

Principal Candidate

Brochure





St Gregory the Great
An all-through school from nursery-19

Contents

Welcome from Chairman and Executive Principal	Page 3
Mission and Spirituality	Page 4
The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company	Page 5
Job Specification	Page 6 - 11
Person Specification	Page 12 - 15
The Application Process	Page 16
Definition of a “Practising Catholic” Document	Appendix A





St Gregory the Great Catholic School
All through school for students aged 3 - 19
Cricket Road, Oxford, OX4 3DR
T: 01865 749933 E: stgregory@dbmac.org.uk



'opera in caritate'

Acting Deputy Head: Secondary
Mrs H Pallier

Acting Head of School
Mr S Tucker

Assistant Principal: Head of Primary
Mrs H Forder-Ball

LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE APPLICANTS

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in applying for the post of Principal at St. Gregory the Great Catholic School. We are a community at the very centre of Oxford, which has a wonderful history and is an exciting innovative place to work and learn. Enclosed in this pack are the details of the professional and personal specifications required, together with the other information regarding this vital post for our academy. A Catholic leader has to have the vision and absolute understanding of the truth to inspire, motivate and ultimately change attitudes and aspirations for all. St Gregory the Great is a school which has tremendous potential and this will be a wonderful opportunity for the right candidate to transform Catholic education in the heart of Oxford.

If you would like to visit our academy, please contact Richard Lucas at Academicis to arrange a suitable time.

If there is anything further that you would like to discuss with the academy regarding the application and the information enclosed, we shall be happy to help. This is an opportunity for a candidate to really shape the future for years to come. We would very much like the opportunity to meet you prior to your application.

With best wishes,

Fraser Long
Executive Head of the DBMAC

Canon Mervyn Tower
Chair of the Governing Body





St Gregory the Great
An all-through school from nursery-19

Mission and Spirituality

St Gregory the Great has a strong sense of community where Christian values underpin the work of the school. There is a purposeful working atmosphere in which all students are encouraged to do their best.

Form Tutors, working closely with a Head and Deputy Head of House, are responsible for the day-to-day care of the students in their group. An induction programme is arranged for Year 7 students to make their transfer to secondary school an enjoyable, positive and effective experience.

Close communication between home and school is encouraged. The pastoral staff will contact parents if they are concerned about a student's well being and parents are asked to inform the school of any problems that might affect their child's school life.

The school sets high standards and makes challenging demands of its students. The pace is set by the staff who are dedicated professionals and who want every student to achieve their potential. Students are expected to attend school punctually and be prepared and equipped.



We Walk in God's ways where together we live, love, learn and celebrate.

Learn Together

By encouraging and supporting each person to use their unique gifts as we commit ourselves to the services of shaping and enriching our world.

Love Together

By embracing each person as we listen to the voice of God.

Celebrate Together

By accepting the growth and development of each person as we find God in everyday life.

Live Together

By building positive relationships where each person is welcomed, respected and valued.



St Gregory the Great
An all-through school from nursery-19

The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company

A Centre of Excellence for Catholic Education in Oxfordshire.

The leadership & management of the delivery of education in England is changing.

The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company is at the forefront of this exciting change. We are a company set up to lead seven Catholic Academies in Oxfordshire, St Gregory the Great (the only 4-19 year all through Academy in Oxfordshire), St Thomas More Kidlington, St John Fisher Littlemore, Our Lady's Cowley, St Joseph's Thame, St Joseph's Carterton and Our Lady of Lourdes Witney.

We are an integral part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham; our founders are the Barberi and Newman Academy Trust. We work closely with the Diocesan Department of Education, the Local Authority, the Department for Education, Oxford & Cherwell Valley College, our local academies and schools, local business and commerce and the wider community.

We are committed to striving for excellence in delivering outcomes for our students and making a positive difference in our wider community. Please take the time to explore our site to further understand.



The Academies' shared mission within the Company is to be part of the Church's mission, to make Christ known to all people, placing Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of people's lives. The Company & Academies' roots support this mission through: pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the quality of teaching and learning; and the formation of culture and of our society, in Him.

This educative mission is pursued through the Company & Academies' interaction with all other academies in the communion, the local Church, families, the wider educational community and society at large. The Company and Academies shall collaborate with each other and also co-operate with: other Catholic schools and academies; other local schools; charities; statutory bodies; and voluntary bodies based on the call of the Gospel, to serve those in need.



Job Specification

Job Title	Principal
Salary / Scale	L37– L43 (£96,763 - £111,007)
Purpose of the Position	<p>The Principal is responsible for providing vision, leadership and direction for the school and ensuring that it is managed and organised to meet its aims and targets.</p> <p>The Principal shall provide professional leadership for the school that secures its success, ensures high quality education and realises the potential of all pupils.</p> <p>The Principal shall work in partnership with other Principals within the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company, and under the direction of the Executive Principal.</p>
Accountable to	Local Governing Board, Executive Headteacher and MAC.

1. Catholic Purpose and Identity of the School

Key Responsibility:

The Principal must understand the nature and purpose of Catholic education and know that his or her first responsibility is to establish and sustain the Catholic identity of the school and safeguard the teaching of the Church. S/he must ensure that this Catholic identity is reflected in every aspect of the life of the school. In particular in the curriculum, the day to day organisation of the school, staff development, staff and pupil relationships and the partnership between the school, home, parish, local community, schools within the DBMAC, the Local Authority and other agencies. This duty provides the context for the proper discharge of all other duties and responsibilities.

2. Leadership in Catholic Education

Key Responsibility:

The Principal must provide professional leadership and management for the school. This will promote a secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work. To gain this success the Principal must establish high quality education by effectively managing teaching and learning and using personalised learning to realise the potential of pupils. Principals must establish a culture that promotes excellence, equality and high expectations for all pupils.



