



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of  
**Rochester**

Board of Education

**Bishop's Officer & Director of Education**  
Mr. Alex Tear MA(Ed) (Hons)

*Email: alex.tear@rochester.anglican.org*

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

8<sup>th</sup> January 2013

To Headteachers, Chair of Governors and Incumbents

Dear Colleague

### **Director's Letter – Spring 2013**

Welcome back and on behalf of the Education Team a very Happy New Year to you, your staff and pupils.

In my last newsletter in September, I wrote about the challenge of leadership and the evolving educational landscape. I also described some of the changes ahead that will be required if we are going to continue to grow our diocesan family of Church schools and protect our distinctive and inclusive offer of state-funded Christian education in the fast-changing world of academy trusts, commercial sponsors and disempowered local authorities.

#### **Rochester Diocesan Multi-Academy Education Trust**

After careful consideration, the Diocesan Board of Education has decided to give a clear, strategic lead to our Church schools and launch the Rochester Diocesan Education Trust, a multi-academy trust, which will sponsor any Church school which either wishes to become an academy under the umbrella of the diocese or due to underperformance, has been directed to become a 'Sponsored Academy' by the Department of Education.

The purpose of the Education Trust is to maintain and ensure rapid improvement of Church schools which need support now (and in the future) and to act as a vehicle for enabling the sharing of best practice and economies to be achieved across the group of academies.

The Education trust is now an incorporated company and operational, and we are already in discussions with several Church schools who are interested in joining the trust as one of the first cohort of Church academies. It is recognised by the Department of Education as an appropriate mechanism for a Church school to become an academy and we are working closely with DfE officials on sponsorship arrangements.

The Board's policy on academy conversion remains unchanged; that it is the governing body's decision to become an academy and we will continue to encourage the growth of local Church of England multi-academy trusts where this is possible. However we recognise the need for the diocese to provide an alternative solution for those schools which are vulnerable or are located in areas where local multi-academy trusts are not yet operational.

If you or your governing body are interested in finding out more about the Diocesan Education Trust, do contact John Constanti, Deputy Director [john.constanti@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:john.constanti@rochester.anglican.org) who will arrange a visit to see you in school. Every Church school will receive further details and information in the next few weeks.

#### **School Effectiveness Adviser (Primary Schools)**

We are looking to appoint a new member of the education team to work with our Church primary schools and academies on school improvement and use of performance data to raise standards. The post is currently being advertised in the TES [www.tes.co.uk/job/school-effectiveness-advisor-103918](http://www.tes.co.uk/job/school-effectiveness-advisor-103918) and interviews will be held w/c 11<sup>th</sup> February. If you know a suitably experienced and qualified person who might be interested in this role or would like to be considered yourself, do please ask them to get in contact with me at [alex.tear@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:alex.tear@rochester.anglican.org) or via the Diocesan Office.

#### **Affiliated Schools**

This term we welcome two more community schools to the Rochester Diocesan Family of Schools which now includes 93 schools across four local authorities. St Mary's Cray Primary School in Bromley will be affiliating to the diocese this term and Walderslade Secondary High School for Girls in Medway will also be joining us. We look forward to working with both these schools and their staff in the year ahead.

#### **Diocesan Schools' Forum**

This term's Diocesan School's Forum meeting takes place on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January at St Botolph's Primary School in Northfleet. If you would like to place an item on the agenda for discussion or draw something to the attention of the group, you can contact your local representative by e-mailing them. Details of forum members are available here: <http://www.rochester-board-of-education.co.uk/corporate-policies/diocesan-schools-forum>

### **Leadership Conference – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March**

A reminder that our annual Leadership Conference for Headteachers, Senior Leaders and Governors, takes place on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March at the Mercure Hotel, Maidstone. We are pleased to have secured the following keynote speakers:

- Dame Pat Collarbone – Leading Educationalist and contributor to the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda
- Humphrey Walters – Leadership Coach to the England World Cup Winning Rugby Team
- Nigel Genders – Head of School Strategy, National Society and the Church of England

The conference is now open and places can be reserved using the online booking system. A flyer and separate paper booking form is attached with this letter. Do join us for an excellent day with fellow Church school leaders and governors and the promise of a good lunch!

### **New Statutory Inspection Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Framework Briefings**

These afternoon Diocesan briefings on the new SIAMS Framework take place week commencing **28<sup>th</sup> January**. These briefings are designed for Headteachers, Senior Leaders and Governors and provide the latest information on the new inspection framework from the National Society which comes into effect after Easter.

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January** 1.30-3.30pm

**Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January** 1.30-3.30pm

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February** 1.30-3.30pm

These will all take place at the Diocesan Offices in Rochester (as we have not been able to secure other venues for these meetings). You can book places on these briefings (and any other course featured in this letter) using the online course booking system here: <http://www.rochester-board-of-education.co.uk/payg/courses.php>

### **Headteachers’ Retreat and Senior Leaders ‘Refresh, Recharge & Renew’ – Canterbury Lodge**

Would you or one of your Senior Leadership Team benefit from an opportunity to spend some time away from school with other colleagues and gain some perspective on leading your Church school?

There are still a limited number of places available on the Headteacher retreat and Senior Leader event which take place at the Canterbury Lodge Hotel in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral. See the hotel website for more details: <http://canterburycathedrallodge.org> To book, contact: Virginia Corbyn [virginia.corbyn@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:virginia.corbyn@rochester.anglican.org)

### **Heads & Chair’s Network Briefings**

A reminder that this term’s Heads & Chairs Network briefings take place on week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> January.

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January** 1.30 – 4pm – Holiday Inn, Wrotham Heath, Sevenoaks TN15 7RS

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January** 1.30 – 4pm – St. John’s CEP Tunbridge Wells TN4 9EW

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January** 1.30 – 4pm – Diocesan Offices, Rochester ME1 1SL

### **Church Schools Festival 2013**

Please note that the booking form for the Church Schools Festival on 11, 12, 13 and 14 June is enclosed and it should be returned to Teresa Spearink with payment to secure your place.

### **RDBE on Twitter**

Finally, with so much going on we have decided to launch our own Twitter account so you can follow us and we can keep you informed on events. To find us, search for @RDBETweeter.

We look forward to working with you this term.

Best wishes,



**Alex Tear - Director of Education**

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