



A Vision for Excellence

An opportunity to have your say on the vision, mission, values, principles and behaviours which will bring about a step change in the quality of education in CAST schools, inspired by the Gospel and the teaching of the Catholic Church

Approved by the Board on 14 September 2018

PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER

The purpose of this paper is to invite all the stakeholders of Plymouth CAST into a deeper and more compelling understanding of the vision which underpins our educational work. We are not starting from scratch, since the Church has a rich body of teaching on the purpose of Catholic schools. We're reminding ourselves of that teaching and discussing how best we can express that vision and mission in our context.

In this process, we also want to look again at the principles which will inform our thinking and decision-making in the future. There are challenges ahead for all state-funded schools – not least financial – and we need to be clear about how we will approach any decisions which have to be made.

One point is a 'given' and that is that our children and young people deserve the very best Catholic education we can provide for them. Our aim is that Plymouth CAST quickly becomes synonymous with excellence and everyone who works for CAST is committed to making that happen. What is set out below is the foundational teaching which will inspire us in our work, our mission.

This process is also designed to bring more clarity to the roles and expectations of those who work for CAST or who give generously of their time to support our schools, especially our governors who are our advocates and champions in the local community and who provide invaluable support and challenge for our headteachers. Any involvement in the mission of a Catholic school brings with it expectations of the highest standards of personal and professional behavior and these are spelled out in more detail in the two draft documents accompanying this paper: a draft Governors' Handbook and a draft Staff Code of Conduct.

The last few years have not been easy for Plymouth CAST. In many respects we have fallen far short of what the Church and state expects of its schools. We require a 'step change' in approach, to make sure that we move at pace towards the provision of excellent education in all our schools. We need to improve the educational outcomes for our pupils, achieve financial viability, develop a stronger common purpose, develop better systems and processes and improve the opportunities for staff development. Our inspiration and motivation for this work – our 'why' – comes from our mission as Catholic schools.

That is why we are going back to our source – the Gospel and the teaching of the Church – to re-animate our work and give us a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, to give us a new and compelling expression of what we do, how we do it, but above all why we do it.

Attachments with this paper:

- Powerpoint version of Vision and Values paper
- Draft Revised Scheme of Delegation – Introduction, Appendices 1 and 2 (Sept 2018)
- Draft Governors' Handbook
- Draft Staff Code of Conduct
- Proforma for school's summary of stakeholder responses

OUR VISION

Catholic education is part of the mission of the Church “to preach the Gospel to all nations: to enrich all people with the light of the Good News, which, by its essence, is aimed at transforming the human person and setting him or her on the path that leads to salvation.” [1] In our schools, **our pupils will encounter the living God**, as revealed in Jesus Christ, perhaps for the first time in their lives. They will encounter His love and truth in the Gospel, Religious Education, the liturgies of the Church and in the pastoral care and attention they receive.

They will be invited on a journey of transformation to **become more loving and compassionate human beings** so that they will grow into adults who will help to make the ‘civilization of love’ a reality. The Catholic school has at its foundation a belief in **“the dignity of a human being.”** [2] This anthropology gives rise to an understanding of education which “aims at the formation of the human person” [3] – a rounded education which involves their spiritual, moral, physical and intellectual development. A vision, in other words, of human flourishing based on the Gospel revelation.

Catholic schools were established firstly to allow Catholic parents to exercise their right to choose a Catholic school for their child. The Church, however, **welcomes those who are not Catholic** to its schools and has never defined the Catholicity of its schools according to the numbers of Catholic pupils. “In the certainty that the Spirit is at work in every person, the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included.” [4] In our context in Plymouth Diocese, with relatively low numbers of Catholic children, this inclusive and welcoming approach is all the more central to our vision.

