



**Catholic Education Service**  
Supporting Catholic Education Since 1847

## Strategic Plan 2021 - 2024

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## Introduction

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The Catholic Education Service (CES) acts on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to support Catholic education. We have a strong and positive working relationship with both the British and Welsh Governments, sharing the aims of high academic standards for all and increased parental choice. We represent Catholic education to the Government and wider society and support our bishops, dioceses and educational institutions.

We have a long history of providing education in England and Wales and there are currently over 2,175 Catholic schools educating nearly 850,000 pupils, around 9% of the total. There are also Catholic special schools, colleges, universities and other higher education institutions. Catholic schools and colleges promote '*an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony*'.

Our sector and our organisation face a number of tasks over the next three years. This document sets out our key objectives and how we plan to reach them across six important areas: promoting Catholic education; supporting our dioceses; religious education; professional formation (*Formatio*); political engagement and communication; and digital engagement.



## Our History

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The Catholic Church was the first provider of schools and universities in England. The earliest schools were cathedral and monastic schools established from the late sixth century onwards.

In 1847 a unique partnership was agreed with the State, and the Catholic Poor-School Committee was established by the bishops of England and Wales, to represent them collectively and to focus on the promotion of Catholic elementary education for the growing Catholic population, particularly fueled by immigration in the big cities and industrial areas.

The Church put the setting up of Catholic schools for the Catholic community ahead of building churches, often using its schools in those early days as the place for worship for the parish. In 1905 the Committee was renamed the Catholic Education Council and its remit enlarged to include secondary education (this later became the Catholic Education Service).

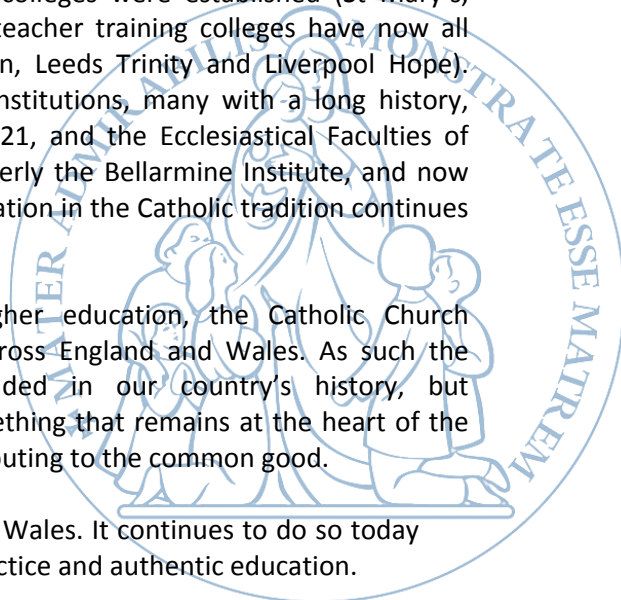
Catholic schools continued to be established throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which, at a time when state involvement in education was still very limited, meant that Catholic parents from poor backgrounds were nevertheless able to send their children to school. Many Catholic schools were established in the 19th century to meet the needs of poor Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Catholic schools have successfully received the disadvantaged from new immigrant populations and integrated them into British society over many generations.

In 1944 the educational landscape across England and Wales changed forever with the passing of the Education Act 1944 (also known as the 'Butler Act'). Under the Butler Act, most Catholic schools became 'voluntary aided' schools. This meant that they remained part of the state system of education, but with equality of revenue funding under local education authorities, whilst retaining their distinctively Catholic ethos through various legal protections which continue to apply to Catholic schools to this day. The settlement between Church and State meant that the funding of Catholic schools was shared by the Catholic foundations of the schools (in most cases the dioceses or religious orders) and by the government. The first Catholic sponsored academies opened in 2005 and from 2011 some voluntary aided Catholic schools began to convert to academies. Most dioceses now have an academisation strategy and by 2021 about 35% of Catholic schools had become academies.

The Church is also involved in higher education in England through its involvement in the Catholic universities and other higher education institutions. Following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy, the Bishops' intention to establish schools meant that teacher training became a priority. With this in mind, a number of teacher training colleges were established (St Mary's, established in 1850, is one of the oldest). The remaining teacher training colleges have now all become universities in their own right (St Mary's, Newman, Leeds Trinity and Liverpool Hope). These work alongside a diverse range of smaller Catholic institutions, many with a long history, e.g. Blackfriars *studium*, originally founded in Oxford in 1221, and the Ecclesiastical Faculties of Theology and Philosophy founded in Leuven in 1614 (formerly the Bellarmine Institute, and now Mater Ecclesiae College at St Mary's University). Higher education in the Catholic tradition continues to flourish.

