

BARNET CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER EDUCATION BOARD TO CATHOLIC PARENTS IN THE BARNET DEANERY CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF THEIR CHILDREN TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS

You will visit this Catholic Secondary School to learn about its life and achievements. You will be thinking about what this school has to offer your daughter as the setting for coming years.

High among your concerns you will be wanting to know if this school will help your child to her best possible academic achievements and to develop other talents to the full. This, of course, will depend to some extent on your child being happy and settled in the school. These are things about which you will be thinking carefully.

At this moment may I also ask you to recall the important task of sharing the precious gift of faith with your children. This is, in fact, an important part of achieving stability and the personal development which goes with it. Growth in faith goes hand in hand with growth as a person. After all, God only wants what is best for us. The more we come to understand God, the more we know what is, in fact, for our own good.

You well know that parents are the first teachers of their children. This is particularly true in matters of faith and right living. But this does not simply refer to the early years of the children's lives. It continues to be true, even though you will realise that as your child grows older, the immediate influence which you, as parents, exercise seems to lessen day by day. So partnership between school and home is crucial to every aspect of education. That partnership is all the stronger when parents and school share the same faith. A partnership fashioned in faith is what we try to achieve in our Catholic schools.

As you look round this school, look out for the signs by which you can recognise it as a Catholic environment. By that I do not just mean the presence of religious symbols, such as the crucifix. But also I expect that you will be able to find evidence of a care and reverence for God's created world; an exploration of everything that is good and beautiful; a vigorous concern for good order and respect between people, no matter their race or ability; a determination that each person makes the best use of the talents and abilities which God has given; times and opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and their prayer; and evidence of generosity in the service of others, both at home and abroad, who are less fortunate than ourselves.

I know that what you are concerned about above all else is the good of your child. That is absolutely right. In coming to that judgement, please do not underestimate the importance of the Catholic context that our schools can provide. There is no real substitute for it.

Thank you for listening to this message. May God bless you in all your responsibilities as parents.

The Most Rev. Vincent Nichols