Job Specification

3. Shaping the Future

Key Responsibility:

To work with the Board of Directors to create a shared vision which expresses core educational values and moral purpose and is inclusive of stakeholders' values and beliefs.

The 'preferred future', expressed in the strategic vision and development of the Catholic school stems from the educational mission of the Church, which is reflected in the school's mission statement and the School Improvement Plan. The Principal, working with the Board of Directors and others, is expected to draw on the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ to create a shared vision and strategic plan, which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the community. The vision should explore Gospel values, core educational values and beliefs.

- a. To ensure that the RE programme is given full regard, both in terms of classroom religious education and the overall programme of the school.
- b. To ensure the vision for the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all.
- c. To lead by example, providing inspiration and motivation for pupils, staff, directors and parents, demonstrating the vision and values in everyday work and practice in order to create a shared culture and positive climate.
- d. To work within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans, which will promote and help sustain school improvement.
- e. To create and implement a strategic plan, underpinned by sound financial planning, which aims for school improvement by identifying priorities and targets for ensuring that pupils achieve high standards and make good progress.
- f. To ensure creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies to achieve excellence and enjoyment.
- g. To ensure the policies and practices take account of national, local and school data and inspection research findings.
- h. To develop and maintain the educational partnership currently existing between the school and parents, within the DBMAC, Board of Directors, linked schools, the Local Authority, the local community and other agencies including the Health Authority and Social Services.
- i. To ensure that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experiences of the school community at large.



Job Specification

4. Leading, Learning and Teaching

Key Responsibility:

To raise the quality of teaching and learning and for pupils' achievement.

In a Catholic school the search for excellence is expressed in learning and teaching, which responds to the needs and aspirations of its pupils and acknowledges their individual worth as children of God. The Principal, supported by the Directors, has a central responsibility for raising the quality of teaching and learning and for pupil achievement. This implies enabling pupils to achieve their God-given potential, setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. A successful learning culture will enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning.

- a. To create and maintain an environment which promotes and secures creative, responsible and effective approaches to learning and teaching, high expectations, high standards of achievement and good behaviour.
- b. To determine, organise and provide equal access to a diverse, flexible and relevant curriculum which values and challenges all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and English as an Additional Language, and to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the more able pupils.
- c. To establish and maintain effective systems of planning, assessment for learning, recording and reporting, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child's learning.
- d. To monitor and evaluate curriculum provision, regularly review classroom practice and the achievement of all pupils in order to set and meet challenging, realistic targets for improvement.
- e. To manage regular reviews of all aspects of the curriculum, to initiate and encourage new and effective ideas, taking strategic roles in the development of emerging technologies to enhance and extend the learning experience of all pupils.
- f. To maintain and develop curriculum continuity with Early Years settings and Secondary schools and to encourage curriculum links through learning networks with other schools and the LA.



Job Specification

4. Leading, Learning and Teaching (continued)

Key Responsibility:

To establish effective relationships and communications in order to build a professional learning community within the DBMAC that enables others to achieve.

In a Catholic school the role of Principal is one of leadership of a learning community rooted in faith. The Principal's leadership should take Christ as its inspiration. The Principal's management of staff should demonstrate an awareness of their unique contribution as individuals, valued and loved by God. Principals must manage themselves and their relationships well. The Principal will build a professional learning community, which enables others to achieve their potential as children of God. Through appraisal and effective continuing professional development practice, the Principal supports all staff to achieve high standards. To equip themselves with the capacity to deal with the complexity of the role and range of leadership skills and actions required of them, Principals should be committed to their own professional development.

- a. Give a clear lead to all staff in the development and the continuing formation of the school's Catholic identity.
- b. Support and advise staff both in the deepening of their Christian awareness and in all areas of their work and professional development.
- c. To create a positive and collaborative learning culture within the school and throughout the DBMAC by treating people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect.
- d. To plan, allocate, support and evaluate work undertaken by groups, teams and individuals, ensuring that there is a clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities.
- e. To implement and sustain systems for the effective management of all staff performance, incorporating targets for future development.
- f. To motivate and enable teachers and support staff to develop expertise in their respective roles through a wide range of high quality induction and continuing professional development opportunities in the context of the school's agreed improvement priorities.
- g. To acknowledge the responsibilities and celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams.
- h. To maintain and develop a Senior Leadership Team and wider management structure and culture which enables effective communication, involvement and development.
- i. To regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own personal development.
- j. To manage own workload and that of others to allow for an appropriate work/life balance.



Job Specification

5. Managing the Organisation

Key Responsibility:

To provide effective organisation and management of the school, in order to maintain an efficient, effective and safe learning environment.

- a. Ensure spiritual and moral development of individuals is given clear focus and is promoted through the prayer life and liturgy of the school.
- b. To create an organisational structure, which reflects the school's values, enabling the management systems, structures and processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements.
- c. To produce clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities.
- d. To work with directors and senior colleagues to recruit, retain and deploy staff appropriately, managing their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school.
- e. To set appropriate priorities for expenditure, allocate funds and ensure effective administration and control of financial matters, in partnership with the Accounting Officer and Board of Directors.
- f. To manage and organise the accommodation effectively and efficiently to ensure that it meets the needs of the curriculum and health and safety regulations.
- g. To lead on the successful submission of Academy Grant Applications.
- h. To manage, monitor and review the range, quality, quantity and use of all available resources in order to improve the quality of education, pupils' achievements, efficiency and secure value for money.
- i. To use and integrate a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.

6. Securing Accountability

Key Responsibility:

The Principal is accountable for ensuring that pupils enjoy the benefit of a high quality education, promoting collective responsibility within the whole school community.

Ensure the directors are welcomed into the school and invited to share in its Catholic life.

