



Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality





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1. Introduction

“Religious Education is central to the curriculum of the Catholic school and is at the heart of the philosophy of Education” RECD¹ – 2013 p 3

In the Education Commission we translate this to ‘Religious Education is at the heart of all we do’. The Education Commission must ensure that Religious Education is supported, resourced, monitored, evaluated and revisited with the same rigour as that used for other subjects. This is a duty placed upon us. It is not an option. Everything we do as the Education Commission is about developing spirituality in our schools whether it is Religious Education, chaplaincy, leadership, governance, standards, place planning or buildings.

Religious Education is also a conduit to make sense of other subject areas.

Religious Education is a core subject in the Catholic school, whilst the wider dimensions of learning through liturgy and outreach are integral to the project of Catholic Education. The content of Religious Education will help the pupil to make a critique of all other knowledge, leading, for example, to an understanding of the relationship between science and religion or history, and between theology, sport and the human body.

RECD – 2013 p 4

Religious Education is a subject that is integral to the spiritual and religious development of a pupil and is subject to the same rigour applied to other subjects.

The outcome of excellent Religious Education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demand of religious commitment in everyday life. RECD – 2013 p 6

All officers in the Education Commission have a responsibility in supporting the Catholic life of the school. Advisers for Religious Education have a special responsibility. Their work will help support the school develop as a Christian community. The advisers’ role is to work with schools in building community and building Church. This can take many forms but it is integral to the faith journeys of each person in the school community. The work of the advisers

¹ Religious Education Curriculum Directory



includes supporting schools in developing the prayer life from which all other areas will emanate, for example, the mission statement, home-school-parish partnerships, retreats and away days, and working on specific projects with the school.

“Those who are in charge of Catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the local Ordinary, that the formation given in them is, in its academic standard as least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area” (Canon 806 B2). Whilst this Canon does not define Catholic Education or Religious Education, it is clear that teaching, as a sacred ministry, must have excellence as its aim. This is mandated further by the Catholic Bishops’ of England and Wales, who state; “It is necessary, therefore, that Religious Education in schools be regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other subjects” RECD – 2013 p 3

The requirement of the Catholic Bishops is to give 10% of taught curriculum time in Key Stages 1 to 4 for Religious Education and 5% in the Sixth Form. In maintained schools and academies this time is paid for out of the public purse, so there is a duty and a moral obligation to ensure that Religious Education achieves the highest standards possible, supported by outstanding teaching.

2. The distinctive nature of Religious Education

Whilst it is important to ensure Religious Education is subject to the same rigour as other subjects, it must also be understood that, unlike other subjects, it is one of the distinctive characteristics of the Catholic school. In its application it endeavours to *“keep in touch with the other elements of the pupil’s knowledge and Education. This Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the pupils in the fields of their learning, and the harmonisation of the culture will be achieved in the light of faith.”* CT², 69 (1979)

In supporting Religious Education in our schools, there is a duty to participate in the mission of the Church in ensuring that the Catholic school is *“A clear Educational project of which Christ is at the foundation”* CSTNM³ (1998). In doing this Religious Education helps pupils spiritually, improves their religious literacy and moves them forward in their individual faith journeys in order to understand the world in which they live and their obligations to it as revealed in Scripture. In brief;

² Catechesi Tradendae, 1979

³ The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium, 1997



Educators must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young persons are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and the right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life. Canon 795

Religious Education also provides an academic field of knowledge within the mission of Education which is the integral formation of the human person.

3. The role of the Education Commission

The role of Religious Education is an encouragement to develop a personal relationship with Christ. The role of the Education Commission in supporting Religious Education in schools is to work closely with them in developing relationships that lead to Religious Education being a stimulating and valuable experience for all pupils and staff. The aim is to ensure that the subject of Religious Education is well supported and held in the highest regard by all in the school community. Religious Education should not be seen in isolation to other work we do in the Education Commission. Given that 'Religious Education is at the heart of all we do' there must be connectivity to all aspects of the Education Commission's work. One of the main areas of connectivity will be linking with the work done on standards.

The Education Commission has the responsibility to develop the Diocesan policy for Religious Education and Collective Worship which is the basis on which all schools develop their RE programmes. The Diocesan policy for Religious Education and Collective Worship will continue to be reviewed at least every three years by a focus group which will include teachers, clergy and governors to ensure its rigour, quality and impact.

The Education Commission's support for Religious Education has as one of its aims the expectation that governors, leaders, staff, parents and pupils will appreciate the importance of Religious Education as a subject and that they will better understand the need for this to be of the highest quality. In turn, this should exemplify the importance of Religious Education in the faith journey of individuals. It should be clear that Religious Education is a subject of academic significance and rigour that develops a pupil's religious literacy. These aspects conspire to make the subject appealing to all pupils, irrespective of their own faith or none.



The Education Commission also has a quality assurance responsibility. There will be times when extra support is needed. It is important that the need is identified quickly and remedial action put in place without delay. To this end, the Education Commission will develop a database for achievement in Religious Education⁴ in schools. This will be updated on a regular basis and the analysis and reporting on Religious Education standards in schools will be a standing item on the termly Religious Education meeting at the Education Commission.

The management and development of Religious Education is delegated to the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality. This senior leader takes on the role to manage and coordinate all aspects of Religious Education and Spirituality. This is a pivotal role, reporting to the Director, which has seven main areas:

1. Providing leadership and management of the work of the Education Commission in supporting schools (through and with the advisers) to achieve excellence
2. Developing international links to help ensure that schools have access to the highest quality, current developments in Religious Education
3. Developing links nationally and inter-diocesan to ensure that the Education Commission is able to access and utilise relevant data, information and resources
4. Providing a link within the Education Commission on the developments and work within Religious Education
5. Analysing and reporting on the quality and impact of Religious Education, and comparing with standards across Diocesan schools, through the advisers to the Director and, ultimately, the Diocesan Trustees
6. Ensuring the rigour and quality assurance of Section 48 inspection reports
7. Developing the expertise of the Education Commission's team of advisers and inspectors

One of the requirements for the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality is to have an understanding of excellence in Religious Education. This includes the teaching, learning, outcomes and impact at school level as well as in the spiritual, theological and ethical aspects which underpin the development of the subject. Ongoing professional development is needed to ensure that the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality and the team of advisers continue to be at the forefront of the field and understand the qualities required to achieve excellence in Religious Education.

⁴ The database is not shared between schools but can inform discussions between the Education Commission and leadership within the school. Schools are expected to publish S48 reports on their websites and the Education Commission will make them available via its website.



4. The roles of the advisers⁵

The Archbishop is the first teacher of Religious Education in the Diocese and delegates this task to the Education Commission. There is, therefore, a requirement that only the Education Commission can provide or broker support and challenge for Religious Education in any Catholic school in the Diocese.

The standards of excellence promoted by the advisers will help ensure that schools have the confidence to seek proactively advice and support from the Education Commission. The Diocesan advisers for Religious Education have a track record of outstanding teaching and are able to support schools to achieve the same. The Religious Education advisers know and understand what excellence in Religious Education looks like and the difference between support and challenge, and the right time to apply them. The core roles of the advisers are:

- Developing resources for schools that will enable them to produce their own resources of an outstanding quality
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on achievements and impact in Religious Education at school level
- Putting in place bespoke packages where there is under development in teaching and/or achievement in relation to the school's expectations.
- Challenging schools by helping set realistic targets to bring about rapid improvement
- Recognising and articulating what outstanding looks like in Religious Education and putting in place systems where good practice is shared
- Supporting school communities in the development of their own spirituality and Catholic ethos
- Maintaining a current knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) and supporting schools to do the same
- Supporting schools in the arrangement of the school environment with particular reference to spaces dedicated to prayer, worship and reflection
- Provide courses, events and conferences to support schools in the teaching of Religious Education

There are other roles necessary for advisers in pursuing excellence in Religious Education. These include:

- Representing the Education Commission at inter-diocesan or national level such as, NBRIA⁶, NATRE⁷

⁵ Appendix Two shows proposed staffing patterns for Religious Education advisers within the Education Commission.

