DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION

Recruitment Guidance for Senior Catholic Posts

Section C2

Recruitment to Deputy Headteacher posts in Catholic Schools

Job description, person specification, shortlist working sheet and sample timetables for interview

Sep 2025

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Job Description

Deputy Headteacher

[Name of School]

Introduction

The school has been designated by the Secretary of State as a school with a religious character. Its instrument of government states that it is part of the Catholic Church and is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon Law, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the trust deed of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The role of deputy headteacher therefore requires a practising Catholic who can show by example and from experience that he or she will work with the headteacher to ensure that the school is distinctively Catholic in all its aspects.

This appointment is with the board of the school under the terms of the Catholic Education Service contract signed with the board as employers. It is subject to the current conditions of service for deputy headteachers contained in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and other current education and employment legislation. In carrying out his/her duties the deputy headteacher shall consult with the headteacher and, when appropriate, with the board, the Diocese, the local authority, the staff of the school, the parents of its pupils, the parish(es) served by the school and other local Catholic schools, particularly where collaboration or federation is being developed.

This job description is based on the key areas identified in the *Headteachers' Standards* published by the Department for Education (2020). It recognises the role of the deputy headteacher in sharing responsibility for the leadership of the school.

(N.B. Where specific responsibilities have been agreed for the deputy headteacher for individual key areas, it is recommended that that these be added to the list of main tasks and actions. Other specific tasks, e.g. teaching commitment, designated safeguarding officer, should be added as required).

The board and the Diocese acknowledge the importance of the role of the Catholic deputy headteacher and will actively offer long term support, encouragement, affirmation and realistic challenge to the successful candidate.

The board and the Diocese are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults and the headteacher must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard them. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced check for Regulated Activity from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The core purpose of the deputy headteacher is to assist the headteacher to set and implement the strategic direction of the school and to provide professional leadership and management to drive achievement of high standards in all areas of the school's[1] work, particularly in ensuring the provision of sustainable outstanding education through the preservation and development of its Catholic character.

[1] The term school refers to both voluntary aided schools and academies

The school's objectives relate to the provision of Catholic education and the school is part of the Catholic Church and, as such, is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon Law, the teachings of the Catholic Church and the trust deed of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. **Therefore, the post of deputy headteacher must be filled by a practising Catholic[2] who can show, by example and from experience, that he or she will ensure that the school is distinctively Catholic in all aspects.**

In addition to being an excellent classroom practitioner, the deputy headteacher should demonstrate the following:

Section 1: Ethics and professional conduct

Catholic deputy headteachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct inspired by Christ and His beatitudes[3] and exemplified by the self-cultivation of virtues, those qualities of character fundamental to the Catholic tradition: faith, hope, love, justice, solidarity, temperance, fortitude and practical wisdom. Catholic deputy headteachers are expected to meet the teachers' standards and be responsible for providing the conditions in which teachers can fulfil them.

In addition, Catholic deputy headteachers uphold and demonstrate the Seven Principles of Public Life at all times. Known as the Nolan principles, these form the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders:

- selflessness
- integrity
- objectivity
- accountability
- openness
- honesty
- leadership

Catholic deputy headteachers support the headteacher in their role as custodians of Diocesan schools and as such embody the abundant hope the Church has placed in education. Catholic deputy headteachers also support the headteacher with their task of human formation in conformity with Christ and Church teaching, and so uphold ecclesial and public trust in school leadership and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. Both within and outside school, Catholic deputy headteachers:

- build relationships of mutual respect rooted in the belief that all are made in the image and likeness of God[4] and always observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
- show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain enabling each person to play their full part in building and sustaining the Common Good.
- uphold fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs understanding

[2] See *Diocesan Briefing Note On Practising Catholic*
[3] The Gospel of Matthew 5:3-12
[4] The Book of Genesis 1:26-27

that such values are rooted in the Catholic understanding of dialogue[5] and the Church's social teaching[6].

- ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit their position, pupils' vulnerability or might lead pupils to break the law but are always orientated to the service of others considering the Gospel.

As leaders of their Catholic school community and profession, deputy headteachers:

- serve in the best interests of the school's pupils.
- conduct themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in church and society by behaving ethically, fulfilling their professional responsibilities and modelling the virtues of a good citizen of the Kingdom of God.
- uphold their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.
- know, understand, and act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
- take responsibility for their own continued professional development, engaging critically with educational research to further the Church's mission in education.
- make a positive contribution to the wider education system within and without the Catholic sector.

