

RDBE NEWS BULLETIN

A LETTER TO THE TEACHERS IN OUR CHURCH SCHOOLS



Dear Friends

It is hard to make sense of big events when we are caught up in them. Perhaps this has always been the human condition, but it has been made worse by the speed at which we work and the audit that has us questing for the next thing. What Foo Fighters laconically sum up as: *done, done and I'm on to the next one; done and done and I'm on to the next one.*

As the 2021-22 school year ends, I'm going to have a go at saying to the teachers in our church schools some things they ought to hear. We have endured a massive crisis in the pandemic. In that weird, linear way, the national storyline has moved on to war in Europe and the cost of living crisis, but the effects of Covid continue to burrow into us like a bad burn. It is only a matter of weeks since we endured a savage lockdown which disrupted every plan a teacher and their school so painstakingly makes.

For the last two years, teaching must have been about as easy as painting a rotating kaleidoscope.

It is not just the delivery of quality education; it is the attention to the complex, overlapping needs of children who struggled to make sense of outcomes and whose mental health, for several reasons, has dipped so noticeably. Cultural changes that teachers sit at the sharp end of. Thank you for putting one step in front of another and not giving up; for being on a frontline that was taken for granted; for adapting to an environment no training had prepared you for. For putting Christian values into practice under unusual pressure, which is the true testing ground for character.

This has made you an exceptional generation of teachers, facing the hardest landscape in UK history since those emerging from the Second World War and the original Education Acts were passed that formed the basis of modern schooling.

I hope and pray as many of you as possible can find summer space. Bessel van der Kolk's book title *The Body Keeps the Score* nails it. The cost of keeping on keeping on is paid in what we ignore in our bodies and I am sure there are many toxins that need to be released this summer.

Jesus exclaimed: *for those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it (Matthew 16:25).* In so many ways, you gave your lives away this year. I am praying you get it back in spades.

THANK YOU.

Simon, Bishop of Tonbridge

FROM JOHN CONSTANTI, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

We have all had to adapt to new ways, none more so than those in our Church schools.

As ever, thank you for all that you have and continue to do for the benefit of your pupils and the school community in such challenging times – it is deeply appreciated.

If there is any way in which we can assist or support, please do get in touch.

With all best wishes for a well-deserved, relaxing summer break.

CORONAVIRUS

Covid infections are decreasing across England with about 1.4% of the population or around 1 in 70 people infected (previously 2.2%, 1 in 45), according to the latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Government figures for the whole of the UK show 5,134 people with coronavirus were in hospital, down from 8,152 previously. Patient numbers were last below 10,000 in late December 2021.

The latest Coronavirus national data relating to England, can be summarised as follows:

People tested positive 34,970 down by 44.8%
(free testing ceased on 1 April)
Positive rate per 100,000 people equals 61.8
which is significant reduction
People hospitalised 647,418 up 1.4% and
Number of cases in England totals 18.8 m
compared to 18.7 m previously.

We are at last seeing a decrease in infection numbers amongst some staff and pupils in our Church schools. We are, however, conscious that in some schools, staff absences continue to be a challenge.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The number of schools subscribing totals 63 so a huge thank you to all those that have subscribed.

For those 26 schools who have not joined, we would encourage you to reconsider.

Subscribing schools are entitled to discounts on many of the services we offer and, out of fairness to subscribing schools, we may need to charge non-subscribing schools for certain services.

ADMIN ASSISTANT

I am delighted to confirm that Louise Liddy has been appointed and started with us on Tuesday 3 May 2022 and will be working 9:30am-1:30pm Monday to Friday.

Please feel free to contact Louise either by email at

louise.liddy@rochester.anglican.org

or rdbe@rochester.anglican.org or

Telephone 01634 560025

EDUCATION POLICY

The White Paper was published on the 28 March 2022 and was included in the Queen's speech on the 10 May 2022. The parliamentary process for enactment has commenced, although clarification over some points is still required.

A reminder of some of the following key factors that will need to be considered further, is given below:

1. There are 50 Church schools across the Diocese that have not yet converted to academy status.
2. Will the establishment of new Church MATs be permitted? If so, what will be the criteria?
3. There is an expectation that a Single Academy Trust (SAT) will be expected to join a MAT.
4. In order to protect their Christian character, it is anticipated that Church schools will only be permitted to join Church Trusts and
5. The issue of outstanding statutory land transfers from LAs needs to be resolved ideally with appropriate legislation so that academy conversions are not prevented.