⁶ The National Board for Religious Inspectors and Advisers

⁷ The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education



- Carrying out personal research or enquiry
- Networking with other advisers (not necessarily just Religious Education) in order to achieve and maintain excellence in their work

Because Religious Education is at the heart of the school, advisers must be trained to be able to identify areas of concern in the school that whilst not directly related to Religious Education and Catholic life, could impact on pupil achievement overall. It would not be expected that the adviser takes responsibility to support the school to remedy the situation, but that the adviser would signpost concerns to the senior leadership in the school with responsibility for standards.

It is important the advisers understand the need to support and challenge in appropriate measures. Support will include pastoral support for teachers of Religious Education where this is requested. The professional development of Diocesan advisers is very important.

For a number of years school improvement partners in local authorities have worked cross phase. Similarly, a Section 5 trained inspector would be expected to carry out an inspection in any phase. There has never been a tradition of working in this way at the Education Commission. It has led to a clear boundary of responsibility. The RECD is clear that Religious Education is a 3-19 journey and the curriculum is designed in such a way that there is one curriculum rather than a primary and secondary curriculum. As such, as part of *Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality* a model will be developed whereby advisers can work cross phase. It will be phased in with strategic leads for the primary or secondary phases. It is a strategic and operational model of working. The 'Lead' for primary will have the strategic responsibility for updating the team on the developments in the primary phase but the secondary 'Lead' can adopt an operational role and support schools in this area, and vice-versa. Advisers will be trained to work cross phase so that by September 2016 all advisers will have expertise to work across phases on a needs basis. Equally, the Education Commission is committed to providing ongoing training for advisers on achieving excellence. This will include:

- RAISE online and evaluation of teaching through observation training for all advisers
- Arranging for advisers to shadow a local authority adviser in order to develop skills in support and challenge
- An agreed, bespoke Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for each adviser relevant to their appraisal objectives



It is important that advisers continue to be able to model outstanding teaching and to use this as part of the support provided to schools. Religious Education advisers will spend ten days teaching in a school⁸. These ten days will take place every two years in schools to ensure that advisers remain current in their teaching and learning skills. The Education Commission will develop a Handbook for Religious Education Advisers to support their work. Excellence is a core focus of the work of the adviser and this is achieved by:

- The ability to know and recognise what excellence in Religious Education is
- The ability to disseminate this across schools
- The ability to identify quickly strengths and weaknesses in a school
- The ability to know what to do when RE is less than good and to put this in place without delay
- The ability to know the difference between support and challenge and when it is appropriate to provide them
- The ability to enthuse and inspire teaching in schools and to help ensure that pupils enjoy Religious Education
- The ability to always be able to provide a good answer to the question ‘How do you know?’

4.1 Advisers supporting schools

Advisers support schools in a variety of ways. The aim of the support is to enable schools to excel in the provision they offer and to continue to be self-improving. The impact of the work of the adviser should meet the Ofsted benchmark in that the school has the capacity to improve sustainably.

The basis of the relationship between the adviser and the school is knowledge of the school. Data is important as the initial step. It is not a complete picture of the school in itself but allows the advisers to map the direction they will take in working with schools. Data accumulation and interrogation is important to monitor school performance and to prepare the support and challenge the school needs. It is essential that the adviser has access to and understands the data and as a result is able to ask the right questions. National data will only provide part of the information that is needed. The RECD gives a level chart for AT1⁹, (learning about religion: knowledge and understanding of) and AT2 (learning from religion: reflection and meaning).

Levels will no longer be part of the National Curriculum assessment at Key Stages 1-3. As yet nothing has been agreed at the national level to benchmark achievement in Religious Education when the notion of levels no longer applies. Consequently, Religious Education advisers will work with schools to

⁸ The purpose and format of the placement will be discussed with the adviser and will be arranged to support the needs of the individual adviser and the school.

⁹ Attainment target



establish a coherent and consistent benchmark for achievement in Religious Education and to agree a reliable data set to show achievement. The RECD levels chart should be used as the basis. This will enable advisers to have an up to date assessment for each school which will be used to determine the work with the individual school over the academic year.

An Education Commission Evaluation Form (ECEP) will be agreed and used as a tool to provide support and challenge over the academic year. The CEP contains percentages of pupils achieving certain criteria in Religious Education. Where possible, achievement in Religious Education will also be benchmarked against other core subjects in Key Stages 1-3, and against English Literature (either school pass rate or FFT¹⁰ predictions – whichever is the highest) at KS4.

4.2 The adviser and visits to schools

Schools appreciate and benefit from the work of advisers when they visit schools. As part of the *Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality* strategy, it is proposed that Religious Education advisers will spend 60%¹¹ of all their working days across the year in schools. This would not always be complete days so allowing for time to write reports. The days in school would include evening sessions for CPD. The days would not include attendance at celebration events unless the adviser was taking an active part such as being a keynote speaker at a prize giving ceremony.

Visits may take different forms according to where the school is in relation to the ECEP. The visits can take the form of monitoring, support, intensive support, evaluation or a focus visit. What happens on each type of visit will differ according to the needs of the school. It is important the adviser is clear about the aim and outcomes, and the impact the visit has made. The Education Commission will produce guidance on visits to schools and proforma and protocols for each type of visit will be published and used as the evidence base for further work for schools.

The demand to be in schools significantly more than at present will require a different approach to work. It will be expected that there will be more off-site work. For example, if an adviser visits a school for a morning, it would not be required for the adviser to return to the office but they could continue to work either at the school, from home or elsewhere. Advisers will be equipped with suitable ICT to give remote access to all files and communication with the Education Commission.

¹⁰ Fischer Family Trust

¹¹ This represents a significant increase in school-based days for the Religious Education advisers. Appendix One shows the current data related to school visits.



4.3 Advisers' role on providing CPD for schools

The evaluations that the Education Commission receives from the annual Religious Education conferences show that advisers are extremely successful in providing CPD for schools. This provides a platform which ensures a very high quality of support for teachers in our schools, helping them to achieve excellence themselves. There is already a generic CPD programme which forms the framework of what is needed. This will continue to expand and be kept under review to meet the changing needs of schools. To support the review and planning process, a focus group will be convened once a year to evaluate the provision of CPD provided by the Education Commission for supporting RE in schools and to make recommendations for further provision.

Concurrently, it is important that schools are signposted to develop their own CPD provision. For example, deaneries may join together and bring in people to lead CPD or CPD may be led by a teacher from one of the schools. Teachers are a great resource in supporting colleagues and the Education Commission has a role in brokering this practice. Advisers will facilitate or broker the involvement of teachers and other facilitators in providing CPD for groups or clusters of schools. In particular, the advisers play an important role as a point for publicising and sharing good practice across a range of schools.

