



Schools newsletter

October 2015

Dear Colleagues,

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. I would also formally like to welcome Anne Vernon to the team - our new Assistant Director for Standards and Effectiveness who is already working in a number of our schools.

Church School Performance and Data

Firstly I wanted to say thank you for the hard work you have put in to achieve some excellent results for our children over the last academic year - and well done to those of you who have had successful Ofsted Inspections. 95% of our schools are classed as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Diocesan Officers will be meeting as soon as RAISE is published to identify schools that may require immediate support over this academic year. However, if you have any concerns that you wish to share in advance regarding your data set, please make either myself or Anne Vernon aware of this in the office. From next year I would like to request that all of our schools submit data on an agreed template prior to the Summer Break so that we can be working over the holidays to plan support that may be required or brokered during the academic year.

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 details on those schools which may be identified as 'Coasting Schools' and eligible for intervention.

One of the major changes is that the RSCs 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.

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Very few of our Church schools within the diocese are at risk of intervention as defined within the draft regulations. However, as the Director of Education I meet regularly with the RSC to discuss potentially vulnerable schools. I would encourage all heads of school to consider the definition of 'coasting schools' to be clear about potential vulnerability.

With regards to Church Schools Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, gave the following assurances in the debate last Wednesday, 16th September:

"In the case of a church school, a diocesan or church school-led multi-academy trust will be the solution in the vast majority of cases. The Government are firmly committed to enabling diocese and church schools to protect and sustain their ethos. For example, where a Church of England diocese lacks the capacity to sponsor a school at the time it needs support, we may, with the involvement of the diocesan board of education, look to a non-church sponsor. In such situations we will ensure that the arrangements that the sponsor enters into will safeguard the religious character and ethos of the school. We will continue to work closely with the Churches on appropriate arrangements. I am grateful to the Second Church Estates Commissioner, my right hon. Friend the Member for Meridian (Mrs Spelman), for our discussions on that issue."

Conference: Partners in Progress - Preparing for the Future

I am delighted to say that the conference is now full with the vast majority (over 90%) of our schools represented. I am also delighted that so many of you are able to fit this into your diaries. All of our speakers have confirmed their attendance as well as those facilitating workshops. Susie will soon be sending out a final agenda for the day and I look forward to meeting many of you for the first time.

SIAMS

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, I act as the 'SIAMS Manager' and organise the SIAMS inspections and ensure that a SIAMS inspector is available to visit your school. I have spoken to the National Society about recruiting more inspectors so that we can begin to offer Mid Term reviews of Schools. I am now in the process of creating a person specification for those who may be interested in undertaking the training. I hope to be able to share this with colleagues after the conference.

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

As a team we look forward to working with you over the course of the coming year.

Best wishes,

Paul Rickeard
Director of Education

We are here to help... a reminder of when to get in touch

We thought it may be helpful to remind our schools of some of the key times when a school/ its foundation governors should get in touch with us for help and support (this is not an exhaustive list):-

- If a vacancy for a Head Teacher occurs at the school. This is so we can help the governing body with advice about the new appointment from an early stage.
- If there are plans to alter or extend school buildings, or any plans to lease or rent space on Diocesan land or within the building to another group (for example an after school club or pre-school) This is so we can provide support and ensure this in accordance with the school trusts and property documents, and so necessary consents can be sought.
- If changes are being proposed to your admissions policy, so that we can provide guidance and support before consultation takes place.
- If changes are proposed to the composition of the governing body, so we can provide advice and guidance.
- If you are considering entering into structural arrangements with other schools and/ or converting to an academy. We must be involved at an early stage so we can support and guide you and ensure you have the necessary Board of Education or related consents.
- If a foundation governor resigns. This is so that we can make sure this is amended in our records and we can provide any necessary support.
- If you have any serious concerns about aspects of the school or its governance which you need to share.

Please remember that we are here to support you and it is important we are kept informed at an early stage in all of the above situations (and others) so that we can ensure you receive the right guidance and support and also any consents or permissions needed.



Please visit our website for full details on how to contact us:
<http://www.jointeducationteam.org/the-team.html>

Leavers' services 2016



Following on from the success of our annual Leavers' Services at Durham and Newcastle Cathedrals in June, we are looking forward to some excellent services in 2016.

The services for Durham Diocesan Schools will be held on Tuesday 14th, Wednesday 15th and Thursday 16th June.

The service for Newcastle Diocesan Schools will be held on Wednesday 22nd June.

As always the services promise to be real celebrations. Booking forms will be issued to all schools in the New Year.



Once again, thank you all our schools who made donations at the Leavers' Services in June. A total of £280.00 was donated to the Durham Lesotho Link from our Durham schools, and £461.55 was donated to the Botswana Link Task Group from our Newcastle schools.

GEL access now available!

For those schools who expressed an interest in Governor E-Learning, this is now available to your governors. This access has now been set up to run until 1st September 2016 and is a useful electronic learning resource, particularly for those governors who for time reasons find it more difficult to attend face-to-face training sessions with their local authority.

