

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Education Service

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Director, Education Service

November 2017

Dear Colleagues,

As I write this letter it is a cold, sunny Sunday and we have just celebrated the two minutes silence for Armistice Day. I have been moved by the different ways in which primary and secondary schools across the diocese have marked Remembrance Day and have commemorated the ultimate sacrifice made by so many to enable us to live in peace. As Catholics we are fortunate not only to live in peace but also to practise our religion without fear of persecution - a privilege denied many of our counterparts across the world. With this in mind, it is even more incumbent upon us to make Catholic education the very best it can be, in celebration of the freedoms and privileges we have been afforded.

One of the key opportunities we have been afforded as a Catholic community in the past few years is the establishment of Catholic multi academy trusts (MATs). It is no accident that Arundel and Brighton MATs are known as Catholic Education Trusts (CETs) - the term is a clear statement of intent. By now all Headteachers and Chairs will be aware of the revision to the diocesan strategy for Academies, and the rationale behind the reduction from five CETs to two. The Diocese remains as committed as ever to our model of academies in Arundel and Brighton and, whilst the number of CETs has changed, the growth and further development of Bosco and Xavier CETs continue to be a key priority for the Diocese. The revised diocesan strategy presents a wonderful opportunity for the development of two outstanding Catholic Education Trusts within the South-East region and both the Diocese and the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office, are excited about the future!

We anticipate that both CETs will grow over the coming months, further increasing the capacity for robust school to school support across the diocese. The collaborative work of the Diocesan Education Service and the Diocesan Academies Strategic Board will continue apace to ensure that both CETs are places of excellence, strength and depth, and that every Catholic school is protected. We will be contacting you in the next few days with details of meetings for schools, but in the meantime please rest assured that the Diocese is excited about and committed to next steps for Xavier and Bosco CETs.

The financial arrangements for school improvement have changed significantly, and almost all funding streams now come through the Regional Schools Commissioners' Office, rather than through the Local Authorities as in the past. Regional priorities are now agreed and triaged by a SRIB (Sub-regional Improvement Board) which meets approximately every half-term. Local authorities and dioceses are members of the SRIBs, alongside the Teaching School Council and the DfE. Multi-academy Trusts, Teaching Schools and Local Authorities are entitled to bid for funds to undertake school improvement in support of agreed priorities. Dioceses are not entitled to bid for funds, so we have a key role in working closely with other parties to ensure Catholic schools are included in bids wherever appropriate. In

support of this, we now have access to diocesan schools' data and have established robust internal processes to screen schools regularly. As a result, the diocese will be contacting schools individually where data suggests a school would be eligible for inclusion in a particular bid, or indicates a vulnerability which may benefit from further support. Whilst this has not traditionally been a diocesan role, the education landscape has shifted seismically, and all dioceses now have a fundamental role to play in ensuring that Catholic schools have access to the best available support in an ever-changing context.

With continued thanks for all you do for the children and young people in your care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marie Ryan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Marie Ryan

