

ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK OUR VISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION



WE ARE INVITED BY GOD TO NURTURE
THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IN ONE ANOTHER
AS CHILDREN OF GOD,
SO THAT WE BECOME 'MORE LIKE CHRIST'
FULLY HUMAN AND FULLY ALIVE.

JESUS CALLED THE CHILDREN TO HIM AND SAID,
'LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME',
LUKE 18:16

THIS IS THE VISION WHICH INSPIRES OUR SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES IN ALL THAT THEY DO.

WE STAND ON HOLY GROUND.
EVERY CHILD, EVERY YOUNG PERSON, EVERY ADULT
IS A UNIQUE IMAGE OF GOD.

Archdiocese of Southwark

Our Vision for Catholic Education

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Foreword

This statement of our vision for Catholic education is the result of a long process of reflection and consultation involving headteachers, clergy, religious, and staff from our Commission for Schools and Colleges. I am grateful to everyone for their work and for their commitment to our children and young people. It is clear that our Diocese has a strong sense of its call to educate and a clear vision and direction for its response. This will give us confidence as we face the challenges and opportunities offered by the educational structures within which we work.

I ask you all to take time to read this statement, to use it to reflect on your work in or with our schools and colleges, and to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire you with new understanding and insight both for your own journey and in the support and leadership you give to others.

Archbishop of Southwark





Background

In 2006, Archbishop Kevin McDonald invited everyone in the Diocese to reflect on our life as a Catholic community in the south-east of England. The resulting process of consultation, discussion and discernment affirmed the range and depth of that life across the diversity of our Diocese. It led to the recognition of prayer as fundamental to all its activity, inspiring friendship and communion and flowing into outreach and mission. It also led to a new awareness of the importance of Catholic schools and colleges in the life of the Diocese.

A process of discussion and consultation on a Diocesan vision for Catholic Education was initiated in the summer of 2008 under the leadership of a working group of headteachers, clergy, religious, Sr Bernie Porter (then Chair of the Diocesan Education Committee), Bishop Pat Lynch, and staff from the Commission for Schools and Colleges. The draft statement produced by this group was shared with all headteachers and with clergy through deanery structures, and fully discussed at the 2009

Diocesan Headteachers Conference to which Deans were invited. This final statement evolved following substantial amendment, contributions from Archbishop Kevin McDonald, and further discussion.

Our Diocese is structured in deaneries and parishes. There are religious orders and congregations contributing to its work, and also many agencies and groups which support particular aspects of its mission. Our schools and colleges are an integral part of our Diocesan mission to follow Jesus Christ in prayer, friendship and outreach, but they hold a different and unique place in the Diocese. They educate children and young people in the love which is the heart of our faith and also work as publicly funded institutions which share explicitly in the responsibility of wider society for education. As a Catholic community we created our schools and colleges and we continue to sustain them. This document states our vision for them and affirms their place in the life of our Diocese.



Purpose and use of this document

- The purpose of this document is to state our Diocesan vision for education and to affirm the position of schools and colleges within the life of the Diocese.
- It is primarily addressed to those involved in our schools and colleges, leaders, staff, pupils, governors and parents, and to the priests of the Diocese.
- It will also be of value to those such as Local Authority colleagues who work with our schools and colleges.
- It is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of the role and place of Catholic education in the Diocese or a detailed plan for the future.
- References to schools and colleges include all those involved in their communities.

This document may be used for reflection on, for example:

- an individual school's contribution to making the vision a reality;
- a governing body's relationship with governors of other local Catholic schools;
- a dean's overview of the schools and colleges in his area;
- the contribution of a school to evangelisation within a parish;
- strengthening partnerships between schools and parishes.

Archdiocese of Southwark

Our Vision for Catholic Education

*Jesus called the children to him and said,
'Let the little children come to me'.
(Luke 18:16)*

We stand on holy ground.
Every child,
every young person,
every adult
is a unique image of God.

We are invited by God to nurture
the life of the Spirit in one another
as children of God,
so that we become 'more like Christ',
fully human and fully alive.

This is our faith.
This is the faith of the Church.
This is our vision for Catholic education.
This is the reason for our schools and colleges.





Catholic schools and colleges

Affirming the presence of Christ in each child and young person

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:4)

The human person is holy ground; everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. All those working in Catholic education, as teachers, leaders, support staff and governors, will seek to recognise and treasure the unique gifts of each pupil and to do all they can to allow these to develop and flourish in response to the creative action of the Holy Spirit. They will acknowledge individual needs and respond positively, using their professional skill, experience and loving care to draw out the best in everyone, as Jesus Christ did.

