



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

RECRUITMENT PACK



HEAD OF RE

CLOSING DATE: 4th March 2024



A Proud Member of
**BISHOP
HOGARTH**
Catholic Education Trust

Per Unitatem Virtus



Diocese of
Hexham & Newcastle



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

WELCOME

Head Teacher and Head of Catholic Life (EMS)

Welcome to The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College. I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to you on behalf of our entire school community and am pleased that you are interested in working with us.

We are committed to providing a nurturing environment where academic excellence and spiritual development go hand in hand. Our school is not just a place of learning; it's a place where values are instilled, friendships are formed, and aspirations are nurtured. We embrace diversity and celebrate the unique talents of each individual so that each person staff and students can fulfil their potential.

We strive to ensure that our students and staff have a sense of community and our motto of 'Per Unitatem Virtus' means Strength Through Unity. You would be joining a dynamic school community and a supportive network of 35 Trust schools and a wider diocesan family.

We invite you to come and visit so that you can see all that English Martyrs has to offer, from our rigorous academic curriculum to our wide range of extracurricular activities and wider opportunities for professional development.

If you decide to apply be assured that dedicated staff will support you every step of the way as you embark on your educational journey with us. We look forward to welcoming you into our school family and sharing in your successes and achievements.

Sara Crawshaw
Head Teacher

Paul McCartie
Head of Catholic Life (EMS)



— DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle** —
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

WELCOME

Head of Catholic Life (Trust)

Hello, I'm Andrew Gardner, Head of Catholic Life for the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust. Welcome to the English Martyrs School and Sixth Form, where our ethos is defined by placing Christ at the centre and keeping children at the heart of all we do.

Joining our Trust means being part of an environment that values both educational excellence and spiritual development. You'll be supported by Paul McCartie, our Head of Catholic Life at English Martyrs, alongside the RE department and wider school chaplaincy team. We also have a team of Lay Chaplains working in our other four secondaries schools, who collaborate to provide resources and best practices. Regular meetings with the diocesan team of chaplains also enhance our mission, ensuring a nurturing and spiritually rich workplace.

We're excited about the prospect of welcoming you to our community. As Pope Francis beautifully stated, 'Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life.' This sentiment echoes our commitment to not just educate, but to inspire and give life through our teachings.

We look forward to sharing more about how we bring this vision to life in our schools.

Andrew Gardner
Head of Catholic Life (Trust)



— DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle** —
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

JOB ADVERT

**THE ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC
SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM
COLLEGE**

HEAD OF RE

L9 – L13

£57,482 - £63,430

Permanent

Closing Date:

4th March 2024

Interviews:

14th March 2024

Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post will be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. The school will consider carrying out an online search as part of the due diligence on shortlisted candidates.

As an employee of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust you may work from time to time in one or more of our Academies.

The Director of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust and Governors of English Martyrs are seeking to appoint a Curriculum Leader of RE

The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College promotes high standards in terms of teaching and learning, behaviour and achievement. We educate our children in the spirit of the Gospel values and the traditions of the Catholic Church, nurturing the talents, virtues and potential of each individual – both pupils and staff. We invite applications from practising Catholics who are motivated for this role.

The successful candidate will have the ability to teach up to KS4 and a willingness to teach to KS5, with a focus on improving outcomes for students and a commitment to Catholic life.

We can offer you:

- The opportunity to join a school with enthusiastic, confident and happy children;
- Dedicated staff who are keen to build on our high standards;
- Excellent collaboration between the existing schools within the Multi Academy Trust & the Diocese;
- Opportunities to share talents within a supportive and trusting network of leaders;
- Opportunities to engage in high quality professional development.

We are looking for a leader who will:

- Articulate a clear vision for Catholic Education;
- Bring ambition and motivation to students so that they are fully engaged in curriculum RE and wider Catholic life.
- Head the department to raise standards and attainment in RE.

Visits to the schools are warmly welcomed and positively encouraged. For further information, to arrange a school visit please email recruitment@ems.bhcet.org.uk

Application forms are available at:

<https://bhcet.org.uk/job-vacancies>

and can be returned to recruitment@ems.bhcet.org.uk or by post to Mrs S Crawshaw, The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College, Catcote Road, Hartlepool, TS25 4HA.



