

## NEWS BULLETIN MARCH 2021

FROM JOHN CONSTANTI DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

### A. COVID - 19

#### 1. Introduction

Pressures on schools leading up to Christmas increased further as many experienced a dramatic increase in the number of infections or those having to self-isolate, mainly due to the more contagious Covid-19 variant that surfaced. These pressures were further compounded by the requirement that headteachers were expected to monitor and report staff and pupil infections via the track and trace system up until Christmas Eve.

I am aware that many did not manage a break over Christmas. Regrettably, the beginning of term in January followed, the now usual chaotic pattern given the further short notice lockdown and the expansion of the definition of vulnerable children to include those who either did not have access to the necessary IT or appropriate space to undertake online learning. As a result, many of our schools saw a dramatic increase in the number of pupils wishing to physically attend school, despite a much reduced and beleaguered workforce.

Despite various (unsubstantiated) statements that schools were deemed safe, a decision was eventually made to close them, but nursery provision did (initially) remain open as presumably they were considered safer. Eventually, this policy was also amended.

As we approach a year since the first Covid-19 lockdown, life has altered for so many in different ways. We have all had to adapt to new ways, none more so than those in our Church schools. We hope that this year will prove much more positive with a return to some kind of normality.

Thank you for all that you have and continue to do for the benefit of your pupils and the school community.

#### 2. Government Guidance

Following the much-anticipated Prime Minister's statement on Monday 22 February 2021, a total of nineteen guidance documents were issued (some of which run into sixty odd pages).

The main guidance documents can be found at:

- a. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-roadmap-for-easing-lockdown-restrictions-in-england-22-february-2021>
- b. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963491/COVID-19\\_Response\\_-\\_Spring\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963491/COVID-19_Response_-_Spring_2021.pdf)
- c. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963541/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963541/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

Apart from matters relating to education, the measures are understandably cautious and being based on data rather than dates, and may be subject to alteration and amendment, with the possibility of re-imposing restrictions at local or regional level.

### 3. Return to school

- a. All primary school pupils will return to school on Monday 8 March.
- b. All secondary school pupils will return to school during the week beginning Monday 8 March.
- c. Breakfast and after school clubs can also reopen from the 8 March.
- d. There is a requirement and expectation that pupils should attend school and the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices is to be re-introduced.
- i. Many had thought that there would be a phased reopening of schools (as is the case in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) or a mix of blended learning on a rota basis.
- ii. Few school staff have received vaccinations, despite continued requests and lobbying.
- iii. Little mention of bubbles (although wrap-around provision and transport arrangements to and from school could result in bubbles mixing).

### 4. General Measures

- a. Secondary (not primary) aged pupils and staff should now wear face coverings in classrooms or during activities (in addition to as previously when moving around the premises), unless social distancing can be maintained.
- b. Large gatherings and whole school activities such as assemblies or collective worship should be avoided.
- c. Remote learning will need to be maintained for any pupils self-isolating or shielding.
  - i. Do these measures raise safety concerns?
  - ii. Given the full return of pupils, which will require teachers to be classroom based, it is difficult to know how teachers will be able to prepare and deliver remote learning.
  - iii. Whole school acts of worship should not be taking place.

### 5. Testing

- a. All staff (both primary and secondary) should be tested twice weekly at home using the supplied lateral flow device (LFD) test kits.

- b. Secondary (not primary) school pupils should be offered 3 tests (3 to 5 days apart) at an on-site ATS (after which pupils should undertake tests at home).
- c. Priority for such testing should be given to vulnerable children, children of critical workers, and year groups 10 to 13.
- d. Consent for such testing is required from parents / guardians.
  - i. It is unclear who is to undertake and supervise the testing.
  - ii. If all secondary pupils are required to be tested, why is priority being given to certain groups?
  - iii. There is a suggestion that additional staff may need to be employed and some grants may be available (eg for a secondary school with 1,000 pupils a grant of £19,000 is mentioned). Is this sufficient?
  - iv. For a secondary school with 1,200 pupils, allowing a conservative five minutes per pupil for testing, a total of 100 hours would be required. There are also some logistical challenges in administering the testing. Is this feasible and achievable?
  - v. If consent for testing is refused, does the pupil still attend school?