4.4 Advisers' role in supporting the Catholic life of the school

Although Education Commission advisers are trained Section 48 inspectors, in their roles as advisers they are not inspectors. The reports from Section 48 inspections form part of the important evidence base for advisers in help improve not only in Religious Education but also in the Catholic life of the school. All Section 48 reports are sent to advisers when they are published and placed on the Education Commission website.

There are times when advisers will identify concerns during their visits. If the concerns are related to Religious Education or the Catholic life of the school the adviser will raise the concerns with the school and work with the school to develop an improvement plan. If the concern is about other issues such as admissions, capability or more general standards then the adviser will report them to the appropriate officer in the Education Commission, who will then follow-up the matter with the school.



5. Working with other agencies and organisations

In achieving excellence it is important to develop working relationships within the Education Commission and across the Diocese and beyond. The Education Commission has a role to play in supporting schools to do the same.

There are a number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who have a good track record of working with schools; St Mary's, Liverpool Hope University, Roehampton University and Heythrop College. There are other HEIs that offer relevant programmes of study and could be linked more closely to the work of the Education Commission, including Kings College (theology), Canterbury Christchurch, Greenwich and Goldsmith's (education). There are also organisations and foundations such as the Farmington Trust which provide resources for teachers to develop their work in Religious Education, religious leadership or related areas. These partnerships can provide a number of benefits including, recruiting potential Religious Education staff, providing further education courses, expertise for CPD and training and research partnerships. It is the role of the Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality and the Advisers to establish relationships with HEIs of relevance to Religious Education.

By working with the other agencies, such as the Centre for Catholic Formation (CCF), the Southwark Catholic Youth Service (SCYS), the Liturgy Commission and the Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission (JPIC), we are working in partnership to further the Diocesan mission for education.

Catholic Teaching Schools Alliances are also excellent partners in supporting and developing Religious Education in schools. The close links the alliances have with the National College can be an advantage. The team of advisers is small compared to the number of schools we have. Even with 60% of time visiting schools this would mean that a school, on average, would receive a total of around two days of visits per year. There is an excellent opportunity for the Catholic Teaching Schools Alliance in the Diocese to work with the Education Commission in developing Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs) for Religious Education. This would be a tremendous support for schools as SLEs are school-based so the spreading of good practice would be quick and schools could benefit in a short time. The Education Commission will work with the Catholic Teaching School Alliance(s) in the Diocese to develop SLEs in Religious Education. The target is to have an SLE in Religious Education (or similar) in each deanery by September 2017.

6. Succession planning

There is a shortage of specialist Religious Education teachers and this shortage is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. A number of HEIs that previously trained teachers of Religious Education, such as Durham University, have closed training programmes. The shortage is more acute at the



secondary stage. It is an ongoing situation. The more Higher Education institutions that close Religious Education centres, the fewer young people will go into this area and then the result is fewer Religious Education teachers for our schools.

As a result, as part of the *Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality* strategy a programme of teacher education for teachers of Religious Education will be undertaken. Funding will be sought from schools and the National College to have a number of placements (similar to the *Teach First* programme) each year for practising Catholic post graduate pupils in religion/theology. In partnership with the Catholic Teaching School Alliance, the Education Commission will develop partnership with leading HEIs with specialisms in theology to provide up to four, funded placements in Religious Education each year for practising Catholics. The Education Commission will also investigate the potential for scholarships for new teachers of Religious Education and/or training bursaries for teachers becoming Heads of Religious Education.

7. Impact evaluation: How we know we are making a difference

Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality is a strategy document and as such addresses the ‘what should we do’ part rather than the ‘how do we do it’ part. The following questions will inform the next steps of the implementation process:

- What are things like now?
- What do we need to do to address it?
- How do we implement this?
- How will monitoring bring us the data we need?
- What difference has it made?
- How do we know?

The evidence that schools are making a difference and are achieving excellence is when:

- All schools give 10% of taught curriculum time to high quality Religious Education
- The data shows that pupils in all schools are making good progress in Religious Education
- The support given by advisers results in high quality impact
- The schools are supported to know their strengths and areas for development and they quickly put measures in place to address these



It is essential that Religious Education is always seen as an experience in which pupils know that it brings them into a special relationship with Christ whilst providing with the necessary disciplines and fields of knowledge to be able to make sense of that relationship and to put it into the context of their life today. It is important that in investing in excellence in Religious Education pupils are engaged and interested in developing their own relationship with the subject and more broadly with Jesus Christ. It is important that pupils have a voice in evaluating Religious Education in schools. It is not easy to get groups of pupils together to evaluate at a micro or macro level. Invariably they will, and can, only respond to the experiences of the Religious Education in their own school. This is important pupil voice is fed back to the Religious Education teacher. The Education Commission will work with schools on developing surveys for pupils in evaluating the quality of Religious Education in their schools. Furthermore, the Education Commission will involve the Youth Executive Board in developing ways to represent pupils' views.

It is important that those involved in Religious Education in the broadest sense have an opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the impact of the support given to schools. A focus group including clergy, governors, and others will meet once each year to evaluate the impact the Education Commission is having on supporting Religious Education in schools and to comment on the difference made.

8. Post 16 Religious Education

The Catholic Bishops' of England and Wales require that 5% of the taught curriculum time at Key Stage 5 (KS5) is given over to non-examination Religious Education (referred to as 'General RE'). This equates to about 30 hours per year. If schools are to do this and it is paid for out of the public purse, then there is a duty for schools to ensure that the provision is appropriate, rigorous, complies with the RECD, is a subject taken seriously by pupils and helps make a difference to their lives.

The majority of secondary schools in the Diocese that have Post 16 pupils follow a structured course that was written by the Education Commission after consultation with the Heads of Religious Education. The course is structured in such a way that it is certified by NOCN¹² which means that pupils following the course can gain a qualification. The course has topics, levels and learning outcomes and is developed in such a way that it is inclusive of pupils of other or no faiths. It is very broad in that schools can tailor the course to the needs of the pupils and staff expertise. About 98% of pupils who embark upon the course receive accreditation at the end. To do this they must have at least 80% attendance and the eight criteria (topics and outcomes) completed.

¹² The National Open College Network (NOCN) is a leading United Kingdom awarding organisation.



Currently, the funding for Post 16 Religious Education provisions is changing. As part of the *Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality* strategy, the Education Commission will survey all schools that teach General RE to gauge how rigorously it is being implemented and to discover the schedule developed in each school.

It is good that 5% of time is given to this area. Thirty hours a year is not a lot of time and there may be ways of extending this. Many sixth forms have a half day a week for enrichment courses which can include sports, arts, performance and community service. The community service element could be used to extend the scheme of work. This would provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop the vocation of service and to be able to put their faith experiences into a practical context so serving the Common Good. This could be arranged through the school or accredited through organisations such as Duke of Edinburgh scheme, ASDAN¹³, Arts Award¹⁴ and other vocational providers where community service is a key part of their offer. The Education Commission will investigate ways in which General RE can be enhanced through accreditation by vocational providers. There are ample opportunities for young people at the 16-19 age groups to become more involved in the life of the Church. Young people are not just the Church of tomorrow; they are the Church of today. Religious Education for 16-19 year olds can provide a platform where connections can be made with organisations that have a youth centred focus, such as the Southwark Catholic Youth Service. The Education Commission will develop links with youth-focussed agencies to enhance the General RE experience for 16-19 year old pupils ('16+') in Diocesan schools.