- a. To provide information, objective advice and support to the Board of Directors to enable it to meet its responsibilities for securing effective teaching and learning and improved standards of achievement, and for achieving efficiency and value for money.
- b. To create and develop a school ethos, which enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for the outcomes.



Job Specification

6. Securing Accountability (continued)

- c. To present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance in a form appropriate to a range of audiences, including directors, the LA, the local community, Ofsted and others, to enable them to play their part effectively.
- d. To create and develop a school ethos, which enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for the outcomes.
- e. To ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to regular review and evaluation.
- f. To reflect on personal contribution to school achievement and take account of feedback from others.
- g. To ensure that parents and pupils are well informed about the curriculum, the attainments and progress of pupils, are able to understand realistic and challenging targets for improvement, and to make a contribution to achieving them.

7. Strengthening Community

Key Responsibility:

To work collaboratively at both strategic and operational levels with each school within the DBMAC, and all connected with the school community, for the well-being of all children.

- a. Recognise that the school is part of the Church locally and seek to promote the partnership between contributory parishes, home and school.
- b. To promote and support the positive benefits of living within a culturally and ethnically diverse society, building a school culture and curriculum that takes account of the riches and diversity of the school's communities.
- c. To create and promote positive strategies for challenging racial and other prejudices and dealing with bullying and racial harassment.
- d. To ensure that the learning experience for pupils is linked into opportunities provided in the wider world.
- e. To collaborate with other agencies in providing for the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural well-being of pupils and their families, and work with the relevant agencies to protect children.
- f. To create and maintain a positive and effective relationship linking home and school in a supportive, working partnership to encourage and improve pupils' achievement and personal development.
- g. To seek opportunities to invite parents and carers, community figures, businesses and other organisations into school to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community.
- h. To contribute to the development of the education system by sharing effective practice, working in learning networks and partnerships with other schools and promoting innovative initiatives.



Person Specification

Factors	Essential	Desirable
Faith Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practising and committed Catholic • Secure understanding of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school, and able to articulate a philosophy for Catholic education • Understanding of leadership role in spiritual development of pupils and staff • Understanding of the school's role in the parish and wider community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of participation in the faith life of the community • Experience in leading acts of worship in Catholic schools
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate and/or qualified teacher status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postgraduate level qualification • Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies or equivalent
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience as an effective Deputy/ Assistant Principal/current Headteacher • Successful experience of leading one or more subject areas or aspects • Substantive, successful teaching experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent experience in a Catholic voluntary aided school • Teaching experience in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post-16 • Experience of teaching in more than one school
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continuing professional development relating to school leadership and management, and curriculum development • Evidence of continuing professional development relating to Catholic ethos and mission • Experience of working with other schools/ organisations/ agencies • Experience of leading/ co-ordinating professional development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended professional development through courses in leadership and management • Ability to identify own learning needs and to support others in identifying their learning needs



Person Specification

Factors	Essential	Desirable
Strategic Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to articulate and share a vision of secondary education within the context of the mission of a Catholic school • Evidence of having successfully translated vision into reality at whole school level • Ability to inspire and motivate staff, pupils, parents and governors to achieve aims of Catholic education • Evidence of successful strategies for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating school improvement • Ability to analyse data, develop strategic plans, set targets and monitor and evaluate progress towards these • Knowledge of the statutory framework for education and other relevant legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the role of the governing board in a Catholic voluntary aided school
Leading and Managing Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in and leading staff teams • Ability to delegate work and support colleagues in undertaking responsibilities. • Experience of appraisal and supporting the continuing professional development of colleagues • Understanding of effective budget planning and resource deployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with governors to enable them to fulfil whole-school responsibilities • Successful involvement in staff recruitment, appointment and induction, and understanding of the particular needs of a Catholic school • Understanding of how financial and resource management enable a school to achieve its educational priorities



Person Specification

Factors	Essential	Desirable
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A secure understanding of the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education and the National Curriculum in relation to the curriculum as a whole and to children's learning and developmental needs Knowledge and experience of a range of successful teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of all pupils A secure understanding of assessment strategies and the use of assessment to inform the next stages of learning Experience of effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning Secure knowledge of statutory requirements relating to the curriculum and assessment Understanding of the characteristics of an effective learning environment and the key elements of successful behaviour management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of and successful experience in creating an effective learning environment and in developing and implementing successful policy and practice relating to behaviour management Understanding of successful teaching and learning in religious education across the key stages
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing to a range of audiences e.g. staff, pupils, governors, parishioners and clergy Experience of whole school self-evaluation and improvement strategies Ability to provide clear information and advice to staff and governors Secure understanding of strategies for performance management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of presenting reports to governors Leading sessions to inform parents Understanding the criteria for the evaluation of a Catholic school



Person Specification

Skills, Qualities and Abilities

- High quality teaching skills
- Strong commitment to the aims, purposes and mission of a Catholic school
- Commitment to their own spiritual formation and that of pupils
- High expectations of pupils' learning and attainment
- Ability to build and maintain good relationships
- Ability to remain positive and enthusiastic when working under pressure
- Ability to organise work, prioritise tasks, make decisions and manage time effectively
- Empathy with children
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Confident, resilient and energetic
- Ability to provide high quality liturgical based worship for pupils and staff

References

- Positive and supportive faith reference from priest where applicant regularly worships
- Positive recommendation in professional references
- Satisfactory health and attendance record



St Gregory the Great
An all-through school from nursery-19

The Application Process



The Application process is being conducted by a team at Academicis, an executive search firm based in Cambridge.

If you would like further information or to arrange a school visit, please contact Richard Lucas at Academicis on:

Switchboard - 01223 907979

Mobile - 07909905392

Email - rlucas@academicis.co.uk

All applications are to be emailed to Richard Lucas no later than **25th Feb 12.00 noon**.