From the beginning of its work in education, inspired by the example of Jesus, a priority for the Catholic school has always been the education and care of **the poor and marginalised**. This is re-affirmed in recent documents, beginning with the *Declaration on Christian Education* at Vatican II, which urges “pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic schools fulfil their function in a continually more perfect way, and especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of faith.” [5]

The personal transformation through education which is offered in our schools is not only so that our pupils will become better human beings but so that they will contribute to “the building of a world that is more human.” [6] They will in other words be invited to contribute to **the common good**, the development of a world which is more just, where the dignity of life is protected and promoted, and **the earth, our common home**, is cherished as part of a simple and selfless lifestyle.

In the view of some, the purpose of education is primarily to serve the market economy and the individual inasmuch as they achieve well-being based on economic success. The Church’s view of education is based on service. “Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others.” [7] This does not mean that we do not want our young people to benefit from material prosperity, but it defines the purpose of knowledge acquisition from a Gospel perspective. Catholic schools believe that every child is **gifted and called** to do good in the world according to their ability. Helping them to discover their gifts and calling is a key part of our work. Our schools should encourage and develop a **culture of vocation**.

The kind of curriculum which serves such an altruistic agenda is about more than just the acquisition of knowledge for personal success. In keeping with a vision of human flourishing for the common good, the Church encourages in its schools the development of “a multiplicity of **skills that enrich the human person**, such as creativity, imagination, the ability to take on responsibilities, to love the world, to cherish justice and compassion.” [8] The core purpose of the curriculum as defined in legislation is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which “promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils.” [9] The Church shares the state’s aspiration for a holistic education and is clear about the purpose of such an education.

Social justice is at the heart of the Church’s vision for education, “since it is motivated by the Christian ideal, the Catholic school is particularly sensitive to the call from every part of the world for a more just society.” [10] It is not only a commitment to make society more just and conformed to the Gospel, but a commitment to the development of the individual, since “education is an important means of improving the social and economic condition of the individual.” [11] In practice, this means a commitment to a culture of **high aspirations** – again, not necessarily to achieve material success, but to flourish as a fully rounded, educated human being. This commitment to the transformative power of education leads naturally to a commitment to the **highest possible standards**. The Church’s vision of education would not be well served by a complacent approach to developing skills and knowledge. Society will only be transformed for the better by well educated, well meaning, creative, caring, responsible, passionate and imaginative young people.

That is why the Canon Law of the Church is clear about the standards required. “Directors of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is **at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area.**” [12] In our ‘dual system’ we do not design the curriculum or the testing regime, but we work in close co-operation with those who do. We have in common a desire to see our young people reach the highest standards of reading, writing, mathematical mastery and knowledge of the world we live in, so that they may leave us with “a special awareness of being called to be **positive agents of change**” [13] with a desire to build the kingdom of love, peace and justice. Whether they leave us at the age of 11, 16 or 18, our invitation to them is to work for positive change in the world.

The Catholic school, inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his mission, should be characterized by a **climate** which promotes and supports human flourishing. “The Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ. It derives all the energy necessary for its educational work from Him and thus ‘creates in the school community an **atmosphere permeated with the Gospel** spirit of freedom and love.’ In this setting the pupils **experience [their] dignity** as a person before [they] know its definition.” [14] Human dignity is diminished by ignorance, poverty, lack of opportunity to fulfil one’s potential. In our schools we will seek to deepen in our pupils a sense of their own worth, to develop their self-esteem.

It is the role of **Gospel-inspired leaders** to create and maintain such an atmosphere so that our young people flourish and the adults in our schools are motivated and trained to the highest standards to support this mission. The Church expects that those in ‘reserved posts’ in Catholic education – the head, deputy and person in charge of RE – are practicing Catholics. What that means is described in some detail in *Christ at the Centre* (2012).

Our current vision statement is:

“If we are effective in our mission, CAST will become:
where every parent would want their child educated;
where every school sector employee would want to work;
where children of all abilities and backgrounds flourish;
where all look to for good practice and innovation;
where vulnerable educational institutions look for support;
where ‘the gospel is preached at all times; where necessary, using words’ (after St Francis).”

This statement is not associated in CAST with the excellence the Church expects of its schools. It is time to consider a new vision statement, derived from the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, focused on excellence and high standards. Following the consultation process, the Board will consider a new vision statement on 26 October to express the ‘step change’ that is required to ensure that Plymouth CAST fulfils the expectations of the Church.