## 6. Recovery

- a. There are suggestions to recover the lost education time, through summer schools or even an extension of the school term and/or day may be considered.
  - i. The suggestions around the recovery of lost learning will place additional pressures on pupils and staff and could have an adverse effect on learning and morale which is already very low, given the numerous challenges that have been endured.

## 7. Wellbeing

- a. The report confirms, "Anxiety and depression levels are now consistently higher than pre-pandemic averages".
- b. The Office of National Statistics found that, in Britain alone by June 2020, almost 1 in 5 adults were likely to be experiencing some form of depression, doubling from around 1 in 10 in March.
  - i. The well-being of pupils and staff is an on-going, serious concern. Whilst there is some mention of pupil well-being, there is little mention of staff well-being.
  - ii. The availability of grant funding remains unclear.
  - iii. We are liaising with several organisations and individuals so that the much-needed support in this area is made available and properly funded.

## 8. Staff Vaccinations

There has been much debate over the prioritisation of vaccinations for school staff and, as the following quotes demonstrate, there is Ministerial disagreement.

- a. "Thankfully, teachers are no more likely to catch Covid than any other member of the population who goes to work, and so trying to come up with a scheme which prioritises one professional group over another would have been complicated to put in place" - Matt Hancock
- b. "My very strong instinct is that those who through their work may come into contact disproportionately with the virus, police, shop workers, teachers... should be prioritised" - Nadhim Zahawi

## 9. Summary

In summary, these latest educational measures, resulting essentially in the re-opening of all schools to all pupils simultaneously, without school staff being vaccinated, with all secondary pupils being tested, seem rushed and unlike the other steps are not cautious.

It should be borne in mind that these comments are based on the situation as at the 24 February and the availability of released documents and statements at that point. From previous experience, the landscape can alter quite quickly with the release of a succession of revised documents and statements, so the situation may alter.

## B. TERM TIME ONLY ANNUAL LEAVE CALCULATION AND NEGOTIATIONS

Agreement between LAs and Trade Unions has been reached in relation to changes to the term time only annual leave calculation for school staff.

The basis of the agreement was one that the unions would recommend to their members but was not collectively agreed. As such, employees can choose to reject the offer and continue with any previously lodged tribunal claims although it is hoped that a vast majority of employees will accept it.

The agreement reached can be summarised as follows:

1. If employees have 5 years or over qualifying service, then they receive 4 years' worth of the difference between their current salary and the salary in place at 1 April 2020 (when most LAs introduced the new calculation)
2. If employees have 2 or more years but fewer than 5 years' qualifying service, they receive 2 years of back pay and
3. If employees have less than two years' service, they receive the actual loss

Some LAs have confirmed:

1. That the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve will be used to fund the settlement to this level in all state schools within the LA and
2. If an academy, foundation school or voluntary school has already settled, or intends to settle this matter, for a higher amount than the LA settlement, they will only receive DSG funding corresponding to the agreement reached by the LA (as outlined above).

VA schools and Academies should, therefore, liaise with their LA to ascertain the details of the local arrangement.

## FROM VIRGINIA CORBYN DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

#### IN BRIEF (some reminders)

- a. There is an **optional** book moderation project being offered so that moderation can happen virtually – if you have not received the project booklet, please let me know and I can send it to you
- b. Rebecca and I are continuing to work on 'The Golden Threads' which will help teachers to make more meaningful links between the faiths which they meet in their primary school. information has been shared with subject leaders, should they wish to use the ideas in terms 5 and 6 for themselves, but not with their teachers for now as this is still a work in progress.
- c. The summer term virtual RE support meetings (choose one option) will take place from 1-30pm to 3-30pm on  
*Wednesday 9 June*  
*Thursday 10 June*  
Aquinas schools: you would usually attend your REconnect sessions.