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

JOB DESCRIPTION

Head of Religious Education

The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Introduction

This appointment is with the Trust under the terms of the Catholic Education Service contract signed with the directors as employers. The board will appoint a practising Catholic¹ who, by personal example and professional leadership, will ensure that the Catholic ethos, rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, permeates all aspects of the life of the school.

The appointment is subject to the current conditions of service for teachers contained in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and other current education and employment legislation. In carrying out his/her duties the Head of Department shall consult, where appropriate, the governing body, the Diocese, the local authority, the staff of the school, the parents of its pupils and the parish/es served by the school.

This job description may be amended at any time, following consultation between the Head of Department and the local governing committee and will be reviewed annually.

Core purpose

- To provide professional leadership and management for the RE department.
- To provide a high-quality educational experience for all students to raise the levels of attainment and achievement.
- To provide a lead in the Catholic life of the school.
- To organise prayer and liturgy in conjunction with the person in charge of Catholic life in the school.



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

¹ See Diocesan Briefing Note on Practising Catholic



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

In addition to the job description for a qualified teacher, as a subject leader, the person appointed will undertake the following duties and responsibilities:

Strategic direction and development of the subject

- Develop and ensure implementation of a whole-school policy for RE in line with the aims and policies of the school.
- Use data effectively, to monitor standards of achievement across the school in RE.
- Produce short, medium, long- term plans to develop RE in relation to: - resources - staff professional development requirements - the aims of the school, and its policies and practices, and ensure this is integrated into the school development plan - targets for realistic but challenging improvements.
- Monitor the progress made towards achieving RE plans and targets and use this information to plan future developments.
- To be involved in the liturgical experience and spiritual life of the school, both curricular and extra in conjunction with SLT and school chaplain.
- To report to governor meetings where appropriate.
- To be involved in the extracurricular life of the school, both RE and non-RE related, e.g. charity work, residential trips.
- To assist on the planning and development of the post-16 provision especially for the RE element.

Teaching and Learning

- Follow the requirements of the exam board and meet with requirements of the Catholic Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD).
- Ensure curriculum coverage, continuity and progression in RE throughout the school.
- Ensure that teachers are clear about teaching objectives, understand the sequence of teaching and learning in the subject and communicate this to students.
- Support and guide colleagues to select the most appropriate teaching and learning methods and resources to meet the needs of the full range of pupils.
- Establish and implement clear policies and practices for assessing, recording and reporting on pupil achievement in line with school policy.
- Support departments in their self-evaluation by monitoring teaching and learning.
- Evaluate the teaching of the subject in school, use this analysis to identify effective practice and areas for improvement and take action to improve further the quality of teaching in the subject.
- To act as a form tutor and provide pastoral support to those pupils in your tutor group.



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Leading and Managing Staff

- Lead professional development of staff through example and support.
- To ensure the behaviour policy is consistently implemented.
- Ensure newly qualified staff and staff new to the department receive appropriate support for the subject.
- Work with the Inclusion staff to ensure that SEND and PP pupils have specific targets and that work is matched to pupils needs.
- To make appropriate arrangements when staff are absent.
- Ensure that the headteacher, senior managers and governors are well informed about subject policies, plans and priorities, the success in meeting objectives and targets and subject related professional development plans.
- To lead the development of subject links with partner schools and community and to effectively promote open day/evenings and other events.

Accountability

- Communicate effectively, orally and in writing to a range of audiences e.g. staff, students, parents and Governors.
- Discuss with the management the progress of the department regarding data and development plan.
- Secure understanding and strategies for performance management and appraise designated members of staff.
- Establish resource and staff requirements for the subject and inform the link SLT of costs and priorities. Distribute subject resources to meet the objectives of the school.
- To ensure 10% curriculum is RE for KS3/4 and 5% for over 16 years.
- Keep abreast of curriculum developments to ensure the department is up to date.
- Ensure the effective and efficient management of learning resources for the RE subject.
- Ensure a stimulating but safe working environment in which risks are regularly assessed regarding safeguarding, health and safety and visits policy.
- Report to Governors as required.