All in the school community will support the

celebration of the Sacraments and the liturgies of the Church's year and will allow prayer and reflection to give light and insight into the events of day-to-day life in the school.

This will help children and young people to develop a personal and living relationship with Christ in prayer, nurturing individuals' own growth, giving them a strong foundation for their life's journey, and inspiring them to reach out to others in loving service.

Jesus said, 'I am here among you as one who serves'. (Luke 22:27)

Catholic schools and colleges

Supporting parents in educating in faith

*These children of yours have been enlightened by Christ.
They are to walk always as children of the light.
(Baptismal Rite)*

Catholic schools and colleges rejoice in sharing with parents and carers in the gift of children and will seek to be the best of teachers in bearing witness to faith in Jesus Christ. As a Diocese, we will do all we can to ensure Catholic schools and colleges are in the right locations and are of the highest quality, so that parents can confidently choose them for their children.

Our schools and colleges will offer an environment where the good news of Jesus Christ can be

heard, be connected with everyday life, and be the benchmark for all activity. Every ability our children have been given is to be celebrated and developed, so that they may become fully human and fully alive, as Jesus Christ has shown us.

The education our schools and colleges give will be rooted in the understanding that life is God's gift and that our existence and presence here, with all its potential, joys and sorrows, is part of a greater reality which transcends death.



Catholic schools and colleges

Providing the highest quality of education

You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

Our schools and colleges are responsible for educating our children and young people in faith. They are called to provide the highest possible quality of education. They will work for the highest possible standards measured against relevant government criteria and the highest possible standards of love and compassion measured against the example of Jesus Christ. There are a number of aspects of the school and college which are central to achieving these aims.

Excellent governance

In Catholic schools and colleges, to be a governor is to exercise a particular ministry within the Church. With the headteacher, the governing body is responsible for the Catholic character of the school, its faithfulness to its mission, and its educational effectiveness. The whole Catholic community will acknowledge the importance of this ministry and will encourage potential governors to offer themselves for service. Governors give their time voluntarily, and bring a variety of skills and expertise to their role.

Excellent leadership

As employers, governors oversee and support the senior leaders who take responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school. Headteachers and principals lead their school communities spiritually and educationally by their example and witness to Christ and by their relationships with others, as well as by the way in which they direct activities. The more they are rooted in Christ, the more they will be able to allow God to work through the skills and abilities they bring to their role.

Excellent teaching

All teaching, support and administrative staff in a Catholic school or college share the vocation to educate children and young people in love, by word and by example. They will recognise their own strengths and weaknesses and support one another in the challenges they face. They will continue to develop their own knowledge of subjects and teaching methods or of support and administrative work. They will do all they can to increase their own understanding of the Christian life and of Catholic teaching.

No subject of the curriculum of a Catholic school is just 'secular', as every aspect of life and knowledge is understood to be God's gift to us. Within this understanding, each subject area is treated using its own principles and methods. Religious education is a vital area of study, as it provides the context for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of God's engagement with human life and the language with which to discuss this and communicate it.



Catholic schools and colleges

Creating welcoming communities of faith

I was a stranger and you made me welcome. (Matthew 25:35)

The Catholic school and college communities in our Diocese are diverse, embracing families and pupils with a range of needs from a variety of ethnic, social and academic groups. They will be welcoming communities of faith. As witnesses to the teachings of the gospel, they will have a keen understanding of the common good and act on it, encouraging strong bonds of cohesion within the communities they serve.

In some areas of large Catholic population, there are schools where all pupils are baptised Catholics. In regions where the Catholic population is more thinly spread, or where there is a particular local need, schools have a number of pupils who are of other Christian denominations or other faiths, or of no explicit religious commitment.

It is not the proportion of Catholic pupils which makes a school or college Catholic; it is the way in

which its leaders ensure that every aspect of school life reflects the teachings of the gospel and that all its activity, implicitly or explicitly, is 'sacramental' in making the loving presence of Jesus Christ a reality.

As a Diocese, we will work together to create educational communities open to the power of the Holy Spirit and allowing justice and love to flourish. In our schools and colleges, the life of the Spirit will be nurtured first of all by prayer. Praying together leads to the development of an environment and a network of belonging in which each person is valued. Catholic schools and colleges witness to the Gospel by the quality of relationships, within the community and beyond it, flowing from this respect for one another.

Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion. (Ephesians 6:18)





Catholic schools and colleges Fostering strong and positive relationships

*Be united in your convictions and united in your love,
with a common purpose and a common mind. (Philippians 2:2)*

Our schools and colleges have many networks of relationship which form structures of support and which need to be tended.

Parents and carers

One essential network is formed of parents and carers. They have entrusted their children's education to the school and will be appropriately and effectively informed, involved and supported. Schools and colleges will be supported by families in maintaining their ethos and standards of behaviour and work.