#### STORY TENT

As an Enrichment resource for the summer term (in addition to your RE units of work), you will receive a 'Story Tent' pack to enhance and deepen the curriculum beyond RE. There is a flavour of this in the snippet below. This will not be ready until during the Easter holidays for which we apologise, but you can plan in the time for term 5 or 6 as it will be with you early in term 5 – those of you who attended the February support meetings were excited by these materials so hopefully you can hold out a little longer for them!

What are the potential advantages of this resource?



Leaders use ethical arguments to justify making bold curriculum decisions to ensure pupils experience an exciting and relevant curriculum that enables them to flourish.

- Recovery curriculum – relationship, mutual understanding, wellbeing, social skills
- Listening and expressing views in a safe space
- High level questioning
- Appreciating difference and diversity
- Links with Literacy
- Links with RE content and skills
- RE taking the lead
- Creating better (RE) learners

## RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY



I am sure that you have found the section on accredited resources on the Understanding Christianity website and some of these might enrich teaching and learning in your context. There are two new suggestions on there - Tales from the Miracle Book 'a collection of fun and engaging short films, designed for the teaching of RE in Primary Schools' as well as a unit of work from the Wintershall Education team.

You can find out more here [www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/accredited-resources/](http://www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/accredited-resources/)

## BELONGING AND BELIEVING



Some of you have already found Gill Vaisey's Early Years resources to be engaging and enriching for you RE. In this series of books reflecting a range of religions and worldviews beyond the 'six world religions' that form the main basis of most RE curriculums presently, she has:

- identified eight 'real life' local families each with a five/six-year old child and each reflecting a different worldview.
- got to know the families, through phone calls and visits and spending time with them at home and in their communities.
- illustrated the family's everyday expression of beliefs through the eyes of a child.
- worked from the family's perspective – their values and how these shape their lives.
- encouraged readers to reflect on their own lives, their experiences, their values and their own worldviews.

In our support groups, we will be unpacking the current debate about RE and worldviews in the months to come!

[http://booksatpress.co.uk/belongingandbelieving.html?mc\\_cid=3b19ba1114&mc\\_eid=e5e67e82fc&mc\\_cid=66640c8c4a&mc\\_eid=e5e67e82fc](http://booksatpress.co.uk/belongingandbelieving.html?mc_cid=3b19ba1114&mc_eid=e5e67e82fc&mc_cid=66640c8c4a&mc_eid=e5e67e82fc)

## MATERIALS FROM WINTERSHALL - <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/>

It is 2 years since I visited Wintershall to experience their remarkable Easter play outdoors. It was a little on the wet side – but all the more real for that! Here are some of their materials that might be used both in the context of RE and collective worship – always remember your context and use appropriately.

There are lots of creative ways to explore the Easter story through the Arts with your class [here](#), including:

- a. Walking the Stations of the Cross in your own school playground using Pilgrim packs (KS1/2)
- b. [Wondering with the Cross](#) (KS1/2)
- c. [Reflecting on the people involved in the story](#) (KS2/3)
- d. Using the [Video Clips](#) from the Last Supper to write your own [play scripts](#) (KS2/3)

## HOME LEARNING

Although we continue to hope and pray that lockdown may be able to be eased soon, it is good to have a range of 'tools' in case there are scenarios where we need to provide this once again:

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Additional%20Documents/RE%20home%20learning%20resources%20v2.pdf>

However, the links here are useful more widely for teaching and learning so keep them in your toolbox just in case!

## INSPIRED

### RE Leadership development programme

*InspiREd is a subject leader development programme, which has a vision to inspire and enable those with responsibility for RE in being 'strategic, impactful and flourishing leaders'.*

The programme is aimed at RE leaders who want to develop their subject leadership skills in a primary setting to ensure that it is strategic, has an impact on the whole school and is driven by the school's distinctive Christian vision.

