered by the education team as a whole.

Why?

Schools have long required informed and reliable governance. In the current climate of a rapidly changing educational landscape the need for Governing Bodies with the right skills and competencies has never been greater. It is important that Headteachers and governors work together, in a climate of support and challenge, to drive the vision and improve outcomes for children. Local Authorities already offer some of this but our Catholic identity can be supported by

our involvement in the delivery of such an offer. Importantly it will provide an opportunity to retain and significantly enhance diocesan influence in this important area.

How?

- Initially collate information about governor training that the diocese currently offers.
- Identify governors who have responsibility for Governor Training.
- Identify new areas for development of expertise and resources.
- Gradually introduce a range of new areas for governor training.
- Offer training for governors in support of statutory requirements.
- Through Link Adviser support identify any current training requirements that the Diocesan Education Team could provide/support.
- Develop a modular 2 year training programme that schools sign up for.
- Diocese provides accreditation for Governing Bodies that take part.

Areas that will be important to develop expertise and training materials for include: HT Performance Appraisal, Role of the Governing Body in an OFSTED Inspection, Being an Effective Governor in a Catholic School, Safeguarding, Managing and understanding Data, HT Recruitment and Succession Planning, Good to Outstanding Governance, Religious Education and Collective Worship in Catholic Schools, Understanding School Finance, Preparing for a Section 48 Inspection, Supporting New Chairs of Governors and Meeting Statutory Requirements. This is something that will take time to develop but we will look to build on what already exists.

Priority 5 – Leadership investment

Success Criteria

A network of school leaders will be developed in order to support effective school-to-school support, brokered by advisers. Training opportunities will be co-ordinated and will include opportunities for aspiring Catholic School leaders, who are identified and invested in for the future. This network will deliver an ongoing potential pool to secure high quality Catholic leaders. Current diocesan provision in this area will be built on and developed and will cover both Primary and Secondary teachers.

Why?

The 'school-to-school support' model is currently highly favoured by the DfE. LA capacity going forward is likely to become more limited given a squeeze on funding and we need to establish an effective network for mutual support, provide relevant training and CPD opportunities and also do as much as we can to meet the growing crisis of leadership recruitment in schools.

How?

- Develop a new Diocesan Leadership Programme for current, new and aspiring leaders to specifically train them for leadership in the Diocese of Brentwood. This will build on work that is currently done with the primary and the secondary teachers.
- Ensure that work is done to clearly establish Catholic principles of education that are well known and understood by leaders and use this to bolster the Catholic identity of our schools.
- Establish a 'home-grown' culture which can go some way to addressing future recruitment needs.
- Work with schools to gain information on prospective leaders who could then be signposted to vacancies as they arise and then supported as above.

- Using the above, establish local networks of leaders/aspiring leaders to support one another and become more effective.
- Work to establish a shift in understanding in Catholic school leaders where required so that they are well prepared to carry out effective stewardship of diocesan schools.

This issue if not acknowledged and some attempt made to address it could severely hamper our schools. The situation is likely to get worse before getting better. This is a national issue.

Priority 6 – Establish Business Support Services

Success Criteria

A self-sustaining arm (or subsidiary company) of the Brentwood Diocese will be set up to offer support services where required in schools including HR, Finance, Premises and legal services. These services will be made available to all schools and MATs in the Brentwood Diocese. These services would also be potentially sellable to other dioceses and schools close to our diocese. Where Local Authorities already provide these services and they are deemed to be high quality we will signpost that provision.

Why?

Schools need these services now and they will be important services to be able to operate in a new MAT landscape. Not all authorities will be able to offer these services at the current levels 5 years down the line. Some authorities will already struggle and other commercial companies are moving in to take these aspects on for profit. Funding cuts are likely to bite further in to LA funding. The diocese has to ensure that it is a trusted partner for our schools. When schools seriously consider MAT options it is clear that these sort of services will come under closer focus. There will be a clear opportunity for the development of this area which if we do not take it up, will be provided from elsewhere, with no guarantee of either quality or an empathy with our Catholic principles.

How?

- Create a separate business development plan.
- Ensure the careful development of a team in the broadest sense with the skills and experience to meet a range of different service provision.
- Investigate and benchmark appropriate costs for services.
- Create capacity gradually over time to respond to demand as it grows.
- Be prepared to speculate based on market research.
- Ensure we remain true to Catholic principles that underpin our activities.

This may take a while to fully develop – perhaps from Year 3 onwards when a range of services have been established.

Priority 7 – Working with clergy and parishes (Parish engagement)

Success Criteria

All schools will have an effective, meaningful engagement with both the local and wider Catholic Church. A Parish Engagement and Chaplaincy Team will be in place, utilising the service and skills of both laity and clergy to provide pastoral and spiritual care and training as required.

Why?

There is a need for the link between parish and school and vice-versa to be as good as they can be. Significant reciprocal support networks may be largely untapped. Relationships need to be strong and where they are not then they need to be refreshed and reinvigorated. As schools become academies, potentially in school led MATs, local parishes need to be helped to maintain and develop their relationships not only with their local school but also with the group of schools (Deanery) with which they are linked. Local parishes need to find opportunities to minister and give witness to their Catholic faith within our Catholic schools and in turn schools need to welcome and facilitate opportunities for this to happen. There is the potential for a partial dislocation to occur if we are not watchful.

How?

- Look to develop or enhance Parish engagement and School Chaplaincy provision/team with identified 'go to' person to lead this area.
- Continue to work at Deanery and Parish level to create and support relationships between churches and schools.
- Explore useful links with Brentwood Diocesan Catholic Youth Service.
- Work with appropriate diocesan body in order to train clergy on how best to support schools.
- Plan strategically for the development of this area.
- Seek additional funding for what is likely to be a three year project.

Again this work cannot easily be 'charged' either to schools or clergy but is nevertheless essential if the wider Diocese is to understand and be able to play an effective part in the mission and pastoral opportunity in new groups of schools.

Priority 8 – Marketing and communications development

Success Criteria

Diocese of Brentwood Education Department 'brand' will be clearly understood and easily identified by both schools and parishes, in terms of its underlying principles, ethos and character. It will be recognised through a distinctive range of activities and its effectiveness and quality of service. A clear 'corporate' brand will facilitate and identify how we approach and deliver in all of the areas listed above. This brand and way of working will be clearly reflected in an effective on-line presence and a reputation known for quality support for schools.

Why?

We have an opportunity to rebrand, rearticulate and to some extent reinvent what we are capable of doing. Sometimes schools will be unclear or unable to see beyond what the diocese previously offered. The education department needs to be updated in order to meet the needs of a changing educational landscape and this may have implications for other departments (Vicariates) within the diocese. The development of a consistent corporate approach to communication will help us to get our messages across to a wide constituency. This needs careful and considered action if both current and new services are going to thrive and become successful. All of the above priorities will need to have a clear identity and effective marketing.

How?

- Identify and adopt a consistent approach to all communications.
- Marketing needs to be clear and effective and this will require the development a List of services that the Education Department is able to provide.
- Services for schools communicated effectively and consistently. In time this will be through the development of a Service Level Agreement with Core and Additional services that schools purchase.
- On-line presence developed to include new education website with for example Facebook and Twitter feeds or similar.

This is an increasingly important area and one that can have a really big impact on the success of what we will be trying to do. There will no doubt be people with strengths in this area in Brentwood Diocese that we can tap in to and there may be other Catholic dioceses that have made a start on this area that we can learn from. We must be resolute and ensure that we end up with something that really works for us even if we have to involve outside organisations at some cost to the diocese.