

Dear Colleagues,

As I write, the Bank Holiday weekend is nearly within touching distance, the sky is blue and the sun is shining – God is good! As ever, it has been an extremely busy time both in schools and at the Diocese and I have some exciting developments to update you on:

Bishop Richard: Bishop Richard met with members of the Education Service briefly on Monday and has kindly agreed to meet with all Headteachers later this term. I am currently liaising with the Bishop's secretary in order to find a suitable date and venue– as I am sure you can imagine, the Bishop's diary is already filling up quickly, and Dabcec will not be large enough to accommodate all Headteachers, so I will be back in touch soon in order to notify schools of a date and venue as soon as this has been confirmed with Bishop Richard. Naturally, Bishop Richard's meeting with Headteachers will be in June or July, i.e. after his installation on May 28th at Arundel Cathedral.

Academies: Trustees have carefully considered the Academies question and agreed earlier this week to the establishment of a small number of cluster MATs across the Diocese in place of one single Diocesan Multi Academy Trust. This is excellent news which I hope will be received very positively by schools. The precise number of cluster MATs across the Diocese is still being determined but it is very likely to be in single figures. Likewise, the possible composition of MATs is currently under careful consideration. It has been agreed that the process will be 'tried' through establishing the first cluster MAT, and work has already begun on this. Following its successful establishment, further cluster MATs will be set up. It continues to be for individual schools to consider whether or not to apply to become an academy, and whether becoming an academy would enhance the Catholic life of the school. The Education Service is facilitating the process carefully whilst, as before, maintaining the Diocese's neutral stance towards Academies. Carole Ann Roycroft (as Chair of the Shadow Board) and I will be in touch with schools before half-term in order for us to share more information, to advise governing bodies on possible next steps, and to seek your views.

Recruitment to the Education Service: As you know, we are all delighted that Bernadette Connor has recently been appointed as Deputy Director to the Education Service. This appointment has been very well received by schools and I know that Bernadette has been very touched by the many lovely messages of support and congratulations. Bernadette takes up post as Deputy Director in September and will continue in this role to be the enormous asset she already is to the Diocese.

Bernadette's appointment also affords somebody else the exciting opportunity of stepping into the key role of Primary Adviser for RE and Catholic Ethos. The advert will appear in the *Catholic Teachers' Gazette* next Friday, 8th May 2015 and will also be available on our website from Tuesday 5th May. The advert and job description are also attached with this letter. We very much hope to be able to recruit to the post for September 2015, but due to the tight turnaround and the fast-approaching deadline of May 31st, we are aware that we may have to recruit for January 2016 instead. We are looking first and foremost for an outstanding Primary RE practitioner with a proven

track record and we would welcome applications equally from Headteachers and non-Headteachers. We are a supportive and happy team and are very welcoming! Whilst the post of Primary Adviser is a permanent one, a secondment will be considered under exceptional circumstances. There will also be the opportunity for some cross-phase development according to experience. If you would like to discuss the post in confidence, please contact Marie or Bernadette direct.

Jubilee: Preparations for the Diocesan Jubilee are going well and we have had many fantastic offers of support from schools. Bernadette will be in touch with schools very soon to confirm arrangements for the day. It is lovely to see so many schools- primary and secondary- actively involved in the day. We are looking forward to seeing you all on 5th July and to hearing the many school choirs!

Section 48 prospective inspectors: Thank you to all those who have come forward recently to express an interest in becoming Section 48 inspectors. I will be writing to each prospective inspector between now and half-term to give further details of our programme of Inspector training, which will begin in September 2015. Becoming a section 48 Inspector is an excellent CPD opportunity, as well as an effective way of supporting the Diocese and working with other schools. If there are others who would like to be involved and who have not yet contacted Ann Baldwin to register an interest, please contact Ann direct on ann.baldwin@dabnet.org

Lastly, the Education Service continues to pray the Angelus together at midday. On every occasion, our intention is always for every school across the diocese and for ourselves as an Education team, that we will continue to grow and serve our schools to the best of our ability every day. Wherever you may be, please join us at midday for a moment if/when you are able. As ever, sincere thanks for everything you do, and for your support of the Education Service. We are all very grateful to you.

Have a lovely Bank Holiday weekend!

Marie

Attached: Advert, Job description and Person Specification for the post of Primary Adviser: RE and Catholic Ethos. Please pass on to Headteacher, RE Co-ordinator and/or please display on the staff noticeboard.