The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Other Professional Requirements

- Establish and maintain positive effective working relationships with professional colleagues and parents.
- Participate as required in meetings with professional colleagues and parents in respect of the duties and responsibilities of the post.
- Be aware of the need to take responsibility for your own professional development and ensure attendance at Diocesan inset provision.
- Lead the school in the fostering of the school ethos.
- This job description sets out the main duties of the post at the date when it was drawn up; it does not provide an exhaustive list of duties. Duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Head of Religious Education

Essential Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
QUALIFICATIONS	E1	Qualified teacher status	A/I/CC
	E2	Degree	A/I/CC
FAITH COMMITMENT	E3	Must be a practising Catholic who can inspire and live the teachings of the faith	A/I/R
	E4	The passion to share faith with others in teaching	A/I/R
	E5	Evidence of participation in faith life of the community	A/I/R
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	E6	Qualified Teacher who has undertaken appropriate training and has the necessary knowledge to undertake the duties of the post	A
	E7	The ability to devise and teach appropriate courses throughout the school	A /I
	E8	The ability to develop strategies for supporting pupils' individual needs in and beyond the classroom	A /I
	E9		A /I
	E10	A commitment to pastoral care as a positive support to learning	A, I/R
	E11	The ability to establish successful relationships at all levels and can work as a member of a team	I/R
	E12	Excellent classroom practitioner	A /I
	E13	A sound knowledge of RE programmes of study	A /I
	E13	A keen interest in the ongoing development in Religious Education	
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	E14	Has demonstrated a commitment to own development	A/I/R
	E15		A/I/R
	E16	Has the potential for further development	A/I
	E17	Evidence of potential to lead and manage an area of the RE curriculum and staff	A/I
	E17	Evidence of leading/managing an initiative	A/I





The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP	E18	Ability to share a vision of our Catholic Secondary Education	A/I
	E19	Successful evidence of motivating staff	A/I
	E20	Evidence of leading a development within RE department and the successful outcome	A/I
	E21	Ability to demonstrate analysis of data and ability to articulate how to monitor and evaluate RE curriculum and development plans	A/I
	E22	Evidence of managing curriculum changes	A/I
	E23	Demonstrate understanding of requirements of Catholic School Inspection	A/I
	E24	Demonstrate knowledge of Safeguarding, Health and Safety and GDPR	A/I
TEACHING AND LEARNING	E25	Proven track record of successful teaching and learning leading to positive improvement	A/I
	E26	A secure understanding of the requirement of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education	A/I
	E27	Knowledge or experience of a range of successful teaching and learning strategies to meet the need of students	A/I
	E28	A secure understanding of assessment strategies and the use of assessment to inform next stage learning in all key stages	A/I
	E29	Experience of characteristics of effective learning environments and key elements of successful behaviour management	A/I
LEADING AND MANAGING STAFF	E30	Evidence of leading events in RE department	A/I/R
	E31	Demonstrate understanding of the purpose of performance management and professional development	A/I/R
ACCOUNTABILITY	E32	Ability to communicate effectively, orally and in writing to a range of audiences	A/I
	E33	Evidence of use of data for self-evaluation and improvement strategies	A/I
	E34	Demonstrate an awareness of managing underperformance	A/I
	E35	Understanding of the criteria of evaluation of Catholic school	A/I





The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

SKILLS, QUALITIES AND ABILITIES	E36	Strong commitment to the mission of a Catholic school	A/I
	E37	Commitment to their own spiritual formation and that of pupils and staff	A/I
	E38	High expectation of pupils' learning and attainment	A/I
	E39	Strong commitment to school improvement and raising achievement for all	A/I
	E40	Ability to build and maintain good relationships	A/I
	E41	Ability to remain enthusiastic when working under pressure	A/I
APPLICATION FORM AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT	E42	The form must be fully completed and legible. The supporting statement should be clear, concise (within the required word count) and related to the specific post	A
OTHER	E43	An understanding of and an ability to contribute to the daily mission of the school	A/I
	E44	The capacity to contribute to the wider life of the school	A/I





The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Desirable Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
QUALIFICATIONS	D1	Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies	A/I/CC
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	D2	Management experience	A/I/R
	D3	Experience of teaching RE in a Catholic school	A/I
	D4	Ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of RE programmes of study	A/I
	D5	Coordination and delivery of PHSE, SRE and Citizenship	A/I
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	D6	Recent in-service training in leadership and management	A/I
	D7	Ability to demonstrate an impact of CPD across the RE department	A/I
TEACHING AND LEARNING	D8	Experience of effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and feedback	A/I
LEADING AND MANAGING STAFF	D9	Understanding of finance and resource management	A/I/R
ACCOUNTABILITY	D10	Lead sessions to develop knowledge of staff	A/I

KEY – STAGE IDENTIFIED

A	Application Form	R	References
I	Interview	CC	Checking Certificates





The English Martyrs
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

DIOCESAN MODEL STATEMENT

DIOCESAN MODEL STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND TRUSTS

The Diocesan Department for Education for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle has agreed the following model statement on equal opportunities in employment, for recommendation to boards.