	Date	Time	Location
Day 1	28th April 2021	10.00am – 4.00pm	Zoom
Day 2	27th May 2021	10.00am – 4.00pm	Zoom
Day 3	7th July 2021	10.00am – 4.00pm	Zoom
Day 4	2nd December 2021	10.00am – 4.00pm	Venue and format to be confirmed
Day 5	25th February 2022	10.00am – 4.00pm	Venue and format to be confirmed

Course cost: £200 per teacher

For more information or to register your interest, email Rebecca Swansbury  
[rswansbury@diocant.org](mailto:rswansbury@diocant.org)

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### IN BRIEF (some reminders)

- a. Easter: We have sent out a plan for Holy Week and Easter provision (videos and other resources) to enable you to plan ahead a little.
- b. Moving forward: Many of you have been asking if the videos and plans will continue after the Easter holiday. The thinking is that, after Easter, they will drop to one video a week until half term and then possibly there will be just some one-off 'specials'.
- c. Plans for terms 5 and 6 will go onto the website in due course.

### FAMILY TRUST RESOURCES

#### The website says:

We've seen many great resources flying around in e-mails and on social media. To make it easy for you to find them, we have gathered them together in one place.



You will find a whole range of resources here. The pages are being updated regularly, as and when we become aware of new resources to share.

<https://www.familytrust.org.uk/>

### SPINNAKER

#### The website says:



We have warm and professional relationships with headteachers and staff in the schools we visit. Our presence is a vital link between schools and local churches. We write our own material.

Much of it is freely available for you to access, use and adapt. Everything on our site is tried and tested. We know it works because we have used it ourselves.

<https://spinnaker.org.uk/>



## IMAGINOR RESOURCES

<https://www.imaginer.co.uk>



Some of you have enjoyed these resources and they are still being produced for us.

The first edition of *Jack in the Box for Schools* has proved so popular that stocks have now almost sold out. Instead of re-publishing and in response to requests from schools for more material, they have embarked on quite a journey, the fruit of **which is this bumper new resource.**

*Jack in the Box Big Bible Story* provides over two years of worship material and is specifically designed to introduce the youngest children to God's Big Story through all the key Bible characters of the Old and New Testament. Whilst much of the material is new, the familiar elements of *Hello Time*, *Story Time* *Thinking Time* and *Praying Time* will be familiar to children along with, of course, Jack the much-loved Labrador puppy! Schools tell us that they like to have a hard copy book as well as the ability to download whatever they need. All the material is, therefore, fully downloadable using a code supplied with the resource.

## SIAMS

We are sorry that our information about the resumption of inspections is not yet available but we only want to pass on information that has been confirmed so that we avoid any anxiety or wrong turns in the road.

### This is the latest from the Church of England Education Office:

'We will wait until Ofsted make a further announcement before we can consider what, if anything, can or should be done about restarting SIAMS inspection before September. We realise that this will be disappointing for some who value the external recognition of all the hard work they do in providing such a rounded education but [we are] mindful of the pressures on staff and schools'.

*Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England Jan 2021*

**We will pass on additional information as soon as we receive this and then Virginia will contact all schools in the SIAMS 'window' to offer support to prepare for inspection.**

## CHANGES IN ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Something that we can confirm is that the scheduling and organisation of inspections is going to be taken from Dioceses and taken over by the Church of England Education Office. We are hopeful that this will address some of the issues that the first year of the 2018 schedule raised with our schools.

This is a broad overview of the changes – we will give you more detail when we have it.

### Church of England Education Office

- Scheduling of Inspections
- A national 'Duty desk' for 'Excellent' and 'Inadequate' judgement to operate for a fixed time (everyday) to support inspectors in schools.
- Q&A process for Inspectors, Inspections and Critical readers.
- Manage appeals and complaints process.
- The publication of a SIAMS Annual Report - including thematic and quantitative trends.
- Training of new and current Inspectors.