Please note that the school can only make a decision whether to invite you to an interview based on the information that you provide on the application.

Shortlisting will take place on **28th February**

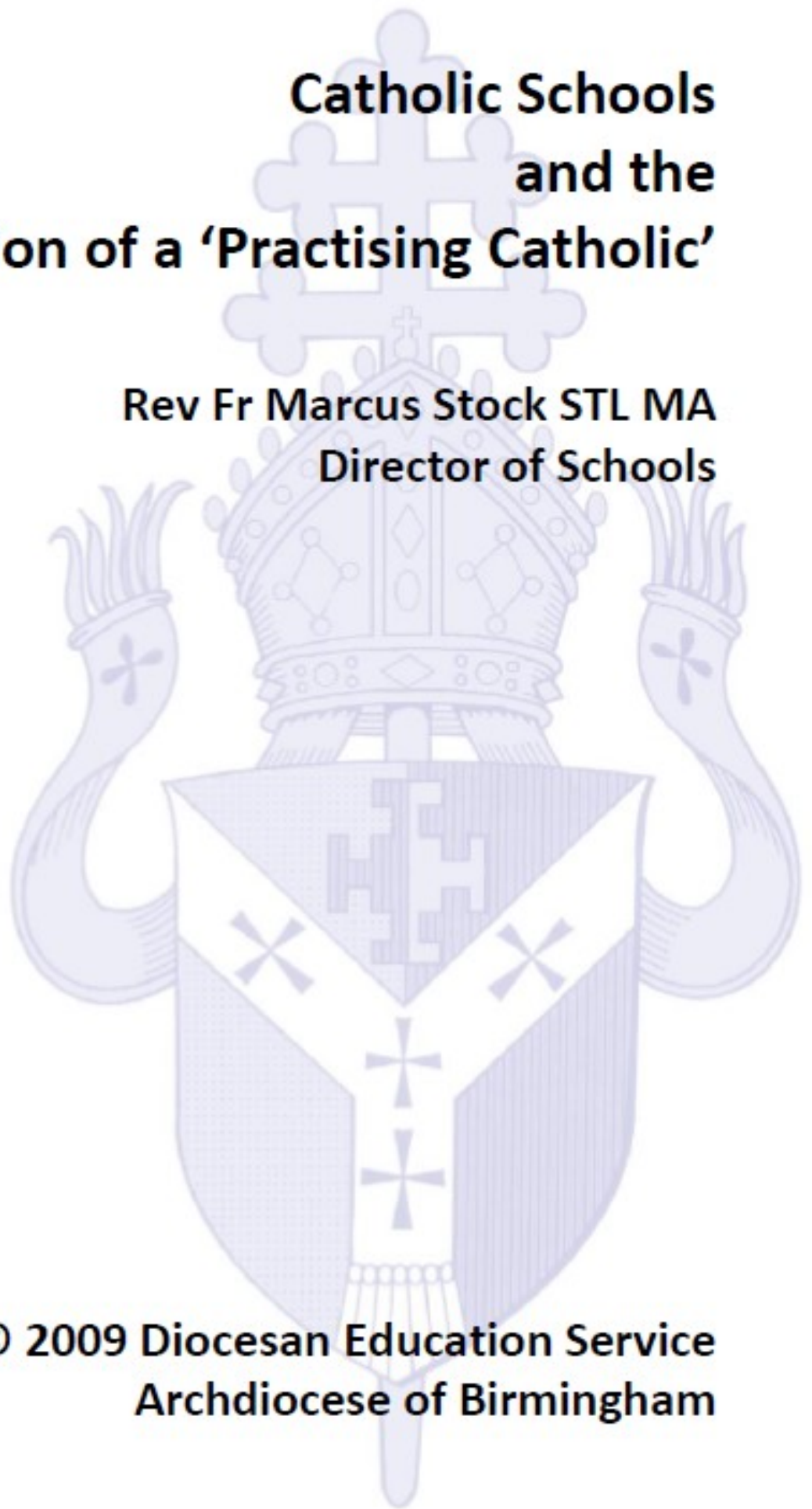
Interviews will be held on **13th & 14th March**

We reserve the right to research applicants on social media platforms and the internet, and the Board of Governors may take this information into consideration during the recruitment process.

Catholic Schools and the Definition of a 'Practising Catholic'

**Rev Fr Marcus Stock STL MA
Director of Schools**

**© 2009 Diocesan Education Service
Archdiocese of Birmingham**



Catholic Schools and the Definition of a ‘Practising Catholic’

Introduction

The heart and expression of Christian life is action flowing from love; love for the One who shows us the Way to Life; love for the One who teaches us the Truth about Life; and love for the One who gives us Life in its fullness – Jesus Christ. “If you love me you will keep my commandments”¹, Jesus said to his disciples. To follow faithfully the teachings of Jesus Christ and his Church is therefore, by those who would be his disciples, an act of love.

As members of the pilgrim People of God on their journey of faith, the disciples of Jesus Christ often find themselves confronted with values and substantive life choices, promoted by the society in which they live, that are objectively incompatible with the teaching of their Lord and his Church. This can be a real test of a disciple’s love in the practice of their faith.

In a society which has largely acquiesced to the “dictatorship of relativism”², Catholic Christians are called to adhere to Gospel values and to practise moral choices which often are “contrary to the world’s behaviour”³. This call is particularly pertinent to those Catholics who hold positions of governance, leadership and other key posts in Catholic schools, where the values of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church should be at the heart of the integral formation of the children and young people in their care. As such, the selection of candidates for these posts is crucial.

What is the purpose of this document?

The Archdiocese of Birmingham requires that those appointed as foundation governors⁴ and to certain key posts within Catholic schools are ‘practising Catholics’. This document defines what a ‘practising Catholic’ is for the purpose of these appointments.

