



PLYMOUTH CAST NEWSLETTER

2019/20

No.4: March 2020

“Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.”

Welcome

A very warm welcome to Kevin Butlin, our new Director of Education, who started on 24 February. Kevin already knows a lot about the Trust after he generously gave two weeks in January to come and visit us. So while it will take him time to get to know all our strengths and areas for improvement, he has certainly hit the ground running and as he said himself, feels very much at home already.

CAST Designated Safeguarding Lead

Please note that Kevin now takes on the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the Trust, taking over from Neil Maslen, who very helpfully stepped into the role as interim between Christmas and Kevin’s arrival.

An ideal opportunity for our heads and governors to meet Kevin will be at next week’s briefings. We revert to the ‘old style’ regional briefings across three days. Please see below:



Heads and Governors’ Briefings

Tue 3 March – WEST – CAST Office, Edmund Rice Building, St. Boniface’s College PL5 3AG

Wed 4 March – CENTRAL – St. Nicholas’ School, Exeter EX1 3EG

Thu 5 March – EAST – St. Mary’s School, Dorchester DT1 2DD

Heads’ Briefings – agenda

9.30 am	Start
R. Friel	Briefing, including admissions, feedback on Headteacher’s Report
K. Cook	Briefing on GAG-pooling, harmonization
K. Butlin	Briefing on Ofsted, school improvement, curriculum
12.30 pm	Lunch
1.30 – 3.00 pm	Cluster Meetings

Plymouth Cast

Edmund Rice Building, St Boniface College, 21 St Boniface Lane, Manadon Park, Crownhill, Plymouth, PL5 3AG

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Governor Briefings

4.30 – 5.15 pm	Induction session for new governors, if booked (please note this is not available on Thu 5 March at Dorchester)
5.30 pm	Briefing begins – Introduction from Kevin Butlin, Director of Education, main session led by Ann Harris on the new Schedule of Accountability and Checklist for local governing boards
7.30 pm	Finish

For the diary

29 April – Heads' Day Conference – CAST Office, Plymouth
2/3/4 June – West/Central/East – Heads and Governors' Briefings

Admissions

The consultation process for our admission policies in the autumn was flawed in several significant respects. I have therefore advised the board that the best course of action is to revert to the policies we used last year and ensure that we have a robust process of consultation for the 2022/23 policies. When the final policies have been determined by the board on 28 February, each school will receive its own policy pre-populated with its own details and local authority contacts for publication on its website.

Well-Being

A CAST Well-Being policy was approved by the Board on 28 February. This can now be found on the CAST website at http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/plymouth_cast_policies/278257. Please consider this policy carefully in your ongoing work at school and cluster level to attend to the well-being of our colleagues. Thanks to everybody who provided feedback in the consultation.

Staff Survey

In the HR section of the newsletter, Adelle has issued guidance for the second Trust-wide staff survey. The return last year was excellent, with over 500 colleagues returning the survey. I would encourage our headteachers to promote the second survey so we have a clear picture of the views of our staff which will help us to shape policy and practice moving forward.

INSET Days

I'm repeating the message from the January newsletter, since despite the advice I issued, I have still had requests for a sixth INSET day. Our position is clear, please see below:

Thanks to all our cluster coordinators for leading on the INSET days on Monday 24 February. I have heard very good feedback from across the Trust and had the privilege of joining our Plymouth schools at Notre Dame on the day. Please note as previously advised that the content of the third CAST INSET day this year, on Monday 1 June, following the final half-term break, will be directed by the Trust, in consultation with colleagues.

Please also remember, in your planning for 2020/21, that we will follow the same pattern: the Monday after every half-term break will be a common CAST INSET day for our schools (with local authority variations) and we will have **five INSET days** in total.

Raymond Friel, CEO

Finance and Resources update

Finance update

The schools 2020/21 budget allocations are due to be received by the end of the month, and it is likely that implementation of the National Funding Formula (soft implementation) will result in an increase in per head funding for the majority of our schools. Once this information is received we will be in a position to commence more accurate planning for 2020/21 and future years.



A mid-year review of finances is required by the ESFA in May and therefore all schools will be preparing a mid-year budget review before the Easter break highlighting their expected year end position.

Following the departure of Sharon George (Trust Finance Manager) in early January we are pleased to confirm that we have now appointed Mr James Reed to the post, with effect from mid-March. In the meantime Laura Fox has been supporting with specific projects and I am working closely with the finance team to ensure that the day to day work remains on going. The relevant declarations of related parties have been made to the ESFA.