Whilst the programmes at 16+ comply with the RECD it is very difficult to ascertain if this is what pupils aged 16-19 need. Times change quickly and there is a need to review what is relevant in Church teaching today in relation to that age group. It is important that the pupils themselves have a voice in this. This can be a difficult area and needs to be managed carefully and sensitively. The first duty is to the Archbishop who requires that the teachings of the Church be maintained. The very nature of discussion with young people who may not follow or believe in Church teaching can lead to excellent experiences from which pupils will benefit. The Diocesan Youth Executive Board has a role to play in surveying 16-19 pupils on their needs for General RE in the sixth form.

Currently, there are specific 14-19 policies but not a specific policy on Post 16 Religious Education. A policy would be the most helpful document but some form of guidance is also needed. The Education Commission will publish guidance for schools on Post 16 Religious Education. As the 16-19 provision, funding and curriculum changes regularly, it is important to ensure that General RE changes with this and that the quality of provision and the status of the

¹³ Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

¹⁴ Art Council England



accreditation and outcomes are monitored regularly. To regularly review the Post 16 guidance, the Education Commission will organise a focus group to evaluate General RE on a two year basis.

8.1 'A' level Religious Education

A number of our schools have 'A' level Religious Education. They will not be specifically Catholic syllabuses but the content and the skills required are generic to the development of religious literacy and understanding and will invariably help young people to make more sense of the teachings of the Catholic Church through academic rigour and application of understanding to actual context. It is not the aim to support schools to put forward 'A' level Religious Education as a subject better than others as this would not be fair to the life chances of young people. However, the Education Commission would support schools to promote 'A' level Religious Education as a credible subject that is worthy of consideration. The Education Commission will survey schools to ascertain the take up for 'A' level Religious Education courses. Based on the outcomes of this survey, the Education Commission will produce guidance for schools on promoting examination Religious Education as an acceptable option. There is also a role for the Education Commission to organise Diocesan wide study conferences in 'A' level Religious Education to support pupil achievement in this subject.

It is important that pupils who take up examination Religious Education know what their options are when they leave school. As stated previously, a number of HEI providers are either cutting back on or closing religion related courses. There are numerous other courses where 'A' level Religious Education will be a help in securing a place. The Education Commission will investigate HEI provision for Religious Education and other similar course offers and will advise schools accordingly.

9. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)

Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is an important part of a young person's education and the quality of its provision will determine how informed young people are as they grow and develop and that they know the consequences of choices they make. SRE in Catholic schools must be approached and applied within the context of the teachings of the Church and in most schools there is an integral link with Religious Education with some schools including SRE as part of the Religious Education programme.



The statutory requirements presently are that all schools must have an SRE policy. For primary schools the policy can be 'SRE is not taught in the school' or 'SRE is taught in Key Stage 2 only'. Most of our primary schools have an SRE programme. The Education Commission has not advised all primary schools to have a programme as sometimes the decision not to teach SRE has good grounds, such as when there is inexperienced staff. This position is reviewed regularly. There is no option for secondary schools which must teach SRE. To support schools, the Education Commission will include two training sessions on SRE (one for primary schools and one for secondary schools) in the annual CPD programme. The aim is that by September 2016 all schools implement effectively the policy and guidelines and view them as being good resources supporting schools in this area.

The Diocesan policy on SRE is called "Education in Human Love." It is written to allow schools flexibility in how to approach each aspect. This has been welcomed by some schools, with the resources and staff expertise to develop their own programmes while other schools want more detailed guidance. The Education Commission will also conduct an audit of schools to ascertain what is being taught in SRE. Currently, NBRIA is working on national guidelines which will provide a scaffold. Once this is published, the Education Commission will adjust its policy. The policy will contain appendices with more structured guidelines to help support schools, particularly those where more support is needed. The policy and guidance will be reviewed by a focus group on a two year basis.

School systems should cater for the monitoring and evaluation of SRE as for any other subject. It is important that Religious Education advisers have a role in this area. Religious Education advisers will report evidence on the quality of SRE following their school visits. The Education Commission will evaluate the evidence in these reports and make recommendations and use these to inform training needs.

It is important to use the resource of the Youth Executive Board in planning SRE policies. While there may be concerns that young people might want aspects that are against the teaching of the Church to be accepted and taught equally to those conforming to Church teaching and some young people believe that decisions in relation to SRE are theirs, it is important that the view of young people is listened to and considered. There are good reasons to do so:

- SRE in our schools is about young people
- Young people need to be heard
- Young people are great evaluators about what works and what does not
- It is important to find out if what we are setting out to do is being achieved



9.1 Support for parents

Parents¹⁵ are the first educators of their children. It is important they are supported in this divine mandate, particularly in SRE. Schools are responsible for establishing and maintaining good relationships with parents. The Education Commission does not therefore have a direct interface with parents. The Education Commission can, however support schools in this endeavour. The Education Commission will produce guidance for schools in involving and working with parents in the planning and implementation of the SRE programme. The guidance will include how to counsel parents who want to invoke their right to withdraw their children from SRE.

10. The Section 48 inspection process

The Section 48 inspections provide an opportunity for the Archbishop to carry out his canonical right in inspecting Catholic schools in his Diocese. This is done during the Section 48 inspection under the umbrella of the Catholic Life of the School. This will include the quality of leadership including governance, relationships within the school community, the school's contribution to the Common Good, the home-school-parish partnership, relationship with the Diocese, relationships with other Catholic schools and within the wider community.

The right to inspect denominational Religious Education and the content of collective worship in our schools is to be valued. The Diocese places great importance on this process and presents it in such a way that it is on par with Section 5 in terms of process, administration, quality of inspectors, the inspection, the report and the ways schools use the reports and the recommendations contained therein. Briefly, the purpose is to inspect Religious Education and the content of collective worship against the national framework criteria and grade descriptors as agreed by NBRIA. The Education Commission will be represented at NBRIA Section 48 Coordinators Meetings. This provides for the dissemination of good practice, finding out how other dioceses have solved problems and influencing national policy by putting forward areas of excellence from our own work. This provides a rigour and consistency which means Religious Education will receive as thorough an inspection as all other subjects in a Section 5 inspection. The Section 48 report enables schools to know what is required to improve and how to build on the strengths identified and in addressing the areas for development. All Section 48 inspection reports are read by advisers and the Director and areas of excellence in reports are identified to be shared as examples in good practice between schools.

¹⁵ Wherever 'parents' appear in this document it also refers to carers, guardians and foster parents.



Overall, the Section 48 report will:

- Identify the strengths of the school, focussing on areas of excellence which the school can celebrate
- Identify areas for development
- Give parents an independent analysis of the school as a Catholic school
- Let pupils know what they are doing well and what they can do better
- Give the Archbishop a detailed analysis of the strengths of the school as a Catholic community
- Give the Education Commission data that can be used for future planning to help schools improve further

In achieving excellence in the Section 48 process it is important that it is seen as on-going and not an event that happens once every three to five years. It is important that it is interwoven with Religious Education and leadership and there is cross-referencing and appropriate junctures. This will ensure Section 48 is part of the on-going evaluation process for our schools in the same way as Section 5.

10.1 Recruitment and training of inspectors

Only the deployment of highly experienced and trained teachers will provide for excellence in the Section 48 process. Inspectors will be recruited from practising teachers or retired teachers who have taught in Catholic schools. Teachers will only be considered for training as Section 48 inspectors following a skills audit and assessment of applying the necessary skills required for inspection. Once successful in the initial assessment the person will embark upon a training programme that will comprise:

- Course based training
- Inspector shadowing
- Assessment by a lead inspector
- Period as an associate inspector

Only those people who are considered competent to be lead inspectors will be entered on to the register of Section 48 inspectors which is held by the Education Commission. When a person has completed the training and is judged to be competent, they will be appointed by a letter from the Director as an



associate inspector. When a person has sufficient experience they will be asked to lead an inspection. If successful as a lead they will receive a letter of appointment from the Archbishop and entered on to the Section 48 register.

