



Director's Letter - Autumn Term 2016

7th September 2015

Dear Colleague

Welcome Back

On behalf of the Diocesan Education Team, a warm welcome back to school and we hope you managed to enjoy the summer break and spend some time with family and friends.

Church School Performance and Data

Firstly, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all those schools who managed to return their performance data at the end of July. Caroline Crofts, our Lead Associate for School Improvement, is currently collating the data and doing an analysis of our Church school performance. Early indications are that most of our Church schools have performed extremely well and in some cases, exceeded expectations and their own targets for the end of key stage results which is really encouraging and reflects the hard work by staff and pupils across the diocese.

In addition to these results, a number of Church schools were inspected by Ofsted in the final part of the summer term and maintained or improved their inspection grade. Many

congratulations to these Church schools who continue to serve the needs of their children, families and local communities so well.

Our own target for Church school performance is that 85% of our Church schools will be judged as 'Good' or better by OFSTED and SIAMS by the end of 2017. At the moment, the data suggests that we are already very close to achieving this target this academic year.

The Board of Education's 'School Effectiveness Committee' (SEC) meets three times a year to monitor the performance and data of all our Church schools and academies and will be meeting in September to review the provisional results following the summer.

Education and Adoption Bill

The new Education Bill has been making its way through parliament over the summer and is due for its final reading in early September. The Bill sets out new powers to the Secretary of State and Regional School Commissioners (RSCs) to tackle underperformance in schools and also provides further detail on those schools which may be identified as 'Coasting Schools' and eligible for intervention.

More details on this can be found by downloading the draft regulations at the bottom on this newsletter.

One of the major changes is that the Regional Schools Commissioners will now take on the formal responsibility for tackling underperformance within their regions including appointing new sponsors to schools who will become academies and also approving new school (Academy and Free School) bids.

Very few of our Church schools within the diocese are at risk of intervention as defined within the draft regulations however, the Diocesan Board of Education has approved a new strategy and policy for the future organisation of Church schools within the diocese which is set out below.

Diocesan Board of Education: New Strategic Approach and Policy for Church schools and academies

During the summer term, the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) reviewed its current position with regard to school organisation and academy conversions including arrangements for sponsorship.

As a result of this review, the DBE has formed a new 'Diocesan Strategic Partnership' (DSP) consisting of representatives of all the established Church of England Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) which currently sponsor Church schools within the diocese.

This new group will meet once a term to review the proposed sponsorship arrangements for all Church schools wishing to become academies and will act as a conduit between the DBE and the Regional Schools Commissioner for the South East and South London area. The DSP will also consider which Church MATs might be best placed to sponsor and submit applications for new Church of England schools in the diocese.

As part of this new strategy, the DBE will not directly sponsor any more Church primary schools and will encourage primary schools wishing to become academies to join one of the established MATs operating across the diocese or if this is not possible, form their own Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) with other primary schools.

The DBE's Academy Conversion Criteria has been revised in the light of these changes and the new version can be found on the RDBE Website here:

www.rdbe.org.uk/schools/academies/conversioncriteria

For further information on academy conversion, do contact John Constanti, Deputy Director of Education at: john.constanti@rochester.anglican.org

New Ofsted Framework Briefings - 8th October, 4.30pm

We are pleased to have been able to organise for a Senior HMI to come to Rochester to give a briefing to all our Church Schools on the changes to the new Ofsted Framework.

The twilight briefing is designed for Headteachers, Senior Leaders and Governorrns and is on Thursday 8th October starting at 4.30pm at the Great Danes Hotel, Hollingbourne, Maidstone. To book a place, please contact Teresa Spearink at teresa.spearink@rochester.anglican.org. There is a small charge of £15 per person to cover venue costs.

SIAMS & Mid Term Monitoring Reviews

All Church schools within the Diocese are subject to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) once every three or five years depending on the outcome of their last SIAS/SIAMS inspection.

In this diocese, Virginia Corbyn, Assistant Director of Education (Schools) acts as the 'SIAMS Manager' and organises the SIAMS inspections and ensures that a SIAMS inspector is available to visit your school.

Although Virginia is a very experienced, qualified SIAMS inspector, she does not inspect in our own diocese, which allows her to conduct 'Mid Term Monitoring Reviews' (MMRs) of all aspects of the SIAMS framework at the mid-point in the inspection cycle at the request of the school.

If you are interested in Virginia conducting a MMR review in your school, do get in touch with her direct at virginia.corbyn@rochester.anglican.org so she can explain how the reviews work in practice.

Diocesan Calendar of Events

A full list of diocesan events for the new academic year can be downloaded using the link at the bottom of this newsletter. Do open it and print it off for your notice board!

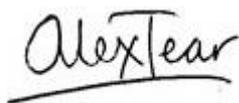
Bereavement Packs

From time to time, we occasionally hear of a sudden loss of a pupil's close family or relative. At times like this, it can often be helpful to have some information and guidance about the best way to support the child and/or the school community as they come to terms with the news. In the Diocesan Office, we do have some specially prepared materials that can be loaned to schools who are experiencing such an event or tragedy. Do contact Teresa Spearink in the Diocesan Office for more details.

We hope that this letter has been useful as you begin the new academic year and the first few weeks go well for you and your staff.

We look forward to working with you over the course of the coming year.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Tear". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Alex Tear

Director of Education

[Diocesan Calendar of Events 2015/16](#)

[DFE's Coasting Schools - Draft Regulations](#)

[RDBE New Academy Conversion Criteria - Sept 2015](#)



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