

Catholic Education Service

Strategic Plan

2015- 2018

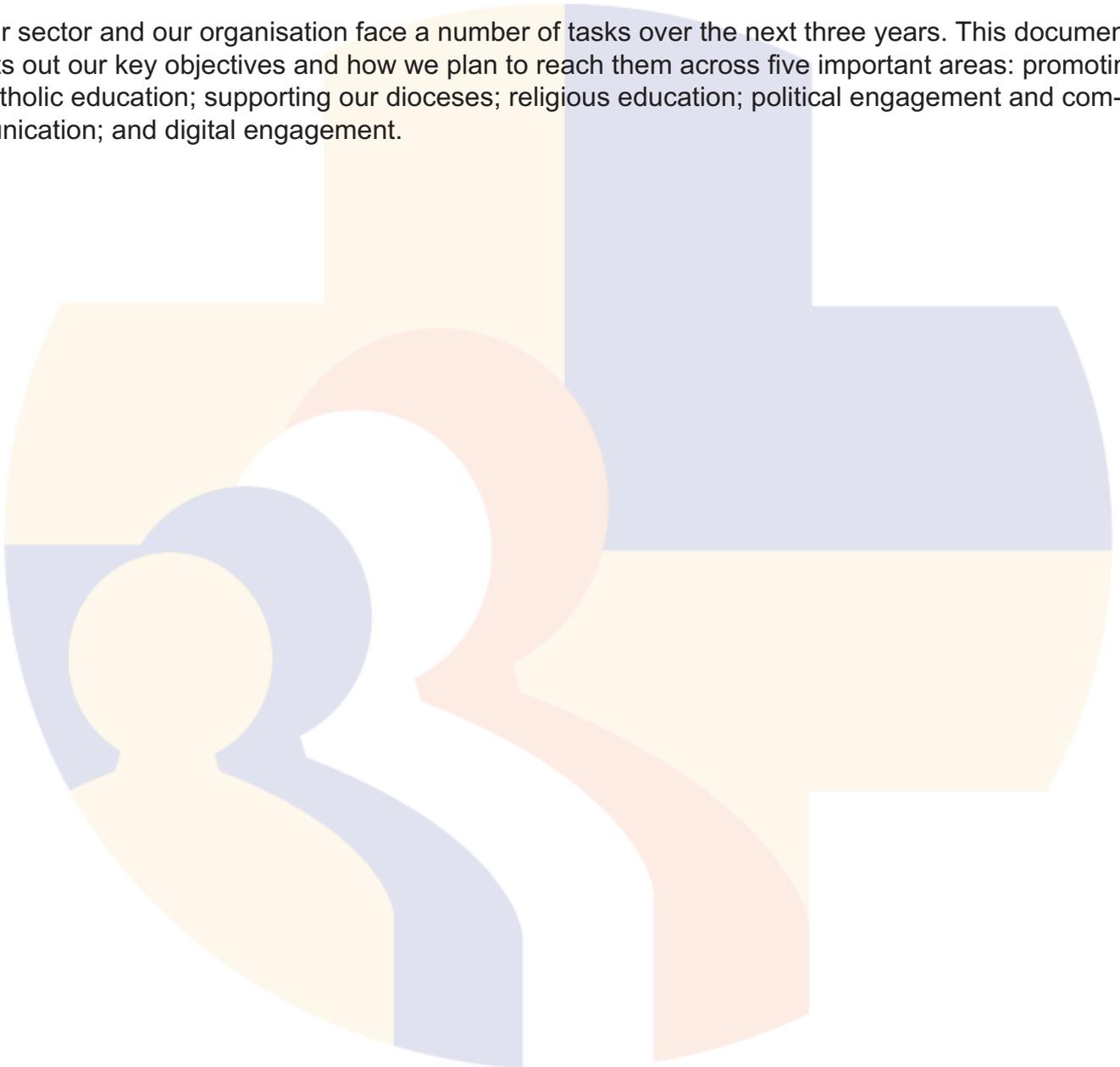


Introduction

The Catholic Education Service (CES) acts on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to support Catholic education. We have a strong and positive working relationship with both the British and Welsh Governments, sharing the aims of high academic standards for all and increased parental choice. We represent Catholic education to the government and wider society and support our bishops, dioceses and educational institutions.