Parish communities and deaneries

Partnership with parish communities and deaneries is vital for the identity and 'belonging' of the school or college. The school will be able to offer expertise in communicating the faith to children and young people. Parish priests will provide sacramental and pastoral ministry to schools and colleges and promote Catholic schools as the first choice for parents. The local parish priest or dean can be a valued member of a school governing

body, as are local parishioners who are able to contribute from their own experience. Parishes commit a proportion of their income to the Diocese for, among other areas, the Diocesan Commission for Schools and Colleges and some funding related to land for schools, and will often provide additional resources for the schools in their local area.

The Archbishop

The Archbishop's authority over all Catholic schools and colleges in the Diocese includes the oversight of the Catholic character of schools and colleges and of the religious education they provide and the right to inspect them. He has the right to be represented at senior leadership appointments and the right to define religious practice for the purpose of admissions to voluntary aided schools, sixth form colleges and Diocesan academies.

The Archbishop appoints foundation governors and has stewardship over the land and buildings for schools in Diocesan Trusteeship. He depends on his appointed governors to carry out their

ministry in an awareness of the trust he places in them both for their own school and for Catholic education in the Diocese as a whole.

The Commission for Schools and Colleges and the link headteachers

The Archbishop has appointed the Director of Education and the other officers at the Commission for Schools and Colleges to act for him in the work to be done to fulfil his rights and responsibilities towards Catholic schools in the Diocese. This requires liaison with the 14 Local Authorities in the area of the Diocese.

The Commission has, with the Archbishop's support, established a network of headteachers from each Local Authority in the Diocese to ensure that there are effective channels of communication and support for Catholic schools and colleges. The link headteachers meet with Commission staff on a termly basis and are in additional contact as needs arise.

Networks of schools and colleges

Partnerships among Catholic schools and colleges in the local area provide a real source of support. They are particularly important when a school has a new headteacher, for example, or when it finds itself in difficulties, but also offer a means of strengthening the local Catholic community and developing the Catholic identity of the school itself.

Partnerships with other schools and colleges are increasingly important for curriculum provision and for widening the experience of pupils and staff. They offer the opportunity to witness to our own beliefs and values and to learn from others.

Other Christian churches and other faiths

The presence in our schools and colleges of those of other Christian denominations provides an opportunity to work for ever fuller

communion of faith and life. The presence of those of other faiths creates a culture of dialogue which nurtures the growth of greater respect and mutual understanding between different religions. Working together as people of faith will strengthen the school's moral leadership within the wider community, countering the absence of shared values, speaking out against the marginalisation of religious values in the media, and making a powerful contribution to the development of social cohesion.

Local Authorities

Catholic schools and colleges are usually maintained by Local Authorities, from which they receive all funding for their running costs. Local Authorities have extensive responsibilities and powers relating to standards in maintained schools. Their advice and, sometimes, intervention is important in supporting the high quality of education in our schools. Most of the funding for school buildings is also received through the Local Authority. Local Councillors will often be very helpful in giving general or particular support to our schools and colleges.

Legal context

Our ability as a Diocese to provide Catholic schools and colleges depends on the national framework of legislation. Government changes to the education system do not always take account of the presence, contribution and needs of Catholic schools and colleges, and at times could undermine their effectiveness. The Catholic Education Service, the Bishops' Conference Agency for Education and Formation, works to ensure that legislation continues to protect the rights of the Catholic Bishops to provide and oversee schools and colleges. As a Diocese we, together with the other Dioceses of England and Wales, support the Catholic Education Service financially and by membership of its working groups.



Catholic schools and colleges

Forming an integral part of the mission of the Diocese

You are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundation and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:20)

Our school and college communities are full of life. They are a vibrant part of our local Catholic communities, of our Diocese and of our universal Church. In some cases they are also distinguished by a charism and a tradition of spirituality belonging to a particular religious order or congregation.

Schools and colleges are at their best when they are fully integrated with the local and wider Catholic family, a vital part of a larger whole and a creative and fruitful dimension of the Church's pastoral provision and mission.

The presence and partnership of our Diocese within the national education system gives unparalleled opportunities and poses challenging questions. In making strategic decisions on issues relating to schools and colleges, we will be guided, as a Catholic community, by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In this way our schools and colleges will engage ever more effectively with society's hopes and concerns and witness to Christ's presence and challenge within them.