GAG pooling

Work will commence on a revised budgetary process for 2020/21, working closely with Kevin Butlin, the Director of Education. This will confirm the budgetary parameters for schools planning and which budget lines will be held centrally. The full detail will be issued after the Easter break.

Capital funding and Investment

Schools have now been advised of in-year priority for capital funds. These funds (circa £1.25 million) address maintenance matters as opposed to significant improvements or developments. Schools are currently developing their planned maintenance schedules to inform future costed plans, and discussions with the diocese about a wider estates strategy are being progressed. These are due back by the start of the Easter break.

In terms of spend to date £443k has been spent and an additional £275k committed to the end of January.

Work on the IT strategy will be finalised by the end of March, with a 3 year costed plan being developed as part of the business plan submission process.

HR Update

Harmonisation project

All support staff job roles have been reviewed and 60 job roles (including central staff) have been confirmed with the relevant working groups. This is half of the current number. These will be issued to headteachers during March for confirmation that they reflect the roles required in schools before they are job evaluated towards the end of March by our external partner.

Contract renewals and tenders

Two main contracts due for renewal have been reviewed over the past month: the payroll contract and the insurance contract.

Payroll contract renewal

The current payroll contract is up for renewal in September and led by Adelle Pope (HR Manager) we have completed the tender process with the support of Church Market Place. We are awaiting finalisation of references before a decision is taken. It is anticipated that there will be a saving of at least £30k from this project.

The two options still in the running are Cornwall County Council (current provider) and EPM a Cambridgeshire based organisation.

Insurance

Our insurance contract runs out at the end of March 2020 and our brokers have reviewed the market and completed a comparison with the Government RPA scheme, as requested by Lord Agnew to ensure that we are receiving best value. The report from the broker is attached for information.

The recommendation is to renew with Zurich for a 3-year period at an agreed rate per pupil of £20.16. The overall cost, including broker support falls from £209,231 per annum to £195,582, a saving of £14k, whilst increasing the numbers covered to include all nursery children.

Catering Contracts

The tender process is underway for renewal of catering arrangements led by Tina Parkes (Executive Officer) with the support of the school buying hub. This is being tendered in 4 lots to recognise the geographical challenges and to allow current local providers to tender. An update on progress will be provided at the next meeting.

Schools were required to complete their emergency plans by September 2019 and following an extension to the deadline **nine schools are still to return this document and eight schools have yet to return their asbestos management plans**. This lack of compliance has been highlighted to the relevant ESM for follow up action.

Following the flat roof incident at St Catherine's Bridport a flat roof inspection process is being considered. 30 of our schools have some area of flat roof and 4 schools have a complete flat roof. Of the schools with flat roof areas 12 have had recent repairs, some minor and all schools have a gutter cleaning programme in place. There are currently more issues identified with our older schools with pitch roof arrangements.

To undertake a complete roof condition survey the cost is estimated at £45k and will be discussed with potential providers over the next month.

Karen Cook, Chief Finance and Operating Officer

Director of Education Updates

Coronavirus –COVID-19

COVID-19 is clearly a rapidly developing situation, and one that may have a significant impact on school and Trust operations over the coming months.

The DfE's *COVID-19: Guidance for Educational Settings Updated 25 February 2020* is a useful document, and one that we should all be familiar with. The government will be updating this guidance regularly to reflect changes in the situation and advice. If you are registered for immediate updates to 'Department for Education' on GOV.UK you will receive the appropriate latest advice on managing COVID-19 in educational settings.

[COVID-19: guidance for educational settings](#)

The guidance includes a poster to display in schools, and hyperlinks to resources to use with children to promote personal hygiene etc.

The current advice is for schools to take a measured, informed, sensible approach to the virus. The focus at this time should be on ensuring appropriate cleaning routines in school; good personal hygiene by children and staff; appropriate storage and removal of waste i.e paper handkerchiefs/tissues.

It is incumbent on all employees and service users to take personal responsibility for their own health and its potential impact on colleagues and other service users; this includes notifying managers if they have recently returned from one of the identified risk areas, or are likely to have been exposed to the virus in another way. Where individuals are unwell they should follow NHS advice with regards to attendance at work etc. Trust HR will provide advice to headteachers on managing COVID-19 related absence.

Please notify the Trust immediately if any member of staff or service user is confirmed to have contracted the virus.

In-line with government and NHS advice, schools should only close as a very last resort. Any decision to close a school should be taken in consultation with the school's Education Standards Manager/Director of Education. Directives from the NHS or Public Health England etc must be followed, again in consultation with the Trust.

Learning Theory

Current expectations are for KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4 students to learn/retain more information. Therefore teachers and students need to know how to achieve retention and retrieval most effectively and efficiently.