### Local Diocese

- Advice
- Training
- School reviews and support for schools

## WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS

### FAITH IN THE NEXUS



Since producing the last bulletin, I have attended the launch of the 'Faith in the Nexus' report, a significant piece of research which can help us to consider the relationship between Church, home and school. The report supports the Growing Faith initiative being developed by the Church of England to help us to build relationships with all of our families appropriately and creatively for the benefit of all. The headteacher of St John's CE primary school in Tunbridge Wells recommends this as a stimulating read for school leaders and governors as does the Bishop of Dover who says:

*"I find this piece of research examining the intersection of children's exploration of faith in the home in relation to Church and school a most interesting one. In my 30+ years of ministry, I have always found children prepared to ask all kind of honest questions. Their curiosity is genuine, and this enables them to confidently initiate faith conversations especially within the home, often following up on something that began in the school setting. This is a practical report that allows the reader to actively engage with the information before them. This report has the potential to be a significant gamechanger in the kind of relationships we intentionally build between Church, school & home, thus enabling the home to better equip and encourage children's exploration in faith and spirituality." Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin Bishop of Dover and the Bishop in Canterbury*

I think we will need to digest and think through what this might look like in each of our schools as all of our contexts are different – but reading and reflecting would be an excellent first step for us all.

## SPORT AND WELLBEING

The Church of England has set up a national sport and well-being project that seeks to engage the Church, reach children, young people and adults with God's love and improve the health and wellbeing of local communities.

A small number of dioceses have been chosen as pilot dioceses and Rochester is one of these.

Bishop Simon oversees this pilot and Wil North, Rector of Barming, is the Bishop of Rochester's Sports Ambassador helping to drive this work forwards. As we slowly emerge from the pandemic, attention to physical fitness and mental well-being will be especially important, and Wil is available to talk through what options are available to schools – ideas, agencies, partnerships – on this front.

Wil's contact details: 01622 726 263

## KICK UK

<https://kick.org.uk/schools/>



KICK UK are open to partnership with diocesan schools. They are a not-for-profit organisation with seventeen years' experience of teaching a variety of services. These include Sports coaching, Dance provision and Mentoring within Infant, Primary, Secondary, PRU, Private and Special Schools as well as within the local community and have been endorsed by the following church schools in the past six months:

Michael Schumm, Headteacher from St Stephen's Primary, Hammersmith: *"Alastair, from KICK, has contributed so much to the school and the staff during this Coronavirus crisis. He has played a massive part in boosting morale for the school. In a difficult time, he's providing our students with normality and as a committed Christian man, he is a powerful image bearer of Christ".*

Stephen Burns, Head of School, The Green School for Girls, Hounslow *"Knowing that the students have the ability to speak with one of the KICK mentors has been invaluable. Students have found it important that mentors are not school staff, but aware that substantial concerns will be passed on to the Safeguarding Team, and it has meant that the school is more aware of their vulnerabilities than ever before."*

## GOVERNANCE

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/925104/Governance\\_Handbook\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf)

Below are further links which remind governors of some key messages in terms of their responsibilities for holding the school to account for performance and compliance (bearing in mind that all of this moves on very quickly!):

### Schools Covid 10 Operational Guidance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

### Recovery Premium

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-education-recovery-package-for-children-and-young-people#history>

A £700 million package was announced on 24 February as a new one-off recover premium - on average, this may mean £6000 for primary schools and £22,000 for secondary schools

### Examinations

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

Rapid Flow testing <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>

## SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- a. Is our curriculum offer ambitious and broad offer in all subjects?
- b. Is the curriculum plan informed by pupil assessment of starting points and gaps in learning?
- c. Is our RHSE policy and offer building positive relationships, and supporting mental & physical health well?
- d. Is there support in place for all pupils to make progress including SEND?
- e. Is there appropriate support for pupils who are struggling to re-engage in school?
- f. What is offered in terms of well-being support, including in the curriculum, with catch-up funding, and through extra-curricular activities?
- g. Is there an awareness of any increased safeguarding risks?
- h. Is there well-being support in place for staff, and clarity about workload expectations as part of this?