Go out to the whole world: proclaim the Good News to all creation. (Mark 16:15)



Catholic schools and colleges

Ensuring responsible stewardship of resources

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no-one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common. (Acts 4:32)

Local Catholic communities value their schools and colleges and are committed to sustaining and supporting them in many ways. Catholics living locally who have, or can learn, the necessary skills may offer themselves for service as foundation governors and take on the responsibilities for the school and for Catholic education in the Diocese that this role entails.

Local deans and parish priests will provide sacramental ministry for pupils and staff. The presence of local clergy in the school or college shows its interdependence with the life of the local parishes.

As a Diocese, we do all we can to ensure that there are enough places in Catholic schools and colleges for Catholic families, working with local authorities to achieve this aim. This is dependent upon a general need for places in the local area, as public funding is only available for the number of school places required by the whole community.

Pupils in our Catholic schools and colleges should have accommodation which is suited to their needs and to the requirements of their education. The land and buildings are usually owned by the Diocese or a religious congregation and are provided for the school without charge. They are entrusted to the stewardship of the governing body, which accepts responsibility for maintaining them in a good state of repair and, with the agreement of the relevant Trustees, improving them for the

benefit of the pupils.

The major part of the costs of school building, maintenance and improvement is provided from Government through Local Authorities. The Diocese works with them to ensure a fair distribution of resources across Catholic, Anglican, community and foundation schools. Governors are required to make a contribution to capital costs, and will work with the school and the local Catholic community to provide this; it is this contribution which makes it possible for the Church to have its own schools. The Diocese, the trustees of religious congregations with maintained schools in the Diocese, and school governors and headteachers work together creatively and constructively to ensure accommodation is as good as possible.

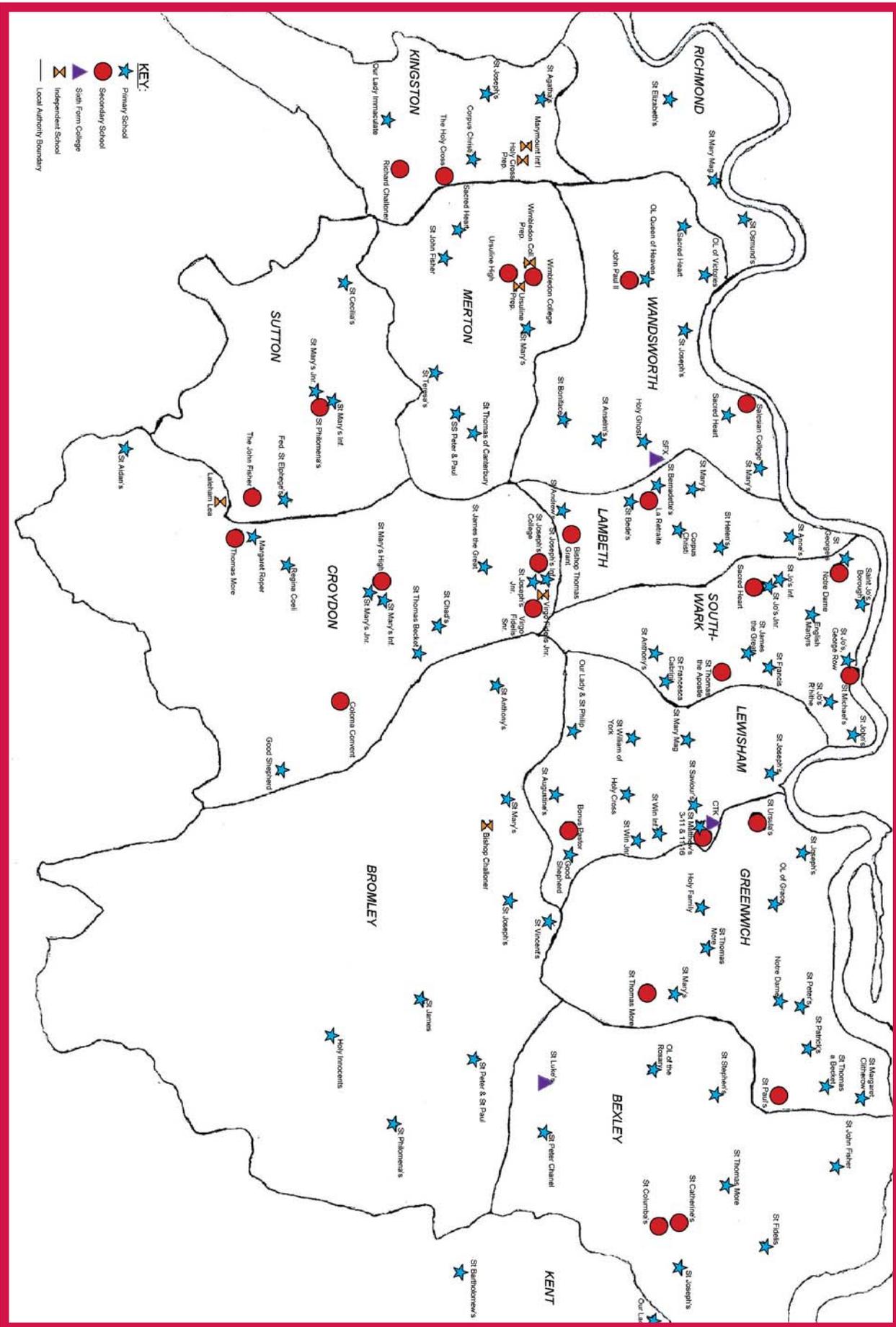
As a Catholic community, we treasure the support staff, teachers and leaders in our schools. We recognise the importance of their vocation to educate our young people and, in the case of headteachers and principals, to lead communities of faith by their example of committed service. We will continue to pray that young people will aspire to follow them in this profession and continue to work to encourage teachers to move into leadership positions.