Through its involvement in primary, secondary and higher education, the Catholic Church currently educates almost 850,000 pupils and students across England and Wales. As such the Church's stake in education is not only deeply embedded in our country's history, but through its continued collaboration with the state, is something that remains at the heart of the Church's mission, serving the Catholic community and contributing to the common good.

Historically Catholic education has flourished in England and Wales. It continues to do so today and will continue to act as a beacon and provider of good practice and authentic education.



## The CES Team

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### Leadership Team

The Right Reverend Marcus Stock **Chairman**  
Paul Barber **Chairman**  
Catherine Bryan **Assistant Director (Education)**  
Christine Fischer **Assistant Director and Head of Legal**

### Legal Team

Keri Goddard **Senior Solicitor**  
Jacqui Callcutt **Solicitor**

### Education Team

Philip Robinson **Education Adviser (Religious Education)**  
Dr Arthur Naylor **Education Adviser (Higher Education)**  
Dr Nancy Walbank **Senior Education Policy Adviser**  
Angela Keller **Education Adviser (Wales)**  
Jane Goring **Catholic Schools Inspection Project Lead**  
Eileen Williams **Projects Manager and PA to Director**  
Rebekah Hayward **Executive Assistant**

### Public Affairs Team

Marie Southall **Director of Partnerships and Public Affairs**  
James Willsher **CES Communications Manager**  
Tom Burke **Partnerships and Public Affairs Manager**  
Molly Conrad **Partnerships and Public Affairs Officer**  
Elena Attfield **Partnerships and Public Affairs Officer**  
Robert Rushworth **IT and Data Manager**

### CES Management Committee

The Right Reverend Marcus Stock **Bishop of Leeds**  
The Right Reverend Bishop Alan Williams **Bishop of Brentwood**  
The Right Reverend Bishop Philip Egan **Bishop of Portsmouth**  
The Right Reverend Bishop Mark Davies **Bishop of Shrewsbury**  
The Right Reverend Bishop John Sherrington **Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster**  
The Very Reverend Canon John Weatherill  
Kate Griffin



## Core work: Representing the Bishops

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**Working with others, we will act on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales to support Catholic education.**

We are committed to working with diocesan school commissions and services to support Catholic education throughout England and Wales. We will identify opportunities to protect and enhance the role of Catholic education and ensure that the views of the Bishops of England and Wales are articulated effectively in discussions with the UK and Welsh governments. We will facilitate partnership working that advances the capacity of the sector to provide inspiring leadership, strategic governance and the highest educational standards. A particular focus will be working with Catholic universities, as we recognise the increasing importance of Catholic universities in supporting the mission of the Church in education.

### Principal Objectives

Represent the views of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales to the UK and Welsh Governments and other agencies.

Assist the Bishops' Conference to develop policy on Catholic education.

Draw on the experience of colleagues and partners to assist in the formulation of education policy.

Work closely with the Catholic universities, to promote their Catholic identity and engage them on matters of policy that have an impact on Catholic education.

### Principal Activities

- Respond to consultations commissioned by the UK and Welsh governments and other education agencies that have an impact on the Catholic sector
- Participate in meetings and discussions on education policy, ensuring that the views of the Catholic sector are articulated effectively and reflected in policy pronouncements by relevant organisations.
- Keep the Bishops informed of policy and political developments through the Department of Education and Formation and Plenary Meetings.
- Formulate developments in policy and advise on their implications.
- Engage with diocesan colleagues, religious orders and existing organisations such as the Diocesan Schools' Commissioners' Conference (DSC), the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).
- Ensure regular contact with Catholic universities and higher education institutions and the Bishop for Higher Education on the mission and strategic direction of Catholic higher education in England and Wales.
- Engage Catholic universities in research and development of education policy.



## Core work: Supporting our Dioceses

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**We will continue to support our dioceses in carrying out their education functions.**

The trustees of dioceses and religious orders are responsible for the running of Catholic schools. Dioceses exercise oversight and supervision of Catholic schools, this includes inspection, visitation and general regulation of Catholic schools including religious education and the employment of senior leaders, teachers of Religious Education and chaplains. The CES supports dioceses and religious orders through the provision of model documents, advice and guidance.

### Principal Objectives

Produce and maintain national guidance and model documents.