This document should also be read in conjunction with ‘Christ at the Centre’⁵, which provides a summary of why the Church provides Catholic Schools. It forms an important part of the diocesan information and guidance that all involved in the appointment process should familiarise themselves with and follow.

¹ Gospel of John 14:15

² Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), Homily, Mass before the Papal Election, 18 April 2005

³ Cf. Pope John Paul II, Homily, Camagüey, Cuba, 23 January 1998

⁴ See Appendix A

⁵ Fr Marcus Stock, Diocesan Schools Commission, Archdiocese of Birmingham, 2005

Why does the Church insist that being a ‘practising Catholic’ is a genuine occupational requirement for holding certain key posts in Catholic Schools?

In schools with a religious character, it is already recognised, acknowledged and provided for in statutory legislation⁶ that certain key posts, necessary to the objectives and activities of a school’s particular religious ethos, carry with them a “*genuine occupational requirement*”⁷.

These key posts require that their holders not only refrain from doing anything “*which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets*”⁸ of the school’s religious ethos but, in the case of headteachers, that they are able and fit to “*preserve and develop*”⁹ that ethos and, in the case of certain other designated posts, that they hold “*religious opinions*”¹⁰, “*attend religious worship*”¹¹ and “*give, or are willing to give, religious education*”¹² in accordance with the precepts and tenets of the relevant religious faith.

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have collectively mandated that in Catholic schools certain substantive posts carry a requirement that they are held by ‘practising Catholics’¹³. These are the posts of headteacher, deputy headteacher, and head or coordinator of Religious Education. Additionally, there are other key leadership posts which directly affect the Catholic mission of a school. These too may be required to be filled by ‘practising Catholics’ with the requisite professional skills.

The genuine occupational requirement attached to these posts derives not only from the objectives of the school as a Catholic institution in its fiduciary and legal religious character (the context of the employment post) but also because the performance of the activities concerned with holding these posts are strictly necessary for the school to preserve and develop its Catholic religious ethos¹⁴ (the nature of the employment post). Consequently, those who hold these posts are required by the context and nature of their occupation to perform specific religious objectives and activities which are essentially

⁶ See Appendix B, School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 60 as amended by Section 37 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

⁷ Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Section 7, subsection 3

⁸ See Appendix B, School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 60, (5), (b)

⁹ Ibid., Section 60, (4)

¹⁰ Ibid., Section 60, (5), (a), (i)

¹¹ Ibid., Section 60, (5), (a), (ii)

¹² Ibid., Section 60, (5), (a), (iii)

¹³ See Appendix A, ‘Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools’, Department for Catholic Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales, 11 July 2003

¹⁴ Cf. Christ at the Centre, Fr Marcus Stock, Diocesan Schools Commission, Archdiocese of Birmingham 2005, pages 10 - 15

catechetical and ministerial. They are thus vocational as well as professional in nature.¹⁵

For this reason, the religious objectives and activities of these posts require the post-holder to strive to model in their lives the values of the Gospel and to adhere, in the substantive life choices that they make, to the teaching of the Catholic Church. They can only be performed therefore by Catholics who practise these objective religious qualities with equally essential professional skills.

In identifying these key posts though, it should not be supposed that this thereby lessens the importance of other positions within a Catholic school. The virtues of all members of staff, non-Catholic Christians and those from other religious traditions make a valuable and treasured contribution to the quality of a school's Catholic life and ethos.

Is there a clear understanding of what the term 'practising Catholic' refers to when applied to key posts in a Catholic School?

The term 'practising Catholic' is used by a range of people and not only by those who are members of the Church. However, there are often subjective variations in the presuppositions that form the basis of the term's meaning. Even when used by those who are members of the Catholic Church, there can be discovered a wide misconception as to what, objectively, constitutes being a 'practising Catholic'. The term 'practising Catholic' can vary in meaning therefore according to the provenance of its use.

For example, in most Catholic Dioceses of England and Wales, the diocesan bishop has determined that where there is a need to prioritise applications for places in the admissions policies of schools which are oversubscribed by Catholic pupils, a person is considered a 'practising Catholic' if they have been baptised (or have been canonically received into full communion with the Catholic Church) and strive to observe the Church's precept of attending Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation. This is perhaps the most simple and common understanding of the term.

However, as we have seen, the term 'practising Catholic' is also used by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales collectively as a requirement for certain key leadership and teaching posts. In these circumstances, the requirement is that a person applying or appointed to one of these key posts will be a

¹⁵ Cf. *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §37

‘practising Catholic’ in a way that is much more than the simple and common understanding which is used for a school’s admissions policy.

Unlike a child’s admission to a Catholic school, the key posts referred to carry a genuine occupational requirement that goes beyond simple membership of the Catholic Church alone or even regular attendance at Mass. Their occupation requires them to participate in a very specific religious way in the mission of the local and universal Catholic Church: they have a duty to collaborate with, and be at the service of, the bishop’s mission to govern, teach and sanctify the people of God through the work of education¹⁶. These religious activities are made provision for in statutory legislation¹⁷ and made explicit in the contracts of employment.¹⁸

Integral to the effectiveness and professionalism of the activities and objectives of these key posts is the exercise of a distinct ministry and vocation in the Church. This demands a fidelity to Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church which is no less than the commitment required of other ministries within the Church. Like any vocation to a specific ecclesial ministry, there are two distinct elements; namely, the personal call that the individual discerns within themselves and the confirmation of that call and suitability by the competent ecclesiastical authority within the Church. Therefore, a person’s desire to be appointed to a key post in a Catholic school will also be balanced by the Church’s assessment of their ability to model an authentic Catholic life of faith.