An appreciation of the common good will sometimes lead to individual schools agreeing to collaborate in order to support another school in greater need.

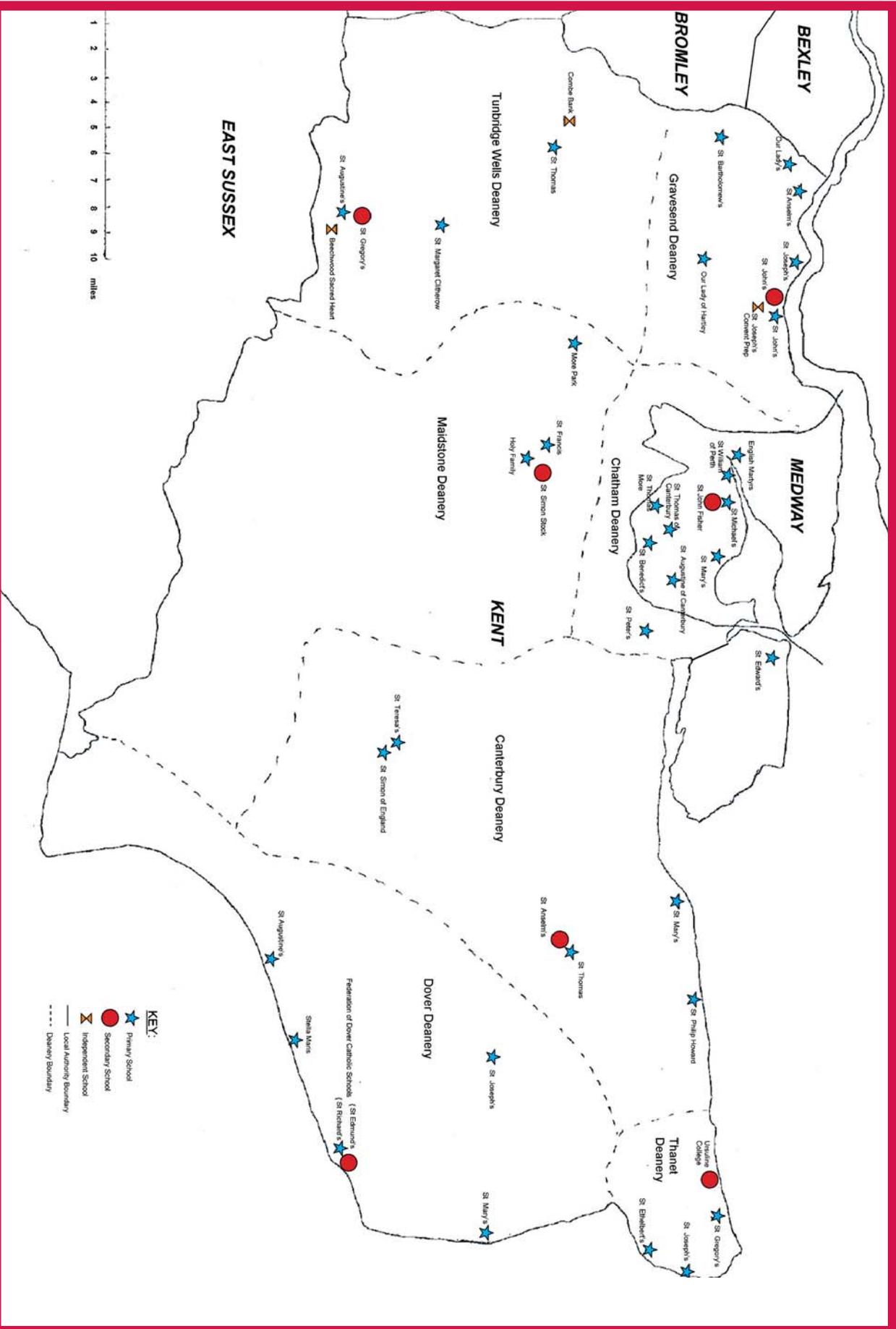
Governors will do all they can to act both for the good of their own school and for the good of other Catholic schools, so helping to ensure that Catholic education flourishes across the Diocese, now and in the future.