The panel is committed to ensuring that matters concerning appointments, including promotions, are dealt with in a fair and just manner. The panel believe that the principle of equal opportunity in selection is consistent with social justice and good personnel practice. This is in keeping with our Catholic aim to recognise the dignity and worth of all who work or apply to work in our organisations.

Our selection processes aim to select the best applicant assessed against the criteria for the post. We are subject to the law of the land and acknowledge our commitment to conducting our affairs in accordance with the law. The panel do not discriminate on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation

The Roman Catholic community maintains schools which have, as part of their character, a duty to provide Religious Education and a requirement that those schools be conducted in accordance with the rites, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic faith. It would therefore be clear that where applicants are equal in qualifications and experience in the context of selection criteria for a post that a Roman Catholic applicant would have an advantage over an applicant not of the Roman Catholic faith in being able to contribute to the mission of the Church in Catholic education. The posts of Catholic Education Trust chief executive officer and deputy chief executive officer, executive headteacher, headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of religious education and chaplain are reserved for practising Catholics.

In fulfilling the objectives of Catholic schools, the panel have regard to matters which are particularly significant in the light of the sacramental teachings of the Church. Catholic teachers by their example and practice are witnesses to the Gospels and to the Church's teachings. The panel would therefore, in line with its responsibilities, reserve the right to take account of circumstances which were genuinely within a person's control and which might include marital status, avowed personal conviction, belief or conduct.

BRIEFING NOTE ON THE DEFINITION OF A 'PRACTISING CATHOLIC'

FOR APPOINTMENT TO KEY POSTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND TO THE OFFICE OF FOUNDATION DIRECTORS AND GOVERNORS

Introduction

The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle requires that those appointed to key posts within Catholic schools and as foundation directors/governors are 'practising Catholics'. The document '*Catholic Schools and the Definition of a 'Practising Catholic' - 2009 Diocesan Education Service, Archdiocese of Birmingham*' sets out in detail what it means to be a practising Catholic for the purpose of these appointments. This document should therefore be read in conjunction with this briefing note.

The appointment of CEO, Deputy CEO, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Religious Education, Religious Education Coordinator and School Lay Chaplain

In the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle it is a requirement that

- those appointed to the roles of CEO, Deputy CEO, Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Religious Education Coordinator, Head of Religious Education and School Lay Chaplains are practising Catholics at the time of application
- the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle *The Appointment of Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers in Catholic Schools - Recruitment Guidance for Governing Bodies* is used by foundation directors/governors when appointing to these roles
- the Diocesan Department for Education is involved in these appointments

The appointment of Foundation Directors and Foundation Governors

In the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle it is requirement that

- all foundation governors and directors are practising Catholics.
- the Diocesan Department for Education guidance and process for the appointment of foundation directors and governors are followed.

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’

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
What is the purpose of this document?	Page 1
Why does the Church insist that being a ‘practising Catholic’ is a genuine occupational requirement for holding certain key posts in Catholic Schools?	Page 2
Is there a clear understanding of what the term ‘practising Catholic’ refers to when applied to key posts in a Catholic School?	Page 3
What then is the objective definition of a ‘practising Catholic’ for appointment to the office of foundation governor and to key posts in Catholic Schools?	Page 5
Does this mean a ‘practising Catholic’ has to be ‘perfect’?	Page 6
What are examples of substantive life choices which are incompatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church?	Page 8
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?	Page 9
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?	Page 10
Conclusion	Page 11
Appendix A: Requirements of the Catholic Church for appointments to the office of foundation governor and key leadership posts in Catholic schools	Page 13
Appendix B: Statutory provision for schools with a religious character to maintain their relevant religious ethos	Page 15

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.

Diocesan Education Service
Don Bosco House, Coventry Road, Coleshill, Birmingham. B46 3EA
Tel: 01675 464755 Fax: 01675 465273

Web: www.bdes.org.uk