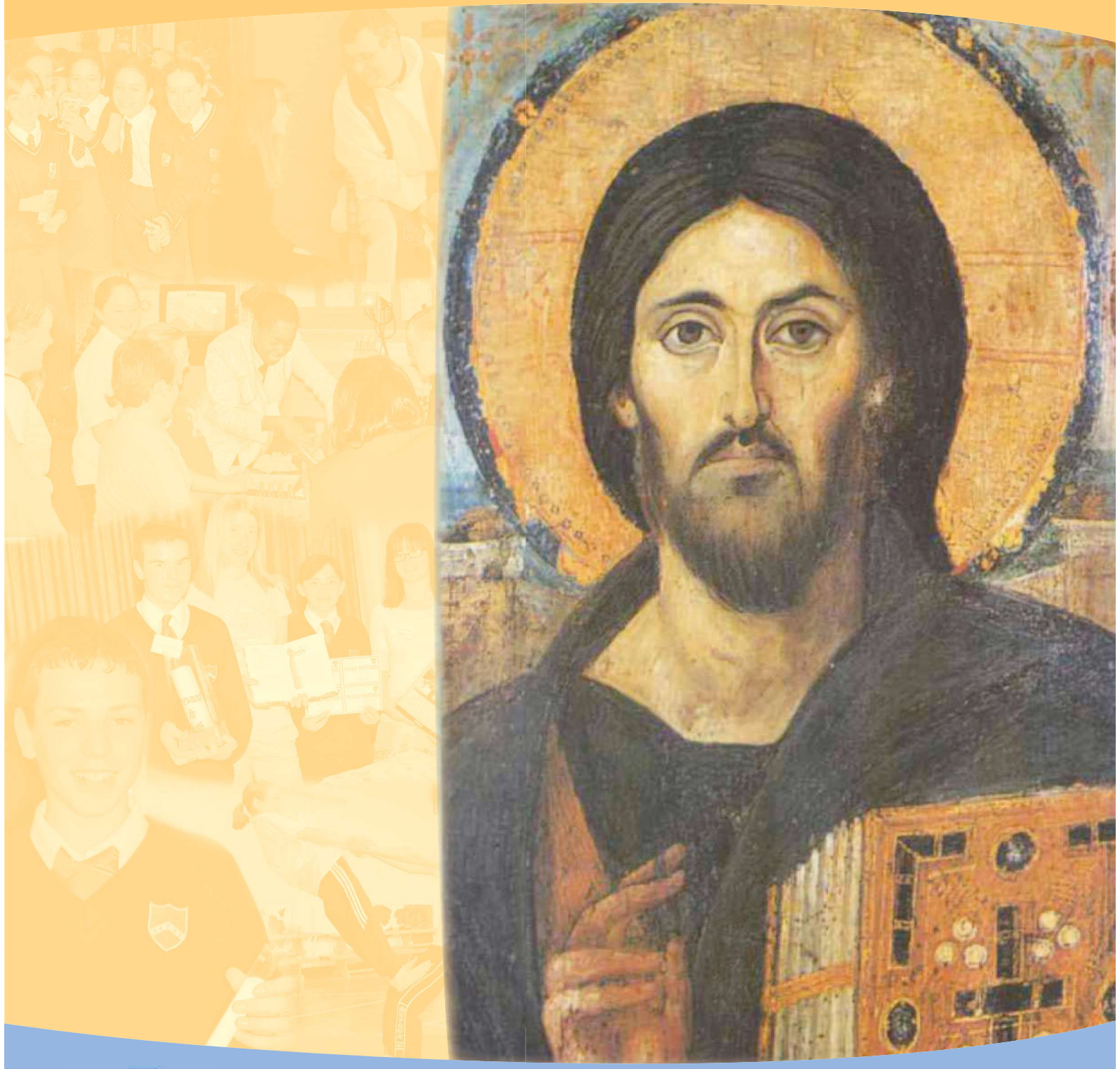
CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

A summary of why the Church provides Catholic Schools

Rev Marcus Stock STL MA Director of Schools



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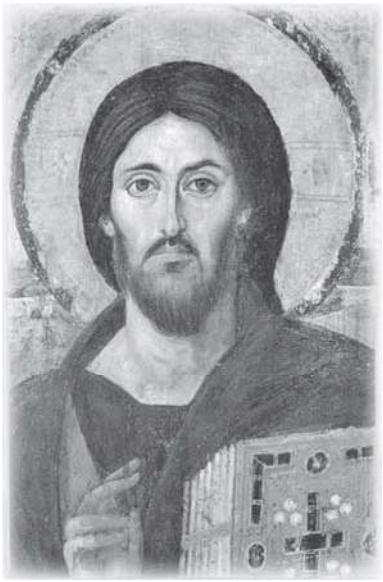

Christ at the Centre

A SUMMARY OF WHY THE CHURCH PROVIDES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Rev Marcus Stock STL MA
Director of Schools

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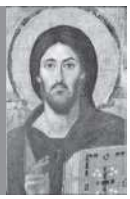
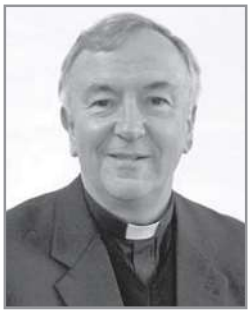




CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

I welcome warmly this document "Christ at the Centre" which puts forward, in a succinct yet rigorous manner, a summary of the Church's reasons for providing Catholic schools. The document shows the depth of the commitment of the Catholic Church to education, not understood in some narrow sense but in the broadest and best possible way.

This document makes clear that Catholic education is inspired by a vision of life seen whole. Catholic faith tutors us in reaching out to the fullness of human experience and to its expression in a community of life in society.

At the heart of this understanding of life lies God, its creator. Indeed without acknowledgement of God as the source and destiny of all human life, efforts at education will always fail to reach beyond the pragmatic.

It is the great gift of Christian faith to know that God speaks to us, in a definitive way, in the person of Jesus Christ. That is why the title of this document is "Christ at the Centre", for Christ is the one who not only shows us the truth about God but also the truth about ourselves. Christ then, is indeed, at the centre of our educational endeavour.

I thank Father Marcus Stock for producing a document which is clear, systematic and authoritative. It has my full support and I know it will help many not only to understand the mission of Catholic schools but also to deepen their commitment to them.

+Vincent Nichols

✠Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Birmingham

Preamble

"Often what is perhaps fundamentally lacking… is a clear realisation of the identity of a Catholic school and the courage to follow all the consequences of its uniqueness. One must recognise that, more than ever before, a Catholic school's job is infinitely more difficult, more complex, since this is a time when Christianity demands to be clothed in fresh garments, when all manner of changes have been introduced in the Church and in secular life, and, particularly, when a pluralist mentality dominates and the Christian Gospel is increasingly pushed to the side-lines." [1]

This passage written twenty-eight years ago and found in the Congregation for Catholic Education's document "The Catholic School" is perhaps even more relevant now than it was then. [2]

The phenomenal pace of developments in technology and communications, increasing secularisation and the challenges posed by a pluralistic and multi-cultural society face all schools alike. These developments and challenges call for: *"...courageous renewal on the part of the Catholic school …And so, now as in the past, the Catholic school must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly."* [3]

Catholic schools are now a major component of the education system in England and Wales. As society has changed so too Catholic schools have changed to meet the contemporary needs of children and young people. Consequently, most Catholic schools have grown in quality and public esteem.

But why does the Church provide Catholic Schools at all? And, why have resources been used to establish and develop these schools? What makes a Catholic School different from any other school?

Often, in answering such questions, concepts such as the "distinctiveness", "ethos" and "Gospel values" of Catholic Schools are used. However, despite their common currency within the world of Catholic education they are seldom defined.

Without attempting to give in any way an exhaustive or authoritative definition, this document tries to draw together the key statements from the Church's teaching on the provision of Catholic education and, specifically, on Catholic schools to help make these concepts more explicit.

Headteachers, governors, staff and clergy may find this document helpful in forming a common understanding of these concepts and a useful resource when discussing and reviewing the Catholic identity and ethos of their own schools.

I hope that the document may also be of service to colleagues within Local Education Authorities, Learning and Skills Councils and to other civic partners by providing a summary of why we provide Catholic schools.

Q1 Why does the Church provide Catholic schools?

A1 The Church provides Catholic schools to:

A1.1 Assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people.

Jesus Christ is *"the way, the truth and the life".*[4] Those who profess this faith believe that in Christ the truth about Almighty God and the truth about us as human persons is revealed.[5] The unfolding of this truth constitutes the Church's teaching. The acceptance of this truth brings true freedom and the fullness of life. Proclaiming this truth, this Gospel (good news), by making Christ known to all peoples, constitutes the mission of the Church.

The first key reason why Catholic schools are established, then, is to be part of the Church's mission, to place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of people's lives. This is done diversely through the Catholic school's interaction with the local Church, families, societies and culture they serve.[6]

Putting Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of the educational enterprise is the key purpose of Catholic schools. By doing this the Church seeks to root our spiritual development, our learning and teaching, the formation of culture and our society in Him.

"The Church has in a special way the duty and the right of educating, for it has a divine mission of helping all to arrive at the fullness of Christian life" [7]

The fullness of life is to be found when Christ is at the centre of our lives. By placing Christ at the centre of all that they are and all that they do, Catholic schools have the potential to promote the 'fullness of Christian life' through a *"…educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony"* [8]

This means that the Church provides Catholic schools to be more than just places where pupils are equipped with learning and skills for the workplace and responsible citizenship. Rather, they are to be the communities where the spiritual, cultural and personal worlds within which we live are harmonised to form the roots from which grow our values, motivation, aspirations and the moral imperatives that inform our choices and actions as persons.[9]

A1.2 Assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children.

Schools, although they may have different structures and modes of operation, are to be found within nearly every society throughout the world.

The establishment of Catholic schools within these different societies and cultures is considered by the Church to be *"…a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole person, since the school is the centre in which a specific concept of the world, of the human person, and of history is developed and conveyed".* [10]

In this context the Church teaches that: *"Among the means of advancing education, Christ's faithful are to consider schools as of great importance, since they are the principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education".* [11]

Thus, the second key reason why the Church provides Catholic schools is to assist parents in the religious formation of their children: *"The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils."*[12]

A1.3 Be at the service of the local Church – the diocese, the parish and the Christian home.

The partnership between the home, the parish and the Catholic school integrates these components of Catholic education: *"The parish community is a place for religious and spiritual education. School is a place for cultural education. The two dimensions must be integrated, because the same values inspire them: they are the values of Christian families who, in a society dominated by relativism and threatened by existential emptiness, intend to offer their children an education based on the unchangeable values of the Gospel."* [13]

Consequently, the fundamental partnership that should be developed and fostered is that between the school and the bishop/diocese. This partnership provides the source of a school's authentic ecclesial foundation - its mission and communion within the Catholic Church. This fundamental partnership will, in turn, form the secure basis for the school's mission and communion with the parish and the home.

Being at the service of the local Church and fostering communion within the local Church is then the third key reason why Catholic schools are provided.

A1.4 Be a service to society

The fourth key reason why the Catholic Church provides schools is to contribute to the creation of a society that is highly educated, skilled and cultured. For this reason the Church emphasises the contribution that Catholic schools make to the common good [14] of society and its culture.

Although Catholic schools are provided first and foremost for baptised Catholic children (see A4 below), they are also very much a public good whose benefits enhance the whole community.

Catholic schools are established to facilitate the right of Catholic parents to choose a Catholic education for their child. In this sense, Catholic schools, *"…like State schools, fulfil a public role, for their presence guarantees cultural and educational pluralism and, above all, the freedom and right of families to see that their children receive the sort of education they wish for them."* [15] This is a significant factor in contributing to social cohesion where the rights of parents are respected and educational diversity is maintained and valued.

Ethnic and racial diversity is, and always has been, a feature of the Catholic Church's trans-national identity and membership. Such diversity has found unity in common religious faith. It is shared core values, which are rooted in religious faith, that contribute to authentic social cohesion.

In a multi-faith society, shared core values that promote respect for the rights and dignity of every human person are essential for social cohesion. Thus, *"In Catholic schools, teaching of religion must help students to arrive at a personal position in religious matters that is consistent and respectful of the positions of others, so contributing to their growth and to a more complete understanding of reality".* [16]

Q2 What are the fundamental characteristics of Catholic schools?

A2 Building upon the reasons why they are provided, Catholic schools should exhibit the following fundamental characteristics:

A2.1 ***"An integral education of the human person through a clear educational project of which Christ is the foundation"*** [17] ***and a "systematic catechesis"*** [18] ***of "Catholic teaching"*** [19]

Concretely this will mean that a Catholic school should:

Put Christ at the centre of everything it does by integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life. In a Catholic school then, a child's and young person's journey into adulthood will also be a journey of faith.

A2.2 ***"A mission in education as a work of love"*** [20]

Concretely this will mean that a Catholic school should:

In its 'mission in education', provide an excellent broad balanced education to help children and young people grow to their full human potential and pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so *"that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society"* [21]

In its 'work of love', be motivated to offer *"to all, and especially to the poor and marginalized, the opportunity of an education, of training for a job, of human and Christian formation"* [22]

Teaching, as a 'work of love', requires a radical commitment and service: *"The Church looks upon you as co-workers with an important measure of shared responsibility … To you it is given to create the future and give it direction by offering to your students a set of values with which to assess their newly discovered knowledge … [The changing times] demand that educators be open to new cultural influences and interpret them for young pupils in the light of Christian faith. You are called to bring professional competence and a high standard of excellence to your teaching … But your responsibilities make demands on you that go far beyond the need for professional skills and competence … Through you, as through a clear window on a sunny day, students must come to see and know the richness and joy of a life lived in accordance with Christ's teaching, in response to his challenging demands. To teach means not only to impart what we know, but also to reveal who we are by living what we believe. It is this latter lesson which tends to last the longest"* [23]

A2.3 ***"An ecclesial and cultural identity"*** [24]

Concretely this will mean that a Catholic school should:

Be an integral part of the spiritual, pastoral and community life of the local parish and parishes, the diocese and the universal Church.

A2.4 ***"A service to society"*** [25]

Concretely this will mean that a Catholic school should:

Serve the human person and society by inviting students to: find meaning in their lives through forming a spirituality based on a mature relationship with Almighty God; form personal values, rooted in the Gospel of Christ and expressed in the teachings of the Catholic Church, which will enable them to develop an understanding of their communal obligations, personal aspirations and their role as citizens in society and the world.

Q3 How do these fundamental characteristics make our Catholic schools distinctive?

A3 Catholic Schools are distinctive when they:

A3.1 Manifest a Catholic ethos which is evident and open to experience by all who enter the school.

A3.2 Promote Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church as an integral part of their mission.

A3.3 Follow policies that reflect and embody the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church

A3.4 Model leadership inspired by the image of Christ

A3.5 Form an integral part of the communion of the local and universal Church

A3.6 Provide a religious education which comprehensively and systematically studies the mystery of God, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the teachings of His Church, the central beliefs that Catholics hold, the basis for them and the relationship between faith and life – all of which is integrated into every aspect of the curriculum and life of the school, and adapted to the age and ability of the pupils.

A3.7 Express the life of faith in acts of religion, [26] through personal and liturgical prayer.

A3.8 Engender a culture of vocation [27]

A3.9 Care for the spiritual needs of children and young people

A3.10 Care for the pastoral and special needs of children and young people in accordance with Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church

A3.11 Model Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church which unite society by promoting a citizenship rooted in a commitment to social justice and the common good. [28]

A3.12 Promote conduct and behaviour rooted in Gospel values

A3.13 Uphold the dignity of the human person through the maintenance and care of school buildings and, through external and internal symbols and displays, manifest the centrality of Christ and the Catholic faith.

Q4 Who are Catholic schools provided for?

A4 Catholic schools are provided by the Church for:

Catholic children and young people who, through baptism, have a right [29] to an education in the Catholic faith.

Catholic schools are the principal means of helping Catholic parents to fulfil their role in education. [30] Recognising this, the Trust Deeds of Catholic dioceses in England and Wales enable some of the charitable resources of the Church to be used to try to provide sufficient places for baptised Catholic children and young people in Catholic schools.

To ensure that Catholic children are given priority in the allocation of school places and benefit from this provision, the admission criteria of Catholic schools should be formulated in such a way that Catholic children and young people are always given priority in the allocation of school places over and above all other applicants:

"A Catholic school is never simply a school for those who choose it. A Catholic school is always, first of all, a school for Catholics. Of course, others who seek a place at the school are most welcome as long as space permits. They are fully part of the school community and greatly treasured." [31]

Q5 What are 'Gospel Values'?

A5 The use of the term "values" in relation to the content and message of the Gospel is relatively modern. Indeed the use of the term "values" relating to moral beliefs and attitudes is also quite recent. It is important to understand what lies behind the use of this term today.

The German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) used the term "values" in opposition to any concept of an objective moral law. For Nietzsche values were subjective and relative; for him there are no objective virtues or vices, good or evil, right or wrong that are true for all and for all time. 'Values', in this sense, are subjective and refer to whatever an individual thinks is right or true for a particular set of circumstances and at a certain point in time.

This use of the term values has been absorbed into the vocabulary of modern society. In this context, values are often subjective, regarded as a question of personal preferences – what is right for 'me' or the community to which I belong.

However, modern society still talks of, and to varying degrees promotes, a set of core human values or principles that are objective, trans-cultural, and universal, for example: responsibility, compassion, respect for others and honesty. Such core values and principles lay at the heart of the laws and ethics that govern societies and nations.

The late Pope John Paul II, in his writings and homilies, consistently used the term 'values' in ways that challenge modern societies and cultures to re-discover the foundation of their core values and principles.

"An urgent task awaits you: to re-establish the bonds which have been strained and sometimes broken between the cultural values of our time and their lasting, Christian foundation" [32]

This is reflected in statements of the Church relating specifically to Catholic schools:

"For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole man, does so in obedience to the solicitude of the Church, in the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment and unity in Christ" [33]

The term *"Gospel values"* is now commonly used in Catholic schools and other Catholic institutions. However, unless the term is "unpacked" and a common understanding formed of what true Gospel values are, there is a danger that what should be an objective Christian foundation, will itself become a random list of subjective values.

Whilst other 'values' may be found within the four Gospels and New Testament writings, it is the Beatitudes which: *"...depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity"* [34]

Gospel values cannot therefore be values chosen subjectively from the vast corpus of the Old and New Testaments but are objective values revealed to us through Christ's proclamation. Such objective values are to be found rooted in the Beatitudes, the proclamation of Christ's Sermon on the Mount: *"Blessed are..."*

The Beatitudes also *"...reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts"* [35] and as such are the objective 'values' given by Christ himself.

A5.1 **Whilst not definitive, the core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarized as follows:**

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven" [36]

Values: **Faithfulness & Integrity**

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

Values: **Dignity & Compassion**

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

Values: **Humility & Gentleness**

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

Values: **Truth & Justice**

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

Values: **Forgiveness & Mercy**

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

Values: **Purity & Holiness**

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

Values: **Tolerance & Peace**

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice for your reward is great in heaven; they persecuted the prophets before you in the very same way"

Values: **Service & Sacrifice**

A5.2 **Gospel values *"...are a guarantee of peace and of collaboration among all citizens in the shared commitment to serving the common good".*** [37]

Rooted in the teaching of Christ, these Gospel values should constitute the targets and outcomes of the educational enterprise in every Catholic school.

For this to be possible, these Gospel values need to be explicitly named, their meaning unpacked and pupils helped to understand how they relate to their lives both at school, at home and in society.

This enterprise is not in addition to the quest for high academic standards and vocational excellence but integral to it: *"Catholic schools, while providing a quality education, hold up Christian values to children, inviting them to build their own lives on them. Teaching these values, for those who know how to accept and live them consistently, yields highly positive results - as experience confirms - at the personal, family and professional levels."* [38]

Q6 What is a Catholic school's 'ethos'?

The word 'ethos' comes from a Greek word (εθοσ) for custom or habit. It therefore refers to the characteristic conduct of an individual human life or group of people, the distinctive spirit of a culture or an era that can be objectively described and/or personally experienced.

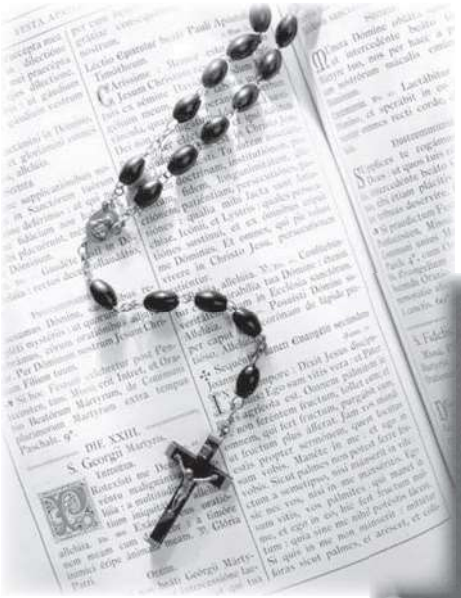
In short, it is a way of living, behaving and doing things by people who, though diverse, follow common values and are united by a shared vision of life. It is often therefore used in a way that is closely linked with 'culture' and 'philosophy'.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of adequately defining a school's 'ethos',[39] an attempt to define a Catholic school's 'ethos' may help to be explicit about the distinctiveness of Catholic schools.

A6 An attempt to define a Catholic school's 'ethos':

A Catholic school's 'ethos' may be understood to be the outward signs and the personal experiences of the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church in the totality of daily life in a Catholic school.

It should be carefully noted that the ethos of each Catholic school will, in addition to the presence of the factors listed below, be dependent on and varied by the changing population of pupils and staff as well as the genuine commitment of individual members of the school community (teachers primarily [40]) to the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church.



Q7 What should be the outward signs of a Catholic school's ethos?

A7 The outward signs of a Catholic school's ethos, in parallel with its distinctiveness (see A3 above), should be explicit and clearly displayed in the following elements:

A7.1 **Instrument of Government**
Within the Instrument of Government there should be a written ethos statement to manifest the provisions of the Trust Deed under which the school operates and the school's Catholic identity.

For schools within the Archdiocese of Birmingham the ethos statement reads as follows:
"The school is founded by and is part of the Catholic Church[41]*. The school is to be conducted as a Catholic School in accordance with Latin Rite Canon Law and the teachings of the Catholic Church, and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and in particular: religious education is to be in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline, general and particular norms of the Catholic Church; religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ."*

A7.2 **Mission Statement**
Each school should have a Mission Statement that roots the life of the school in the person of Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

A7.3 **Governance**
The majority of the governing body should be foundation governors who are practising Catholics, appointed by the diocesan ordinary or his agent.

A7.4 **Leadership and Management**
The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of RE/RE Coordinator must be practising Catholics.[42] Preferential consideration should also be given to practising Catholics for all teaching posts.[43]

A7.5 **Partnership and collaboration**
There should be discernible and regularly celebrated links with the diocese that the school was founded by, the parish community or communities its serves, pupils' families, and other Catholic schools in the area and within the diocese.

A7.6 **Religious Education and the whole curriculum**
Religious Education '…in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline, general and particular norms of the Catholic Church' should be taught as a core subject, well resourced and integrated clearly into other curriculum areas.[44]

Above all other staff, teachers of Religious Education should be trained and formed to a high standard.[45]

A7.7 **Liturgy and prayer**

Regular liturgical celebrations and daily prayers '…in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church' should be at the heart of school life. Opportunities for spiritual retreats should be provided for pupils and staff.

A7.8 **Promotion of a Culture of Vocation**

In planned and evident ways, regular encouragement should be given to pupils throughout their school life to consider life as a vocation. By this is meant not only vocations to the priesthood and religious life; rather, all pupils should learn to interpret *"their existence in the light of God's plan"* [46]

Teachers and staff too, should be given opportunities to reflect on their role within the school as a vocation. School chaplains and chaplaincy teams will play a key role in fostering and developing a culture of vocations in Catholic schools.

A7.9 **Chaplaincy**

Regular visits to schools of priest chaplains appointed by the Archbishop, and visits of other clergy and religious should be organised and facilitated. In the case of primary schools, chaplains will usually be the local parish priest.

A7.10 **Pastoral care, support and guidance**

Clear policies and structures should be in place, which provide pastoral care to children and young people, and adequate provision for children with special educational needs.
When sex and relationship education is offered in a Catholic school as part of the curriculum, it should be offered in consultation with parents and always within the context of Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

A7.11 **Charitable outreach**

Fundraising projects for different national and international charitable agencies and links with local services in support of the needy should be promoted as an integral part of the school's mission. To ensure that efforts are directed towards ventures that conform to Catholic moral and social teaching, priority should be given to Catholic charities and projects.

A7.12 **Code of Conduct**

Behaviour policies, which set expectations for children and adults based on ethics which are rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church, should be implemented and followed. These policies should demonstrate the importance of personal responsibility and the need for justice but also facilitate healing and reconciliation.

A7.13 **School buildings and physical signs**

The primary considerations in the design, construction and maintenance of Catholic school buildings and their premises should be the needs of the teacher and learner, and physical accessibility. Symbols and Icons of the Catholic faith should be manifest externally and internally on the school premises.

Q8 What will enable a personal experience of a Catholic school's ethos?

A8 The personal experiences of a school's Catholic ethos, which parallel the outward signs, should be encountered by all who come into contact with the school. These personal experiences will be encountered through:

A8.1 **Being in the service of the Catholic Church**
(Instrument of Government)
Implementing the ethos statement within the Instrument of Government into all aspects of school life will make evident the school's role in the service of the universal and local Church.

A8.2 **Sharing a mission and vision**
(Mission Statement)
The shared aspirations of the school community contained in the mission statement should be formulated so as to be clearly rooted in Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The same aspirations should be experienced as a palpable reality through the shared vision the statement inspires and drives in all aspects of school life.

A8.3 **Faithful stewardship**
(Governance)
Foundation governors should be aware of their specific roles and responsibilities to the diocesan ordinary and ensure that their stewardship and the life of the school manifest, and is faithful to, Catholic teaching and Gospel values.

Policies and procedures enacted by the governing body should enable Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church to be experienced and lived out integrally in the daily lives of the staff and pupils.

A84 **Personal witness**
(Leadership and Management)
The personal faith of the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, staff, children and whole school community should witness to the presence of God, the authentic daily living of the values of the Gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Catholic Church which flows from those values.

A8.5 **Communion in the family of the Church**
(Partnership and collaboration)
The staff and pupils, through their collaboration and partnership with parents and parish, should experience school life as an integral part of the communion of the local and universal Church.

A8.6 **The religious literacy and understanding of pupils (Religious Education and the whole curriculum)**

Through a well resourced provision and guaranteed allocation of curriculum time, children, young people and parents should value Religious Education as the *"foundation of the entire educational process"* [47]

High quality learning and teaching of Religious Education, combined with its effective integration in all other curriculum areas, should form *"religiously literate young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life"* [48]

A8.7 **The development of the spiritual life (Liturgy and prayer)**

The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of learning and teaching should create time for the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and develop a mature spiritual life.

Day and residential 'retreats' for pupils and staff will facilitate the spiritual life engendered in school to be experienced more intensely through a dedicated and focused time of prayer and reflection.

A8.8 **Encouraging the full potential of every person (Promotion of a Culture of Vocation)**

An authentic 'culture of vocation' in a Catholic school will be experienced when the Church's concept of 'vocation' is approached in a systematic and integrated way across all levels of primary and secondary education.

This will enable pupils to experience encouragement and support as they consider all the options that will enable them to make decisions about their future life. Ideally, these decisions will enable them to develop to their fullest potential.

Encouraging and highlighting the presence of priest chaplains, clergy and religious in the school will help pupils to experience and see these particular vocations as valued and respected.

A8.9 **The spiritual care of pupils and staff (Chaplaincy)**

School chaplains and, where appropriate, chaplaincy teams should support, encourage and help to harmonise the Gospel values *"which inform the present life and future direction of the school"* [49] with the liturgical and prayer life of the school community.

Pupils should experience school chaplains as those who 'accompany' them on their journey of faith at a significant and formative part of their life. Chaplains can help *"bring the spiritual life of the school to its most explicit expression".*[50]

A8.10 **The Gospel of life and the dignity of the human person (Pastoral care, support and guidance)**

The Gospel of life and the dignity of the human person it promotes should be experienced in the pastoral care, support and guidance given by the school to its pupils and the equal dignity with which those who have special educational needs and disabilities are befriended and treated, etc.

A8.11 **The promotion of justice and peace**
(Charitable outreach)

Catholic social teaching and action are the living fruits of Gospel values. They emphasise the obligation to promote social justice, peace, love for the poor, solidarity among nations and respect for the integrity of creation.

This will be experienced through the active participation of the school community in national and international charitable enterprises as well as local community projects for the needy and the improvement of the environment.

A8.12 **Moral and ethical behaviour**
(Code of Conduct)

Catholic moral teaching recognises that our personal freedom is necessarily limited by the rights of others and our responsibility for the common good.

Based on that moral teaching, the Code of Conduct in a Catholic school should lead to the formation of human relationships and an ethical behaviour which make the experience of genuine freedom possible.

A8.13 **The learning environment**
(School buildings and physical signs)

Well designed, constructed and maintained school buildings that are accessible to all as far possible, will create a learning environment that reflects the Church's teaching regarding the dignity of the human person and our obligation to care for the human needs of one another.

Symbols and Icons of the Catholic faith (e.g. religious pictures, crucifixes, etc.,) when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment.

CONCLUSION

The 'outward signs' and 'personal experiences' of a Catholic school outlined above will be present more or less effectively and in varying degrees from school to school. Equally the effectiveness of the outward signs will also be affected by the personal faith commitment and the subjective disposition of the individual pupils, staff and community it serves. However, *"… now, as in the past, the Catholic school must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly"* [51].

Significant developments and changes have happened in recent years in education as a result of numerous government initiatives and reforms. These continue apace. All maintained schools will need to meet the challenges and opportunities that accompany this 'remodelling'.

This document has tried to outline how the Catholic school is able to 'speak for itself effectively and convincingly' and to make explicit why the Church, continues to exercise a *"prophetic choice"* [52] through its *"investment of human and material resources"* [53] in Catholic schools.

By seeking and developing ever new ways of placing the person of Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of every aspect of school life, governors, headteachers, staff, parents and pupils will help to continue to fulfil the primary purposes of the Catholic school whilst at the same time engaging positively with changes and developments in education.

As the 21st Century progresses, envisioning what Catholic schools will look like in the future requires openness and imagination. At the same time, for Catholic Schools to play their full and effective part in the educational provision of that future, it is essential that those who are called to lead and govern them, to work in them and entrust the education of their children to them, are clear about their identity and purpose:

- to assist in the Church's universal mission
- to assist parents in the education of their children
- to serve the needs of the local Church
- to be a service to society

In the evangelisation of culture and contributing to the common good, the Church recognises that Catholic schools can play a deliberate and vital role. This is why the Catholic Church in England and Wales continues to provide and invest in Catholic schools.

REFERENCES

[1] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §66

[2] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §1

[3] Ibid, §3

[4] John 14:6

[5] Gaudiem et Spes, Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II on the Church in the Modern World, 7 December 1965, §22

[6] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §16-17

[7] Code of Canon Law, Can.794 §1

[8] The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §34

[9] Gravissimum Educationis, Declaration of Vatican II on Catholic Education, 28 October 1965, §19

[10] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §8

[11] Code of Canon Law, Can.796 §1

[12] Catechesi Tradendae, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, 16 October 1979, §69

[13] Pope John Paul II, Address to Teachers and Students of the Catholic Villa Flaminia Institute, Rome, 23 February 1997

[14] The common good consists of three essential elements: i) respect for the dignity of the human person; ii) social well-being and development and iii) peace and justice (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, §1905 – 1912)

[15] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §16

[16] Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools, Congregation for Catholic Education, 2002, §54

[17] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33-37 & The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §4

[18] Catechesi Tradendae, Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, 16 October 1979, §21

[19] Code of Canon Law, Can.779

[20] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33-37 & The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §4

[21] Code of Canon Law, Can.795

[22] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §15

[23] Address to Catholic Educators, Pope John Paul II, September 12, 1984

[24] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33-37 & The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §4

[25] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33-37 & The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §4

[26] The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §83

[27] New Vocations for a New Europe (In Verbo Tuo) Pontifical Work for Ecclesiastical Vocations, Final Document of the Congress on Vocations to the Priesthood and to Consecrated Life in Europe, Rome, 5-10 May 1997, §13 (b)

[28] The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §53 & 62

[29] Code of Canon Law, Can.793 §1-2

[30] Ibid, Can.796 §1

[31] Letter of Archbishop Vincent Nichols to Warwickshire Catholic Schools, 21 October 2004

[32] Pope John Paul II, Address to the Members of the Pontifical Council for Culture, "Letting the Gospel take root in every culture" §6, 10 January 1992

[33] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §9

[34] Catechism of the Catholic Church §1717

[35] Ibid § 1719

[36] Matthew 5:3-12

[37] Pope John Paul II, 31 October 2004 Angelus Address on the occasion of the signing of the new European Constitution (29 October 2004)

[38] Pope John Paul II, Address to Teachers and Students of the Catholic Villa Flaminia Institute, Rome, 23 February 1997

[39] "Differences in Schools: a question of ethos?", Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, University of Sussex, by Caitlin Donnelly, School of Public Policy, University of Ulster, September 1999.

[40] The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §26

[41] Code of Canon Law, Can.803 §1: "A Catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority."

[42] Ibid, §2: "…teachers must be outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life"

[43] In England and Wales, facility is made for this preference in statutory legislation. Cf. School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Section 60 (5)

[44] Ibid, §2: "Instruction and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine."

[45] The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, §96-97, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988 and Cf. Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Catholic Bishop's conference of England & Wales, May 2000, §11-12

[46] Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools, Congregation for Catholic Education, 2002, §55

[47] Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Catholic Bishop's conference of England & Wales, May 2000, §4

[48] Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, Catholic Bishop's conference of England & Wales, December 1996, Page 10

[49] A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains in Schools and Colleges, Catholic Education Service, 2004, Page 10

[50] Spiritual and Moral Development across the Curriculum, Catholic Education Service, 1995, Page 16

[51] The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §3

[52] Ibid., §21

[53] Ibid.