



**The Headteachers of Catholic Schools in the  
Catholic Province of Cardiff  
(Dioceses of Cardiff, Menevia & Wrexham)**

The Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS  
First Minister of Wales  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear First Minister,

**RE: Curriculum for Wales**

As headteachers of Catholic schools across Wales, we wish to express serious concern regarding the recent positions the Welsh Government is taking on education, which we believe has an unintended consequence of compromising the ethos of the Catholic education sector in Wales.

We have largely been supportive of the widespread changes being undertaken to the new curriculum and the reasons behind it. We remain engaged as to how we will play our part in delivering the new curriculum and are confident that we can achieve this while maintaining our distinctive nature. However, we would urge caution that a singular approach risks diluting the diversity of provision in Wales.

The recent announcements made by the Education Minister to change the name and nature of Religious Education towards a wider Religion, Values and Ethics area of learning, fails to recognise the heritage and deep connection Religious Education has within schools of religious character, such as ours. It is after all the core of the core of a Catholic curriculum, forming ten per cent of teaching time. The move away from RE also fails to appreciate the significant benefits a theological based approach to RE gives to students in their everyday lives, as well as to their longer-term academic studies.

We know our parents also believe in the current approach, given the negligible levels of withdrawal by parents of their children from Religious Education. This is important to us, given the role of parents and carers as the primary educators of their children which is enshrined in the Catholic tradition.

In seeking to enforce so-called 'neutral values' curriculum, which we would argue is impractical and undesirable for today's Welsh society, the risk is that the Government is moving towards a homogeneous education system which will no longer recognise the importance of allowing children to pursue a deep knowledge and spiritual understanding of faith. This will do little to improve community cohesion or foster tolerance of world religions. We believe Wales is a pluralistic, diverse and tolerant country built on respect for people with or without faith. It can only be through continuing to support a diverse provision of education facilities, that we can ensure this remains the case.

We would seek your reassurance that it is not the Government's intention to damage the distinctive Catholic nature of our schools. We also hope you will work with the Education Minister to revise these provisions before legislation comes to the Senedd later this year.

Yours sincerely,

Joanna Taylor  
**St. Michael's Primary  
School, Treforest**

Susan Miles  
**Christ The King Primary  
School, Cardiff**

Sarah Hopkins  
**Bishop Hedley High School,  
Merthyr Tydfil**

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## The Headteachers of Catholic Schools in the Catholic Province of Cardiff (Dioceses of Cardiff, Menevia & Wrexham)

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**Cwmbran RC Junior &  
Infants School, Cwmbran**

Mr D B Thomas  
**St. Iltyd's Catholic High  
School, Cardiff**

Louise Mills  
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School, Cardiff**

Karen Lewis  
**St. Aloysius RC School,  
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Justin O'Sullivan  
**Cardinal Newman RC  
School, Pontypridd**

Wendy Lavagna  
**Saints Gabriel & Raphael  
Primary School, Tonypany**

John McMorro  
**St. Joseph's RC Primary  
School, Tredegar**

Kathryn Giernalczyk  
**St. Helen's Catholic Primary  
School, Barry**

Gareth Rein  
**St. Joseph's RC Primary  
School, Penarth**

Mrs Jackie Phillips  
**St. Mary's & St. Patrick's  
School, Bridgend**

Catherine Power  
**St. Philip Evans RC Primary  
School, Cardiff**

M. Langsdale & C. Power  
**St. Francis RC Primary  
School, Cardiff**

David Blackwell  
**St. Richard Gwyn Catholic  
High School, Barry**

Abigail Davies  
**Holy Name Catholic  
Primary School, Fishguard**

Francesca Sartori  
**St. Therese's Catholic  
Primary School, Port Talbot**

Angela Nicholls  
**St. Teilo's Catholic Primary  
School, Tenby**

Julie Beaumont Rees  
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School, Port Talbot**

Stephen Lord  
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John Morgan  
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Newport**

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Claire Priest-Jones  
**St. Anne's Catholic Primary,  
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**St. Iltyd's Primary School,  
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Claire Russell  
**St. Mary's RC Primary  
School, Cardiff**

Mrs Alison Howells  
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School, Llanelli**

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**St. Mary's RC Primary  
School, Chepstow & St.  
David's Cwmbran RC  
School, Cwmbran**

Mr Viv Evans  
**Our Lady & St. Michael's  
RC School, Abergavenny**

Juliet Stack  
**St. Joseph's RC Primary  
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Elizabeth Richards  
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School, Cardiff**

Bernadette Brooks  
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School, Newport**

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Mrs Jill Jones  
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Mrs Catherine Dowding  
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