As collaborators with the bishop in the ministry of education, the holders of these key posts are expected to model lives of personal holiness and professional integrity¹⁹ which are worthy of their high calling and position of religious trust within the Church. The religious nature of these posts is the reason for the occupational requirement which demands that they are performed by Catholics who have committed themselves to the integration of their professional excellence with a clear sense of vocation and ministry. Above all others then, these posts must be substantively held and maintained by ‘practising Catholics’.

¹⁶ Cf. *The Catholic School*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §71

¹⁷ See Appendix B, *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*, Section 60

¹⁸ *Catholic Education Service Contracts of Employment (Leadership Contracts)*, Section 4.4

¹⁹ Cf. *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, §32, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982

What then is the objective definition of a 'practising Catholic' for appointments to the office of foundation governor and to key posts in Catholic Schools?

To objectively define what a 'practising Catholic' is when assessing applicants for foundation governor or key leadership posts within a Catholic school, it is necessary to understand that there are general obligations as well as essential components that constitute 'practice' of the faith in the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Church's general obligations for its members require that they strive to live lives of holiness²⁰ by being faithful to the teaching of the Gospel²¹, by trying to uphold the values²² proclaimed in the Beatitudes²³, by assisting in the Church's mission to make Christ known to all peoples²⁴, by upholding privately and publicly the Church's moral²⁵ and social²⁶ teaching, by endeavouring to follow an informed conscience²⁷ and by making every effort to keep the precepts²⁸ of the Church. This is the 'practice' of the Catholic faith in its widest and all encompassing sense.

At the heart of these general obligations though, there are essential components for "*full communion*"²⁹ with the Catholic Church. These are sacramental initiation (Baptism³⁰, Confirmation and the Eucharist) and the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance. The preservation of this full communion is not limited to purely religious activity but is to be an integral part of the whole pattern of behaviour of a member of the Church³¹. It is what essentially constitutes being a committed and 'practising Catholic'.

²⁰ Code of Canon Law, Can.210

²¹ Code of Canon Law, Can.217

²² Christ at the Centre, Section A5, Page 8, Diocesan Schools Commission, Archdiocese of Birmingham, 2005

²³ Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.1725 - 1729

²⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.871 – 873; Code of Canon Law, Can.211

²⁵ Code of Canon Law, Can.225 §2 and Can.227

²⁶ Code of Canon Law, Can.222 §2

²⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.1783 - 1785

²⁸ These are: attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation; reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year; reception of Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season; observing faithfully the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence; providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to their ability. Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.2041 - 2043

²⁹ Code of Canon Law, Can.205

³⁰ For someone validly baptised in a non-Catholic Church or ecclesial communion, this would require their subsequent Canonical Reception into the Catholic Church. Baptism, Confirmation and Canonical Reception can all be objectively verified through the production of a relevant certificate issued by the ecclesiastical authority where the sacraments or reception were conferred. Although, there is no canonical requirement for a register of First Holy Communion to be produced, parish priests can usually provide a reference of regular attendance at Mass for someone claiming to be a practising Catholic.

³¹ Code of Canon Law, Can.209 §1

Therefore, for appointment to the office of foundation governor or to key posts in a Catholic school, a 'practising Catholic' is to be defined as someone who has been sacramentally initiated into the Catholic Church and who adheres to those substantive life choices which do not impair them from receiving the sacraments of the Church and which will not be in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the religious ethos and character of the school. Inspired by the Gospel and sustained by God's grace, a 'practising Catholic' will give sincere external expression to their interior faith through specific religious, moral and ethical behaviour which is in accordance with the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church.

Does this mean that a 'practising Catholic' has to be 'perfect'?

The process for appointment to the office of foundation governor or for key posts in a Catholic school is not, nor should it ever be used as, an appraisal of an applicant's spiritual and moral successes or failures. Assessment of a person's suitability cannot be a subjective judgement about their 'goodness' or 'holiness'. In terms of the Church's general obligations, almost all Catholics fail to live their faith fully and do not give an authentic witness to their beliefs in all aspects or at all moments of their lives. A 'practising Catholic' therefore, no matter how strong their faith in Christ or firm in their commitment to the Church and its teaching, will almost certainly not be a 'perfect' Catholic.

Rather, assessment of a person's suitability must be objectively based on the requirement for the office or post to be held by a 'practising Catholic' as defined in the section above. The only evidence to be taken into consideration in that assessment is of the substantive life choices that they are known to have made and adhere to, both in the personal and public forum; and whether or not those choices are compatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Church clearly lays out the 'way of life' for the faithful in the substantive choices that they make in life:

"Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, Christians are 'dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus' and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord. Following Christ and united with him, Christians can strive to be 'imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love' by conforming their thoughts, words and actions to the 'mind ...which is yours in Christ Jesus, and by following his example.

Healing the wounds of sin, the Holy Spirit renews us interiorly through a spiritual transformation. He enlightens and strengthens us to live as 'children of light' through 'all that is good and right and true.' The way of Christ 'leads to life'; a contrary way 'leads to destruction'.

The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: There are two ways, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference."³²

Consequently, it is clear that a 'practising Catholic' will be someone who, despite weaknesses and personal sinfulness, decides to make only those substantive life choices which follow the "*Way, the Truth and the Life*"³³. This way of life is not vague or unknown but is manifest fully and most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ and unfolded in the teachings of His Church.

There are substantive life choices which are incompatible with the teaching of the Church and objectively impair³⁴ our communion with the Church for as long as we adhere to them; they are objectively grave in nature and are objectively incompatible with God's law.³⁵

³² Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.1694 - 1696

³³ Cf. Gospel of St John 14:6

³⁴ Impaired communion within the Church is not to be confused with 'excommunication'. The former results from committing a gravely sinful act or an act that is incompatible with the teaching of the Church but it does not completely separate someone from the life of the Church or from sharing in it in real but limited ways; the latter is the most serious censure or penalty which the Catholic Church imposes on her members and has canonical consequences beyond deprivation of the sacraments and separates them completely from communion with the Church, until the excommunication is lifted.

