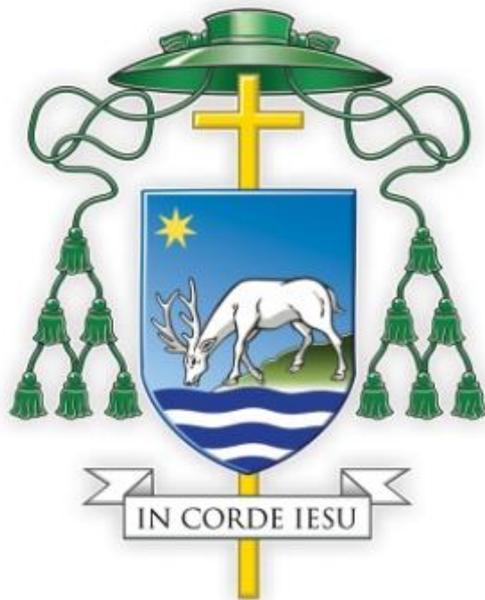


“THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE”
Our Diocesan Catholic Schools and the
New Evangelisation



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“THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE” Our Diocesan Catholic Schools and the New Evangelisation

I present herewith, with the full support of the Diocesan Trustees, the following document ‘That They may have Life’ which contains some new and revised policies, thoughts and aspirations relating to Catholic education and the schools of our Diocese of Portsmouth.

In late 2013, I established a think-tank to review the direction of education in the diocese in the light of the Church’s call to ‘new evangelisation.’ The context was a desire to consolidate the achievements of our Catholic schools and to develop a clearer policy for Trustees to make decisions on the enlargement of existing schools and the creation of new ones. A further wish was to develop strategies to help schools and parishes work more closely together in the evangelising mission of the diocese. Schools have a remit to wider society as well as to the Church, but the ecclesial remit is becoming more attenuated because of the declining number of practising or ‘Eucharistically committed’ Catholics.

In the period since, we have begun the process of conversion of our diocesan VA schools into academies. The discussion and implementation of this will occupy much of our energy over the coming months. However, the issue of enlargement of existing schools and the creation of new ones is still pressing, especially given the pressure in some areas of our diocese to find more school places.

The think-tank comprised the Bishop’s Council plus lay members of the Trustees Education Committee. It met with the Director of Schools and developed a consultation paper with key priorities and questions. The think-tank also met with a selection of teachers and heads, primary and secondary, from whom feedback and written submissions were invited. The Trustees accepted its recommendations, and in the light of these I present this document. Schools and parishes are the two principle agencies of the Diocese’s mission. They need to be closely united in the work of new evangelisation. They must seek to form Eucharistically committed disciples, in love with Christ and His Gospel, filled with outward-looking missionary zeal. The key issue here is:

- how to assist parents in educating and helping their children to know God;
- how to ensure that Eucharistically committed parents are able to find places for their children in a Catholic school, especially in situations where our schools are over-subscribed; and
- how to assist other Catholic parents, who send their children to our Catholic schools, to become more Eucharistically committed disciples.

Without a sufficient proportion of Eucharistically committed disciples in a school (i.e. ‘intentional’ parents, governors, teachers and SMT), the Catholic ethos of the school cannot be sustained in today’s context. New strategies are needed to forge a closer partnership between parishes/schools, and parishes/schools and families.

Over the last twelve months, I have visited most of the schools of our diocese. I have become aware of a number of urgent needs to be addressed: e.g. ‘succession-planning,’ the recruitment of teachers, the ‘vocation’ to be a Catholic teacher, the formation of future teachers and leaders, the formation of governors, and the renewal of the diocesan RE syllabus in the light of the new evangelisation. Like our parishes, all the schools of our Diocese of Portsmouth are unique and as I visit them, I appreciate their diverse personalities. We thank God for this. Schools are the place where many people meet Christ and come to a deeper faith. Yet just as with many of our parishes, clergy and people need to undertake a shift of internal culture from maintenance to mission, so too do many of our schools.