Inspectors will be required to take part in on-going training which could include external provision.

Quality Assurance relies, to a large degree, on the independence of the inspection process. Many inspectors are serving headteachers and although this appears to work well most of the time, there is always the chance of the perception of bias. This is in no way a judgement on the integrity of headteachers. There is less a chance of all headteachers in primary schools working together than headteachers in secondary schools. Therefore, by September 2017:

- Serving secondary headteachers will not inspect other secondary schools (this does not prevent them from inspecting primary schools)
- Retired headteachers will not inspect schools where they were the incumbent headteacher (this does not prevent them from inspecting primary schools or other secondary schools)
- Primary headteachers may not inspect primary schools within the same Episcopal areas as their own school (this does not prevent them inspecting a secondary school)
- Retired primary headteachers may not inspect schools where they were the incumbent headteacher (this does not prevent primary headteachers from inspecting secondary schools or other primary schools)

10.2 Support resources

The quality of resources used to support the Section 48 process will contribute to achieving excellence in this area. They must be fit for purpose and enable the sustainability of excellence. The Diocesan *'Handbook for Inspectors'*¹⁶ is the equivalent of the Section 5 document. It will be updated and revised once every two years or sooner if circumstances demand. Similarly, the *'Guidance for Governors for the Section 48 Inspection Process in Catholic Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies'* will be reviewed on a two year basis by a focus group including governors, clergy and an area Bishop.

Concurrently, the Education Commission conduct training sessions for governors on the Section 48 process. This will be included in the CPD programme. *'Guidance on Section 48 Inspections for Senior Leaders and leaders of Religious Education'* will be published for September 2014. This will support the work

¹⁶ Available from the Education Commission website, www.educationcommission.org.uk



of schools and help ensure that Section 48 is related to all that happens in the school on a day-to-day basis. To accompany this document, the Education Commission will put on a Section 48 training day for senior leaders and for leaders of Religious Education. This will be included in the CPD programme.

10.3 The Inspection Board

The Inspection Board is a demonstration of the importance the Archbishop gives to the Section 48 process. It has both Quality Assurance and Quality Control roles. In its Quality Assurance role it ensures that any changes undergo rigorous analysis before being implemented. It is important, therefore, that those who are members of the Board should have the necessary skills and experience to ensure that the rigour required helps achieve the excellence that is being sought. The Inspection Board is chaired by a Diocesan Trustee and its composition is reviewed on a two-year basis. The terms of reference for the Inspection Board will be reviewed with new terms of reference in place for September 2014.

10.4 Section 48 and the pursuit of excellence

The Section 48 process should be instrumental in supporting school improvement. It is about whole school improvement. An adviser from the Religious Education team at the Education Commission will visit a school in the fourth term following a Section 48 inspection to monitor how well the school is working on the areas identified in the Section 48 report. If there is evidence the school has made little or no improvement or if there has been regression the Director can make a decision for another Section 48 to be carried out. Where a school judged to be Inadequate or Requires Improvement and believes it has reached a sustainable level to be 'good' or better, it may request a Section 48 inspection providing it is between four and six terms since the last inspection. The cost of any additional inspection will be borne by the school.

There is an important role in quality assurance for the members of staff in the Education Commission involved in the Section 48 process. It is important there is consistency among all involved. To this end, an update training session will occur every two years for Education Commission staff involved in the process.

A feedback evaluation form is given to each headteacher once they have been informed of the inspection. It is important that these forms are completed as these are a vital part of the quality assurance process. These evaluation forms will be reviewed with focussed area for comment. A random selection of inspections will be chosen as 'benchmark inspections'. A senior inspector or coordinator from another diocese will shadow a whole inspection and write a report for the Director of Education at the Education Commission. The report will be written in line with guidance agreed by the Education Commission.



The recommendations will go to the Inspection Board for consideration. The expectation is that the exercise will be similar to when an HMI quality assures a Section 5 inspection. The quality control mechanism in place should ensure a quick response and that changes may be made, if needed, to the process to ensure better quality assurance. A Section 48 *Complaints Procedure* will be put in place and reviewed every two years by the Inspection Board. This is used where there is concern expressed about the content of the report or the grade given. The *Diocesan Complaints Procedure* will be used when the concern is about the conduct of an inspector.

10.5 Independent schools

Fee paying independent schools with a Roman Catholic character are not required to have Section 48 inspections. We have endeavoured in the past to include independent schools but only a few have taken the opportunity to be inspected. It is important all schools within the family of Catholic schools in the Diocese are supported in the same way. Although independent fee-paying Catholic schools are not subject to Section 48 inspections, the Archbishop has the right to inspect any Catholic school in his area. If a Canonical inspection is ordered for the school, then the Diocese has to bear the cost. Independent fee-paying Catholic schools are encouraged to request an Education Commission Section 48 inspection in order to identify strengths and to build areas for development. The Archbishop will write to all Catholic independent schools in the Diocese to invite them to take part in the inspections process in the Diocese.

11. Chaplaincy

Chaplaincy is an integral part of the support provided for our schools. It has a particular role in supporting the religious and spiritual development of pupils and teachers and in the development of the school as a Catholic community. It is a polymorphous role and no two posts are exactly the same. In some schools the emphasis is on liturgical celebrations whilst in others it is working with individual young people.

Whilst roles differ from school to school there needs to be some agreement on what makes the chaplain's role different from other staff. This does not mean it is more important. There is a plethora of job descriptions, person specifications and other documentation that need to be rationalised. The core task is that the chaplain is there to support the young people and staff in the development of their spirituality and to help guide them on their individual faith journeys. In so doing the Chaplain is also a key person in helping develop the school as a spiritual community.



It is important to say at this stage what the role is not. The chaplain is not a teacher of Religious Education. It is important to keep the two roles separate. The relationship between the chaplain and young person is different to that between the teacher and young person. One of the roles of the teacher is to be a disciplinarian (proactively or reactively). The chaplain cannot take on this role and establish the relationship with the young person that is needed, which is a separate role to teaching, in supporting them in their spiritual development. The chaplain is not a counsellor. Although counselling skills are necessary to be a chaplain (as indeed they are for anyone working with young people), the role of the counsellor is fundamentally different. Many schools employ counsellors and some which do not, have access to their services when needed.

11.1 The priest, deacon and religious as chaplains in schools

There is also a difference between priests, deacons and religious who act as chaplains and lay chaplains. The role of the clergy and religious is long established and has always been an integral support for Catholic schools. The priest's presence in the school is welcome for a multitude of reasons not least being the celebration of the Sacraments. In most cases the priest and religious who visit our schools do so on an 'informal' (non-contractual) basis. This is acceptable and welcomed by schools. The Education Commission produces guidance for schools and priests and religious who act as chaplains to schools. In most cases the priest and religious carry out this ministry at no cost to the school and would refuse any remuneration that is offered. There should not be an expectation that chaplaincy services should be offered free. Schools should be prepared to make offerings from voluntary funds though the offer may not always be accepted. The Education Commission will produce guidance for schools on offering stipends to priests and religious who act as chaplains.