We have a long history of providing education in England and Wales and there are currently over 2,000 Catholic schools educating over 800,000 pupils, around 10% of the total. There are also Catholic colleges, universities and other higher education institutions. Catholic schools and colleges promote '*an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony*'.

Our sector and our organisation face a number of tasks over the next three years. This document sets out our key objectives and how we plan to reach them across five important areas: promoting Catholic education; supporting our dioceses; religious education; political engagement and communication; and digital engagement.



Our history

The Catholic Church was the first provider of schools and universities in England. The earliest schools were cathedral and monastic schools established from the late sixth century onwards.

In 1847 a unique partnership was agreed with the State, and Catholic Poor-School Committee was established by the bishops of England and Wales, to represent them collectively and to focus on the promotion of Catholic elementary education for the growing Catholic population, particularly fuelled by immigration in the big cities and industrial areas.

The Church put the setting up of Catholic schools for the Catholic community ahead of building churches, often using its schools in those early days as the place for worship for the parish. In 1905 the Committee was renamed the Catholic Education Council and its remit enlarged to include secondary education. It later became the Catholic Education Service following reforms in 1990.

Catholic schools continued to be established throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which, at a time when state involvement in education was still very limited, meant that Catholic parents from poor backgrounds were nevertheless able to send their children to school. Many Catholic schools were established in the 19th Century to meet the needs of poor Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Catholic schools have successfully received the disadvantaged from new immigrant populations and integrated them into British society over many generations.

In 1944 the educational landscape across England and Wales changed forever with the passing of the Education Act 1944 (also known as the 'Butler Act'). Under the Butler Act, most Catholic schools became 'voluntary aided' schools. This meant that they remained part of the state system of education, but with equality of revenue funding under local education authorities, whilst retaining their distinctively Catholic ethos through various legal protections which continue to apply to Catholic schools to this day. The settlement between Church and State meant that the funding of Catholic schools was shared by the Catholic foundations of the schools (in most cases the dioceses or religious orders) and by the government. The first Catholic sponsored academies opened in 2005 and from 2011 some voluntary aided Catholic schools began to convert to academies.

The Church is also involved in higher education in England through its involvement in a range of higher education institutions (HEIs). Following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy, the Bishops' intention to establish schools meant that teacher training became a priority. With this in mind, a number of teacher training colleges were established (St Mary's, established in 1850, is one of the oldest). Some of these teacher training colleges have now been subsumed into larger universities (e.g. Roehampton University), and others have expanded to become universities in their own right (St Mary's, Newman, Leeds Trinity and Liverpool Hope). Thus, higher education in the Catholic tradition continues to flourish.

Through its involvement in primary, secondary and higher education, the Catholic Church currently educates over 800,000 pupils and students across England and Wales. As such the Church's stake in education is not only deeply embedded in our country's history, but through its continued collaboration with the state, is something that remains at the heart of the Church's mission, serving the Catholic community and contributing to the common good.

Historically Catholic education has flourished in England and Wales. It continues to do so today and will continue to act as a beacon and provider of good practice and authentic education.

