



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

THE ALPHA BETA

The news and information bulletin
from the A&B Education Service



JANUARY 2021

Director's Letter

Dear Colleagues,

I hope this finds you safe and well. As a new year begins to unfold and we consider the year that was, it seems salient to reflect on the fact that the month of January is named after Janus (Ianuarius), the Roman god of the doorway, with January being the door to the year. Janus is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks both to the future and to the past. There will be few if any among us who have not reflected at length on the past year, before turning our eyes to the future. This year, our looking back surely involves an element of disbelief. None of us could have conceived that churches would be closed for Easter! A year ago, we had no inkling that we would have to close our schools to all but keyworkers' children and the most vulnerable; spend time in isolation; wear masks in public; or worry about

whether the NHS could cope with the pandemic. But January is the time to look forward and the celebration of the Epiphany reminds us to seek the light, especially during times of darkness. By virtue of our faith in Jesus we are people of light. Therefore, despite the darkness which enshrouds much of our lives as present, let us remember to walk in faith with Christ as our light and salvation, providing our path out of darkness and into the light. Further, we are called to share this light with those who dwell in darkness. Let us strive to always bring light into the lives of those with whom we interact in this new year.

In a Homily reflecting on people of light earlier this month, Pope Francis offered us three phrases from the Epiphany Gospel for contemplation: **"to lift up our eyes", "to set out on a journey" and "to see". So, as people of light, setting out both on a new term and a new Lockdown, we must lift our eyes to see what may at first glance be hidden from view.**

First, to “lift up our eyes” does not mean denying reality. On the contrary, it is the belief that the Lord is aware of our troubles, attentive to our prayers and not indifferent to the tears we shed. This trust in the Lord gives rise to gratitude and opens our hearts to worship. When we lift up our eyes to God, our problems do not go away, but the Lord grants us the strength to deal with them.

Second, this January we must once again “set out on a journey”. In order to worship the infant Jesus, the Magi had to undertake a lengthy journey. There is always something new (or renewed) about those who have undertaken a difficult journey; they have learned new things; encountered new people and situations; and found inner strength along the way. Each of us has a role to play in Catholic education and, like the Magi, we learn from the journey of life, marked by its inevitable hardships. The past year has been especially punishing but we must try not to be discouraged. By lifting our eyes and setting out, once again, we will find the strength needed to experience interior spiritual growth and persevere with renewed joy.

And lastly, as Catholic educators, each of us is called upon “to see”. Matthew says that the Magi “*saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him*” (Mt 2:10-11). Worshipping was an act of homage reserved for sovereigns and high dignitaries.

Yet the wise men looked beyond lowly surroundings and recognised in that Child a royal presence. They were able to “see” beyond appearances, with the opening of the treasures they had brought as gifts symbolized the offering of their own hearts.

Continuing the Epiphany theme of bringing gifts and talents, we welcome Karen Head as interim Headteacher at St Pancras, Lewes for the rest of the school year. I know school, deanery and diocesan colleagues will make Karen very welcome. Likewise, welcome to Carol Scanlon who has just started at St Mary’s Crowborough as Headteacher. Carol joins St Mary’s from St Joseph’s Redhill and again, I know her school, deanery and diocesan colleagues will make her very welcome. We all hope Karen and Carol will be very happy and fulfilled in their new schools. If you can find five minutes in your incredibly busy days, please do pick up the phone and introduce yourselves to Karen and Carol.

Here at the DES, I am delighted to let you know that Emma Sharp, Anna Flood and Claire Franke have joined the Diocese as Primary and Secondary Advisers respectively for Catholicity and RE and are already making a very positive impact! Sarah Feist will be working with and supporting Emma, Anna and Claire on this, and a range of other projects. As ever, for any questions regarding CPD or to book places, please contact Claire Martin:

E: claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk

Equally exciting is the news that Bernadette has made a wonderful recovery over the past few weeks and is even well enough to return to work on a limited basis this term. Sincere thanks to all those who sent cards, prayers, gifts and messages of support. Your unstinting kindness meant a great deal and supported Bernadette and her family through a very difficult time. Understandably, Bernadette now wishes to focus on her family, her health and on staying well and has therefore made the difficult decision to retire from the Diocese at Easter. I write this therefore with a mix of emotions; happiness that Bernadette is well, and sadness that she is leaving us! Bernadette has been part of Catholic education in Arundel and Brighton for more than forty years and has been a much-loved colleague and friend to many. I hope that, by Easter, we may all be able to celebrate her wonderful contribution together in person, and I know you will want the opportunity to do so in person if at all possible!