Section 2: Headteachers' Standards

1. School culture

Deputy headteachers work with the headteacher to:

- establish and sustain a Christ centred vision embodied in the school's Catholic mission, ethos and strategic direction in partnership with the parish and Trust, those responsible for governance and through consultation with the school community and Diocese.
- create a Christ inspired culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life enabling them to flourish.
- uphold ambitious educational standards which reflect the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education[7] and which prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment which recognises an individual's dignity as made in the image and likeness of God.
- ensure a culture of high staff professionalism rooted in mutual respect, subsidiarity and the pursuit of excellence.

[5] *Dialogue and Proclamation*, (1991) Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Vatican.
[6] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, Vatican.
[7] The distinctive characteristics of Catholic education are 1. The search for excellence, 2. The uniqueness of the individual, 3. The education of the whole person, 4. The education of all and 5. Moral principles

2. Teaching

Deputy headteachers work with the headteacher to:

- establish and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.
- ensure teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains and demonstrate how each discipline and domain contributes to the Christian vision of human flourishing to live life to the full.[8]
- ensure effective use is made of formative assessment.

3. Curriculum and assessment

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- ensure a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement rooted in the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education which sets out the knowledge, skills, values and virtues that will be taught.
- establish effective curricular leadership, developing subject leaders with high levels of relevant expertise with access to professional and Diocesan networks and communities.
- ensure that all pupils are taught to read through the provision of evidence-informed approaches to reading, particularly the use of systematic synthetic phonics in schools that teach early reading.
- ensure valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

4. Behaviour

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- establish and sustain high expectations of behaviour for all pupils, rooted in love, justice and reconciliation and built upon relationships, rules and routines, which are understood clearly by all staff and pupils.
- ensure high standards of pupil behaviour through the promotion of the virtues and courteous conduct in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.
- implement consistent, fair and respectful approaches to managing behaviour.
- ensure that adults within the school lead by example and model and teach the virtues characteristic of a good citizen.

[8] The Gospel of John 10:10

5. Additional and special educational needs and disabilities

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- ensure the school holds ambitious expectations for all pupils with additional and special educational needs and disabilities considering the principles of Catholic social teaching.[9]
- establish and sustain ethos, culture and practices rooted in the distinctive characteristics of Catholic education that enable pupils to access the curriculum and learn effectively.
- ensure the school works effectively in partnership with parents, carers, parish and professionals, to identify the additional needs and special educational needs and disabilities of pupils, providing support and adaptation where appropriate.
- ensure the school fulfils its statutory duties regarding the SEND code of practice.

6. Professional development

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- ensure staff have access to high-quality, sustained professional development opportunities in all key and distinctive aspects, aligned to balance the priorities of whole-school improvement, team and individual needs.
- prioritise the professional development of staff, ensuring effective planning, delivery and evaluation which is consistent with the approaches laid out in the standard for teachers' professional development.
- ensure that professional development opportunities draw on expert provision from beyond the school, as well as within it, including Diocesan and nationally recognised career and professional frameworks and programmes to build capacity and support succession planning.

7. Organisational management

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- ensure the protection and safety of pupils and staff through effective approaches to safeguarding, as part of the duty of care.
- prioritise and allocate financial resources appropriately, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and probity in the use of public funds reflecting the school's Catholic mission.
- ensure staff are deployed and managed well with due attention paid to workload.
- establish and oversee systems, processes and policies that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently and that are rooted in a clear understanding of the Church's mission in education.
- ensure rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk.

[9] The relevant principles being: the Dignity of the Human Person, the Call to Community and Participation, Rights and Responsibilities, the Preferential Option for the Poor and Solidarity.

8. Continuous school improvement

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- make use of effective and proportional processes of evaluation to identify and analyse complex or persistent problems and barriers which limit school effectiveness and identify priority areas for improvement.
- develop appropriate evidence-informed strategies for improvement as part of well-targeted plans which are realistic, timely, appropriately sequenced and suited to the school's Catholic context.
- ensure careful and effective implementation of improvement strategies, which lead to sustained school improvement over time.

9. Working in partnership

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- forge constructive relationships beyond the school, working in partnership with parents, carers, the parish, Trust, Diocese and the local community.
- commit their school to work successfully with other Catholic schools and other schools and organisations in a climate of mutual challenge and support.
- establish and maintain working relationships with fellow professionals and colleagues across other public services to improve educational outcomes for all pupils.