The CES Team

Chairman

The Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon OP KC*HS

Director

Paul Barber

Humaira Bajwa **Assistant Legal Adviser**

Christine Fischer **Assistant Director & Legal Adviser**

Rebekah Hayward **Administrator**

Cassandra Hurley **Assistant Legal Adviser**

Stephanie MacGillivray **Parliamentary Officer**

The Reverend Dr Philip Manghan **Education Adviser (Wales)**

Marian Moynihan **PA to Assistant Director & Legal Adviser**

Dr Arthur Naylor **Higher Education Adviser**

Gregory Pope **Deputy Director**

Philip Robinson **Religious Education Adviser**

Robert Rushworth **Data Manager**

Marie Southall **Public Affairs Manager**

Peter Taylor **Education Adviser (England)**

Eileen Williams **Office Manager & PA to Director**

CES Management Committee

The Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool

The Right Reverend Peter Doyle, Bishop of Northampton

The Right Reverend Terrence Draine, Bishop of Middlesbrough

The Right Reverend Alan Williams, Bishop of Brentwood

The Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds

The Right Reverend David McGough, Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Birmingham

The Very Reverend John Canon Weatherill

Mrs Kate Griffin

Core work - Representing the Bishops

Working with others, we will act on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales to support Catholic education.

We are committed to working with diocesan school commissions and services to support Catholic education throughout England and Wales. We will identify opportunities to protect and enhance the role of Catholic education and ensure that the views of the Bishops of England and Wales are articulated effectively in discussions with the UK and Welsh governments. We will facilitate partnership working that advances the capacity of the sector to provide inspiring leadership, strategic governance and the highest educational standards. A particular focus will be working with Catholic universities, as we recognise the increasing importance of Catholic universities in supporting the mission of the Church in education.

Principal Objectives

Represent the views of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales to the UK and Welsh governments and other agencies.

Assist the Bishops' Conference to develop policy on Catholic education

Draw on the experience of colleagues and partners to assist in the formulation of education policy

Work closely with Catholic universities, to promote their Catholic identity and engage them on matters of policy that have an impact on Catholic education

Principal Activities

- Respond to consultations commissioned by the UK and Welsh governments and other education agencies that have an impact on the Catholic sector
- Participate in meetings and discussions on education policy, ensuring that the views of the Catholic sector are articulated effectively and reflected in policy pronouncements by relevant organisations.
- Keep the Bishops informed of policy and political developments through the Department of Education and Formation and Plenary Meetings.
- Formulate Developments in policy and advise on their implications.
- Engage with diocesan colleagues, religious orders and existing organisations such as the Diocesan Schools' Commissioners' Conference (DSC) and the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).
- Ensure regular contact with Catholic HEIs and the Bishop for Higher Education on the mission and strategic direction of Catholic higher education in England and Wales.
- Engage Catholic HEIs in research and development of education policy

Core work - Supporting our Dioceses

We will continue to support our dioceses in carrying out their education functions.

The Trustees of dioceses and religious orders are responsible for the running of Catholic schools. Dioceses exercise oversight and supervision of Catholic schools, this includes inspection, visitation and general regulation of catholic schools including religious education and the employment of senior leaders, teachers of religious education and chaplains. The CES supports dioceses and religious orders through the provision of model documents, advice and guidance.

Principal Objectives

Produce and maintain national guidance and model documents

Provide technical advice for individual diocesan queries

Support for, and facilitate professional discussion and in-service training

Undertake collaborative projects based on our agreed policy priorities

Principal Activities

- Maintain an integrated set of model employment policies and procedures, including template contracts.
- Produce and maintain guidance for dioceses, religious orders and schools on current issues, such as governance, equality and FOI requests.

- Produce regular letters to dioceses informing them about the progress of current issues and policy developments as they arise.
- Provide regular legal and employment updates to dioceses and produce a Legal Newsletter
- Be a first point of contact for technical queries from dioceses (and, through them, schools) and religious orders.
- Assist in individual cases where there are potential national implications of where there are issues of a complex technical nature

- Attending, and (where appropriate) helping to organise, conferences including the DSC Conference and NBRIA.
- Support national networks of schools with particular characteristics, such as non-maintained special schools, sixth-form colleges (ACVIC), teaching schools and independent schools.