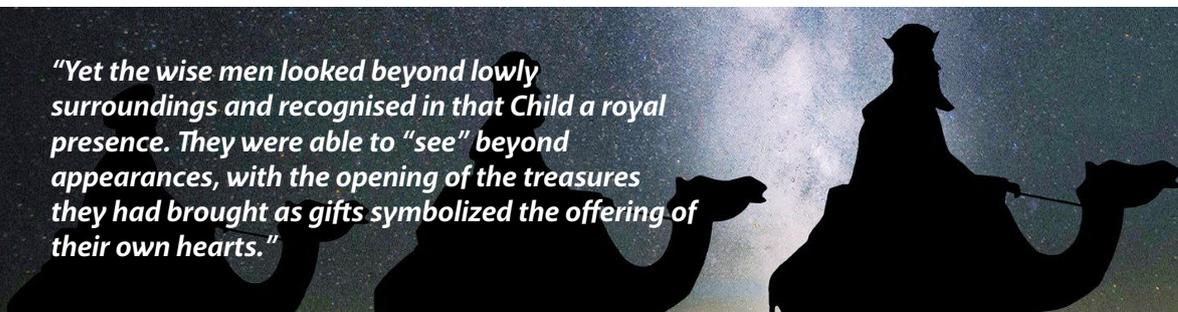
Lastly, and mindful of the Kings’ presentation of their gifts at Epiphany, I know I speak on behalf of all at the DES when I say how blessed we feel to work with such gifted school leaders and governors. Your talents, and the way in which you use them to bring light into the lives of others are constant sources of inspiration. Thank you, as ever, for all you do in the service of Catholic education.

Warmest wishes,



Marie Ryan

“Yet the wise men looked beyond lowly surroundings and recognised in that Child a royal presence. They were able to “see” beyond appearances, with the opening of the treasures they had brought as gifts symbolized the offering of their own hearts.”



CATHOLICITY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As mentioned in the Director's Letter at the beginning of this Alpha Beta, we are very excited that Anna Flood, Emma Sharp and Claire Franke have joined the Diocese as Primary and Secondary Advisers respectively for Catholicity and RE. As we have moved once again into lockdown they are working on resources that can help and support parents/carers with home learning to complement the *Come and See* programme. They are beginning with preparing home learning resources for the Eucharist Topic; these will be available on the Education Service website from Monday 25th January. They will be found by following this path on the website: Catholic Life and RE / Religious Education / Key documents and resources / Primary RE resources. Further resources will follow for the next topic Lent & Easter after half term.

Dioceses nationally have used the lockdown periods as an opportunity to share resources. Hexham and Newcastle Diocese has also begun creating some Home Learning Packs for the *Come and See* topics and these can be accessed through our website and by following this link [here >>>](#)

The Archdiocese of Westminster has created resources for teachers to build up their theological knowledge and seeing as the month of January is devoted to the Most Holy Name of Jesus they have produced materials that can be shared to link to this.

[Name of Jesus prayer resource](#)

[Basics of our faith using the Divine Praises](#)

On the 8th December 2020, the Pope declared this coming year as the year of Saint Joseph in his apostolic letter *Patris Corde*.

The letter can be accessed [here >>>](#)

He said 'The aim of this Apostolic Letter is to increase our love for this great saint, to encourage us to implore his intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal.'

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special "Year of St Joseph," beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Pope wrote *Patris Corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph!

We are also planning to produce resources for both Primary and Secondary schools that can be used alongside the themes of the Pope's Letter and will communicate these through the *Ablaze* due for publication at the end of January.



ADMISSION APPEAL ARRANGEMENTS DURING COVID-19 UPDATE

On the 31st January 2021 the School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 will come into force.

These regulations amend the School Admissions (England) (Coronavirus) (Appeals Arrangements) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. The main effect of these Regulations is that the amendments to admission appeal arrangements due to coronavirus will continue to have effect until 30th September 2021 (rather than ceasing on the 31st January 2021).

In summary, the 2020 regulations give admission authorities, local authorities and admission appeal panels more flexibility when dealing with appeals during the COVID-19 outbreak. The 2020 regulations permit appeal hearings to be heard by telephone or video conference. They also allow appeals to be decided on the basis of written submissions only. In addition, the statutory timescales have been amended.