Governors from subscribing schools wishing to access GEL need to go into the GEL homepage at www.elc-gel.org and click on the 'Register' icon at the bottom of the screen. They should select the 'CE Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham' from the drop-down list and continue onto step 2 where they need to enter in their personal details and select their school from the drop-down list. An automatic e-mail will be sent to our team just to confirm and approve this registration. The governor will then receive an automatic email to either say their registration has been approved and they can log in or that the registration has been rejected.

Please ensure your governors are aware of this if your school has signed up. If you have any problems at all please do contact liane.atkin@drmnewcanglican.org and Liane will do her best to resolve any issues.

Reminders and updates...

Maintained schools



You may remember that in our last newsletter we reminded our maintained schools of the requirement to publish details of governors interests on the school website from 1st September 2015.

The guidance was updated in August and the website must now also include details of the structure and remit of the governing body, any committees and the full names of the Chair of each.

Governor's interests should also be published and should include relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions and material interests arising from relationships between governors or governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and school staff)

The guidance now also states that governors attendance records at both governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year should be published. This information should also be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees they serve on.

The guidance states that the information must be in a 'readily accessible format' which means being on a webpage without the need to download or open a separate document.

You will have no doubt received example registers and guidance on these requirements from your Local Authority. In the event that you need further examples we have updated our example template register of interests to assist you in recording this information, and this can be found on our website at: <http://www.jointeducationteam.org/school-website-rules.html>

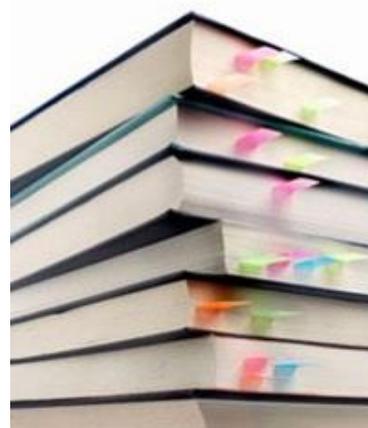
Academies

Academies have been required to publish relevant business and pecuniary interests of Members and Trustees.

However, from 1st September 2015 the Academies Financial Handbook now requires Academies to also publish the business and pecuniary interests of local governors.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Liane Atkin via email at:

liane.atkin@drmnewcanqlican.org



Some important admissions updates...

'Summer born' children deferred admission to Reception class



The DfE have recently published a letter from Nick Gibb setting out the government policy intention regarding admission of 'summer born' children (those born between 1st April and 31st August)

This letter sets out an intention to amend the Admissions Code to ensure that summer born children can be admitted to the reception class at the age of five if their parents request this (rather than possibly entering school in year 1), and also to ensure that those children can then progress through school with the same cohort.

This differs from the current position which is down to the discretion of the admission authority following consideration of both the parents and the head teachers view.

The changes will be subject to the usual consultation and parliamentary approval processes, but it is worth being aware of the government's clear view on this issue and the likelihood of forthcoming changes.

The letter can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-nick-gibbs-letter-about-school-admissions>

An accompanying press notice can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/summer-born-children-to-get-the-right-to-start-school-later>

It is also important to be aware that a recent decision by the Office of the School Adjudicator makes it clear that own admission authorities (i.e. governing bodies of maintained schools and academy trusts) must **make clear in their admission arrangements** the process for requesting admission outside of a child's normal age group. This will be of particular relevance to summer born children (i.e. those born after 1st April) applying for places in reception.

I know some of you already have this information in your policies, but others may have been relying on local authority general guidance rather than including it specifically in your policies.

Please can you ensure that your admissions policies include details on the process to ensure compliance with the school admissions code. Suggested wording is available on our website at: <http://www.jointeducationteam.org/admissions.html>

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Important admissions updates continued...

Earlier timescales for consulting on Admissions Policies for 2017/2018

Also on the subject of admissions, the timescales for own admission authorities (i.e. our VA schools and academies) consulting on any changes to their admissions policies for 2017/2018 are earlier than they have been in previous years. Remember, if you are seeking to make any changes from the 2016/17 policy to apply for entry in September 2017, consultation should be for a minimum of 6 weeks and take place between **1st October 2015** and **31st January 2016**.

Whether you are making any changes or not you must make sure that the Governing Body has formally decided on and adopted its Admissions Policy for the year by **28th February 2016**. **This decision must be minuted**. Copies **MUST** be sent to the Local Education Authority as soon as possible before **15th March 2016** and admissions policies must be published on the school website clearly stating the year to which they apply.



Finally, please note that own admission authorities (i.e. VA schools and academies) are not required to consult on increasing or keeping the same PAN (although you must consult if you intend to decrease the PAN) However, you **MUST** notify the local authority of any intention to increase the PAN and refer to this change on the school website.

If you have any queries or if you wish to discuss admissions generally, please contact Liane Atkin via email at: liane.atkin@drmnewcanglican.org

Free services available from SGOSS

SGOSS are a school governor recruitment specialist who are funded by The Department for Education. They provide a **FREE** service to governing bodies, local authorities and dioceses to help find new governors with the skills you require.