OUR MISSION

Our mission statement is an expression of how we will go about making our vision a reality. The mission of Catholic schools takes place in a local context and, depending on the circumstances, different aspects of the Church's vision may be highlighted. Our current mission statement is:

“Our Mission is to provide outstanding education and learning in a safe environment where Catholic values are promoted and encouraged for the benefit of all.”

This mission statement does not seem to be ‘owned’ by the schools in the Trust and, like the current vision statement, is not in practice associated with the highest expectations of the Church for its schools. It is not widely displayed in schools and it seems very much a forgotten statement. The intention is to ‘refresh’ this mission statement with a renewed sense of energy and commitment, a statement which captures this moment in the history of the Trust, a moment of renewal and re-commitment.

Many institutions also have a motto, or in business terms a ‘marketing strap line’ – a neat summary of what the ‘brand’ stands for (e.g. Nike - “Just do it” and Adidas - “Impossible is nothing”). Many Catholic schools and dioceses have a motto, often in Latin. Plymouth CAST currently does not have a motto, but it may be worth considering this to help us to project our mission more effectively into a crowded world of signs.

Please use the attached proforma to provide a summary of your community's responses to the following 7 questions:

Question 1.

What main ideas (the ones in bold are a guide) from the vision section should be highlighted in our vision statement to reflect our context?

Question 2.

What main ideas (the ones in bold are a guide) from the vision section should be highlighted in our mission statement to reflect our context? Would you like to suggest a motto?

OUR VALUES

The values which inspire our work and inform the ethos and decision-making in our schools are the values of the Gospel, based on the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 5: 1-11). These values are presented to the school community at assemblies and liturgies and explored throughout the working week in the classroom. When we come to celebrate achievement in the school, we recognize first and foremost those who have witnessed to Gospel values, as well as recognising excellence in other areas.

The Beatitudes, according to the Catechism, "...depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity." [15] In a very moving way, they sum up the essence of the transformed human being God calls us all to be in Jesus. These are the kind of persons and actions that are 'blessed' by God, this is the 'job description' of people living in God's kingdom, as opposed to the world's kingdom of selfishness, inequality, aggression, materialism and violence. They "challenge each generation to reflect on what persons and actions they consider to be important or blessed." [16]

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

Gospel value: Humility, seeing life as a gift

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted"

Gospel value: Compassion, empathy

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"

Gospel value: Kindness, gentleness

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied"

Gospel value: Justice, working for a fairer world

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"

Gospel value: Forgiveness, reconciliation

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"

Gospel value: Integrity, do what you say

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God"

Gospel value: Non-violence, committed to peace

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

Gospel value: Courage, standing up for truth

Question 3.

What do you do to make Gospel values a reality in your school? What more can you do?

OUR OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following 10 principles, derived from our vision and values and specific to our context, will determine our priorities in the coming years and how we go about managing the change process. Embedded in these principles are the Nolan principles of public life (See: Appendix 1 for Nolan Principles).

Dignity of the individual – selflessness, focus on dignity of other rather than ‘my’ dignity, especially the dignity of the child or young person. Adults in our community share the same dignity, of course, but our schools are ‘child-centred’ – our reason for being is to provide an education and formation for them of the highest quality.

Preferential option for the most vulnerable – from our Old Testament roots, Christianity has had a particular mission to serve those who are marginal in our world – the lost, the least and the last. In our schools, our most disadvantaged and ‘lost’ should be a priority in the allocation of time, attention and resources.

High standards – as stated in Canon Law, the Church has high expectations of the academic performance of Catholic schools. This is a question of social justice, equipping our pupils to be ‘agents of change’ and giving them a chance to flourish in a volatile world. In line with the principle of dignity, high standards extends to all areas of life in school – presentation of work, appearance, quality of assemblies, reports and so on.