# ADMISSIONS

## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The proposed timescale for the revision of the School Admissions Code is not entirely clear but there are some indications that the revised document will be available for those going to consultation for 2023

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/home-to-school-transport-and-admissions-team/changes-to-the-school-admissions-code/>

## LOCAL ADVICE

- a. Please remember that all of our current Diocesan guidance is on our website
- b. If you are going to consultation for 2023, please check your proposals alongside the Diocesan guidance
- c. Remember that you are required to consult the Diocese before going to wider consultation so please allow time for this
- d. A regular question that is often asked by us when we receive proposed admissions documentation is whether the evidence required in terms of oversubscription criteria is clear and objective. The OSA also asked this question of some schools in the recent rounds of application for variations in relation to Covid19.

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

## FROM CAROLINE CROFTS LEAD ASSOCIATE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

We are in a rapidly changing landscape in terms of all matters relating to school improvement. We endeavour to keep you updated but as advice often changes overnight, please do try to find the time to keep abreast of developments from the DFE and Ofsted.

### 2. OFSTED

All routine inspections remain suspended unless specific concerns are raised. Ofsted currently state 'we are not planning to carry out graded inspections of education or social care providers before the summer term 2021'.

Remote monitoring of schools graded 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' began on 25<sup>th</sup> January with a particular focus on how well children and learners are educated remotely. The focus will now, of course, also be on how well the transition from home to in-school provision is managed. These inspections are not graded and will continue for the rest of the term remotely by default, unless there are specific concerns expressed about safeguarding or leadership.

Monitoring inspections will normally last one day and involve two HMIs.

The prospect of full inspections returning in the summer term is understandably causing some anxiety. There is uncertainty about how standards will be measured, particularly with the fact that the schedule states that internal data will not be looked at, and there is,, of course no national data in either primary or secondary schools for a second year. We do not know when inspectors will be able to conduct inspections 'normally' (looking through books and talking to pupils for example) so we await guidance about how inspections might work.

### 3. REMOTE EDUCATION

The DFE has now set out requirements for schools to provide high-quality remote education when children are unable to attend school:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Parents who feel that remote provision is not suitable should first raise concerns with their child's school and, if issues are not resolved, then they should report the matter to Ofsted.

The government has published research showing their findings about remote education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education>

#### 4. WORK OF THE ASSOCIATES

Our associate consultants have been busy supporting schools remotely. In the autumn, this involved supporting a large number of headteacher appraisals. Current support is mainly through coaching sessions for leaders (again, remotely).

We have a new associate consultant – Carol Morris – who is highly experienced and has a secondary background which will be very useful to us. If you are interested in support from one of our team (coaching, mentoring, general school improvement support), please contact Caroline Crofts to discuss: [caroline@croftsed.co.uk](mailto:caroline@croftsed.co.uk)

Details of our Associates can be found on our current website [www.rdbe.org.uk](http://www.rdbe.org.uk) under 'About Us' and 'Associates'.

#### 5. WEBSITE

As some of you are aware, our current website is changing. This is a time-consuming process but we are hoping that it will ultimately be more up-to-date, easier to use and will target our audience more effectively. Booking for courses and events will also be streamlined. Please bear with us while we work on this and do contact us if there are things you cannot find on our current website.

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE WIDER RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS ON OUR WORK

For the time being, the team continues to work at home. All meetings and training have been taking place either via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. It has been agreed that for the safety of staff and pupils, we will not be returning to school visits for the foreseeable future. We will continue to communicate with schools remotely, as well as liaising with Trusts and Local Authorities, to ensure we have all the information needed to effectively monitor provision in our schools, as well as the well-being of staff and pupils during this difficult and very stressful time.

There may be exceptions where blended activities may take place, such as headteacher recruitment processes where it is difficult to be fully effective remotely. This will be decided on an individual basis, considering risk assessments, the safety of all involved and the latest guidance at the time.