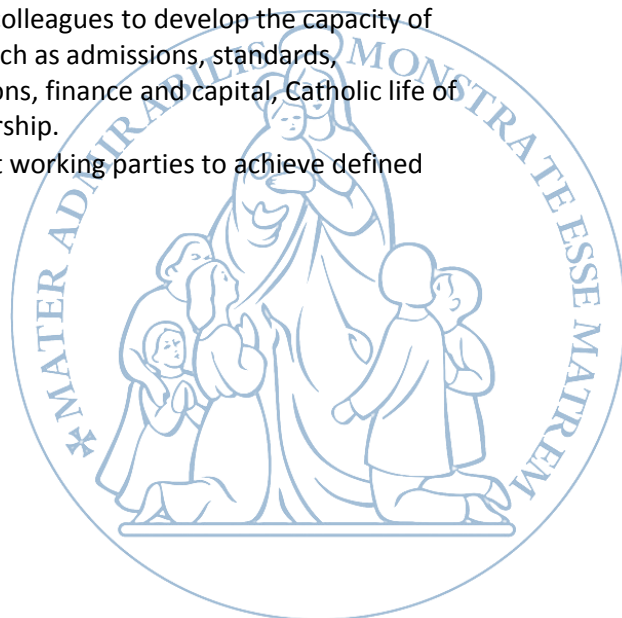
Provide technical advice for individual diocesan and religious order trustee queries.

Support for, and facilitate professional discussion and in-service training.

Undertake collaborative projects based on our agreed policy priorities.

### Principal Activities

- Maintain an integrated set of model employment policies and procedures, including template contracts.
- Produce and maintain guidance for dioceses, religious orders and schools on current issues, such as admissions, governance, equality and freedom of information requests.
- Produce regular letters to dioceses informing them about the progress of current issues and policy developments as they arise.
- Provide regular legal and employment updates to dioceses via the Legal Newsletter
- Be a first point of contact for technical queries from dioceses (and, through them, schools) and religious orders.
- Assist in individual cases where there are potential national implications of where there are issues of a complex technical nature.
- Attending, and (where appropriate) helping to organise, conferences including the DSC Conference and NBRIA.
- Support national networks of schools with particular characteristics, such as non-maintained special schools, sixth-form colleges (ACVIC), teaching schools and independent schools (CISC).
- Work with diocesan colleagues to develop the capacity of the sector in areas such as admissions, standards, governance, admissions, finance and capital, Catholic life of the school and leadership.
- Establish and support working parties to achieve defined pieces of work.



## Core work: Religious Education

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**We will continue to improve the quality of Religious Education (RE) in Catholic schools in England and Wales through working with strategic partners in Government, Ofsted, Estyn, dioceses and Catholic universities.**

We need to ensure that Religious Education continues keep pace with the ever-changing educational landscape and continues to serve our schools as the “core of the core curriculum” with the same academic demands and expectations as other core subjects.

### Principal Objectives

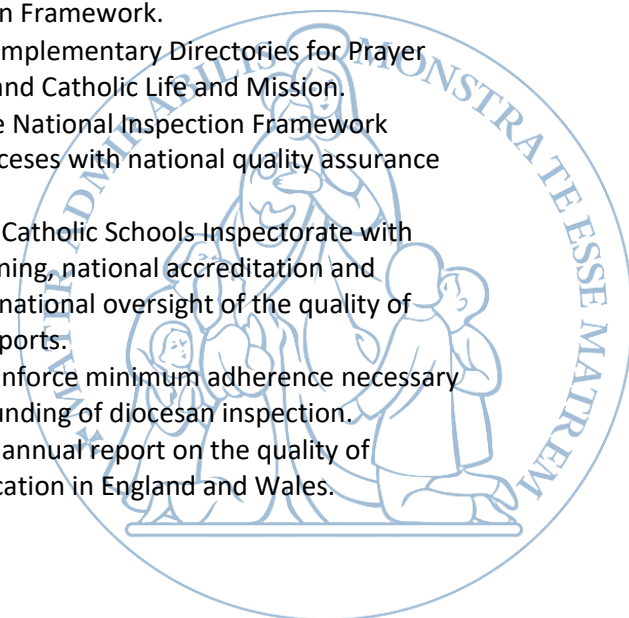
Improve the quality of teaching and examination of Catholic Religious Education at GCSE and A Level.

Improve the teaching and assessment of Religious Education in Key Stages 1-3 and ensure consistency with other core subjects.