Location of Catholic schools and colleges in London boroughs



Location of Catholic schools and colleges in Kent and Medway





Catholic schools and colleges

Full of hope for the future

Jesus said, 'I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I love you, you also must love one another.' (John 13:34)

We are proud of the Catholic education provided by the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Parents

As a Diocese:

- We recognise and affirm the place of our Catholic schools and colleges within our mission.
- We will work for excellence in all our schools and colleges.
- We will discern the signs of the times and be open to positive change and development.
- We will use government initiatives creatively for the benefit of Catholic education.
- We will provide schools and colleges for our children and young people, with the support of parents and carers, wherever it is possible to do so.

We call on all the people of the Diocese to support this wonderful venture of our Church.

Parents will recognise that the availability of free Catholic schools and colleges is a privilege. Wherever possible, they will choose Catholic schools for their children because they understand the unique value of the education offered. They will also do all they can to support Catholic schools, including being ready to offer themselves for the ministry of governance.

Clergy and parishes

Catholic families will support local Catholic schools where the importance of Catholic education is emphasised within the parish, and especially by parish priests. Schools and colleges are part of the mission of the parish, deanery and Diocese to proclaim the gospel, and can be a wonderful support to the whole

Catholic community. Parish clergy will recognise that for many children and young people, schools are the main place of contact with the Church and an important aspect of and focus for pastoral provision. Parishioners will provide active support and encouragement to schools and colleges, through prayer, supporting school events and as governors.

The Diocese

The Archbishop and Bishops see Catholic schools and colleges as a vital part of the Diocese, an integral part with the parishes of the mission to build communion and to reach out in love to all. They will continue to invest Diocesan resources by making available land and buildings to schools, by supporting school and college chaplaincy and by the work of the Commission for Schools and Colleges, where the staff are employed by the Trustees and are directly accountable to the Archbishop.

Our hope

As people of faith, we look to the future with trust in the power of God.

We are called to journey together as a Diocese united in prayer, rejoicing in friendship and

communion and working together in outreach and mission.

We are committed to ensure that we have, for the rest of the 21st century, Catholic schools and colleges:

- which are an integral part of the mission of the Diocese,
- which support parents in educating in faith,
- which are welcoming communities of faith and prayer
- where adults affirm the presence of Christ in each child and young person
- and so enable all to become fully human and fully alive.

This, then, is my prayer.

Out of his infinite glory, may God give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God. (Ephesians 3: 14-21)



Appendix

The following pages offer suggestions for structuring discussion about the Vision for Catholic Education for:

- governors
- deaneries
- parents

The Archdiocese of Southwark Our Vision for Catholic Education

Focus for governors

1. The role of governors

We, the Governors of.....stand on holy ground.

Every child,
every young person,
every adult
is a unique image of God.

We are invited by God to nurture
the life of the Spirit in one another
as children of God,
so that we become 'more like Christ',
fully human and fully alive.

Insert the name of your school into this vision statement. Reflect on each verse. Consider how you, as a governing body, nurture the life of the Spirit in one another and in your school.

Taking the Vision for Catholic Education as a whole, identify and discuss three paragraphs which challenge you in your role as a governor.

2. Providing the highest quality of education

'Our schools and colleges are responsible for educating our children and young people in faith. They are called to provide the highest possible quality of education. They will work for the highest possible standards measured against relevant government criteria and the highest possible

standards of love and compassion measured against the example of Jesus Christ'. (p.8)

How do you, as governors, respond to this calling?

3. Excellent governance

'In Catholic schools and colleges, to be a governor is to exercise a particular ministry within the Church'. (p.8)

Suggest key words which describe this ministry, giving your reasons for them.

'With the headteacher, the governing body is responsible for the Catholic character of the school, its faithfulness to its mission, and its educational effectiveness'. (p.8)

As a governing body, how do you ensure that these responsibilities are carried out effectively? What issues arise? How do you try to resolve them?

4. Excellent leadership

'Headteachers and principals lead their school communities spiritually and educationally by their example and witness to Christ and by their relationships with others, as well as by the way in which they direct activities'. (p.8)

How can you support your headteacher or

principal in carrying out this service within the Catholic community?