Dylan Wiliam states that it is imperative for teachers to have an understanding of *Cognitive Load Theory*:

A simple understanding of Cognitive Load Theory can transform teaching and children's learning.

- **Intrinsic Cognitive Load:** This is the inherent difficulty of a task or topic. It is largely out of the hands of the teacher, and is to an extent dictated by the curriculum or syllabus.
- **Extraneous Cognitive Load:** This is generated by the way in which the material is presented. This is largely in the hands of the teacher and school pedagogical policy and practice.
- **Germaine Cognitive Load:** This is generated by processing information, concepts and ideas, and the construction and automation of schemata. This is where learning takes place.

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If children's operational memory is overloaded with intrinsic and extraneous load, there will not be enough free capacity for the Germaine load required to make sense of the intended learning, make connections and embed the learning in the long term memory.

Teachers can reduce Intrinsic and Extraneous Cognitive Load, maximising room in the working memory for the Germaine Load, the effort required to learn material more securely.

Kevin Butlin, Director of Education

Safeguarding Update

1. CPOMS

Thanks to everyone for completing the SG4 and 5 forms. We are looking at ways to streamline these further, so look out for further updates.

One possible cause for concern is the disparity amongst schools in the levels of reporting of safeguarding schools. For example, in one school staff had reported 472 safeguarding concerns during the Autumn Term. In another school, over double the size, there were only 4.

ESMs will be talking to schools where there appears to be a lack of reporting to investigate further. In my opinion it is always better for staff to over report and then the DSLs to make a judgement on whether to take this further.

2. Transporting pupils in private cars

We have had a number of questions related to whether staff can transport pupils in their own cars. It is advisable that this is not done routinely, and all other avenues have been considered first. If there is no other option, the following conditions must be met:

- Ensure that the driver is not alone with any children. There are two reasons for this. The first is related to safeguarding the children and the adult. The second reason is because a driver cannot supervise children and drive.
- Evidence the driver have a clean and valid driving license with no more than 6 points for speeding, and no convictions for drink/drug driving, talking on a mobile whilst driving, careless or dangerous driving. A copy of the driver's license should be taken and kept on file with an updated copy taken every term.
- Evidence that adequate insurance cover is in place. Usually this will need to be business insurance.
- Evidence that the car is road worthy by taking copies of the MOT certificate.
- Ensure the driver knows how to get to the destination independently to avoid driving in convoy.
- Ensure the driver is equipped with a mobile telephone for emergencies.
- Ensure the driver is given an emergency plan (this can be verbal) to follow in the event of breakdown or road traffic collision.
- Ensure the driver understands and is familiar with seat belt legislation and that all passengers will be secured properly.



**Keeping children
safe in education**
Statutory guidance for schools and
colleges

September 2019

- Ensure that all children will be provided with child or booster seats if they are under 12 years of age or under 135cms in height, whichever they reach first and that only three point lap and diagonal safety belts are used in conjunction with a child or booster seat.
- Ensure that no child is carried in the front seat of a vehicle where an active airbag is fitted.
- Ensure that specific written permission is given by each parent for their child to be transported in private cars.

3. Supervision of Contractors in schools

Paragraph 180 of KCSIE 2019, clearly states that any contractor working in a school has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. How this applies to our schools and the process to follow is outlined below:

- Any contractor working in schools when pupils are present must have the correct DBS in place, if not they must be supervised by a member of the school staff.
- ID checks of any contractors must be carried out
- Contractors sent from TDA will have had appropriate DBS checks. All schools must have on file the latest letter of assurance from TDA and their list of approved contractors. These will both be available from the TDA portal. TDA will update their approved contractor list every time they appoint a new contractor.
- If a TDA contractor arrives, not on the approved list, they will they will have to be supervised. Please also inform Paul Stewart who will contact TDA.
- CAST will provide schools with a list of CAST approved contractor list. Letters of assurances will also be provided.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure that any other contractor used has the correct DBS and this has been verified
- If you regularly use a self-employed contractor, as they are not able to obtain a DBS individually, you may obtain the DBS check via the school.

4. DBS checks for Volunteers

Whilst there is no requirement that volunteers who are not in regulated activity should have a DBS check, in 'certain circumstances...schools and colleges may obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (not including barred list information)' (Keeping Children Safe in Education paragraph 169).

Schools are busy places and inevitably volunteers could easily be unsupervised; not least because supervised means 'by someone in regulated activity'; this means that supervision doesn't simply mean not working alone. Keeping Children Safe in Education recognises this potential loophole and says 'under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity (paragraph 167).'

