

ST. CHARLES CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENT

St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College opened in 1990 following the reorganisation of Catholic secondary education in the central area of the Diocese of Westminster. It was resourced by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea until 1993 when it was taken out of local authority control and placed, along with other Sixth Form and Further Education Colleges, as an independent institution in the new Further Education sector. Since then the College has been resourced by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Further change took place in April 2001 when the FEFC was itself replaced by the new Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Government's current policy objectives of high levels of student achievement and social inclusiveness make for a challenging agenda, but the College is clear about its mission and its direction, draws reassurance from its achievements so far, and we can face that future with confidence. It opened with a roll of c. 500 students, and now sustains rolls in excess of 1,000.

The College was launched as an exciting, high profile, high prestige venture and its capacity to manage the challenges facing it was given very positive reinforcement by the first-class reports on the College given by the FEFC Inspectorate in March 1994 and again in November 1997 and April 2002. In May 1999 ten colleges in the Further Education Sector were declared "Beacon Colleges". St Charles was one of only four sixth form colleges in that group. Our Beacon status was confirmed again in February 2004. Our most recent inspection took place in October 2007 and the excellent outcomes from that scrutiny are summarised in an enclosed leaflet. The full report can be read in the Colleges section at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Student achievements at St. Charles are very good. The College is not top of raw A level results tables, but we have still achieved an A2 pass rate of 97% in 2008, with vocational outcomes significantly above national benchmarks. Value-added analyses of our level 3 provision, whether through the ALIS, ALPS systems or the new CAV score appended to league tables, places us in the very top rank of sixth form colleges. Outcomes from one year vocational provision, whether at Foundation or Intermediate level, are consistently above national averages.

The College is well regarded by the LSC and the local authority and has just opened £6 building incorporating gym, fitness suite and six classrooms which has enhanced our campus significantly.

CATHOLIC MISSION AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The College is explicitly Catholic in its general aims, its policies, and in its daily life. Roughly half of the students have come through a Catholic schools' system, although in common with Catholics everywhere they will all be at different stages in their faith journey. The College sees itself as a Catholic college that caters for the community, and is therefore inclusive in its admissions policy, welcoming students from other Christian or other faith backgrounds. All these students contribute to the richness of our community, which is a characteristic of the College.

All members of staff, whether Catholics or not, are expected to be supportive of the Catholic identity of the College, and we are particularly blessed in the contribution made to College life by those members of staff who are not Catholics. The College provides staff with supportive documentation and guidance on how the Catholic identity and ethos of the College can be actively promoted and developed, irrespective of a teacher's background. Roughly 45% of the staff are from a Catholic background.

It is important that applicants for teaching posts are aware of the community that St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College serves. It is an inner city community and our students come from a wide variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. We lay great emphasis in the College upon our multi-cultural ideals, which derive clearly from our Catholic principles, and applications are therefore welcome from candidates able to contribute to those ideals. Not all students will come from backgrounds in which study beyond 16 is the norm. A significant proportion of our students come from backgrounds of some disadvantage, and we place the provision of a high quality educational experience for them firmly in the Catholic educational tradition. The challenge from such students is more than matched by the rewards that working with them bring, and we remain committed to an inclusive approach. Most students that enrol with us at Foundation or Intermediate levels will progress to the next stage the following year. The majority of students who leave St Charles for university will be the first generation of their family to do so.

Prior achievement for those students engaging on advanced level programmes is a little below national norms. High expectations and very good practice ensures that their results and progression meet or are in advance of national norms; in this way social and educational value is offered and secured by the large majority of our students.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Staff working in a sixth form college are freed from some of the challenges attached to schools, but they are subject, on the other hand, to a high contact ratio, to continuous examination pressure, and to the demanding business of working closely with students whose stay in the college is two/three years, or sometimes less. College management has become increasingly complicated over recent years, and the pace of change shows no sign of slackening, as we deal with continuous curricular and structural changes.

In the appointment of teaching staff to St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College it is thus important that all applicants have a clear awareness of the task they are seeking to undertake, have a strong commitment to that task, and an understanding of the need to accept wider responsibilities than those defined by conventional subject specialism. Central amongst those wider responsibilities is the pastoral care of students. All full-time teachers take on the role of Group Tutor, and you will find a separate job description outlining the requirements of that role in your application pack. We firmly believe that the establishment of constructive and supportive relationships with students outside the classroom is central to their success; robust and responsive pastoral care systems facilitate that. We are a college that works hard to ensure that students' names and stories get known very quickly.

The College is currently divided into five divisions, each division having staff and students assigned to it. These divisions might correspond roughly in other structures to faculty groupings. Each division is made up of members of staff with specific academic and pastoral responsibilities and is led by a Pastoral Director. The regular Divisional meetings also serve as a communication conduit between the staffing body and the senior management team.

The College has been most fortunate to date in recruiting a team of highly qualified, high calibre staff whose dedication has been exemplary and inspirational to all. It is worth noting that the staff profile overall is relatively young, that the staff facilities are very good, and that the staff are committed to the notion of as healthy and ecologically as sound an environment as possible. There is no smoking at all within the College buildings, or on campus. Applicants should note that the College currently lies within the extended congestion charge zone, although this designation is expected to cease at some point in 2010. Although the College has car-parking spaces we do not contribute to the cost of congestion charge payments for car drivers. Interest free loans for travel cards are available.

As the holder of the Investors In People Award, which has been renewed successfully on three assessments, the College is fully committed to the professional and personal development of all staff. Well-resourced opportunities are available for all staff. The future success of the College rests upon the continuing professional development of the people that work here.

The contracts offered for all appointments will be those recommended nationally by the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum as amended by the Governors in the light of the Catholic identity of the College.

A copy is attached of the new spinal scales currently being adopted by the Sixth Form Colleges' Employers' Forum. Progression up these scales is assessed within a new performance management framework. For teachers on the main scale progression should take place on an annual basis. For teachers on the PSP or management scales progression is considered every two years. It is worth noting that the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum is currently reviewing the scope and operation of these salary frameworks in the light of changes recently made by the School Teachers Review Body.

The teaching posts currently advertised will be placed within the divisional structure as outlined earlier. Applications are welcome both from experienced teachers and from new entrants to the profession.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Paul O'Shea - Principal

March 2010