The Schools' Bill received its first reading in the House of Lords on the 11 May 2022 and a second reading on the 23 May 2022. A number of very interesting points were raised on the 23 May 2022. Of particular interest were the following comments raised by Lord Baker.

"We have to be very aware that this is an important Bill. It is a real grab for power by the Department for Education. We must remember that, since 1870, the Department for Education has never run a school. It does not know how to appoint heads or how to determine any of the aspects of running a school because it has never had to do that, but now it is going to take complete control over the education system. It should be watched - not least by members of the Church of England - because I know how delicate the relationship is between Secretaries of State and the Church"

Further readings are scheduled for both the Houses of Commons and Lords, and we shall continue to monitor the passage of the Bill and, in particular, any amendments.

The main points of concern, which were not referred to previously in the White Paper, can be summarised as follows.

1. This is in relation to LAs establishing their own MATs and Voluntary Church schools being prevented from joining them which, thus far, we had been assured was the case

The policy statement at [Schools Bill](#) appears to imply that Local Authorities can academise all of their schools including Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Foundation schools by consulting with the trustees and the bodies that appoint Foundation governors:

"If plans include an application to convert a foundation or voluntary school, the local authority must obtain the consent of trustees of the school and the body responsible for appointing foundation governors"

There is no mention of the DBE or how DBEs would be consulted in line with the MOU. Therefore, where a DBE does not appoint foundation governors and is not the site Trustee, it would be possible for consent to be given by others for a Church school to join a LA or other MAT without any church representation against the wishes of the DBE and without their consent. This is in direct conflict with Section 8(3) of The DBE Measure 2021 which confirms "The governing body

of a voluntary or foundation school which is a church school must obtain the consent of the DBE before applying for an Academy order under section 3 of the Academies Act 2010”.

- The proposals in the Bill relating to school sites are associated with a post-academy landscape when academies move sites, it does read as though such transfers will only be made once the proceeds of sale of any former site are handed over (often there are contentions over former schoolteachers’ houses and reverts). They have chosen to retain the awful, ambiguous phrase “reasonable costs” which often becomes an obstacle as LAs often refute costs are reasonable.

There are a number of outstanding historic statutory land transfers from LAs (we have 19 at present) which largely arise where school buildings have been constructed on LA owned land and should be statutorily transferred to the site Trustees. We were assured that these would be addressed via legislation but there is no provision in the Bill for such instances. Where there is an outstanding statutory land transfer, it would be inappropriate for conversion consent to be given (as the LAs duty to transfer disappears post-conversion) and could indeed, therefore, represent a breach of charitable duties. There is no provision within the Bill for such historic outstanding transfers.

- What is required at this point in the legislation is the statutory inclusion of a role for the DBE or at least an assurance that the national MoU will be honoured.
- Seemingly, only MATs with a majority of VA schools will have majority governance that was not the case previously and
- The Secretary of State’s intervention powers are extreme and could disempower the MAT directors and Members.

CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS FOR VA SCHOOLS

These allocations have now been confirmed as shown below.

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
£	£	£	£	£

Total Diocesan Allocation	1,106,145	1,353,892	1,553,853	1,448,549	1,410,511
Variance on previous year - £	8,213	247,747	199,961	(105,304)	(38,038)
Variance on previous year - %	1	22	15	(7)	(3)

Although the funding in 2022/2023 is slightly less than in the previous year, it does facilitate a significant number of building projects being able to be undertaken at our Church VA schools this summer.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

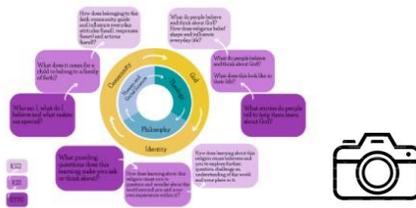
It really feels as if we are getting back on track with RE. Thank you for encouraging your RE leaders to attend the termly support meetings as this seems to have been particularly important as a consistent feature of their professional lives when all else around them has been disrupted. This term, we have looked at giving some reminders to all staff about what good RE might look like. We also did a shared book-look to think about good practice in recording RE thinking. Please encourage input into staff meetings so that what we think about together for improving RE is shared in school. Our book-look focused on these areas:

How do you evidence that pupils are thinking deeply and using RE specific skills and vocabulary?