Accountability – clear expectations are required about who is responsible for what in the Trust and people should then be held to account for their responsibilities. A culture of accountability supports the principles of subsidiarity i.e. responsibility at the level where it can be most effectively deployed. Accountability is one of the main drivers of the vision. See: *Note on Subsidiarity*.

Good stewardship – our schools are funded by the state, by tax payers, and we have a public responsibility to ensure value for money. In common with all other public bodies, we are experiencing the impact of austerity. Our challenge is to provide an excellent Catholic education for our pupils while delivering value for money for the state and the Church. Good stewardship means that we challenge inefficiency and consider the viability of schools with deficit budgets, falling rolls and poor outcomes. The Catholicity of leadership is also a factor in considerations of stewardship.

Unity – we are one family of schools, one Trust. Joining a MAT requires a shift in mind-set from everyone involved in a school, especially leaders and governors. The Trust is now the key legal entity, not individual schools. The Board is the employer, not the local governing board. But what are the implications of this in practice, linked to the other principles? Do we, for example, continue to subsidize and support a Trust academy which has a deficit budget, falling roll, poor outcomes and is becoming unviable? Is it fair in that scenario to take resources away from other schools?

Alignment – a consequence of the previous principle is that for many policies and procedures, alignment is the default position. One employer means one pay policy, one finance system, one HR function and so on. What we must consider is do we align everything, or do we allow some room for local variation?

Objectivity – in school communities, often interwoven with parish communities, friendships form over the years, which is enriching but can compromise some of the principles outlined above. Friendships can undermine effective accountability and clear judgement about viability. Our leaders especially must bring objectivity to their judgements and decision-making and never be seen to be siding with a vested interest or individual.

Openness – in a period of change and challenge like the one we are entering into, there will be some difficult conversations and some tough decisions to be made. Throughout the process, it is important that we establish an open

and honest culture, with questions answered as fully as possible and opportunities provided for everyone to speak and be listened to.

Integrity – in common with all public bodies, but especially so in those associated with the Church, the highest standards of honesty and integrity must apply. Moral rectitude should be a defining feature of our schools. Any community which values integrity must provide opportunities for stakeholders to ‘speak up’ if there are any concerns or suspicions of wrongdoing, especially when it comes to the safety and well-being of children.

In line with the Nolan principles, all staff and local governors and especially those in **leadership** roles will be expected to promote and support these principles by example.

Note on Subsidiarity

In the original Scheme of Delegation, there was a paragraph on Subsidiarity. This paragraph assured academy schools in CAST that they retained a high level of autonomy, that nothing in fact had changed when they joined the Trust. This approach did not deliver outstanding Catholic education. In the new draft Scheme of Delegation (Sept 2018), based on the Catholic Education Service Model Scheme, there is no mention of subsidiarity. Instead, it states that “the Directors are accountable to the Bishop to ensure that [each] Academy is conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon law and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church so that, at all times, the Academy may serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.” While of course subsidiarity is a key part of Catholic Social Teaching, the main focus in the new scheme is Canon law -with its emphasis on formation, standards and the common good – and the teachings of the Church, which for a Catholic school are mediated by the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome.

Question 4.

Do you have any comments on the principles proposed to govern the work and decision making of the Trust?

OUR EXPECTED BEHAVIOURS

“Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together.”

Ephesians 4:1-6

Based on our vision, values and principles, what kind of behavior do we expect from the staff employed by the Trust? Attached to this paper is a draft Staff Code of Conduct, as required by *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2018). A final Staff Code of Conduct will be approved by the directors on 26 October.

As a Catholic Trust, all adults in school are expected to support and promote the vision, values and principles of the Trust. There should be a recognizable ethos or climate in our schools, inspired by our foundational vision. All relationships in the school should be based on a belief in the fundamental dignity of the person. All interactions should be characterized by courtesy and sensitivity, respectful listening and constructive dialogue, while recognising the principles of accountability and decision-making. Difficult messages and conversations, which will arise in challenging circumstances, should be characterised by civility at all times.

