Lead role for teachers

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NEW teachers at Catholic schools will have to undertake a two-year “leadership program” from next year, as schools try to stop the “haemorrhaging” of promising new recruits leaving the profession.

The program would be mandatory for all graduate teachers in the Catholic system with two years experience or less and include a “teacher resilience framework” and national professional standards.

Catholic Education Office WA leadership consultant Shane Glasson said the program came amid fears schools were losing quality teachers.

“The program has been born out of a concern that we have had for a while that a lot of our graduate teachers are haemorrhaging out of the system,” Mr Glasson said.

“They come out of university, they get a job in a school and within a couple of years they leave.

“In WA in particular, because the mining industry has been so strong, a lot of graduates exit and move into the human resources area.”

He hoped the program would help graduates cope with the “huge” demands of the role and improve staff retention.

Among WA’s 1105 schools almost 160 are Catholic.
That’s about 18% of the state’s 408,000 schoolchildren.

The Catholic Education Office of WA employed 4435 teachers in 2011, according to its latest annual report – 291 fewer than it employed in 2010.

Leadership consultant Georgie Wynne is heading up the program.

Ms Wynne said the program was being tried this year before formal introduction next year.

She said 20 teachers from the Perth metropolitan area started a pilot version of the program in March, which was expanded to include 16 Goldfields teachers last week.

“Over the course of 2013 each cohort will complete three professional learning modules.”

She said, “Between each of the professional learning modules they will also be conducting some action research in their classrooms, to improve specific aspects of their teaching as well as learning outcomes for students.”

Almost 160 of the state’s 1106 schools are Catholic, educating nearly 18 per cent of the state’s 408,000 schoolchildren.

The Early Career Teachers Program is part of a bigger overhaul of the CEO WA’s professional development offerings and is funded by the Federal Government’s Smarter Schools National Partnership.

The program will be run over two years and takes seven days.