'All schools should undertake a risk assessment on all volunteers and use their professional judgement and experience to decide whether or not to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity' (KCSIE, paragraph 170). In doing so they should consider:

- the nature of the work with children;
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on suitability;
- whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check.

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Without undertaking an Enhanced DBS check, schools would not know whether a person had committed offences that could mean they were unsuitable to work with children. In 2015, a teacher who had been jailed after being convicted for grooming a teenage girl was able to work as a volunteer in an infant school after his release. The school had no idea about his past because they had not carried out any checks.

Although not a statutory requirement in itself to complete an Enhanced DBS on volunteers, it is a **statutory requirement** to carry out a risk assessment on volunteers to ascertain whether there are 'certain circumstances' where an Enhanced DBS would be needed. Therefore it is most sensible to complete an Enhanced DBS on volunteers, especially if they regularly come into school, in addition to completing the mandatory risk assessment.

What schools should do:

- Complete a risk assessment for each volunteer
- Obtain an Enhanced DBS Check with Barred List if the person is in Regulated Activity
- Obtain an Enhanced DBS Check without Barred List if the person may be left unsupervised by someone who is themselves in Regulated Activity

A risk assessment template is available on the Plymouth CAST website under safeguarding resources. Follow this [link](#).

Neil Maslen, ESM

Governance Training

Formatio Governor Training Joining Instructions for Governors



We are delighted to inform you that this free online training resource for all governors of your Catholic school, designed by the Catholic Education Service, is available.

The governance training is for all those involved in governance in schools and academies of all abilities and experience. This includes governors, local governors and directors of Catholic Multi Academy Trust Companies.

You can access the training here: <http://formatio-ces.org/moodle/login/index.php>

The training consists of five modules to support you in your particular role as governor of a Catholic school:

1. An introduction to Catholic Education – **available now and takes about 30 minutes**
2. The environment of a Catholic school – **available now**
3. Strategic Leadership – *available Spring 2020*
4. Accountability – *available Spring 2020*
5. Financial Performance – *available Spring 2020*

To access the training please follow the instructions in the attached letter. If you have any questions or are in need of any support please do not hesitate to get in touch with Elisa McLaughlin, Education Officer at the Catholic Education Service (emclaughlin@catholiceducation.org.uk) or Anna-Marie Kenny, the e-learning developer, at a.kenny@st-josephs.hants.sch.uk.

“I found it informative and interesting and it gave a clear overview of the context of Catholic education and how and why Catholic schools exist.”

Feedback from pilot participant, 2019

“Thought this was a really well-designed training with lots to think about. It presented complex material with clarity”

Feedback from pilot participant, 2019

Staff Survey

Plymouth CAST is committed to listening to its staff so that we can find out the level of understanding of our vision and values and also find out more about the ethos and working practices in our schools and, where possible, make changes for the better.

As part of this commitment, it is very important that there is feedback from all staff on key issues concerning Plymouth CAST. We have asked QDP Services to manage and analyse a staff survey for us again this year.

The guarantee of individual anonymity will apply fully to this staff survey. Your feedback and observations are invaluable, and the survey results will give allow us to see the improvements made since the last survey and how we can continue making improvements.

The survey can be undertaken using QDP's online feedback software. To access the questionnaire and express your views, employees will need to follow the link which will be provided to each school on Monday 2nd March 2020.

It is important that you take this opportunity to express your opinions. The survey will run for 3 weeks and will close on 20th March 2020.

Occupational Health

Our contract with Medigold (previously known as IMASS), has ended. We are currently working on securing a contract with another provider. In the meantime, we do have an alternative provider that can complete referrals on a pay as you go basis, please contact HR if you require the details.

Pre employment checks should be completed using the form on the Plymouth CAST portal.

Teachers' Pensions (TPS)

Could Headteachers please remind members of their teaching staff that, if they have a teachers' pension, they are required to establish a log-in on the Teachers' Pension website

<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/forms/registration.aspx> Registrations are monitored by TPS and the Trust receives monthly reminders to ensure compliance.

Adelle Pope, HR Manager

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY (PLYMOUTH)



Pupils from Sacred Heart in Paignton and St Mary's in Bodmin also collected money when each classroom had a crib box for their pupils to bring in foreign coins as well as English ones. CCSP welcomes collections and donations, no matter how great or small as every penny counts, and we would like to thank these two schools for their support.

Does your school have an orange box?

A number of our Catholic schools already have a CCSP orange box into which pupils and parents can recycle :-

- Stamps, old envelopes, postcards and first day covers
 - Coins and bank notes from all over the world
 - Precious metals including broken jewellery, old trophies, gold, silver etc
 - Medals and badges
 - Costume jewellery
 - Keys and locks
 - Metals including toys, cutlery, household ornaments
 - Watches old and new, quartz or wind up
- Many of these orange boxes have been delivered since the start of this academic year as the schools have held Patchwork Parenting courses, but some schools have been collecting on our behalf for a number of years.