This document discusses and lays down new and revised policies relating to:

- (1) building a stronger partnership between our parishes and schools;
- (2) strategies for fostering Eucharistic commitment;
- (3) admissions criteria;
- (4) enlarging existing schools;
- (5) building new schools; and
- (6) revisions to the Section 48 inspections.

Obviously it does not intend to offer a comprehensive statement about Catholic education in our diocese and must be read in the light of previous policy. At times, this document proposes figures and targets (e.g. ‘33% Catholic’), but these seek to quantify an aspiration which will need to be reflected upon in the context of each school.

With gratitude, prayers and best wishes,

In Corde Iesu

Bishop of Portsmouth

29th June 2017, the Solemnity of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul

“THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE” Our Diocesan Catholic Schools and the New Evangelisation

1. SCHOOLS AND PARISHES: PARTNERS IN THE NEW EVANGELISATION

New evangelisation (NE)

1. “I came that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10: 10). The Church, its parishes and schools, exists to evangelise (cf. Paul VI *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 14), that is, to witness to Jesus Christ and His Gospel and to draw all people into a life-changing relationship with Him in His Body, the Church. (We might variously call this life-changing discipleship ‘missionary discipleship,’ ‘intentional discipleship,’ ‘Eucharistic commitment,’ etc.). The initiative is always the work of the Holy Spirit Who works within a person’s heart and mind, and woos them towards Christ and His Church, so that, following closely the Master, they can find and receive eternal life. The change of life that Christian discipleship brings should be expressed in a ‘life lived to the full’ (cf. John 10: 10), and it leads to an active desire in turn to spread the faith and be a missionary in contemporary culture, serving those in need. Evangelisation is a life-long process, both for those already members of the Church (evangelisation *ad intra*) and for those whom the Church seeks to reach out to draw in (evangelisation *ad extra*). In today’s post-modern context, many of the baptised are no longer Eucharistically committed disciples and many in our society do not know Christ and so in response the Church invites us to the work of new evangelisation (henceforth NE), “an evangelisation that is new in its ardour, new in its methods and new in its expression” (John Paul II *Address to Bishops of Latin America, Haiti, 1983*).

Catholic education

2. Catholic parishes and Catholic schools exist to make Jesus Christ better known and better loved. The context for this mission in schools is always that they are places of educational excellence, where all can grow in holiness as stewards of God’s creation. A school’s concern is to support families in the education of their children, especially their responsibility to help their children develop a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. The school therefore uses all the resources and expertise available for the harmonious physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of the young people in its care. In cooperation with the bishop, with parishes and with families, the school coordinates its activity to bring to full potential the gifts, talents and personalities of those young people for whom it is responsible. At the same time, the school has a particular concern for the education of the poor and those who do not have the support of a stable family life. It constantly evaluates its effectiveness in caring for the poor and for those children who lack the help and affection of family. It cares too for those who do not have faith or whose faith is weak, and for those families that experience the challenge of broken marriage. “The Church is bound as a Mother to give to these children of hers an education by which their whole life can be imbued with the Spirit of Christ and at the same time do all she can to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human” (Cf. *Gravissimum Educationis* 3 and 9).

The Diocese and the new evangelisation

3. NE should be central to the concern of everyone in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Building on the 2004 Diocesan Assembly and its outcome, *Go Out and Bear Fruit*, and the *Framework for Collaboration*, all the resources of our diocese are currently being focused on mission and evangelisation. This should be especially evident in both our schools and our parishes, as well as in our Pastoral Areas and deaneries, and it requires new attitudes and new ways of working. New attitudes and new ways of working need

to be adopted and made visible in our schools. Whilst our Catholic schools have a specific mission to wider society and a remit to government, they are essentially an agency of the diocese and a critical tool of the diocesan mission.

Parishes and schools working together

4. Parishes and schools must work closely together to form effective partnerships for the sake of mission and evangelisation. This might include joint initiatives such as RCIA for parents, short catechetical courses, ‘twilight’ sessions on prayer. Primary schools tend already to have strong links with the local parish, especially liturgical links. Secondary schools need to work more closely with their local feeder parishes and their clergy. Parishes and schools should develop joint strategies for NE, with perhaps a termly discussion of aims and aspirations, progress made and projects planned. Moreover, schools should have a representative on the Pastoral Area Evangelisation Strategy Team. The Catholic Academies and Schools Office can help here in developing collaborative working groups across the diocese.