Find an example of recorded work where you see a pupil demonstrating their religious literacy.
How has this been enabled to happen?

These prompts might help:

- Text, impact, connections
- Vocabulary - knowledge and understanding
- The Golden Threads
- Theology (Believing)
- Human and social sciences (Living)
- Philosophy (Thinking)



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In the recent network joint Diocesan meeting, Rebecca talked about how we might create a culture of hospitable collective worship. She suggested that you could ask some questions which might help you to step back and review this aspect of the life of your school:

- What is the purpose of collective worship?
- What culture / environment are we trying to create?
- What are your hopes and dreams for it?

and also how you need to know that collective worship is working for your school community

IMPACT!

Staff and pupils talk about how worship causes them to reflect on their behaviour, values and attitudes.



Think



Reflect



Act/ respond

SIAMS

The national team continues to develop materials to support schools in understanding and preparing for SIAMS. They have produced some materials related to self-evaluation which is both ongoing and also leads to a summary for the inspector.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>

The Diocese also offers some suggestions

<https://www.rdbe.org.uk/page/?title=SIAMS+Support+Documents+%28Diocesan%29&pid=52>

On this page, there is also some information about making sure that your school website is 'SIAMS ready' – this helps you to consider if your window to everyone outside (including the SIAMS inspector) celebrates how you are the best church school that you can be.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>

There will be an updated list of those schools due to be inspected in 2022-23 published on the national website during term 6. It will include those schools on the current list but not yet inspected. Out of 14 Rochester schools on the list for up to December 2022, four have been inspected. Well done to these schools for the many things that were celebrated in their reports and for all the hard work and commitment that is represented there:

<https://www.rdbe.org.uk/page/?title=SIAMS+Reports&pid=50>

TRAINING DIRECTORY

All of these areas and more will be covered by the offer in our Training Directory which will be on our website before the end of term 6. All sessions are subsidised for schools who join the Diocesan SLA

<https://www.rdbe.org.uk/page/?title=Diocesan+SLA&pid=24>

EARLY HEADSHIP COACHING OFFER FOR NEW HEADTEACHERS

<https://www.cefel.org.uk/headshipcoaching/>

The Early Headship Coaching Offer for New Headteachers (formerly known as the ASO) is a targeted package of support for Headteachers in their first five years of Headship. This is fully funded for all eligible participants (see eligibility criteria on the website).

The programme builds upon the NPQH framework, allowing Headteachers to explore and apply leadership challenges in greater depth whilst putting their learning immediately into practice at school.

Highlights of the offer are:

- **ASSESS:** a detailed 360 leadership diagnostic, which covers the NPQH criteria and Headteacher standards, to identify key strengths and areas for growth
- **TAILOR:** the EHCO enables you to set personalised learning goals for your leadership journey, with access to an extensive research base
- **REFINE:** highly relevant expert group coaching to support you through an area of school improvement you are already working on

- **NETWORK:** opportunities to build relationships with other new Headteachers, to dig deep into the NPQH topics and share common challenges

There is no assessment for the EHCO - it is entirely focused on new Headteacher development, wellbeing and support.

For a 1:1 chat about this, please email matthew.welton@churchofengland.org



CHURCH SCHOOLS CELEBRATION DAYS MAKE A WELCOME RETURN

We were delighted to welcome so many Year 6 pupils back to our Church Schools Celebration Days in Rochester Cathedral from 14-17 June. Almost 300 pupils with their teachers and helpers spent the day thinking about the promise of Jesus in Matthew 28:20 – ‘I am with you always’. They explored the Cathedral in a journey from place to place, as well as spending time in prayer and reflection focussing on the years spent in their primary schools.



We started and ended the day with worship – Bishop Simon and Bishop Laurie led a short service helping us all to take strength and encouragement in the knowledge that Jesus walks with us at all times. Thank you to the many volunteers who make these events possible and successful and for the support which they provide to the Cathedral and Education teams in making our plans come to fruition.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION

<https://churchofengland.tfaforms.net/4903528> for full details.