Improve the rigour of inspection of Religious Education

### Principal Activities

- Continue to work with Awarding Organisations and the DfE to ensure that GCSE and A Level Religious Studies guarantee the integrity of Catholic RE
- Collect data annually and provide analysis of it to ensure that Catholic schools are not unfairly disadvantaged by following the more demanding Catholic specifications; keep track of the impact of the new examinations on pupil outcomes.
- Revise the KS4-5 of the Religious Education Directory (RED) to enhance the routes through GCSE, A Level and General RE.
- Revise the Religious Education Directory (RED).
- Deliver CPD for diocesan advisers on the implementation of the RED, to be rolled out to all schools.
- Use the revised RED as the basis for trialling alternative assessment methodologies to assist in the measuring of progress and attainment at all age phases.
- Create a National Inspection Framework, backed up with new or revised Directories for three strands of the Inspection Framework.
- Formulate complementary Directories for Prayer and Liturgy, and Catholic Life and Mission.
- Introduce the National Inspection Framework across all dioceses with national quality assurance mechanisms.
- Establish the Catholic Schools Inspectorate with common training, national accreditation and regional and national oversight of the quality of inspection reports.
- Review and enforce minimum adherence necessary to approve funding of diocesan inspection.
- Introduce an annual report on the quality of Catholic education in England and Wales.



## Core work: Professional Development and Faith Formation - *Formatio*

***Formatio* will work to form, nourish and sustain leaders of Catholic education by providing opportunities for professional development and Catholic formation.**

*Formatio* was formed in response to the Bishops' statement on education following the Education Symposium between Bishops of England and Wales, Diocesan Schools' Commissioners, Financial Secretaries and the CES. The Bishops commissioned the CES to develop strategies for leadership and governance that will provide Diocesan Schools' Commissions with innovative options for the formation of Catholic school leaders and the exercise of good governance.

### Principal Objectives

To implement the national strategy for leadership and governance commissioned by the Bishops in their April 2017 statement.

Establish a vision for Catholic school leadership and a framework for leadership development.

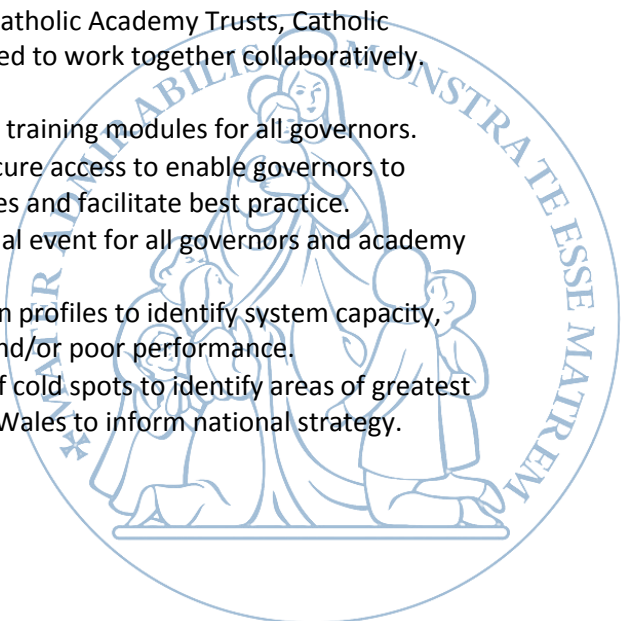
Ensure equality of provision across all dioceses in England and Wales and encourage collaboration in relation to the formation of Catholic school leaders and the exercise of good governance.

Empower dioceses to work collaboratively through the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. Provide ongoing formation for governors and directors in Catholic schools and trusts.

Profile the communities Catholic schools serve to better understand the nature of the changing educational landscape.

### Principal Activities

- Support *Formatio* as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.
- Maintain *Formatio* website containing information, resources and updates on the national strategy.
- Manage constitutional changes to replace representation of Catholic teaching schools with larger Catholic Academy Trusts.
- Support the recruitment of Catholic teachers.
- Provide formation and development opportunities for CEOs.
- Provide support for aspiring leaders and those in leadership roles
- Facilitate opportunities for leaders of Catholic education to reflect on the relationship between a clear mission of leadership and an embracement of both spiritual and transformation leadership.
- Provide NPQ+ additionality resources to develop the capacity for system leadership in the sector.
- Facilitate and support the *Formatio* National Steering Group formed of the CES, dioceses, Catholic universities, Catholic teaching schools, CISC and ROE.
- Support working parties to progress projects identified and agreed by the *Formatio* National Steering Group.
- Provide regular updates to the *Formatio* National Steering Group.
- Support the four regional hubs by liaising with the Chair of each to ensure that dioceses, Catholic Academy Trusts, Catholic universities are empowered to work together collaboratively.
- Maintain online induction training modules for all governors.
- Maintain a portal with secure access to enable governors to register for regular updates and facilitate best practice.
- Organise a regular, national event for all governors and academy directors.
- Collate data from diocesan profiles to identify system capacity, economic disadvantage and/or poor performance.
- Produce a national map of cold spots to identify areas of greatest need across England and Wales to inform national strategy.