Prayer and Formation

5. In the diocesan *Framework for Collaboration*, new methods of working have been adopted to take account of the *ad intra* aspect of NE and the need to promote on-going spiritual, moral and intellectual conversion. Team meetings within the *Framework for Collaboration* begin with a substantial period of prayer and formation to express a total reliance on God's initiative and grace. Schools too should adopt this *modus operandi*. For instance, a Governors Meeting should begin with a substantial period of prayer, placing the school community and its endeavours in the hands of the Lord. This would lead into a formation-exercise to assist governors develop their grasp of the Church's vision for its schools and of their own role as missionary disciples. Materials for this prayer and formation will be supplied by the Department of Schools.

Partnership of Parishes and Schools at Primary level

6. At the Primary level, the relationship and collaboration of Parish Priest and Head is crucial, ideally with the Head involved in the life of the parish and the Parish Priest involved in the life of the school. Priests may need help in developing the appropriate skills, but the Parish Priest should be a governor of the school and its chaplain. Strategies should be developed to enable the parish and school together to become a joint evangelising, catechetical and formation community bridging the period between infant Baptism, the reception of the child into School (Year R), First Holy Communion (typically Year 4) and transition to the Secondary school (Year 6). The emphasis should be on meeting the Lord personally in the Sunday Eucharist as the source and summit of the life of all in the school and strategies should be developed to encourage parents and children to attend and participate.

Collaboration of Parishes and Schools at Secondary level

7. At the Secondary level, where a number of parishes have children in the one school, the relationship and collaboration of the ‘feeder’ Parish Priests and the Head and SMT is crucial, ideally with the Head and SMT involved in the lives of the parishes where they live and the Parish Priests of the feeder parishes involved in the life of the school and supporting its lay-chaplain. Some points:

- One priest (e.g. the Coordinating Pastor) should be designated as the ‘lead’ priest to coordinate the local clergy. He should be a governor of the school and its official priest-chaplain (even if he deputises this). He should be a man who relates well to secondary school students and staff, and be committed to developing relationships between the parishes and the school. He will support and on behalf of the Bishop canonically oversee the lay-chaplain.
- Secondary school lay-chaplains, contracted by the schools, should be approved,

theologically formed, canonically delegated and liturgically commissioned by the Bishop and the diocese.

- Secondary school lay-chaplains should work closely with the lead Priest and with the Parish Priests, albeit without making excessive demands (e.g. celebration of school Masses) yet in turn counting on a generous response from the priests. Lay-chaplains should be formed in leading diverse types of prayer (e.g. Liturgy of Hours, Rosary, Eucharistic adoration, seasonal devotions) alongside the authentic preparation of school Masses. Above all, they should promote explicitly the spiritual development of students, teaching them how to pray and how to lead others in prayer. Lay chaplains should also link with parish youth workers and organisations, and with the diocesan Department of Educational Chaplaincies.
- Secondary schools should be encouraged to establish a small chapel with the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament (duly instituted, with training and formation of those responsible, and the encouragement of Eucharistic devotion among staff and students)
- Secondary schools should appoint a student ambassador or ‘link-person’ with each feeder parish, and parishes should appoint, perhaps from the Parish Council or Evangelisation Strategy Team, a lay ambassador or ‘link-person’ with the school.

2. SCHOOLS AND EUCHARISTIC COMMITMENT

Developing a sacramental imagination

8. The ethos and curriculum of a Catholic school is centred on developing a ‘Catholic sacramental imagination’ (see CBCEW *On The Way to Life* 55). This is derived from the Incarnation and orientates all Catholic life creatively to the ways grace fills and elevates nature. Education, catechesis, sacramentalisation and formation are not only beneficial *ad intra* within the Christian community but for all humanity and are thus integral to the process of *ad extra* evangelisation. The ‘Catholic sacramental imagination’ thus opens up new generative resources for engagement with contemporary culture.