The 2021 Regulations can be found [here >>>](#)

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS - STATUTORY DEADLINES FOR 2022-23 ARE APPROACHING

The important statutory deadlines for governors for 2022-23 admissions are as follows:

- **All schools MUST formally determine (and record in the minutes) their 2022-23 admission arrangements by latest 28th FEBRUARY 2021.**
- **All schools must email copies of the determined policy and SIF to their LA and to Simon Parr at the Diocese and post copies on the school's website by latest 15th MARCH 2021.**

NEW DIOCESAN WEBSITE

The new diocesan website is now live and brings together all diocesan departments (including the Education Service) onto the same website.

The diocesan website can be found at: www.abdiocese.org.uk
with the Education Service section at www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/home

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

DIocese FAITH DEPARTMENTS NEWS f t

EDUCATION News Hub Schools & Admissions Governance Academies Catholic Life & RE Catholic Leaders & CPD Recruitment Inspection

EDUCATION SERVICE

With Christ at the centre, we lead and serve in partnership to secure the long-term future of Catholic education.

Find a School School Business & Buildings Contact Us

DONATE

BUILDINGS & FINANCE MATTERS



Voluntary Aided Schools' Condition Allocation (VASCA)

We still have about half of last year's project retentions showing as unclaimed – we do need receipts for the whole project to release these, please talk to us if there is a problem in obtaining these.

By the time this is published we will have prioritised the bids for projects for next year. Diocesan Finance Committee meets on 10th February and much of the expected funding will be committed at that point, with successful schools notified by 15th February 2021.

Final confirmation of the quantum of funding was not received last year until 15th April; once we have a firm figure then we will be able to commit to further projects.

Covid issues affecting buildings

Advice from government is updated frequently. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19> is the home page for this topic.

The Health and Safety Executive have also updated guidance at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm> - they are not as good at putting published dates on their webpages, but they do offer an option to sign up for e-mail notifications of any relevant updates – and they don't inundate you.

School Estate Management Self-Assessment

The latest release of "Good Estate Management for Schools" (GEMS) launched some useful tools and checklists (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools/tools-and-checklists>) – and they are all free (our favourite price). Have a look at the self-assessment tool – a spreadsheet with 34 questions on it – and some sensible prompts.

Condition Surveys

The GEMS site also has a document called "Introduction to condition surveys" – please remember that the Diocese does require you to have a regular (maximum five yearly) condition survey undertaken by a professional. You should be making sure that you have a line in your budget for this; the withdrawal of some Local Authorities from provision of this is leading some schools to fall behind with keeping this essential resource up to date.

Budgets

Preparing a budget is going to be an interesting exercise for the coming year. VA schools will be working on these now; if you are struggling with any aspect of budget setting, please do ask us and we will see what we can do to help (provision of advice only, not money...).

Mark Brunet, Buildings Officer

E: SchoolBuildings@abdiocese.org.uk



NOTE TO CLERKS

The Education Service should receive the minutes of the full Governing Body/Local Governing Committee meetings and any Headteacher report to the Governors on a termly basis. Thank you to all those who have already sent minutes for last term.

Please submit any outstanding minutes electronically to gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk as soon as possible.

School Budget – Minutes request - VA Schools

We are keen to understand better the financial pressures that schools are under; we do not, however, want to increase anyone's workload.

Budget figures are agreed by VA school governors annually, so clerks will already have the budget papers that governors approved. It would help our understanding tremendously if, when sending in the minutes of the full board meetings, you included the supporting papers for the budget that governors agreed.

Budgets are usually provisionally set in March and finalised in or around May.

Mark Brunet – Buildings Manager is working closely with business managers supporting schools on any finance matters and this will help him with this task.

Zoom Clerks briefings have proved popular. We have decided to have a short catch up briefing this term on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 10.00am. Please make sure you are booked onto this briefing, joining details (Zoom) will be sent to all attendees prior to this date.

N.B. TO BOOK please email Claire Martin:
E: claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk

To help with communication in these unusual circumstances that we find ourselves in, please make sure that we have up to date contacts for you, email most importantly but a contact phone number as well.

Foundation governor application forms can be found on the Diocesan website at www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/governance. Please make sure that all areas of the form are completed in full. The completed application form should be sent to:

Marie Ryan,
Director - Diocesan Education Service,
St. Philip Howard Centre,
4 Southgate Drive,
Crawley,
West Sussex
RH10 6RP

Or by email to Gill Sajnog:
E: gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk

Historically all governors' terms of office were renewed on 1st September regardless of when they had been appointed. Although this does not happen now, we still have a higher than average number of governors whose terms of office end this academic year, particularly August and September 2021. Please check for any imminent ends of terms of office and ask governors to submit application forms as soon as possible so we are not overwhelmed at the last minute.