## Core work: Political engagement and communications

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**We will work closely with Parliament, the Senedd, and the media to raise the positive profile of Catholic education and influence national debates.**

We seek to inform the public and the media through new research, events and campaigns and we will meet and brief parliamentarians. We aim to ensure that Catholic schools are seen as a positive contribution to the common good.

### Principle Objectives

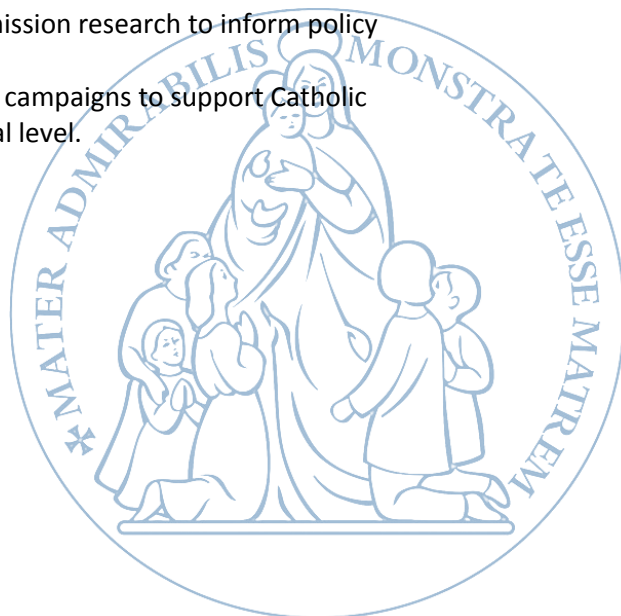
Develop stronger relationships with parliamentarians.

Ensure regular and positive coverage in the media.

Educate stakeholders on the public affairs work of the CES.

### Principal Activities

- Run regular events in Parliament to inform parliamentarians of Catholic education issues.
- Increase meetings and briefings with Catholic, Christian and other MPs, MSs and Peers with an interest in education.
- Attend annual party conferences, influence policy debates and build relationships with political stakeholders.
- Represent the views and concerns of Catholic education providers through evidence submissions to the relevant Parliamentary committees.
- Build relationships with journalists in the Catholic and national media.
- Respond quickly and positively to all press requests and continue to provide articles for Catholic papers and online.
- Engage positively on social media.
- Inform and engage diocesan representatives on the importance of public affairs and communications through workshops and training events.
- Establish network of Catholic education voices
- Organise events and meetings to inform policy specialists, journalists and decision-makers on important issues surrounding Catholic education.
- Identify and commission research to inform policy positions.
- Implement annual campaigns to support Catholic education at a local level.



## Core work: Digital engagement

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**We will support and maintain the IT, data and digital requirements of the CES.**

Key areas of work include: management of the CES schools census; website maintenance and development; software, database and digital development.

### Principal Objectives

Continue to improve accuracy and efficiency of schools' census.

Administer and develop CES website.

Develop IT and digital applications.

### Principal Activities

- Maintain 100% return rate.
- Reduce administrative costs through increased use by schools of online helpdesk and knowledgebase.
- Increase accuracy of census data by further automating the data analysis phase.
- Maintain website content and periodically review site design.
- Reduce cyber threat by applying updates to Joomla CMS when available and also by regularly monitoring website for unusual activity.
- Improve accessibility of school data through use of new technology, eg mobile apps.
- Ensure that data is maintained and updated regularly.



## Glossary of abbreviations

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### **ACVIC**

Association of Catholic 6<sup>th</sup> Form Colleges

### **Cathedrals Group**

Organisation representing the country's Church-based universities

### **CBCEW**

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales

### **CES**

Catholic Education Service

### **CISC**

Catholic Independent Schools' Conference

### **CoR**

Conference of Religious

### **Estyn**

Office of Her Majesty's school inspectorate (Wales)

### **DSC**

Diocesan Schools Commissioner

### **MP**

Member of Parliament

### **MS**

Member of the Senedd

### **NBRIA**

National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors

### **Ofsted**

Office of Her Majesty's school inspectorate (England)

### **PSHE**

Personal, social and health education

### **RE**

Religious Education

### **ROE**

Religious Orders in Education

### **RSE**

Relationships and Sex Education