There are occasions where a school has a contract of employment with a priest or religious as chaplain in the school. In this case the chaplain is subject to the same terms and conditions as other members of staff being paid from public funds or the school budget including contract, job description and appraisal processes. Appointed chaplains are also subject to all workplace policies and procedures.

11.2 Recruitment and appointment of lay chaplains

In raising the status of the chaplain in schools we are also contributing towards the pursuit of excellence. It is important that the chaplain is recruited and appointed in exactly the same way as other staff. This gives a very strong message that the role is important and a necessary one for the development of



pupils in the school. The Education Commission regularly reviews the guidance on the recruitment and appointment of lay chaplains to schools and colleges and considers the relevant CES¹⁷ documents in the process.

It is equally important that the status of the chaplain is recognised with appropriate remuneration. A lot of work was done on the job evaluation of the lay chaplain in the Catholic school by the *School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)* before it was dissolved in 2011. The documentation agreed by that time will provide a platform from which to move forward. Experience shows that the remuneration for chaplains varies considerably from salaries commensurate with professionals in similar roles to 'cash in hand' at the end of the day. As a result, the Education Commission will produce guidance to schools on the status of chaplains and make recommendations on remuneration.

11.3 Support for chaplains

The schools and colleges chaplaincy adviser is the key person within the Education Commission in supporting chaplains in schools. It is a role that continues to evolve. The Education Commission will review the role of the chaplaincy adviser to include role, job description, remuneration, training and development needs.

The role of the chaplain in schools and colleges in the Diocese is set out in the '*Yellow Book*' which was written jointly by the Vicar General and the Education Commission. It is an important guide and references to the work of chaplains but in reality tends to be left on the shelf. The '*Yellow Book*' will be re-launched so that it becomes a reference used on a regular basis by schools.

Education Commission evaluations show that the CPD for chaplains is not always given the same importance as that for teaching staff. Schools are regularly reminded of this. The CPD programme contains quality opportunities for chaplains. The CPD programme for chaplains is decided by the chaplaincy adviser with reference to a focus group including headteachers, clergy and lay chaplains.

The induction programme and commissioning ceremony for new chaplains is an excellent support for the work they do and in witnessing to the importance of the role. Although planned for new chaplains, the commissioning ceremony, held annually, is an excellent opportunity for more experienced chaplains to be reaffirmed in their roles. The appraisal system in schools should include performance management of the chaplain. This is not mandatory as the statutory appraisal procedures for schools only include teaching staff. Targets should be agreed and the same quality of support provided in order for the

¹⁷ Catholic Education Service



chaplain to achieve the targets. The appraisal forum is a confidential one to which we do not have access but we still need to find a way in which we can evaluate the work of the chaplain in the school.

Traditionally, chaplaincy has been the prerogative of the secondary school and college. There are only a few primary schools with paid chaplains. In practice, the priest has a far greater connection with the primary school and visits regularly. It is highly unlikely most primary schools would be able to afford to employ a chaplain solely for one school. Primary schools in the Diocese have a strong foundation of working successfully in clusters. This will become even stronger in the Multi-Academy and Umbrella Trusts forming in various areas throughout the Diocese.

The Education Commission will survey the provisions and outcomes of chaplaincy in schools and colleges. It is the aim that all secondary schools will have a paid chaplain by September 2015. Clusters of primary schools could employ chaplains to work across a number of schools. The aim is moving towards a situation where all primary schools are supported by a chaplain by September 2017. The Education Commission will publish guidance on how this can be achieved including example job descriptions and person specifications.

12. Spirituality in our schools

The Education Commission has an important responsibility in working with schools to help them develop as spiritual communities with Christ at the centre. The spiritual ethos should be inclusive and embrace all in the school community regardless of religion or none. The school is essentially a place of formation and that includes spiritual formation. A principle of CPD in schools is that in developing the individual you are also developing the school. The same can be said for spiritual development.

It is important to ensure that spirituality is both an outward and an inward development. It helps make the school a beacon within society, a light on a bushel and that light reaches all parts of the community in which the school is situated, not just to other Catholic schools and Catholic communities. This is putting faith and spirituality into the context of the Common Good.

All staff within the Education Commission are responsible for supporting spirituality in schools. It is truly a joint enterprise in which everything that is done is about supporting schools to become better Christian communities committed to the pursuit of excellence in all its forms. Excellence is totally compatible to the Gospel value of the 'call to perfection'. It will always be a 'work in progress', such is the nature of excellence and therefore the nature of perfection. The impact from each team in the Education Commission is important. It is like the component parts of the whole; none can be missing.



12.1 Spirituality in recruitment and retention of staff

It is important to remember that the way in which schools advertise, recruit and appoint is the first experience of the school for many people and the way in which the school presents itself attracts people to the school. Whilst it is important to attract good quality Catholic staff it is acknowledged that many colleagues, even those without religious affiliation, are deeply spiritual people who can make a valued contribution to the development of spirituality in the school. Staff who are outstanding in their particular areas also contribute to the spirituality of the school as the development of the whole child, including academic and intellectual development, is part of the divine mandate we have.

The Education Commission will provide guidance on the recruitment and retention of staff to ensure that those joining the school are aware of its mission. This guidance would be similar to that provided at the appointment of headteachers. It is important all schools have a robust succession planning process whereby members of staff are developed and prepared to take on more responsibilities in the school.

12.2 The school as seen through its communication

A school says a lot about itself through its literature. The school website is often the first ‘port of call’ for many visitors to the school. It is important for other people including parents in the school. It is important the website demonstrates the school is a place of spiritual animation. This can be done in a variety of ways and does not always need a written statement. The Education Commission provides guidance on the production of school literature and the school website.

The school’s literature that is in the public domain (prospectus, policies, procedures, newsletters etc.) should be characterised in such a way that they celebrate the school where Gospel values are important.

The Mission Statement is the most important statement a school makes. It sums up what the school is and what it believes to be important. It should be developed around the school and understood by all. The Mission Statement itself may be brief but it is the process that goes into agreeing it that is its strength in helping the school to develop spiritually. Schools are on pilgrimages and therefore the Mission Statement will only help it for a part of its journey. It should be reviewed regularly, at least every three years. The Education Commission can provide support to schools in developing and reviewing their Mission Statements, including bespoke training.



12.3 Supporting the spiritual development of the school leadership

Leaders in schools are also pastors. They have the Christ-like responsibility to lead those entrusted to them to develop their full potential. It is difficult for leaders to remain focused on their pastoral role all the time. The Education Commission has a role in supporting leaders in this area whilst not distracting them from what needs to be done to achieve excellence in standards. These two roles are inseparable. All conferences provided by the Education Commission provide a balance of support for the affirmation and formation of the leaders as pastors in our schools as well as supporting them to lead their schools in improving standards in all areas. The Education Commission offers bespoke training and formation on the development of spirituality for leaders in our schools, including governors. The annual CPD programme has provision for supporting leaders in developing spirituality in their schools.

The Education Commission also has a role in signposting schools to other provisions such as the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS), Masters level degrees in Catholic Leadership (Liverpool Hope, St Mary's) and other programmes which would benefit individuals and their schools (Heythrop), and for action research development (Farmington Institute). There is a rich offer from HE providers with a Catholic character. Schools have made individual links but this needs to be explored and extended. A number of our schools are involved in the Heythrop College research into the theological and ethical competencies of Leaders in Catholic Schools (Visions for Leadership in Education – VLE). It is important that such connections continue. Headteachers have reported that it is important to have opportunities to reflect in depth on themselves as spiritual leaders.