The draft Staff Code of Conduct spells out in more detail the types of behavior which are acceptable and those that are not. In addition to the Staff Code of Conduct, all staff employed under Teachers’ Terms and Conditions of Employment have a statutory obligation to adhere to the ‘Teachers’ Standards 2012’ and in relation to the Code, Part 2 of the Teachers’ Standards - Personal and Professional Conduct.

A Code of Conduct for governors is included in the Draft Governors’ Handbook.

Question 5.

What expected behaviours, based on our Gospel values, should we highlight in a Code of Conduct for our schools?

OUR STRUCTURES

A revised draft scheme of delegation, approved by the Board on 14 September 2018, sought to bring clarity to the roles and responsibilities of all levels of leadership and management in CAST, especially of our local governing boards. These committed volunteers are advocates and champions for our schools and we want to encourage them in their role and develop an understanding of best practice with them. A draft **Governors' Handbook** was sent to all Chairs with this paper to provide more detail on the role of local governing boards in specific scenarios.

Please note that the revised draft scheme of delegation does not apply to St. Mary's, Buckfast. In accordance with the provisions of the original and draft revised Articles of Association, they have their own Scheme of Delegation approved by the Trustees of Buckfast Abbey.

Question 6.

Do you have any comments on the role for local governing boards as outlined in the draft Governors' Handbook? How can we make even better use of the expertise and commitment we have in our local governors?

Question 7.

Do you have any other comments on this paper?

THE PROCESS

The deadline for all proformas to be received by email to raymond.friel@plymouthcast.org.uk is **4.00 pm on Monday 15 October**. School leaders have been invited to lead this consultation process with their school communities in the way which best suits their context and return one proforma summarising the views of the school community. At the very least, staff, pupils, local governors and parents and carers should be involved in the discussions. Local parish priests should also be invited to participate. Individual letters or emails are permitted.

Thereafter, the Senior Executive Leadership, working closely with a representative Vision and Values Steering Group, will collate the responses and bring forward a series of proposals to the Board meeting on 26 October 2018. CAST stakeholders will be informed of any resolutions adopted by the Board as soon as possible thereafter.

Summary of Timeline

14 Sept	Board approves Vision and Values paper and draft revised Scheme of Delegation, Governors' Handbook and Staff Code of Conduct
17 Sept	Vision and Values paper and attachments sent to all heads and chairs of LGBs, CAST Central employees
27/28 Sept	Heads and Deputies conference, Exeter
1/3/4 Oct	Governors' Consultation meetings: 1 Oct (East), 3 Oct (Central), 4 Oct (West)
15 Oct	Deadline for return of proformas summarising each school community's responses, with clear indication of relative strength of feeling of each point – e.g. 'all felt that...' 'a significant number felt...' 'some felt..' 'one or two expressed a view that...'
26 Oct	Board considers representations presented by CEO with a Vision and Values paper recommending a vision and mission statement, motto, operational principles and possible name change. The CEO will also present a final draft of the Governors' Handbook, the Staff Code of Conduct, Scheme of Delegation and Strategic Plan.
29 Oct	Roll-out of new vision statements and clarifications.... Any other consultations arising from the feedback and the Board's decisions announced.

References

- [1] Cardinal Grocholewski, *The Catholic School According to the Code of Canon Law* (Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, Vol.10, Issue 2)
- [2] Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education*,1 (1965)
- [3] Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education*,1 (1965)
- [4] *The Catholic School*, 85 (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1975)
- [5] Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education*,9 (1965)
- [6] Vatican II, *Declaration on Christian Education*,4 (1965)
- [7] *The Catholic School*, 56 (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1975)
- [8] *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)
- [9] Education Act, 2002
- [10] *The Catholic School*, 58 (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1975)
- [11] *Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014)
- [12] Code of Canon Law, 806.2
- [13] *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 30 (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)
- [14] *The Catholic School*, 55 (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1975)
- [15] Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1717
- [16] Daniel J. Harrington SJ, *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew* (Liturgical Press, 2007)

Appendix I

The Nolan Principles

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations)

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office should not place themselves under the financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity** – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
- **Honesty** – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example