

Diocesan Director's Newsletter - Pentecost - May 2016

19th May 2016

Dear Colleague

I hope you are well and for primary colleagues, that your SATs week went smoothly for staff and pupils.

With the recent announcements by the Secretary of State around the revisions to the new White Paper, I thought it might be helpful to re-iterate the position of the Diocese in relation to the academy agenda so all our Church schools are clear and can plan appropriately.

'Education for All' - The Queen's Speech

There has been much speculation since the Secretary of State's announcement on the 6th May that the government intended to withdraw the requirement for all schools to be forced to become academies by 2022.

However, the detail of the announcement made it very clear that the government intends to pursue its academy policy albeit through a different route. The announcement states:

In addition, the government will bring forward legislation which will trigger conversion of all schools within a local authority in 2 specific circumstances:

"firstly, where it is clear that the local authority can no longer viably support its remaining schools because a critical mass of schools in that area has converted. Under this mechanism a local authority will also be able to request the Department for Education converts all of its remaining schools

secondly, where the local authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools, demonstrating an inability to bring about meaningful school improvement"

For many of our Church schools in this diocese, this means that it is likely that as the funding for Local Authorities is reduced, the tipping point will be reached when Local Authorities can no longer provide the support to their remaining schools.

For this reason, it is important that governing bodies of our Church schools start to look

ahead and begin to plan strategically for a time when the Local Authority will withdraw its support. This will mean thinking carefully about which Church Multi-Academy Trust to join and for primary schools in some parts of our diocese, coming together to form new Church MATs.

If your school or governing body needs guidance or support with this, do contact either John Constanti or myself who will be able to discuss this with you or visit your school.

The National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Church of England Schools

At our recent Heads & Chairs briefings, I outlined the principles and protocols agreed between the National Society (on behalf of the Church of England) and the Department of Education.

The national MOU is a critical document which will guide the work of the Diocesan Boards of Education when considering proposals for new Church Multi-Academy Trusts and requests for academy status, so it is really important that all Headteachers and governing bodies have read the document and understand the arrangements for Church schools.

A copy of my slides from the Heads & Chairs briefings and the MOU itself is available to download at the bottom of this newsletter.

Service Level Agreement 2016-17

Thank you to all those schools who have signed up for the SLA for 2016-17 and supported our work with you.

It is not too late to join the SLA so if you haven't returned your reply form, please download a copy of the form below and return it to the Diocesan Office as soon as possible.

Diocesan Associate Consultants

We have a growing number of very experienced Diocesan Associates who work with us and are available to support our Church schools with school improvement, headteacher's performance/appraisal and teaching and learning reviews, so if you need support do contact the Diocesan office for more details of what we offer.

R.E Support Group Meetings - Summer term dates

These meetings designed for RE Subject leaders take place every term across the diocese in a number of locations:

- Wednesday 8th June (Tunbridge Wells)
- Thursday 9th June (Rochester)
- Friday 10th June (Bexley)

Church Schools' Celebration - Rochester Cathedral

We are looking forward to welcoming those schools who will be joining us for this year's Church Schools' Celebration (formerly the Church Schools' Festival) which returns to Rochester Cathedral. A copy of the three-year rota for the Church School's Celebration is available to download below so you can see the future slot for your school.

Education Service & Garden Party - 5pm 22nd June 2016

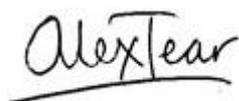
All Headteachers and Chair of Governors of our Church schools are invited to attend our annual thanksgiving service at Rochester Cathedral on the 22nd June.

This is wonderful occasion to bring everyone involved in education in the diocese together before the end of the academic year and is followed by a Garden Party hosted by Bishop James.

A reminder that we present Bishop's Certificates to those Headteachers who are retiring in the summer and governors who have given long service to our Church schools. Please let us know if you wish to propose someone for this recognition.

We look forward to seeing you at the service.

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
Diocesan Director of Education

[National Memorandum of Understanding for Church of England Schools](#)

[Director's Slides from Heads & Chairs briefings](#)

[Church Schools' Celebration - 3 year rota for schools](#)

[Service Level Agreement 2016-17 - Response form](#)



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