Schools have a responsibility themselves to develop spirituality in their own institutions. The Catholic Bishops' of England and Wales requires that one INSET day per year is given over to Catholic ethos (in the broadest sense of the word). There are schools who work together with joint provisions enabling them to buy in well-respected facilitators. The Education Commission provides guidance on school based CPD to develop spirituality. This includes bespoke training for individual or groups of schools or signposting to other providers.

Schools are at different places. Schools within the trusteeships of religious orders benefit from the Charism of the religious order and all that it brings to the school. At the other end there are schools with very few Catholic staff and they need to continue to reflect upon the importance of the development of spirituality in all they have to do.



12.4 Developing the spirituality of pupils

Whilst provisions and support for staff will benefit pupils, it is also important that opportunities for the pupils to develop their spiritual formation are provided. This can be done in a variety of ways including having a seasonal-related programme of assemblies, liturgies and para-liturgies. Pupils can also benefit from working together with other schools. Many schools have a strong tradition of retreats, away days and reflection programmes. Pupils will also benefit from whole school or part school projects by outside providers. Diocesan schools work with a number of partnership charities and organisations to bring richness to the spiritual development opportunities in the school. The Education Commission provides guidance for schools on school-based development of spirituality including signposting to external providers and partners. The Education Commission also aims to enhance the pupils' sense of being part of a broader spiritual community through the annual youth conference (for years 5, 6, 7 and 8 pupils) and the Youth Executive (a decision making young people's board for representatives from Year 11 and 12 pupils).

In developing spirituality in schools there must be opportunities for the pupils to express this in a practical way. Pupils must be able to put their faith into a practical context if they are to develop their understanding. A well tried way is the great tradition our schools have in supporting charities. 'Love your neighbour' is a call to action not only a statement of mind. In this context 'neighbour' means anyone anywhere in the world who will benefit from the action of the pupils. It is not sufficient to just provide material resources and support for worthy causes. There must be a deeper and joined-up approach in order to develop the spirituality of pupils. For example, if a school is supporting the building of a classroom by CAFOD in Sudan then it is important the work of CAFOD and the conditions in Sudan are part of the pupils' learning experience and that this is brought to reflection through the school's approach to prayer and liturgy.

Supporting charitable causes is only one aspect of community cohesion and the commitment to the Common Good. Many schools have a rich tradition of working in the community and providing a service to others. Activities can include Christmas hampers for needy families, food banks, parties for the elderly, helping clear a local park of rubbish and providing music, voice and drama for community events. All of these are part of the school's spirituality in action. It is about service in that through serving other people we are serving God. Evaluation should be undertaken to ensure the impact such work has had on the school and the difference it has made to the pupils. The Education Commission can provide an audit toolkit for schools that allows schools to monitor and evaluate the impact that 'putting faith into practice' has on pupils and the school.



12.5 Developing the prayer life of the school

Prayer and worship are the life forces of the Catholic school. Prayers develop the spirituality of the school. Prayer and worship should not be ‘bolt-on’ to the school day but integral to everything that happens in the school. Many of our schools have developed very affirming ways in which prayer becomes a part of the pupils’ life in school. Opportunities are provided for prayer in its many forms; formal and informal, private and communal, reflective and responsive and through different media including ICT. Secondary schools have opportunities to explore issues in detail and liturgies should always be age related and integral to the pupils’ learning experience. The Education Commission provides support to schools in developing the prayer life through visits, whole school and Education Commission CPD and helping arrange and participate in whole school activities.

13. Working with clergy

Priests and deacons assist the Archbishop in his mission for Catholic Education in the Diocese. Together with religious, they are welcome and integral partners in supporting school communities in aspects of their life. The priest is an essential component part and the catechetical ministry of the priest is not separate to the education ministry of the Education Commission. The priest has an important and indispensable role in our work. Schools are supported mainly from a professional basis by the Education Commission but the priest has a more pastoral role with pupils and staff.

The priest is already involved in supporting schools in a variety of ways; governor, chaplain, pastoral worker, visitor, mentor, counsellor and advocate. Priests, deacons and religious possess considerable knowledge, skills and experiences that can complement the work of the school but they may not necessarily have a detailed understanding of Education. It is important that schools work with priests, deacons and religious in supporting them in their work in schools, valuing the gifts each other brings and providing resources that will help them in their mission. The partnership of the home – school – parish is important. The partnership is valued and is enshrined in our work. The communication between the priest and the school is far stronger than between the priest and the Education Commission. Supporting priests in their role will result in priests being better equipped to support our work.



13.1 Support for priests

Priests value personal communications and part of the role of the Education Commission is to develop this relationship. It is also important that this is done in consideration with the Area Bishops to give status to the work occurring in connection to Diocesan schools. To this end, the Director of the Education Commission meets with Area Bishops at least once a year. This discussion includes the work of priests in schools and how this can be developed. The Director of Education also visits each deanery on a four year rolling programme. The Education Commission can also be invited to the September deanery meetings each year to discuss Education priorities for the coming year.

13.2 CPD for priests

A good CPD Programme for priests is hosted by *Ongoing Formation of Priests* (OGF) team. It is important to ensure that education is seen as an integral element in the formation of priests. The Education Commission is a member of the OGF Inter Agency Group. As part of the ongoing formation of priests and deacons, the Education Commission liaises with the Director of the OGF, the Rector of St John's Seminary and the Director for the formation of deacons to determine education needs and priorities and to agree a programme of support.

The CPD Programme put on by the Education Commission contains training courses for priests and deacons. These courses receive very positive evaluations and are considered to be very helpful for the clergy who attend. To continue to maintain the high standard and relevance of these courses, a focus group of priests will be convened annually to discuss what would be considered to be worthwhile training for priests in their work with schools and to make recommendations to be included in the next year's CPD Programme.

As well as training and formation there is a need for ongoing support for priests in relation to their work in schools. The Education Commission provides a number of publications of relevance to clergy. These are regularly reviewed. *The Maximilian*, which is the monthly newsletter supporting governors in Catholic schools, has proved to be a great success. The Education Commission will now also produce a monthly newsletter for priests that will contain information that will support them in their work with schools.

Deans are invited to the annual Headteachers' Conference but the uptake varies from year to year and overall there are less than half that attend in any one year. As a result, the Education Commission will also organise a half-day annual conference for priests on a theme related to their work in schools.



The Education Commission works with clergy around Education Sunday themes and events. This work will be continuing by linking schools and parishes in joint activities, events and celebrations for Education Sunday. The Education Commission produces guidance and an information pack for parishes and schools for Education Sunday.

The clergy can greatly support the schools in an area by working closely with parents and schools to build links between Catholic primary and secondary schools. The Education Commission is developing a primary/secondary transfer event each year for parishes to focus on at the time parents make decisions on secondary schools.

14. Excellence in the Education Commission (spirituality)

We are a pilgrim church and spiritual fulfilment will only come at our journeys end. However, we can speak about developing individual spirituality. The reference point and model is the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, meeting Jesus, who walked alongside them, talking to them and teaching them. The disciples on the road to Emmaus grew in knowledge and understanding of Jesus. They were different people at the end of their journey.

The Mission Statement for the Education Commission summarises what the staff are called to do: “We are commissioned by the Archbishop to enable the Kingdom of God to flourish in our schools and colleges” The Emmaus story offers a valuable way to reflect on the nature of our work in the Commission to enable this flourishing. Like Jesus, our work is to walk alongside those whom we serve. We are not at the centre of the relationships. We walk alongside for a while, offering support, encouragement, resources, direction, and encouraging spiritual development in our school communities.