Communion and Mission

9. Catholic schools should be schools of communion as well as mission (cf. *Go Out and Bear Fruit*). The school community should find its binding force and its potential for relationships derive from a set of values and a communion of life rooted in discipleship of Christ. Everything about the school needs to be explicitly related to this goal. The diocesan mission is to form intentional disciples capable of drawing others into a deeper relationship with Christ, and this mission should also be central to everything in a school. Vocation (“Who is Christ calling me to be”) and mission (“What is Christ asking me to do?” or “To whom does Christ need me to be a neighbour?”) should mark every aspect of school life and its relationships. This includes the curriculum, the appointment of staff, the admissions policy, expectations on pupils and their families (some form of “contract”?) and allows these questions to be reflected upon in a prayerful, discerning way. In this regard, the existing school-home partnership agreement might be developed outlining expectations.

Service

10. In Catholic schools, all teachers are responsible for the faith formation of students. Evidence should be visible in the curriculum, therefore, that students are being helped to develop an awareness of the needs of the poor, those who lack the affection of a family, and those who do not have faith (*Gravissimum Educationis* 9). Moreover, there should be a written policy on ecumenical and interreligious aspects of the school’s links with the wider community.

Fostering a Eucharistic commitment

11. There are real challenges in the present cultural context for young families who strive to live a Christian faith and Eucharistic practice, however important, is not the only definition of what it means to be a Catholic. However, for the purpose here, 'practice' or 'Eucharistically committed' means a person who strives "to observe the Church's precept of attending Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation" and who strives to "follow faithfully the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church" (CBCEW *Christ at the Centre* 26; cf. 26-34 ['Catholic Schools and the Definition of a "Practising Catholic"']). Eucharistic practice, that is, union and communion with Christ and the way of life that flows from this, shewn in prayer and the practical service of the needy - faith in action - is a central aspiration to the strategies of NE. Consequently, Eucharistic practice must also be a central aspiration in parish and school strategies and a central feature of the definition of the 'Catholic ethos' of a Catholic school.

Developing strategies to encourage Eucharistic practice

12. Schools and parishes in partnership together should develop efficient and effective strategies for promoting Eucharistic practice, together with simple methodologies for measuring practice and encouraging it, whilst seeking to avoid the perhaps inevitable sense of 'hoops to jump through'.

Parishes and Eucharistic Practice

13. Some points:

- Parishes need to be family- and child-friendly, with programmes of pastoral support and catechesis (e.g. Children's Liturgy, altar servers, evangelistic Parents/Toddlers groups, etc.)
- Parishes should work at achieving 33% practice of baptised Catholics as a benchmark. Parish strategies are beyond the scope of this document, but in adopting a common benchmark, schools and parishes should collaborate to develop them.
- Parishes should develop formation and catechetical programmes 'from birth to old age', reviewing their baptismal and post-baptismal catechesis, liturgical celebrations and pastoral support services in order to create a family-friendly environment and an on-going relationship with parents and young children. The focus should be on fostering regular practice by including, for instance, occasional para-liturgies within the Sunday Eucharist such as post-baptismal anointings, blessing of infants, blessing of toys, messy-church, a blessing for children entering nursery class, and so on.
- The Catholic Academies and Schools Office can help in these areas in numerous ways, not least with the induction of new priests.

Schools and Eucharistic Practice

14. Some points:

- A simple yet effective measurement-system of Eucharistic practice should be adopted within parishes and schools and all diocesan schools henceforth should amend their admission requirements to include an indication of Eucharistic practice. This is important especially in cases where schools are over-subscribed, the intention being to ensure that practising Catholic children are not excluded.
- The indication of Eucharistic practice is important when parents are applying for a Primary School, especially in the year before Year R. This requires both the school and the parish priest to collaborate in an effective system. Any process of 'stamps and signatures' needs to be turned positively into an 'evangelistic moment'.
- The celebration of First Holy Communion is an important opportunity. Catechesis is normally undertaken by the parish, which might, for instance,

involve the use of a liturgical ‘Journey-Card,’ sessions with parents, the provision of opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc. As children are prepared for these sacraments, parents too should be given formation so that they can fulfil their role as teachers of their children in the ways of faith.

