

Faithful Service Founded on **Courage, Humility, Hopefulness and Joy**



A Vision for Catholic School Leadership

“Catholic education will be the seedbed in which authentic, spiritual leaders are formed, nourished and sustained. Our leaders will exercise the values of courage, humility, hopefulness and joy, engaging with the community and empowering those around them.”

The origins and purpose of this document

Formatio, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, was formed in response to the Bishops' statement on education following the 2017 Education Symposium between Bishops of England and Wales, Diocesan Schools' Commissioners, Financial Secretaries and the Catholic Education Service (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. This vision document is seen as the foundation for these strategies, providing a gold standard for Catholic education and educators.

The roots of this document: from vision to mission

At the heart of the Catholic vision for school leadership is the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. In the 1999 document, *Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of Catholic Education*, it is explained that, "God is at the centre of the learning process and is the ultimate purpose of school, as of all aspects of life. Christ's love should permeate all that occurs in the school".¹ In *Christ at the Centre*, Bishop Marcus Stock reiterates this truth, saying "All Catholic schools share something in common: they are rooted in Christ, who is to be the centre of their life."²

Leaders of Catholic education must be inspired by the example of Christ, allowing themselves to be formed into people who serve their communities with courage, humility, and hope. Speaking to members of the Congregation for Education in 2011 Pope Benedict XVI said, "Always keep your gaze turned to Christ, the only Teacher, so that with his Spirit he will render your work effective."³

The authority of Catholic school leaders comes from their relationship with Christ. Baptism enables and commits Christians to serve God by participation in the holy liturgy of the Church, the witness of holy lives and the vocation to practical charity.⁴

By loving God and loving their neighbour, Catholic school leaders make Christ known to others. They recognise the dignity of all people and see Christ in others. Their leadership helps people to become more human, forming people who can flourish in all aspects of their life; who "have life, and have it to the full".⁵

Ultimately Christian leaders recognise that God's gift is who we are, our gift to God is who we become.

¹ CBCEW (1994), *Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School*

² CTS (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Revised Edition: https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/Christ_at_the_Centre_1.pdf

³ Benedict XVI (2011), *Address to Congregation for Catholic Education*: <https://sces.org.uk/to-educate-is-an-act-of-love/>

⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992), 1273: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P3N.HTM

⁵ John 10:10

The vision statement

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The vision statement explained

This vision statement is the outcome of collaboration with Catholic school, college and university leaders, who identified the key themes and characteristics of effective and wholesome Catholic leadership, appropriate for our time.

Effective and wholesome leadership in Catholic educational institutions principally consists of an inter-dependent tripartite relationship between *mission of leadership*, *spiritual leadership* and *transformational leadership*. These three tenets are further explored below.

Mission of leadership

The mission of school leaders is to actualise the Catholic vision for education.

Leaders of Catholic schools are formed and shaped by the teaching and example of Christ. Working with others, they are called to create a “right culture” to enable a clarity of witness and unity of purpose among all members of the school community.

In nurturing this, Catholic school leaders must show courage, humility, hopefulness and joy as well as hold those characteristics which show them to be authentic in their discipleship: honesty, faithfulness, prayerfulness, receptivity, innovation, trust and respect.

An embrace of spiritual leadership

Spiritual leadership must be integrated into any renewed vision for Catholic education: its centrality of spirituality to the leadership of Catholic educational institutions is indisputable. Spiritual leadership is a model of leadership which imbibes spirituality and the intentions of God inclusively, recognising that not all members of the school community will be overtly spiritual. Spiritual leadership is thus joyfully responsive and relational, encouraging people to nurture (or ‘form’), moving people from where they are to where God calls them to be.

In so being, spiritual leadership will fundamentally invoke the culture and language of Catholicism in dialogue with teachers, support staff and students so they can contribute

wholly to the spiritual identity of their institution. In achieving this, staff will be encouraged to view their roles as a vocation.

Transformational leadership qualities

Catholic school leaders must see themselves as transformational leaders: individuals who empower others, lead and live a vision for learning, unafraid to embrace new ways of working whilst maintaining the highest ethical standards.

Producing change is not an indicator of transformational leadership per se. Rather, transformational leaders are those willing and able to effect change where it is considered, viable and positive in light of the joy of the Gospel. Thus, the motivation underpinning change and the manner in which it is undertaken is central to the authenticity of transformational leadership.

Most significantly, transformational leadership is an ongoing, formative process enacted by those who have experienced transformation themselves and who understand what it means to be transformed. Evolving from (and dependent on) the values espoused by servant leadership, the relationship between transformational leadership and servant leadership is symbiotic.

The ultimate goal is personal transformation for the transformation of society whereby we become the person God has created us to be.

Approved by the CES Management Committee, 2 July 2019