5. Creating welcoming communities of faith

'The Catholic school and college communities in our Diocese are diverse, embracing families and pupils with a range of needs from a variety of ethnic, social, and academic groups. They will be welcoming communities of faith. As witnesses to the teachings of the gospel, they will have a keen understanding of the common good and act on it, encouraging strong bonds of cohesion within the communities they serve'. (p.9)

Identify the ways in which your school is a 'welcoming community of faith'.

Where, as a result of your understanding of the common good, have strong bonds of cohesion been forged within the community which you serve? How can these be further developed?

'It is not the proportion of Catholic pupils which makes a school or college Catholic; it is the way in which its leaders ensure that every aspect of school life reflects the teachings of the gospel and that all its activity, implicitly or explicitly, is 'sacramental' in making the loving presence of Jesus Christ a reality'. (p.9)

Discuss the challenge which this presents to you as a governing body.

6. Parish communities and deaneries

'Partnership with parish communities and deaneries is vital for the identity and 'belonging' of the school or college...' (p.10)

How would you describe this partnership between your school or college and the parish and deanery? Are there areas where further development could take place?

How do you actively promote Catholic schools as the first choice for Catholic parents?

7. Networks of schools and colleges

'Partnerships among Catholic schools and colleges in the local area provide a real source of support'. (p.11)

How does your school contribute to these partnerships?

8. Other Christian churches

'The presence in our schools and colleges of those of other Christian denominations provides an opportunity to work for ever fuller communion of faith and life'. (p.11)

Are you aware of members of other Christian denominations within your school community amongst both pupils and staff?

How do you build upon their presence to foster fuller communion of faith and life?

What further developments could take place in this area?

9. Other Faiths

'The presence of those of other faiths creates a culture of dialogue which nurtures the growth of greater respect and mutual understanding between different religions. Working together as people of faith will strengthen the school's moral leadership within the wider community, countering the absence of shared values, speaking out against the marginalisation of religious values in the media, and making a powerful contribution to the development of social cohesion'. (p.11)

Discuss the implications of this statement for your school community and for you as a governing body.

10. Forming an integral part of the mission of the Diocese

'Our school and college communities are full of life. They are a vibrant part of our local Catholic communities, of our Diocese and of our universal Church. In some cases they are also distinguished by a charism and a tradition of spirituality belonging to a particular religious order or congregation'. (p.12)

How can you further enhance the particular character of your school?

How do you contribute to Catholic education across the Diocese as a whole?

How do you ensure your school plays its full part in the mission of the Church?

Appendix

The following pages offer suggestions for structuring discussion about the Vision for Catholic Education for:

- governors
- deaneries
- parents

The Archdiocese of Southwark Our Vision for Catholic Education

Focus for deaneries

1. The Vision in your deanery

What aspects of our shared Diocesan Vision for Catholic Education speak to you in your own vocation and ministry?

What is the impact of Catholic schools and colleges in your deanery area?

What challenges does the Vision for Catholic Education present to you as a deanery?

What steps can you take towards making this Vision for Catholic Education more real in the life of parishes and schools within your deanery?

2. Providing the highest quality of education

'Our schools and colleges are responsible for educating our children and young people in faith. They are called to provide the highest possible quality of education. They will work for the highest possible standards measured against relevant government criteria and the highest possible standards of love and compassion measured against the example of Jesus Christ.' (p.8)

How can you as a deanery group support Catholic schools in this calling?

3. Creating welcoming communities of faith

'The Catholic school and college communities in our Diocese are diverse, embracing families and pupils with a range of needs from a variety of ethnic, social, and academic groups. They will be welcoming communities of faith. As witnesses to the teachings of the gospel, they will have a keen understanding of the common good and act on it, encouraging strong bonds of cohesion within the communities they serve.' (p.9)

What makes your deanery schools 'welcoming communities of faith'?

What action can be taken as a deanery to strengthen community cohesion in your area?

'In some areas of large Catholic population, there are schools where all pupils are baptised Catholics. In regions where the Catholic population is more thinly spread, or where there is a particular local need, schools have a number of pupils who are of other Christian denominations or other faiths, or of no explicit religious commitment.' (p.9)

Which of these is true for your deanery? What

issues does this raise?
How might these issues be addressed?

'Catholic schools and colleges witness to the Gospel by the quality of relationships within the community and beyond it, flowing from this respect for one another.' (p.9)

How might you further enhance the quality of relationships within your deanery?

4. Parish communities and deaneries

'Partnership with parish communities and deaneries is vital for the identity and 'belonging' of the school or college. The school will be able to offer expertise in communicating the faith to children and young people. Parish priests will provide sacramental and pastoral ministry to schools and colleges and promote Catholic schools as the first choice for parents.' (p.10)

How strong is the partnership between your deanery and its schools and colleges? Are there points where this could be more effective? Are there any deanery events which embrace schools? Can you think of further events or celebrations which would foster a sense of 'belonging'?