10. Governance and accountability

Deputy headteachers work with headteachers to:

- understand and welcome the role of effective governance, rooted in strategic stewardship of the Catholic mission in education, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility.
- establish and sustain a professional working relationship with those responsible for governance which is inspired by a Christ centred vision of human formation.
- ensure that staff know and understand their professional responsibilities and are held to account.
- ensure the school effectively and efficiently operates within the required regulatory frameworks and meets all statutory duties.

Based on the 2020 DfE Headteachers' Standards published to articulate the additional responsibilities of headship in addition to the requirements of the teachers' standards but reflecting the ethos of the Catholic school and the vocational role of a Catholic headteacher in upholding the mission of the Church

Person Specification – Deputy Headteacher

Deputy Headteacher

Essential Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
FAITH COMMITMENT	E1	A practising Catholic (fulfilling the requirements of the Diocesan Briefing Note)	A/I/R
	E2	Secure understanding of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school and Catholic education	A/I/R
	E3	Understanding of the leadership role in spiritual development of pupils and staff	A/I/R
	E4	Experience of leading school worship	A/I
QUALIFICATIONS	E5	Qualified teacher status	A/CC
	E6	Degree	A/CC
	E7	CCRS/CTC (or equivalent) or commitment to obtaining the certificate	A/CC/I
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	E8	Evidence of appropriate professional development for the role of deputy headteacher	A
	E9	Evidence of recent leadership and management professional development	A/I/CC
	E10	Evidence of appropriate safeguarding training	A
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE	E11	To have substantial and current experience as a middle leader	A/I/R
	E12	To have had active and effective leadership of a team/key stage/curriculum area/department	A/I/R
	E13	To have taken an active involvement in school self-evaluation and development planning	A/I/R
	E14	To have implemented and developed a whole school initiative	A/I/R
	E15	To have had responsibility for policy development and implementation	A/I/R
	E16	To have had experience of and ability to contribute to staff development (e.g. coaching, mentoring, INSET for staff)	A/I/R
EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING	E17	Significant teaching experience	A/I/R
	E18	To have a knowledge and understanding of all key stages in the school	A/I
	E19	To be able to effectively use data, assessment and target setting to raise standards/address weaknesses	A/I

PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES	E20	To have excellent written and oral communication skills (which will be assessed at all stages of the process)	A/I
APPLICATION FORM AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT	E21 E22	The form must be fully completed and legible The supporting statement should be clear, concise (within the required word count) and related to the specific post	A A

Desirable Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
FAITH COMMITMENT	D1	Involvement in parish community	A/I
QUALIFICATIONS	D2	Recent experience in a Catholic school	A
	D3	Experience of teaching in more than one school	A
	D4	Experience of monitoring staff performance	A/I
	D5	Knowledge and understanding of current educational issues	A/I
	D6	Postgraduate level qualification	A
	D7	Successful completion of Diocesan leadership programme	A

KEY – STAGE IDENTIFIED	
A	Application Form
I	Interview
R	References
CC	Checking Certificates

Shortlist Working Sheet – Deputy Headteacher

Deputy Headteacher

Name of applicant:	
Current school:	
Current post:	

Essential Criteria

Criterion No.	FAITH COMMITMENT	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E1	A practising Catholic (fulfilling the requirements of the Diocesan Briefing Note)	☐	☐	☐
E2	Secure understanding of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school and Catholic education	☐	☐	☐
E3	Understanding of the leadership role in spiritual development of pupils and staff	☐	☐	☐
E4	Experience of leading school worship	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	QUALIFICATIONS	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E5	Qualified teacher status	☐	☐	☐
E6	Degree	☐	☐	☐
E7	CCRS/CTC (or equivalent) or commitment to obtaining the certificate	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E8	Evidence of appropriate professional development for the role of deputy headteacher	☐	☐	☐
E9	Evidence of recent leadership and management professional development	☐	☐	☐
E10	Evidence of appropriate safeguarding training	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E11	To have substantial and current experience as a middle leader	☐	☐	☐
E12	To have had active and effective leadership of a team/key stage/curriculum area/department	☐	☐	☐
E13	To have taken an active involvement in school self-evaluation and development planning	☐	☐	☐
E14	To have implemented and developed a whole school initiative	☐	☐	☐
E15	To have had responsibility for policy development and implementation	☐	☐	☐
E16	To have had experience of and ability to contribute to staff development (e.g. coaching, mentoring, INSET for staff)	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E17	Significant teaching experience	☐	☐	☐
E18	To have a knowledge and understanding of all key stages in the school	☐	☐	☐
E19	To be able to effectively use data, assessment and target setting to raise standards/address weaknesses	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E20	To have excellent written and oral communication skills (which will be assessed at all stages of the process)	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	APPLICATION FORM AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
E21	The form must be fully completed and legible	☐	☐	☐
E22	The supporting statement should be clear, concise (within the required word count) and related to the specific post	☐	☐	☐