Growing Faith is about schools, churches and homes working together to give young people and children the best possible chance to have life in all its fullness - to enjoy safe spaces to explore their spirituality and to grow in faith. The Growing Faith Foundation has been created to support dioceses and parishes to do this even more effectively than they do at present.

In order to ensure this work is rooted in good theology and good practice in the fast-changing world of the 21st century, to raise the quality and profile of ministry in the intersections between home, school and church, and to ensure as many children and young people as possible benefit from the Growing Faith movement, the Foundation is keen to commission research into aspects of the intersections between churches, households and schools.

The Foundation will be delighted to receive research proposals that are very different in scope and length from each other. They would give a study carried out in one primary school or parish church as much consideration as they do to a wide-ranging diocesan- or region-wide study. They value both quantitative and qualitative research.

If you would like to discuss the suitability of your proposal, please feel free to call Lucy Moore on 07909 477107 or email lucy.moore@churchofengland.org.
Closing date: 21 July 2022





Discover, discuss and debate the compatibility of science and faith



Rochester Cathedral
28th September 2022
10.00-2.30

A day of interactive workshops for Year 5 students to explore topics including creation, climate change and curiosity with scientists of faith

Students are equipped with the tools to form their own opinions and consider some of life's biggest questions

Tickets are £10 per student and are limited to three student places per school
To book places, email
louise.liddy@rochester.anglican.org

 www.gatbb.co.uk  @GatBB_UK  @GatBB_UK

GOD AND THE BIG BANG (GATBB)

You have received an email for this event through your headteacher which includes details of how you can book for up to three Year 5 pupils from your school.

INTER FAITH WEEK – thinking ahead

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/> for full details

Inter Faith Week 2022 will take place from Sunday 13 - Sunday 20 November.

Each year, Inter Faith Week begins on Remembrance Sunday, and runs until the following Sunday. It is hoped that the additional Sunday provides the opportunity for other weekend events to take place as well as those linked to Remembrance Sunday. Remembrance Sunday was chosen as a start day to encourage people to remember together the contributions of all faiths and none, and to consider how best to create a just, peaceful, and harmonious world.

Inter Faith Week also ends on Mitzvah Day, an annual day of faith-based social action: <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/>

Inter Faith Week aims to:

- Highlight the good work done by local faith, interfaith and faith-based groups and organisations
- Draw new people into interfaith learning and cooperation
- Enable greater interaction between people of different backgrounds
- Help develop integrated and neighbourly communities
- Celebrate diversity and commonality
- Open new possibilities for partnership

WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

https://www.bible.org.uk/wtb_child_events.php

I know that some of you have made use of the resource offered in Walk Through the Bible as they complement the ideas about the Big Story of the Bible which is a key part of Understanding Christianity. It is important to remember that this is a way of re-inforcing what pupils are learning – it does not replace what is featured in the RE syllabus but it can help to bring it to life and make it memorable for you and for your pupils.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK YOUTH TRUST YOUNG LEADERS AWARD

<https://www.archbishopofyorkyouthtrust.co.uk/young-leaders-award> for full details

Some of our schools have engaged with the programme and Ruth recently contacted me to find out if any others would be interested in exploring how to develop young leaders in this way – please contact her if you are interested ruth.lebreton@ABYYT.com



The Young Leaders Award (YLA) is a fully resourced leadership and character education programme designed to be delivered by teaching staff within the classroom.

*'Young people have the power to change the world.
We're passionate about empowering Young Leaders to transform society
and to inspire others to do the same'.*

THE SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER – Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers

The stated Overall Ambitions of the White Paper published in March are that by 2030:

- 90% of primary school children will achieve the expected standard in reading, writing & maths; the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by a third
- In secondary schools, the national GCSE average grade in both English language & maths will increase from 4.5 in 2019 to 5.