- Work with diocesan colleagues to develop the capacity of the sector in areas such as governance, admissions, standards, Catholic life of the school and leadership.
- Establish and support working parties to achieve defined pieces of work.

Core work - Religious Education

We will work improve the quality of Religious Education in Catholic schools in England and Wales through working with partners in Government, Ofsted, dioceses and Catholic higher education institutes.

We aim to ensure that RE keeps pace with the changes contained in the new national curriculum. Religious Education is, and should continue to be, the “core of the core curriculum” in Catholic schools with the same academic demands and expectations as other core subjects. We need to lead the way in presenting an authentic vision of human flourishing which, through Catholic Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), adequately protects children and young people from harm.

Principal Objectives

Improve the quality of teaching and examination of Catholic Religious Education

Improve the rigour of inspection of Religious Education

Improve the quality of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in all Catholic schools

Principal Activities

- Aim to ensure that GCSEs and A Levels can provide outstanding Catholic RE.
- Work with the Awarding Organisations, Government, and Catholic HEIs to assist the delivery of the new examinations.
- Revise the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and the Religious Education Levels of Attainment to promote parity with national curriculum subjects.

- Revise the national s48 inspection framework and review how dioceses are using this framework.

- Produce guidance for dioceses and school governors
- Produce RSE materials which incorporate the broader PSHE goals within a Catholic context to support the delivery of outstanding Catholic RSE

Core work - Promoting Catholic education

We will work closely with Parliament, the Welsh Assembly, and the media to raise the positive profile of the Catholic education and influence national debates.

We are in a period of prolonged political uncertainty. Elections to both the UK Parliament (2015) and the Welsh Assembly (2016) can bring changes to education policy and have an impact upon the role of the Catholic Church in education. We seek to inform the public and the media through new research, events and campaigns and we will meet and brief Parliamentarians. We aim to ensure that Catholic schools are seen as a positive contribution to the common good.

Principal Objectives

Principal Activities

Develop stronger relationships with parliamentarians

- Run regular events in parliament to inform parliamentarians of Catholic education issues
- Increase meetings and briefings with Catholic, Christian and other MPs, AMs and Peers with an interest in education
- Attend annual party conferences, influence policy debates and build relationships with political stakeholders

Ensure regular and positive coverage in the media

- Build relationships with journalists in the Catholic and national media
- Respond quickly and positively to all press requests and continue to provide articles for Catholic papers and online.
- Engage positively on social media

Educate stakeholders on the public affairs work of the CES

- Organise events and meetings to inform policy specialists, journalists and decision-makers on important issues surrounding Catholic education
- Identify and commission research to inform policy positions
- Implement annual campaigns to support Catholic education at a local level

Core work - Digital engagement

We will support and maintain the IT and data requirements of the CES.

Key areas of work include management of the CES Census, website, database and software development and initial IT support.

Principal Objectives

Principal Activities

Continue to improve accuracy and efficiency of schools Census

- Increase data accuracy through a maintained high return rate, advanced error checking and regularly reviewed questions
- Reduce administrative costs through increased automation of file processing and reduce helpdesk queries through improvements to both documentation and communications with schools
- Rebuild the Census website on the Bishops' Conference web host

Maintain and develop contacts and schools databases

- Migrate contacts and schools databases from LAN to Office 365 SharePoint and develop enhancements to existing databases
- Ensure that data is maintained methodically and routinely

Administer and develop CES website

- Maintain website content and periodically review the cosmetic design and ensure that the website retains a contemporary feel
- Regularly upgrade CMS software and provide functional enhancements
- Take steps to protect website against cyber threats

Glossary of abbreviations

CES

Catholic Education Service

FOI

Freedom of Information

DSC

Diocesan Schools Commissioner

RE

Religious Education

HEI

Higher Education Institute

s48

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 provides for inspection of religious education

PSHE

Personal, social and health education

RSE

Relationships and Sex Education

MP

Member of Parliament

AM

Assembly Member (of the Welsh Assembly)