- An indication of practice is important when parents are applying for a place at an oversubscribed Secondary school, especially in Year 5 and 6 as students prepare to leave the Primary school. This requires both the school and the parish priest to collaborate in an effective system. Again, any process of ‘stamps and signatures’ needs to be turned positively into an ‘evangelistic moment.’
- The celebration of Confirmation and the post-Confirmation follow-up year is another important opportunity. Catechesis and the subsequent *mystagogia* are normally undertaken within the parish. At this stage too, parents should be given formation as well as their children, who are preparing for Confirmation.
- Secondary schools should develop links with the diocesan youth formation programmes (e.g. Lourdes pilgrimage, retreat days, missions, WYD etc.). These provide further opportunities for parishes and schools to work together whilst stressing the importance of personal commitment to Christ in the Holy Eucharist.
- Eucharistic practice should be included within the Section 48 religious inspection.

3. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Schools serve three ‘constituencies’

15. Schools in the light of NE serve three ‘constituencies’: (1) practising Catholics that they might become more intentional disciples, (2) not-yet-practising Catholics that they might be drawn to Eucharistic commitment; and (3) people of good will (other Christians, those of other religions and those with no religious affiliation) who wish to hear the Gospel. Schools need to develop mission-policies that take account of these broad categories.

Admissions in the light of the NE

16. The intention of the NE is that everyone within both our parishes and our schools (students, teachers, governors, parents) should become intentional disciples. Parish strategies cannot be covered here but for schools, this means that, whilst complying with the Schools Admissions Code, they must strive to ensure they comprise a high subscription of Catholics upon admission (say, 90%), that a high proportion of these Catholics are practising upon admission (say, 75%) and that a fair proportion of these Catholics continue to practice subsequently (say, 33%). Schools should also ensure that a ‘constituency’ of people of good will (say, 10%) can also be admitted, once the other statutory requirements have been fulfilled. Obviously, the actual or real-life situation will vary widely across the diocese from school to school. There should be an annual reporting of statistics with a subsequent discussion among stakeholders as to how the hoped-for targets might be achieved.

Admissions Criteria

17. The admissions criteria for Catholic schools across the diocese should be amended to include ‘Practising Catholic.’ This should be placed above ‘baptised Catholic’ (e.g. ‘Practising Catholic applicants with no sibling connection, who have provided a Certificate of Baptism and a Certificate of Practice’). This Certificate of Practice requires counter-signing by the parish priest, in accordance with the legal and accepted format.

Teachers in Catholic schools

18. We value highly the contribution and commitment of non-Catholic teachers who teach in our Catholic schools and our schools are enriched by their presence. However, those who lead in our Catholic schools should be practicing Catholics:

- At Primary level, the Head, Deputy Head and the Phase Leaders should be Eucharistically committed Catholics (ideally 100%);
- At Secondary level, the Head and SLT should be Eucharistically committed Catholics (ideally 100%). The rest of the teaching staff should comprise ideally 33% Eucharistically committed Catholics.

As with all the aspirations in this policy document, the actual statistics will vary. They will need to be negotiated, approved and made explicit in each particular school context and thus be able to act as a benchmark.

4. ENLARGING EXISTING SCHOOLS

Some basic criteria

19. An existing school (primary or secondary) should not be considered for enlargement until there is a high subscription of Catholics upon admission (say, 90%), a high percentage of practice upon admission (say, 75% practice) and a reasonable rate of continuing practice in subsequent years (say, 33%). The purpose of these criteria is to ensure that there is a place in a Catholic school for those who are practicing Catholics as well as a place in school for those Catholics who are not practising but who need to be encouraged to become more Eucharistically committed. Moreover, where a school is not fully subscribed by Catholics, then a beneficent evangelistic general principle can be applied that enables non-Catholics and non-Christians (say, 10%) to take a place in school where they can be offered an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Factors

20. To enlarge an existing school, besides the statutory and financial considerations to be considered, such as its Section 48 and Ofsted outcomes, the factors below can provide a set of criteria, e.g.