³⁵ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.1849 - 1860

What are examples of substantive life choices which are incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church?

Clearly, it would be hoped that any individual governor or member of staff in a Catholic school would be sensitive to the very important role that they play in the life and mission of the Church and in the life of faith of the children that their school serves. All those who work in a Catholic school therefore, are required to conduct themselves in a way which does not conflict with the *"precept"* and *"tenets"*³⁶ of the Catholic Church and are bound by their contractual obligations *"not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest"* of the Catholic character of the school³⁷.

There are actions and behaviours which would be considered not only incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church specifically but also incompatible with the professional life and career of any employee within any school³⁸. Some examples of these would be:

- serious dishonesty or fraudulent activity;
- being unfit for duty due to alcohol or drug related abuse;
- inappropriate use of school property;
- gross negligence in the performance of professional duties;
- violent or inappropriate behaviour;
- any action which endangers the welfare or safety of pupils;
- any action which would bring the school into disrepute, etc.

There are also substantive life choices which are incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church and which may be detrimental or prejudicial to the religious ethos and character of a Catholic school. Some examples of these would be:

- formal apostasy from the Catholic Church³⁹;
- maintaining membership of, or giving direct support to, any organisation whose fundamental aims and objects are contrary to Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church;

³⁶ See Appendix B, School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 60, (5), (b)

³⁷ Catholic Education Service Contracts of Employment, Section 4.3

³⁸ Such conduct may well be in breach of an employee's Contract of Employment and/or amount to actions which could be the subject of disciplinary action. Such behaviour may also be in breach of the GTC Code of Conduct.

³⁹ Code of Canon Law, Can.1364

- maintaining the publication or distribution, or by any other means of social communication or technology, of material content which is contrary to Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church;
- a Catholic contracting a marriage in a non-Catholic church, registry office or any other place without dispensation from canonical form⁴⁰; or contracting a marriage where one or both of the parties have been previously married (and whose former spouse[s] is[are] living) without the former marriage(s) being annulled or declared invalid by the Church;
- maintaining a partnership of intimacy with another person, outside of a form of marriage approved by the Church and which would, at least in the public forum, carry the presumption from their public behaviour of this being a non-chaste relationship; and, where such a presumption in the public forum is not repudiated by the parties within the relationship.

What if a Catholic who has made a substantive life choice which is incompatible with the values of the Gospel and the teaching of the Catholic Church, applies for the office of foundation governor or a key post in a school?

Catholics, whose choices have resulted in them being unable to receive the sacraments but who otherwise may have been a potential applicant for one of these key posts will, on occasion, sincerely present themselves for consideration. In these circumstances, there is sometimes much pressure on clergy and governors to overlook these particular substantive life choices. This may spring from a genuine charitable and pastoral concern not to offend or hurt the individuals involved, or because it is considered that their professional skills and abilities in respect of governance or leadership are needed in the school and override all other considerations.

In these situations clergy and governors should work in partnership with, and follow the advice from, the appropriate officers at the Diocesan Schools Commission and the Diocesan Department of Religious Education. For the good of the school and of the wider Church, the requirement stated here must be upheld in terms of appointing only 'practising Catholics', as defined in this document, to the office of foundation governor and to the key posts within Catholic Schools.

⁴⁰ Code of Canon Law, Can.1059

With regard to this, clergy have a clear leadership role and a particular pastoral duty towards those individuals who are unable to be appointed to those positions, by explaining, with the greatest possible care and sensitivity, the Church's requirements and the reasons for these requirements while also encouraging them to maintain their life of prayer and faith within the Church.

What if a Catholic, appointed as a foundation governor or to a key post in a Catholic school, subsequently makes a substantive life choice which is incompatible with the values of the Gospel and the teaching of the Catholic Church?

As already stated, even the most committed Catholic frequently fails in the full expression of the practice of their faith through personal weakness and sinfulness on various occasions and at particular moments.

These failures in the practice of the faith are, however, distinct from adhering to and maintaining substantive life choices which are incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church and which prevent them from receiving the sacraments. These choices can give scandal potentially both to the Christian and wider community and bring the religious ethos and character of the school into disrepute.

If for any reason a foundation governor of a Catholic school seriously contravenes the declaration that they signed as a condition of their appointment, they can be removed from office⁴¹ by the diocesan bishop or his delegate.

Similarly, all those appointed to key posts within a Catholic school are expected to read and sign the relevant Catholic Education Service Contract. These contracts state that they are:

*"...expected to be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the School, having regard at all times to the Catholic character of the School, and not to do anything detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same."*⁴²

Reflecting this contractual obligation, the Catholic Education Service's 'Model Disciplinary Procedure' defines a principal example of misconduct in a Catholic school as:

⁴¹ School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003, 23(1)

⁴² Catholic Education Service Contracts of Employment, Section 4.3

*"Conduct on the part of a teacher or worker which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the Catholic Church."*⁴³

Therefore, if someone who has been appointed a foundation governor or appointed to key post in a Catholic school subsequently makes a substantive life choice which is incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church, then their ability to govern or to lead and model Catholic life and faith with ecclesial integrity may cease to exist. In such circumstances, an investigation by those responsible for preserving the Catholic ethos of the school will need to be undertaken and, in some circumstances, this may necessitate a foundation governor being removed from office or disciplinary action being taken against someone appointed to a key post, in accordance with the school's formally adopted disciplinary policy.

Any action that diocesan authorities or governing bodies may be required to take within the appropriate procedural and legal parameters should though, be measured, sensitive and exercised with charity and compassion. Working with professional associations and the school's maintaining local authority; every effort should be made to manage, with dignity and respect, the impact of any action that needs to be taken upon the individuals concerned, their families and the Catholic school community.