The Mission Statement represents an enormous challenge, and there is an expectation that all who work in the Education Commission subscribe to this mission. There is a need for continuous support for each member of the Commission to enable them to sustain and develop their own spirituality, in order to carry this out. Our ongoing spiritual development is manifest in the work of the Education Commission. Prayer is part of the Education Commission’s work life. Meetings and the working day begin and end with prayer and prayer informs all our thoughts and actions.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of our work. It was in the breaking of the bread that the Emmaus disciples recognised Jesus. It was not the end of their pilgrimage but a turning point after which they took a different direction, becoming the beginnings of the evangelising Church. Mass is celebrated in the Education Commission at least six times a year. This is often followed by an ‘agape’ meal shared by all staff in the Education



Commission. The Education Commission sets aside two retreat days each year (Advent and Lent) as part of team formation. The Education Commission gives half a day per year to staff members for their personal spiritual development.

Chaplaincy is an important ministry in the Church. The Education Commission is a religious community in the sense that all our work is committed to the mission of Catholic education in schools and colleges and there is a need for spiritual direction in the mission we have. The need will be even greater as remote working practices develop. We will not meet as often and therefore have less opportunity for support. Currently, we are served graciously by the parish priest and grateful for this but we compete with the demands on his time from other commitments. The Education Commission will develop the chaplaincy provision for the office, having regard to operational changes.

There is also an expectation we will be up to date on Church teaching as it supports the work we do. Time will given at Education Commission team meetings every second month, to present teachings, documents and statements.

It is important that we are seen as Church which means that we must not work in isolation from other agencies and Commissions in the Diocese. Part of the mission of Catholic schools is a commitment to the common good. Charitable outreach is an important aspect of this. It is a response to the command 'Love your neighbour'. Our neighbour is anyone anywhere in the world who is supported by our prayers and actions. The Education Commission will actively support charitable causes aligned to the Church's mission of providing care and resources where they are needed, and will link with other agencies and Commissions related to our work.

The Education Commission will monitor and evaluate the provisions put in place to support that development. The Education Commission will hold a 'Review of the Year', with a qualitative evaluation of provision which will inform changes and developments.

14.1 Education Commission staff

Every post in the Education Commission is important in endeavouring to achieve the aim within the Mission Statement. We work in different teams but we are one community and the spirituality of the Education Commission is inclusive of everyone.



There are two people in each person when we come to work each day. The first person is the 'This is what I do person'. It is about the skills, talents and other gifts a person has to carry out the job they are required to do. It is important that in accepting that human work is a gift from God we are respecting the person in what they do. The second person is the 'This is who I am person'. It is about the emotions, the life experiences, personal convictions, beliefs and unique qualities of the person. It is the Image of God in which the person has been created.

It is important that the work practice within the Education Commission demonstrates a commitment to including all people wherever they are on the pilgrimage of their choice. Job descriptions, person specifications and contracts within the Education Commission are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are inclusive yet distinctive in that there is a clear connection between the requirements and the aims of the Education Commission.

The set of workplace policies and procedures apply to all who work in the Education Commission. It is important that they are understood and 'owned' by all. To this end they must reflect the Catholic nature of the Education Commission whilst being inclusive of those of other or no faith. Policies, procedures and handbooks are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are inclusive and where needed explanations are given.

It is important that all staff are valued and that the working environment for all staff demonstrates this. Care is taken to ensure that colleagues' views are taken into account in the design of the working environment. The physical environment of the Education Commission should be welcoming and the displays should be a balance of religious iconography and the core of the work we do – children's work. The public areas of the Education Commission and rooms in which we meet with people should reflect the work we do and the Church we represent. Displays should change regularly and include work from our schools on a rotational basis. There will be a changing 'focal point' in the entrance hall. This will be an actual and/or virtual display on a screen which is visible to all in the entrance hall. The focal point follows the liturgical year and could be supplemented with examples of the Mission in practice. When visitors come to the Education Commission they are welcomed and feel welcomed. Hospitality is at the heart of Christian relationships. Visitors to the Education Commission will be met and greeted by a member of the administration staff and offered refreshments.

Christ is at the centre not only of the work we do but also in the place we work. The Chapel is central with clear signage

A cross section 'focus group' of Education Commission staff will regularly review the work environment and associated policies and practices. An independent review carried out by a senior officer from the Education Department of another Diocese every three years.



14.2 The public face of the Education Commission

The first experience of the Education Commission for many people is not visiting the office nor even speaking to a member of the Education Commission staff but through the means of communication such as the website, job adverts and publications. The Education Commission's communications with people and organisations display clearly our spiritual and religious dimensions. How we communicate is important in the spiritual quest of the Education Commission. Education Commission's communication proclaims the Glory of God in such a way that it is applicable to the world in which we work. Therefore, it is important that our communications with the world outside of the Education Commission are of the highest quality possible. This is non-negotiable. It reflects the importance of who we are and what we do. The website is the most important means of communication with the world outside of the Education Commission. It is, by nature, a functional appliance but it should be clear that what people see is testimony to the work we do. All publications carry the Education Commission and Diocesan logo and explain our purpose. Education Commission publications are reviewed on a two-yearly cycle by a representative group of Education Commission staff and intended recipients.

For some people their first encounter with the Education Commission is in answering an advertisement for a post in the Education Commission. It is important that people feel welcomed by the quality and content of the advertisement that they will feel confident to apply or seek further information. Therefore, advertisements are of the highest quality and should be welcoming in how it is laid out and what it says. It should make clear the work of the Education Commission as well as the brief requirements for the job that is advertised. It should also have a contact number or email where prospective applications can get further information. The follow up to applications should reflect our commitment to the respect with which we treat all people. All applications should be acknowledged and those not shortlisted should be informed and thanked for the interest they have shown.



Appendix One: Analysis of visits

This is a breakdown of Religious Education visits to schools over the last three years.

The percentages are for Religious Education or Catholic ethos visits to schools or clusters of schools and are specific to Religious Education, collective worship, spirituality, and whole school INSET. They include attendance at interviews for Heads of Religious Education and Religious Education coordinators. They do not include attendance at celebratory functions which are entirely passive e.g. carol services, deanery Masses and so on. They do include the Religious Education conferences.

The figures are percentages of the working days available to the whole team in an academic year. Holidays have been deducted. Visits may not have taken up a whole day.

2010-11

Primary 19.3% Secondary 15.2%

2011-12

Primary 21.5% Secondary 15.6%

2012-13

Primary 17.0% Secondary 24.5%

The percentages are of the total number of days available for the primary advisers and the secondary adviser separately.



Appendix Two: Proposed staffing patterns for Religious Education advisers

Staffing

Presently there are 3 FTE advisers in the Education Commission.

To achieve what has been set out in *Excellence: Religious Education and Spirituality* will not require a lot more time.

It is important that the *Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality* spends time at both a strategic and operational level.

Proposal 1

With the *Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality* being operational for the equivalent of .5 days a week at least 3.5 FTE would be required.

Proposal 2

Although chaplaincy is separate from Religious Education it would be worth considering chaplaincy being combined with some Religious Education in terms of personnel. With the *Deputy Director: Religious Education and Spirituality* being operational for the equivalent of .5 days a week we would require 4.0 FTE to include chaplaincy.





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