- Review of demographic factors e.g. proposed new housing, increasing population, Catholic immigration;
- Forecasting expected demand (in the Primary sector up to 4 years and in the Secondary up to 7 years) on trends, births, survival rates and mobility;
- Local authority school organisation plans;
- location of the school;
- impact of an expansion on nearby Catholic and other schools;
- the level of support for the proposed expansion from local clergy, local Catholic parents and the wider community;
- review of baptismal data (NB migration and the baptism of children abroad, etc.)
- evaluating whether the expanded facility can be resourced with Eucharistically committed students, teachers, governors and parents (say, 33%)
- evaluating the statistical likelihood and projected time-scale within which the expanded facility could reach 90% Catholic admission, 75% practice upon admission, and 33% continuing practice

5. BUILDING NEW SCHOOLS

The present 50% cap

21. Current government policy is that any new academy or free school with a religious designation may only prioritise up to 50% of places according to religious criteria ('50% cap on admissions'). The CBCEW has expressed strong opposition to this, arguing its imposition as unacceptable and an uncertain basis for the provision of a Catholic school.

We recognise that until there is a change of government policy, the Diocese of Portsmouth is at present unable to establish any new Catholic academies or free schools.

Some criteria

22. Whilst the current 50% cap on admissions is a stumbling-block for a new school, there may be cases where another avenue is possible. In this case, a careful evaluation of the criteria by the Trustees is needed before the authority to proceed can be given. Because the partnership between parish and school is central to the mission of NE, in any proposal for a new school, the following should be considered (as mentioned above):

- A new Primary school must ‘belong to’ and be in partnership with its local parish, and be named after that parish. The Parish Priest would be a Foundation Governor and act as chaplain to the school community.
- Any new Secondary School must be in partnership with its feeder parishes, their clergy and people. One priest (e.g. the Coordinating Pastor) should be designated as the ‘lead’ Priest. He or a deputy should be a Foundation Governor and act as priest-chaplain to the school community, whilst supporting the lay-chaplain and coordinating the involvement in the life of the school of the other priests.

Factors

23. Besides the usual statutory processes, the acquisition of the necessary funding and approval from the Secretary of State, factors for Trustees to consider include:

- Review of demographic factors e.g. proposed new housing, increasing population, Catholic immigration;
- Forecasting expected demand (in the Primary sector up to 4 years and in the Secondary up to 7 years) on trends, births, survival rates and mobility;
- Local authority school organisation plans;
- the location of the school;
- impact of an expansion on nearby Catholic and other schools;
- the level of support for the proposed expansion from local clergy, local Catholic parents and the wider community;
- review of baptismal data (NB migration and the baptism of children abroad);
- evaluating whether the expanded facility can be resourced with Eucharistically committed students, teachers, governors and parents (say, 33%)
- evaluating the statistical likelihood and projected time-scale within which the new facility could reach 90% Catholic admission, 75% practice upon admission, and 33% continuing practice

6. SECTION 48 INSPECTIONS

Areas covered in a Section 48 Inspection

24. The Section 48 validation presently examines 5 areas of school life:

- The school as a Catholic community
- The curriculum and religious education
- The students’ spiritual and moral development
- The leadership of the school
- Overall effectiveness in delivering Catholic education.

Schools are graded as ‘outstanding’, ‘good’, ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’ and depending on the grade, appropriate support is provided and regular monitoring visits arranged. Areas for development are agreed.

Proposed amendments

25. The elements and process of this Section 48 validation should be reviewed and further developed in relation to the statutory requirements whilst paying particular regard to the work of NE. This especially relates to the *Judgment Descriptors for A2*.

The Wider Community and how the school relates to the parish and the diocese. In the Diocese of Portsmouth, in order to ensure the partnership between parishes and schools in the work of NE, the Vicar for Education (and/or deputy) should be actively involved in the processes of validation, assisted by a small team of clergy. Moreover, as mentioned above, a new criterion relating to Catholic practice should be developed and incorporated.

At times, this document proposes, figures and targets (e.g. ‘33% Catholic’), but these seek to quantify an aspiration which will need to be reflected upon in the context of each school.

With gratitude, prayers and best wishes,

In Corde Iesu

Bishop of Portsmouth
15th August 2015, the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary