

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 29th November

Upcoming Events

- 9th Dec SEND Network meeting 2pm @ Pastoral Centre
- 21st Jan Senior Leaders' Development day @Pastoral Centre
- 28th Jan Heads' Forum
- 31st Jan Science Subject Immersion @ St John Fisher

New Updates (since last bulletin)

HR Service Update and Discussion – Wed 8th Jan 10am (TBC)

With our HR Advisors approaching the end of their first term in post and with configuration and development of our HR system underway, Alison and her team would like to meet with Heads and Business Managers to provide an overview on how the HR service is expected to develop once the system is fully implemented. This meeting will also provide an opportunity for Alison, Steven and Tom to understand hopes and concerns around the development of the HR service and how it connects to your day-to-day work in school.

The date and time is to be confirmed, but for now, please put a save the date in your diary for Wednesday 8th Jan. The meeting will start at 10am and will be at the Pastoral Centre. This will be most immediately relevant to schools in the Trust, but all members of the St Clare family are welcome.

Senior Leaders' Development Day

The January Senior Leader Session on Tuesday 21st (not Wednesday 22nd as previously noted) will be a full day. Jonathan Lear will lead a session on Curriculum and Immersion days in the morning, then Nick Whittaker is leading the afternoon session 'Exploring a Balanced System and a robust Graduated Response.' The SEND network group have been invited to join Nicks session at 1.30pm.

Heads' Forum – Tue 28th January

This Heads' Forum is currently noted in the Trust Calendar as being focused on School Improvement Capacity Self-Evaluation. John, Fiona and I have decided that it would be helpful to change the focus of this meeting to give us more time to update you more broadly on work across the Trust and to get your feedback in order to inform future priorities and development. The date and time will be as already planned in your calendar, this is just advance notice that there will be a change of focus for the meeting.

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Aspiring Leaders Programme

The St Clare CMAT Aspiring Leaders programme is designed to help senior leaders prepare for Catholic headship by focusing on both leadership skills and mission-driven values. Over six sessions led by experts, participants will engage in reflective learning, address real-world challenges, and complete a school improvement project aligned with Trust priorities. Mentoring and support for headship applications are also provided.

A flyer with more details was sent with the bulletin—please share it with Catholic teachers who may be interested.

Items from previous bulletin for reference

Admissions Consultation Meeting – Thus 28th Nov 10-11am @Pastoral Centre

This meeting was arranged to allow us to look together at feedback received during the consultation, in order to consider actions and response. I know that a number of schools have not had any responses at all to consultation. If that is you, while you are of course more than welcome to join the meeting, there is no need for your school to be represented.

If you have had comments or questions which require consideration of a change to your proposed policy, please do come to the meeting so that we can agree the best response and ensure that any response and/or change made by one school does not undermine anything being done or said at another.

The next step for all schools will be to put the proposed policy on the agenda for your LAC in the spring term, along with any feedback received through consultation, so that governors can consider and approve admissions arrangements. To remind you, the policy must have been approved by governors by 28th February and local authorities notified by 15th March.

Business Managers Briefing – Summary

Here is a brief summary of the topics that were covered at the School Business Manager Fortnightly Briefing on Wednesday 20th November.

- New Payroll and HR System – SBMs were asked to keep an eye out this week for an email containing a spreadsheet of information requirements so support the preliminary development work for the new system.
- Finance
 - New Finance Apprentice – Kaleem Sabir was introduced to the SBMs and will be providing transactional support for schools and the shared services finance team.
 - Prepaid Purchase Orders/Invoicing – SBMs were provided with a refresh on the process to be followed to manage prepaid purchase orders/invoices. An upturn in the number of non-compliant incidents was evidenced during October.
 - Management Accounts Meetings – The outline of a meeting schedule was discussed to SBMs. The shared services finance team will be in touch with schools to arrange meetings for the academic year 2024/25.

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- Risk Management Survey 2024/25 – SBMs were advised to expect an email by Friday 22nd November with a fully completed example of the responses we expect each school to provide via the online link. SBMs were asked to submit their survey no later than Tuesday 26th November and to also forward a copy of the completed survey to Anita Bray as a cross check should we receive any non-compliance challenge from the RPA.

Integrated HR and Payroll System – Update

Following on from the start of the project we have now completed the following activities:

- Initial project management meeting
- HR requirements support session
- Payroll requirement support session

We are now pulling together all the information requested by our project consultants via data tables and as such have asked SBMs to provide the following information by 5pm Wednesday 27th November 2024:

- Absences
 - Sickness Absence Reasons
 - General Absence Reasons
 - Lateness Reasons

This information will need to match exactly what is entered into SIMS/Bromcom to ensure successful integration of different system.

- Heads of Department
This information has been requested to identify line management responsibilities in relation to absences, annual leave requests etc. Please note this information has only been requested for secondary schools and a simplified model will be developed for primary schools.

A significant proportion of our time will now be spent on developing the data tables and validating the entries and as such there are unlikely to be any specific project updates until early January when the vast majority of build and testing work will be undertaken. We hope to have completed all the build work for the payroll system by late January providing the opportunity to undertake parallel payroll runs in January, February and March prior to the April go live.

Subject Immersion Days

It is really clear from the subject immersion days held so far that there is a real appetite for further collaboration. We do recognise the current demands on schools in terms of further release for staff, so we need to be sensible about how we facilitate this in at least the short term.

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To that end, we have set up email distribution lists and a SharePoint area for both History and Maths subject leads following the immersion days earlier this term. We will be communicating this to subject leads next week. This will facilitate further informal networking and material sharing. We are fortunate that the Maths Hub is already working with the majority of schools – we are therefore also sharing some of the feedback following the Maths immersion day with Maths Hub Work Group leads who are working with Trust schools in order to inform the work they are already doing with Trust schools.

Primary Picture news

Sarah Eady has kindly shared the latest edition of Primary Picture News. St Ann's has had a fortnightly subscription to this for many years, and recently were approached by the company for feedback while they were developing the prayer aspect of the publication.

They are offering a group discount for our schools - £200 for a 1-year subscription, which is a 33% discount. Please let us know [here](#) if you would be interested in this.