Do you draw upon the expertise of the schools and colleges in developing approaches to communicating the faith within your own parish communities?

How do you actively promote Catholic schools as the first choice for parents within your parish and within the deanery?

5. Other Christian churches and other faiths

'The presence in our schools and colleges of

those of other Christian denominations provides an opportunity to work for ever fuller communion of faith and life. The presence of those of other faiths creates a culture of dialogue which nurtures the growth of greater respect and mutual understanding between different religions.' (p.11)

Reflect upon the dialogue which exists within your community with those of other Christian denominations and other faiths.

Are there initiatives which could be taken by the deanery to nurture greater dialogue? Are there ways in which schools and colleges might contribute their experience?

'Working together as people of faith will strengthen the school's moral leadership within the wider community, countering the absence of shared values, speaking out against the marginalisation of religious values in the media, and making a powerful contribution to the development of social cohesion.' (p.10)

What can be done to make this more evident within the deanery? What issues might you speak out about?

6. Forming an integral part of the mission of the Diocese

'Our school and college communities are full of life. They are a vibrant part of our local Catholic communities, of our Diocese and of our universal Church. In some cases they are also distinguished by a charism and a tradition of spirituality belonging to a particular religious order or congregation.' (p.12)

How can the contribution made by schools and colleges to the mission of your deanery and of the Diocese best be celebrated locally?

The following pages offer suggestions for structuring discussion about the Vision for Catholic Education for:

- governors
- deaneries
- parents

The Archdiocese of Southwark Our Vision for Catholic Education

Focus for parents

1. Parents and carers

'One essential network is formed of parents and carers. They have entrusted their children's education to the school and will be appropriately and effectively informed, involved and supported. Schools and colleges will be supported by families in maintaining their ethos and standards of behaviour and work.' (p.10)

How are you kept informed and involved in the life of your children's school?

How does it support you as parents or carers?

2. Excellent Teaching

'No subject of the curriculum of a Catholic school is just 'secular', as every aspect of life and knowledge is understood to be God's gift to us. Within this understanding, each subject area is treated using its own principles and methods. Religious education is a vital area of study, as it provides the context for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of God's engagement with human life and the language with which to discuss this and communicate it.' (p.8)

What does this mean to you?

3. Creating welcoming communities of faith

'It is not the proportion of Catholic pupils which makes a school or college Catholic; it is the way in which its leaders ensure that every aspect of school life reflects the teachings of the gospel and that all its activity, implicitly or explicitly, is 'sacramental' in making the loving presence of Jesus Christ a reality.' (p.9)

Reflect upon the meaning of this statement in relation to the Catholic school or college that you know best. Identify five areas where you think that the loving presence of Jesus is a reality in this school or college.

'The Catholic school and college communities in our Diocese are diverse, embracing families and pupils with a range of needs from a variety of ethnic, social, and academic groups. They will be welcoming communities of faith. As witnesses to the teachings of the gospel, they will have a keen understanding of the common good and act on it, encouraging strong bonds of cohesion within the communities they serve.' (p.9)

Identify the ways in which your children's school or college can be seen as a 'welcoming community of faith'.

Do you know how your children's school or

college works with other schools and with the wider community?

4. Parish communities and deaneries

'Partnership with parish communities and deaneries is vital for the identity and 'belonging' of the school or college. The school will be able to offer expertise in communicating the faith to children and young people. Parish priests will provide sacramental and pastoral ministry to schools and colleges and promote Catholic schools as the first choice for parents. The local parish priest or Dean can be a valued member of a school governing body, as are local parishioners who are able to contribute from their own experience. Parishes commit a proportion of their income to the Diocese for, among other areas, the Diocesan Commission for Schools and Colleges and some funding related to land for schools, and will often provide additional resources for the schools in their local area.' (p.10)

Name three strengths which you can identify in

the partnership between your school and parish. Are there ways in which this might be further strengthened?

Do parishioners hear about your school or college through the parish?

Are they aware of the parish levy and how it is used for the common good of Catholic education and other activities within the diocese?

5. Ensuring responsible stewardship of resources

'Local Catholic communities value their schools and colleges and are committed to sustaining and supporting them in many ways. Catholics living locally who have, or can learn, the necessary skills may offer themselves for service as foundation governors and take on the responsibilities for the school and for Catholic education in the Diocese that this role entails.' (p.13)

Reflect upon the skills and talents available in your community. Can you identify some which could be of service to your local schools?





ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK
OUR VISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP AND TO
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