New policies aimed at achieving this ambition are outlined across four chapters. Implications of the final chapter have been covered in the Education Director's section of this bulletin. Key points arising from chapters one to three include:

- Deliver 500,000 teacher training and professional development 'opportunities' across ITT, ECF and NPQs by 2024
- Introduce new NPQs in Leading Literacy and in Early Years Leadership; consult on introducing SENCO NPQ as mandatory for new SENCOs
- Introduce a Levelling Up Premium of up to £3,000 for eligible maths, physics, chemistry and computing teachers in years one to five of their careers, for those who choose to work in disadvantaged schools
- Establish a new arms-length national curriculum body to co-design and create with teachers' packages of optional, free, adaptable, sequenced curriculum resources and video lessons
- Introduce a minimum expectation on the length of the school week of 32.5 hours for all mainstream state-funded schools by September 2023, overseen by Ofsted
- Publish updated plans to support sport and music education in 2022, and a cultural education plan in 2023
- Launch a new careers programme for primary schools in areas of disadvantage, extend the legal requirement to provide independent careers guidance to all secondary school children
- Deliver a Parent Pledge – a promise from government, via schools to families, that any child who falls behind in English or maths should receive support, and that schools communicate this to parents
- Deliver up to 6 million tutoring packages by 2024 and continue to financially incentivise schools to provide tutoring, expecting every school to make tutoring available to children who need it (from 2024 schools will be expected to use their core budgets for this).

SEND GREEN PAPER: RIGHT SUPPORT, RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

The paper has six chapters to consult upon a range of proposals that seek to address the key challenges in a system that does not service the needs of pupils with SEND. Key proposals are to establish new national standards for SEND and to reform the systems that underpin SEND and Alternative Provision. The paper proposes simplifying, standardising and digitising the Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) process, reforming funding models, establishing local inclusion boards, strengthening accountability within the Health system, protecting SENCo time and updating the SENCo qualification, all of which will have implications for schools.

OTHER GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Updates to the accountability measures 2021/22 for primary, secondary and students aged 16-19 have been published. Publication of KS2 performance data returns in 2023, KS4 and post 16 performance data will be published this year. The DfE have announced that, to support the appropriate use of 2021/22 data, the website (currently 'Compare School & College Performance') will undergo some changes. These will include the removal of the traffic-light coloured bandings, the removal of some comparative tables and a re-branding of the site to reduce the emphasis on comparison between schools.

The revised version of [Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\)](#), for implementation from 1 September 2022 is now available. Currently, it is for information only to support schools to prepare to respond to changes and will come into force 1 September 2022. Annex F lists substantive changes from the previous document, which include further clarity on the safeguarding role of governors and proprietors, new information on Domestic Abuse and familial harms, and additions around schools' engagement with parents and carers.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) are seeking views on their approach to implementing the direct national funding formula (NFF) for mainstream schools, following on from previous 2021 consultation on reforms that had focused on the principles of moving to a direct NFF. The Government is committed to the direct NFF and this consultation focuses on its implementation.

To help support pupils, the Government created the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). There are three subsidised tutoring routes available: Tuition Partners, Academic Mentors and School-led Tutoring. Eligibility and subsidy rates vary across the three routes. It is mandatory for all schools that received a school-led tutoring grant to submit an 'end of year statement' and guidance on this return has been published.

In June, the Government published their National Plan for Music Education. This non-statutory guidance sets out a vision to 2030 to enable all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and to have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally. The Plan outlines what is expected of high-quality music in schools.

OFSTED

The 2019 inspection framework placed greater weight on what is taught in schools and requires schools to have a curriculum which meets certain criteria to be rated 'Good'. However, during a one-year transition period, schools had the latitude to demonstrate that they are 'in the process' of implementing their plans. Due to the pandemic, this transition period was extended with a review scheduled March 2022. Ofsted then indicated there would be a 'longer review period' up to September 2022. At the time of writing, it is uncertain as to whether transition arrangements will continue into the next academic year.

Ofsted has recently published a report into securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence finding that the pandemic has exacerbated previous causes. The report explains what Ofsted has seen on inspection, both in terms of

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TEACHING

The new National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) was formally signed off by the DfE in May. The NIoT will be run by four multi-academy trusts, collectively known as the Schools-Led Development Trust (SLDT). Its aim is to 'boost the quality of teacher and leader development nationally by generating and interpreting research, applying the insights to the design and delivery of high-quality teacher and school leader development programmes, and sharing it all with the sector'. The

the challenges and effective school responses to these. Ofsted has also recently added new curriculum research reviews in English and computing to its series which now comprises ten subjects.

first programmes will begin in September.