Clerks Briefings

Tuesday 23rd February 2021
10.00 – 12.00

Remote log in via Zoom

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Carol Scanlon

Headteacher

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Crowborough

January 2021

Julie Renaut

Headteacher

St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Banstead

With Immediate Effect

CURRENT VACANCIES

PRIMARY

Headteacher

St Pancras Catholic Primary School, Lewes

September 2021

Headteacher

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings

September 2021

Headteacher

St John's Catholic Primary School, Horsham

September 2021

Headteacher

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School, Brighton

April 2021

SECONDARY

Principal

Cardinal Newman Catholic School, Hove

September 2021

Please may we remind colleagues that the Bishops' Conference has a very clear stance on the posts of Headteacher, Head of School, Deputy Headteacher, Head of RE and Chaplain. These posts must be reserved for practising Catholics and clearly advertised as such. In view of this, a senior member of the Diocesan Education Service (DES) is obliged to represent Bishop Richard in the recruitment process for any of the above positions, even if a post is part-time.

With this in mind, it is essential when recruiting for any of these positions that the school liaises with Gill Sajnog in advance of any advertisements being placed or before any dates are agreed. Gill co-ordinates our recruitment diary and is the first port of call for these matters.

E: gill.sajnog@abdiocese.org.uk **T:** 01293 511130

The updated Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools can be found [here >>>](#)

UPCOMING COURSES AND EVENTS

Please note that all our courses for the Spring Term 2021 are either being run as an online tutorial or live through a web platform such as Zoom or Teams.

All courses can be booked through Claire Martin:

E: claire.martin@abdiocese.org.uk

Notification of your booking and any links required to access training will be sent to you via email. If you have any queries regarding any of these courses or tutorials, please do not hesitate to contact us and one of our colleagues in the Education Service will help you.

T: 01293 511130.



SPRING TERM 2021

JANUARY

DAY	DATE	EVENT	FOCUS		TIME
WED	13th	Catholic School Inspection	Preparation for a CSI Inspection	Video Conference	15.30 - 17.30
WED	27th	Primary RE	Primary RE: RE in a Creative Curriculum	Video Conference	15.30 - 17.30

FEBRUARY

MON	1st	Governance	Outstanding Governance: Providing effective support and challenge	Video Conference	18.30 - 20.30
WED	3rd	School Business Managers	School Business Managers' Forum	Video Conference	10.00 - 12.00
THURS	4th	Secondary RE	Secondary Heads of RE - Day 2	Video Conference	15.30 - 17.30
TUES	9th	Primary Headteachers / School Leaders	Primary Headteachers' Conference	Video Conference	TBC
THURS	11th	Newly Qualified Teachers	NQT Induction - Day 2	Video Conference	15.30 - 17.30
TUES	23rd	Governance - Clerks	Briefing and training for Clerks to Governors	Video Conference	10.00 - 12.00
FRI	26th	Leadership	Middle Leaders' Day - Day 2	Video Conference	15.30 - 17.30

SPRING TERM 2021

MARCH

DAY	DATE	EVENT	FOCUS	TIME
MON	1st	Governance	Outstanding Governance: Providing effective support and challenge	Video Conference 18.30 - 20.30
THURS	4th	Cross-phase RSE	Cross-phase RSE Conference	Video Conference 15.30 - 17.30
FRI	19th	Leadership	Middle Leaders' Day - Day 2	Video Conference 10.00 - 12.00 or 14.00 - 16.00

SAYING THANK YOU



Catholic School communities in the Diocese have done truly wonderful work, particularly in the light of the difficulties that COVID-19 has brought.

One of the difficulties that the COVID situation has caused is not being able to say goodbye to students and staff who leave the school in the way that we would like.

As an example, one person who we and the school would like to thank profusely in terms of their contribution to Catholic education and to helping parents and children over many years, is Barbara Martin. Barbara retired at Christmas after 26 years as School Secretary and Clerk to the Governors of St Charles Borromeo Catholic Primary School in

Weybridge. 26 years of service to one school is incredible ... so Congratulations Barbara! The school will look to celebrate this achievement with Barbara when the COVID-19 situation (hopefully) starts to improve.

In future editions, the Education Service would like to maintain a 'Good News' section at the end of *The Alpha Beta* where we can celebrate the work of long-serving staff at Catholic schools in the Diocese who are leaving their schools. If your school wants to celebrate such service in this way, please do send details to schools@abdiocese.org.uk. *The Alpha Beta* is usually published five times a year (January, March, June, September and November).