



ACADEMIES NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2014

Welcome!

Welcome to our inaugural Academies Newsletter! It is intended that this newsletter will be sent out on a termly basis to ensure schools are both involved in the process and fully informed of any developments. I hope you will find this newsletter useful.

As you are no doubt aware, Trustees currently propose to establish a diocesan multi academy trust (MAT) in order to preserve and protect the distinctive nature of our Catholic schools, to ensure that all schools are equal partners, and to enable diocesan schools which wish to become academies to do so. Schools which would like to become academies must be judged as good or outstanding in the most recent Section 48 and Section 5 inspections; have no land issues; and no debt. The diocesan MAT and academies will be governed by a Board of Directors. In preparation for the establishment of the substantive Board of Directors, a skeletal 'Shadow' Board has been set up.

Who is on the Shadow Board?

The Shadow Board currently comprises:

- ❖ Carole Ann Roycroft (Chair); Carole Ann is Chair of Governors at Cardinal Newman, Hersham and is a National Leader of Governance. Carole Ann has a background in the Voluntary Sector which also includes experience of the management of Trusts.
- ❖ Father Chris Spain; Fr. Chris is Dean of Redhill Deanery, Foundation Governor at St. Bede's, and a member of the Diocesan Schools Committee.
- ❖ Angela O'Hara; Primary Head.
- ❖ James Kilmartin; Secondary Head.

The four members of the Shadow Board have drafted a vision statement, from which aims and objectives will flow. The statement reads: "The primary purpose of Catholic schools is the promotion of the Common Good through the education of Children. We believe that we can fulfil this purpose more effectively by coming together as equal partners in a Catholic multi academy

trust enabling each school to flourish and live out its Mission."

In November's edition of *A and B News*, the Diocese advertised for practising Catholics with a strong background in finance or law to apply to join the Shadow Board in order to strengthen and broaden it. Application is by CV and letter to Fr. John Hull, with a closing date of noon, Thurs 18th December. Primary and Secondary Heads have also been invited to elect their own representative (elections co-ordinated by Richard McKenzie and James Kibble respectively) to the Shadow Board and notify Marie Ryan of elected representatives by Fri 19th December.

The Shadow Board is currently advised by Andrea Squires (Winckworth Sherwood); Fr John Hull (Chair, Diocesan Schools Committee); Fergus Brotherton (Diocesan Financial Secretary); Mary Reynolds (current Director, Schools Service) and Marie Ryan (New Director, Schools Service).

What does the Shadow Board do?

The Shadow Board has been tasked with considering the proposed diocesan MAT, ensuring the distinctive nature of our Catholic schools is protected, and that all schools are regarded as equal through developing the Scheme of Delegation. Thus far the Shadow Board has met twice; on 18th Sept 2014 to consider roles, responsibilities and commitments of the Shadow Board, and to consider the skillset required. Further to this, an advert and Job Description for new Board members appeared in the *A&B News*, and Primary and Secondary Headteachers were asked to elect their reps.

The Board met again on 24th Nov to begin considering the Scheme of Delegation. This document acknowledges the Catholic mission and values of the group, i.e. what makes the Company unique and distinctive. It will set out what is delegated and to whom, and where decisions are taken. The Shadow Board is committed to the principle of subsidiarity (i.e. wherever possible, decisions are to be taken at the level nearest to those affected by those decisions

rather than by a central authority, in accordance with the principles of solidarity, subsidiarity and support for the common good). The Shadow Board recognises the Scheme of Delegation is a crucial document and will necessitate a significant amount of work on the part of the Shadow Board going forward in order to meet schools' needs and remain true to Trustees' vision of a diocesan MAT. The Shadow Board also favours the establishment of an Academies Advisory Board to take a strategic role and hold the Board to account. This Academies Advisory Board would comprise elected Headteachers and Chairs of Governors from diocesan Academies, the numbers of which have yet to be agreed.

The Board will next meet on 16th January to continue its work on the Scheme of Delegation and to review responses received thus far to questionnaire administered to schools in early January (see below).

How can I ensure my voice is heard?

1. January 2015 - The Shadow Board and members of the group advising the Board are putting together a questionnaire for all schools, in order to establish schools' wants and needs with regard to Academies within the diocese. The questionnaire will go out to schools in the first week of January 2015 with a return date within ten days so that responses and trends can be shared with Trustees in January. Please ensure you complete and return this ASAP so that your views can be represented to Trustees.
2. February 2015 - As a follow up to the questionnaire, the Shadow Board and those advising the Board are currently arranging an event for February 2015 (date and location tbc early next term) to which all schools will be invited, along with Trustees. The purpose of the day is threefold;
 - a. to brief schools on developments thus far;
 - b. to seek schools' input into the development of Academies within the Diocese and the shape of a diocesan model;
 - c. and to enable Trustees to hear first hand from a range of schools and other perspectives, following on from January's questionnaire.
3. Termly - Through your Primary or Secondary Headteacher Representatives. The Primary Steering Committee is chaired by Richard McKenzie and

Deanery representatives meet termly with members of the Schools Team. Chaired by James Kibble, the Secondary Heads also meet termly with Marie. Both Richard and James are also members of the Schools Committee in their capacity as elected Headteacher Representatives and are therefore well placed to share schools' views. In her role from January 2015, Marie will act as a conduit between schools and Trustees, ensuring that all parties are kept fully informed of any developments and conversations exploring the different options available with regard to Academies.

Winckworth Sherwood Law

You can access Winckworth Sherwood's Academies site and look at draft exemplar documentation at <https://extranet.wslaw.co.uk/wsacademies/Arundel%20and%20Brighton.aspx>

Please note this is draft exemplar documentation and does not yet reflect ongoing discussions held by the Shadow Board about the delegation of responsibilities.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 18th December: Closing date for applications to join Shadow Board from practising Catholics with requisite legal and/or financial background.

Friday 19th December: deadline for notification of elected Pri and Sec HT reps for Shadow Board

Week beginning Mon 5th Jan: Questionnaire to be e-mailed out from Shadow Board to schools seeking views on academies and on current proposed diocesan model of single MAT.

Fri 16th January: Responses to questionnaire to be emailed back to Marie Ryan in order to facilitate sharing at Trustees meeting on Monday 19th January.

February (date and location tbc) 'Academies Assembly' to be held for all schools in order to discuss the above. Trustees to be invited.

And finally...

We hope you have found this newsletter useful as a starting point. Please don't hesitate to contact us should you wish to discuss any of the above.

Happy Christmas to you all!

Marie Ryan and Carole Ann Roycroft