Desirable Criteria

Criterion No.	FAITH COMMITMENT	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
D1	Involvement in parish community	☐	☐	☐

Criterion No.	SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE	Clearly Meets	Some Evidence	No Evidence
D2	Recent experience in a Catholic school	☐	☐	☐
D3	Experience of teaching in more than one school	☐	☐	☐
D4	Experience of monitoring staff performance	☐	☐	☐
D5	Knowledge and understanding of current educational issues	☐	☐	☐
D6	Postgraduate level qualification	☐	☐	☐
D7	Successful completion of Diocesan leadership programme	☐	☐	☐

Notes:

SAMPLE TIMETABLE FOR PRIMARY DEPUTY HEADTEACHER INTERVIEW (ONE DAY, BASED ON TWO CANDIDATES)

8.45 Panel briefing

- Opening Prayer
- Confirm arrangements for the day
- Discussion of presentation task

9.15 Candidates arrive.

9.30 Tour of the school and liturgical prayer (ten minutes with half of full school reception to year 6)

Time	**Liturgical Prayer** (school hall)	**Tour**
9.30	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
10.00	Candidate 2	Candidate 1

10.30 BREAK

Time	**Data Task**	**School Council**
10.45	Candidate 1 given data	Candidate 2
11.15	Candidate 1 data presentation	
11.15	Candidate 2 given data	Candidate 1
11.45	Candidate 2 data presentation	

12.15 Candidate identity and qualification checks

12.30 LUNCH - Candidates lunch with the board and staff

13.00 Panel reconvenes

- Agreement of questions for the formal interview and who will ask the questions

13.00 Presentations. Candidates have 30 minutes preparation time.
(Presentation 10 minutes with 5 minutes for governor questions).

Time	
13.00	Candidate 1 given presentation title
13.30	Candidate 2 given presentation title
13.30	Candidate 1 presentation
14.00	Candidate 2 presentation

14.30 BREAK

14.40 Formal interviews

- Approximately 40 minutes per candidate
- At the end of the interview chair confirms that candidate is a practising Catholic and will accept the post if offered

Time	
14.40	Candidate 1
15.20	Candidate 2

16.00 Deliberation

- Feedback on liturgical prayer task
- Feedback on data task
- Feedback on school council
- Presentation
- Interview

17.00 The decision

- The panel use criteria to identify strongest applicant
- Offer post (see model letter)
- Arrange feedback for unsuccessful candidate

SAMPLE TIMETABLE FOR PRIMARY DEPUTY HEADTEACHER INTERVIEW (ONE DAY, BASED ON FOUR CANDIDATES)

9.00 Panel meeting

- Opening prayer
- Confirm arrangements for the day

9.15 Candidates arrive

- Identification and qualification checks

9.30 Liturgical Prayer and data task

Time	Liturgical Prayer	Data
9.30	Candidate 1	Candidate 2
9.50	Candidate 3	Candidate 4
10.10	Candidate 2	Candidate 1
10.30	Candidate 4	Candidate 3

10.50 BREAK

11.10 Presentations (10 minutes with 5 minutes for questions)

Time	
11.10	Candidate 1
11.30	Candidate 2
11.50	Candidate 3
12.10	Candidate 4

12.30 LUNCH - Candidates lunch with the board and staff

13.00 Panel reconvenes

- Agreement of questions for the afternoon and who will ask the questions

14.00 Formal Interviews

- Approximately 40 minutes per candidate
- At the end of the interview chair confirms that candidate is a practising Catholic and will accept the post if offered

Time	
14.00	Candidate 1
14.40	Candidate 2

15.20 BREAK

15.30	Candidate 3
16.10	Candidate 4

16.40 Deliberation

- Feedback on Liturgical Prayer task
- Feedback on data task
- Discussion presentation task

17.40 The decision

- The panel use criteria to identify strongest applicant
- Offer post (see model letter)
- Arrange feedback for unsuccessful candidates