We are in the process of compiling which parishes and schools in the Diocese have an orange box, so if your school has one but you are not on list below, please let Vicki Dunstone know by emailing vicki.dunstone@prcdtr.org.uk

Please also get in touch if you would like to take part in our recycling scheme and have an orange box in your school. In 2018, we raised just over £2,000 and in last year we raised almost £1,500. Let's hope 2020 will be the best year yet!

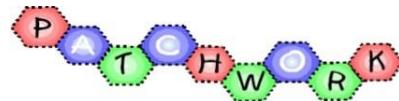


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St Mary's, Penzance
St Peter's, Plymouth
Cathedral School and Holy Cross RC Primary School,
Plymouth
St Paul's, Plymouth
St John the Baptist, Dartmouth
St Josephs, Exmouth
Our Lady's, Barnstaple
St Boniface's Catholic College, Plymouth
St Joseph's, Newton Abbot

Patchwork Parenting Course Update



Second half Spring term courses:

Parenting through the Primary Years -

Tuesday afternoons - 25/2/2020 – 21/4/2020 @ St Peters, Plymouth 1.30pm – 3pm

Wednesday afternoons – 26/2/2020 – 22/4/2020 @ St Josephs, Poole 1.30pm – 3pm

Thurs mornings – 27/2/2020 – 23/4/2020 @ Christ the King, Bournemouth 9am -10.30am

Thursday afternoons – 27/2/2020 – 23/4/2020 @ St Catherine's, Bridport 1.30pm – 3pm

Summer term courses:

Parenting through the Primary Years -

Tuesday afternoons — 5/5/2020 – 16/6/2020 @ St John the Baptist, Camborne 1.30 – 3pm

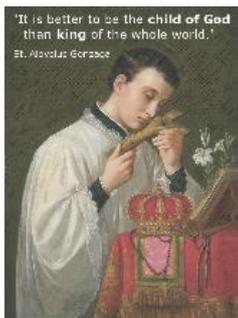
Wednesday afternoons - 6/5/2020 - 17/6/2020 @ St Marys, Buckfast 1.30 – 3pm

Thursday afternoons – 7/5/2020 – 18/6/2020 @ St Mary and St Joseph's, Wool 1.30 – 3pm

Bookings for 2020/2021 –

After Easter, we will be making bookings for Patchwork courses for the academic year 2020-2021. If you would like to show an early expression for interest, please contact Caroline Hambly via email caroline.hambly@prcdtr.org.uk

Please join us to celebrate the feast of St Aloysius Gonzaga – Friday, 19 June 2020



Last Summer, 4 schools took part in our first ever non uniform day by wearing blue, white and yellow to school.

Just over £400 was raised and we hope that we can beat this target in June, as more schools have already pledged to support us.

If your school would like to take part to help us raise money to continue to support children living in the Diocese, please contact Vicki Dunstone at vicki.dunstone@prcdtr.org.uk or call 01364 645420.

Would you like to take part in our Great Big Diocesan Quiz?

The next Great Big Diocesan Quiz is being held on Friday, 24 April 2020 and the CCSP warmly extend the invite to all schools once again to compete against the parishes for Ultimate Diocesan Championship status.



Last year, Priory School in St Marychurch Torquay joined it and it would be great to have more schools take part again this year to be in with a chance of winning this trophy for the overall winning team.

All materials will be provided by CCSP – you just need to find a venue and some teams to compete on the night, competing against each other and against other teams in the Diocese. Please contact Vicki Dunstone to register your interest and she will arrange for an information pack to be sent to you.

2020 CCSP Annual Mass

This year, our Catholic Children's Society Annual Mass is being held at Buckfast Abbey on Thursday, 18 June at 2.30pm. If you would like to come along to meet members of staff and members of the Board of Trustees, please contact Karen Grute, who can provide you with more information nearer the time.

More information – If you have any other ideas to help CCSP raise funds, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Vicki by email vicki.dunstone@prcdtr.org.uk or by phone 01364 645420.

If you would like more information on our grant funding, please visit our website www.ccsplymouth.org.uk or contact Karen Grute by email ccs@prcdtr.org.uk or by phone 01364 645420.

If you are interested in running a Patchwork Parenting course in your school, please contact Caroline Hambly by email caroline.hambly@prcdtr.org.uk or by phone 01364 645420.

Many thanks,



Vicki Dunstone, Fundraiser and Communications Officer