Conclusion

*"If you love me you will keep my commandments"*⁴⁴

Acting out of love as disciples of Jesus Christ, Catholic Christians are called to model in the substantive life choices they make, the Way, the Truth and the Life of the One who, out of love, laid down his life for them. This love in action is what the 'practice' of the Catholic faith ultimately means. It cannot be reduced to an outward legal conformity to rules or laws but is a response of love to the God who is Love.

Similarly, no ministry or vocation in the Catholic Church can be reduced to the mechanical performance of a set of duties or skills, no matter how excellently or professionally they might appear to be carried out. Without them being lived authentically, in private and public life, they would be insincere.

⁴³ Catholic Education Service, Model Disciplinary Procedure (All Workers at the School) For Schools with Delegated Budgets (2004)

⁴⁴ Gospel of St John 14:15

In Catholic schools, foundation governors and the holders of certain key posts which carry with them an occupational requirement to be a 'practising Catholic', are responsible in law and required by the Church to be able and fit to *"preserve and develop the religious character of the school"*⁴⁵ and *"not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same"*⁴⁶.

Consequently they must, by the very nature and context of their objectives and activities, be substantively held and maintained by 'practising Catholics'. They carry an obligation of office and an occupational requirement which cannot be fulfilled by someone who does not adhere in their substantive life choices to the teachings of the Catholic Church, or by anyone who does not share the Catholic faith.

⁴⁵ See Appendix B, School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 60, (4); School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003, 8 (1) (b)

⁴⁶ Catholic Education Service Contracts of Employment, Section 4.3

APPENDIX A

Requirements of the Catholic Church for appointments to the office of foundation governor and key leadership posts in Catholic schools

For the appointment of a foundation governor, a candidate for this office in a school operating under the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham is required to sign a declaration that:

"I am a practising Catholic in full communion with the See of Rome, and I am not the subject of any canonical censure or penalty; my appointment places a statutory duty upon me to ensure that the religious character of the school is preserved and developed⁴⁷ and that the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Archdiocesan Trust Deed⁴⁸; my appointment requires me to comply with the provisions of Canon Law, the teachings of the Catholic Church and such determinations made by the Archbishop and his Trustees and their agent, the Diocesan Schools Commission, in respect of the school or other schools situated in the Archdiocese."⁴⁹

With regard to the Church's requirements for appointments to key leadership posts, the 'Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers to Catholic Schools'⁵⁰, states:

"The posts of Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head or Coordinator of Religious Education are to be filled by baptised and practising Catholics. Other Leadership posts that affect directly the Catholic Mission of the school should, wherever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics. All teachers must respect and support the aims and objectives of a Catholic school."⁵¹

The purpose of the 'Memorandum' is:

"...to help and guide Governors to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school in relation to the appointment of teachers. Governors of Catholic Voluntary Aided and Independent schools are the employers of the teachers, to whom they

⁴⁷ School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003, 8 (1) (a)

⁴⁸ Ibid., 8 (1) (b)

⁴⁹ Foundation Governor Application Form, Diocesan Schools Commission, Archdiocese of Birmingham

⁵⁰ Department for Catholic Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales, 11 July 2003

⁵¹ Ibid., Section entitled 'Selecting Leaders For Catholic Schools'

should give clear guidelines about the Catholic character of education and life in their school. As employers the Governing Body must issue the appropriate contract of employment and associated documentation as published by the Catholic Education Service.”⁵²

The expectations set out in the ‘Memorandum’ are based on the pertinent Canons in the ‘Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church’:

“The formation and education in the Catholic religion provided in any school, and through various means of social communication is subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the Diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it. The local Ordinary is to be careful that those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their Christian life, and in their teaching ability.”⁵³

In addition the ‘Memorandum’ states that the appropriate contracts of employment and the associated documentation published by the Catholic Education Service must be used by Catholic schools to preserve and uphold their Catholic ethos. The contracts used for specific key posts state:

“You are required to develop and maintain the Catholic character of the School. You are to have regard to the Catholic character of the School and not to do anything in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the interest of the same.”⁵⁴

⁵² Department for Catholic Education and Formation of the Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales, 11 July 2003, Section entitled ‘Purpose of the Guidance’

⁵³ Code of Canon Law, Can.804

⁵⁴ Catholic Education Service Contracts of Employment, Section 4.3

APPENDIX B

Statutory provision for schools with a religious character to maintain their relevant religious ethos

Statutory legislation in England and Wales makes provision for schools with a religious character to maintain their relevant religious ethos. Section 60 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 makes the following provision:

- "(4) In connection with the appointment of a person to be head teacher of the school (whether foundation or voluntary controlled) regard may be had to that person's ability and fitness to preserve and develop the religious character of the school.*
- (5) If the school is a voluntary aided school -*
- (a) preference may be given, in connection with the appointment, remuneration or promotion of teachers at the school, to persons -*
 - (i) whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4), or*
 - (ii) who attend religious worship in accordance with those tenets, or*
 - (iii) who give, or are willing to give, religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets; and*
 - (b) regard may be had, in connection with the termination of the employment of any teacher at the school, to any conduct on his part which is incompatible with the precepts, or with the upholding of the tenets, of the religion or religious denomination so specified."*

Section 37(2)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 extended these provisions in voluntary aided schools with a religious character in England (not Wales) to the appointment of non-teaching staff, to have regard to a person's faith where there is a 'genuine occupational requirement'⁵⁵. An example of such a non-teaching post in a Catholic School is the appointment of a Lay Chaplain.

⁵⁵ Governing bodies, as the employers, must comply with the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 which prevent discrimination on religious grounds, except in a case where being of a particular religion or religious denomination is a genuine occupational requirement. Schools considering whether a particular post has a genuine occupational requirement for a person to be of a particular religion or belief must follow both the regulations and the guidance.