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To: All Headteachers and Chair of Governors

Dear Colleagues,

**Director's Letter - Easter 2015**

I am writing to you at the end of an intensely busy and fruitful term both in schools and here at the Education Service. Much has happened throughout the Diocese in the last three months and I would like to share some of these developments with you before we all enjoy a well-earned Easter break.

**Bishop Richard Moth:** First and foremost, we are all delighted by the news that Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Richard Moth, currently Bishop of the Forces, as the new Bishop of Arundel & Brighton. Bishop Richard's induction will take place on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May at Arundel Cathedral. In addition to his current role as Bishop of the Forces, Bishop Richard is Chair of Governors at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, Liaison Bishop for Prisons, Episcopal Advisor to the National Catholic Scout Fellowship and holds a brief on Mental Health on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. With his background of working with and for children and young people, in and beyond education settings, Bishop Richard will be a great support to us all as, together, we strive for excellence in all aspects of Catholic education. We very much look forward to working with him.

**Appointment of a Buildings Officer:** I am delighted to inform you that Mark Brunet will be taking up position as part-time Diocesan Buildings Officer on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May. Mark will be leading on LCVAP and all aspects of the Education Service's work on school buildings. Mark is currently the Schools Business Manager (SBM) at Blatchington Mills Secondary School, Hove; prior to that, he worked for local government. Mark therefore brings a wealth of valuable experience of working in partnership with the local authority on building projects and on exploring possible additional funding streams. Mark and I are both keen to explore ways in which he can share his expertise in a variety of ways so that all schools benefit, whether currently undertaking a schools buildings project or not. To this end, from Sept. 2015 we will be offering a termly "School Business Managers' Forum" for SBMs and Bursars in all diocesan schools – primary and secondary, maintained and independent – and Mark has kindly agreed to lead this. Fergus Brotherton (Financial Secretary) and Jenny Williamson (Church Marketplace) have also kindly agreed to be involved. We hope that SBMs and Bursars will find this forum – and the networking opportunities it affords – financially and socially invaluable.

**Deputy Director, Education Service:** The post of Deputy Director will re-appear on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March in the *TES* and the *Catholic Teachers Gazette*. The salary will be indicated on the advert and the job is advertised for a September start. The closing date for receipt of applications is 9am on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April, with shortlisting to take place on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April. Interviews will be held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April. We are very aware of the tight turnaround but are eager to complete the process by 30<sup>th</sup> April so that any serving Headteacher who might wish to apply is able to do so. I will be away for Holy Week, but am very happy for any interested parties to phone me from Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April to discuss the post, or any aspect of the work of the Diocesan Education Service. Naturally any such conversation will remain entirely confidential and does not in any way oblige the caller to apply!

**LCVAP Update:** I know that, quite rightly, you are anxious to hear the outcome of the recent round of bids for LCVAP funding. As you will remember, all funding sits with the local authorities and not with the Diocese; we are not therefore the budget holder, but the client. As I outlined in my February letter to schools, the process necessitates negotiation between the Education Service, the local authority and - in the case of East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove – with the Anglican Diocese of Chichester, in order to ensure an equitable allocation of funding. This process has been completed successfully for schools within the three LAs noted above, and Catholic schools in these three LAs will be able to start the new academic term with written confirmation of funding decisions.

This is unfortunately not yet the case for Surrey Catholic schools. Surrey has a significantly larger number of dioceses and the picture is therefore more complex. Despite frequent requests from the Diocese, Surrey has not yet confirmed a meeting date in order to ascertain funding allocations for A&B Catholic schools and as a result we are not yet able to notify our Surrey diocesan schools if funding is available for proposed projects. We are confident that this will be resolved imminently but in the meantime have taken the difficult decision to notify non-Surrey schools of LCVAP decisions so, in cases where funding has been agreed, those schools can begin to make arrangements accordingly.

**Academies:** As you will remember, we held a well-attended Academies Assembly Day at the AMEX on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March. This was a very positive day and there appears to be a clear appetite amongst many A&B schools for the Diocese to move forward with its consideration of cluster/community models. We are also intending to answer all the questions posted on the day, and to arrange a follow up event next term. The next few months will be very busy as in conjunction with the Shadow Board, the Education Service considers a range of possible cluster/community models, before making carefully considered recommendations to Trustees on next steps. We must always keep at the heart of our thinking the fact that our role is to protect the distinctive Catholic nature of our schools, and to support the Common Good so that all our schools are protected, whether they choose to become Academies or not. I do want to reiterate here that there is no pressure from the Diocese for schools to convert, and that any decision is one for the Governing Body. Finally, with regard to the Academies Newsletter– please forgive me if it is not ready for the end of term, but I do intend to have it in schools for the start of the new term!

**Section 48 Inspections:** These will be re-starting soon and Ann Baldwin will be in touch with those schools due a Section 48 inspection in order to make the necessary arrangements. Training will be available for all these schools on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April. In addition, we are delighted that several individuals have come forward to say they would like to train to be Section 48 Inspectors. Would anyone who is interested in training to be a Section 48 Inspector and has not yet come forward please contact Ann Baldwin who will arrange CPD and training for prospective inspectors.

**And finally,** I wish you all a very happy and restful Easter break. I hope that you and your families have a lovely time, whatever you do, and that the Easter season brings a sense of peace, renewal and trust in the future. Thank you so much for all that you do for Education throughout the Diocese.

Best Wishes,

**Marie**