Please click on the link to find out more: <http://www.sgo.org.uk/about.html>

Legislation states that all appointed governors need to have the appropriate and varied skills to be able to contribute to the success of your school.

We understand that it can be hard to find a governor with the required skills, which is why we suggest you take a look at SGOSS. If you have any queries or if you wish to discuss this further, please contact Liane Atkin at: liane.atkin@drmnewcanglican.org



A governor skills audit form can be found on our website by clicking the following link: <http://www.jointeducationteam.org/skills-audit-documents.html>

More Than Books...



The RRC offers more than just the physical resources at both of our sites. We also source and recommend great online resources too.

KS2 teachers may like to take a look at Barnabas in Schools' cross-curricular resources on the Northern Saints:

Saint Eadfrith and the Lindisfarne Gospels

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/saint-eadfrith-and-the-lindisfarne-gospels/>

The secret talents of Hilda and Caedmon, two early Christian Saints

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/the-secret-talents-of-hilda-and-caedmon-two-early-christian-saints/>

The Present - a story to introduce the life of Saint Aidan

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/present-the-a-story-to-introduce-the-life-of-st-aidan/>

Saint Aidan - flame of the North

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/saint-aidan-flame-of-the-north/>

To be the first to find out about news and resources, LIKE us on  or FOLLOW us on 



What's Money Worth?

How do we view money? How do we value people? What makes something valuable? How do we make wise choices?

What's money worth? is the new creative arts-based RE Day available from **Barnabas in Schools**, starting in October 2015.

It helps primary teachers and pupils (from Foundation to Year 6) to unpack some of their assumptions and beliefs about what really constitutes 'the bottom line' in achieving one's life goals, and suggests that for Christians and others, there's a lot more to life than simply 'making a living' and spending it.

All schools booking this Barnabas RE day will receive a copy of the resource book **Valuing Money** by Chris Hudson (our local Barnabas team member)



Free support material for RE and other curriculum subjects linked to this theme will soon be available on the Barnabas in Schools website at:

<http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/money/>

NPQSL Programme Registration

The Prince Bishops Teaching School Alliance are delighted to bring to your attention details of their **National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL)** programme working in collaboration with Newcastle University. This follows on from recent successful NPQML cohorts across our region.

NPQSL is aimed at individuals who are in a leadership role with cross-school responsibilities, including experienced middle leaders, deputy heads, Special Needs coordinators (SENCO) and other senior staff. The programme is designed to support you in becoming a highly effective senior leader, with the skills, knowledge and understanding to drive school improvement and pupils' progress.

An Exclusive Approach

The Prince Bishops Teaching School Alliance offers a quality opportunity for professional development of leaders or aspiring leaders of:

Church of England Schools and Community Schools because we provide an elective module in:

- **The historical context of the Church of England in Education**
- **The Distinctiveness and spirituality that mould the ethos of school life**

Commencing January 2016 (all phases), clusters will be held in central North East locations from: North of the Tyne, Sunderland, Durham and Stockton (depending on numbers) There will be 9 sessions from 1pm – 6pm. To register your place on this programme, please click on the link: <http://www.pbtsa.co.uk/training-and-events/>

This will take you to the events page where you can complete your details in full and secure your place. The final date for registration is **Friday 4th December 2015**

For further details please contact Colleen Miller, Teaching School Manager, Prince Bishops Teaching School Alliance. Tel: 0191 529 4202 or email Colleen at: colleen.miller@pbtsa.co.uk

Website : www.pbtsa.co.uk

Twitter: **Follow PBTSA on Twitter**



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Teaching & Leadership

New Church Free School opens in Durham

A new Church of England school has thrown open its doors to new pupils. The Church of England Diocese of Durham has established Wynyard CE Primary School in Wynyard Woods, on the edge of Wynyard near Billingham, as part of a new housing development.

The school is the latest in the Diocese's education portfolio, which educates more than 14,000 children in primary and secondary schools. Nationally, the Church of England educates more than one million children a day.

Paul Rickeard – Director of Education for the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle said: "Wynyard CE Primary School is the Diocese's first school established as part of a Government initiative designed to see the development of more Free schools. The Diocesan Board of Education hopes to establish many more schools under this initiative over the next few years."



Headteacher Roger Ward rolls his sleeves up and gets stuck into a bit of classroom teaching with reception children Chloe Ryder (4) & Joshua Ryan (4)
Picture By: Keith Blundy



Headteacher Roger Ward teaching in the classroom
Picture By: Keith Blundy

Wynyard School is a Church of England Academy school. It will have the same popular inclusive Christian ethos as the other Church of England schools in the Diocese of Durham and be overseen by a governing body including representatives from the Church, parents and staff.

Initially, the children, up to 60 of them from Reception and Years 1 and 2, will be taught in a temporary building while the main building is being constructed. The school formally started on Thursday 3rd September with 17 children. When the new building is established in 2016, it will be able to take in more pupils so that there are up to 60 pupils in each year group.

Headteacher Roger Ward said: "I'm extremely proud to be part of such an exciting project. It is not often that you have the chance to be involved in the creation of a new school. The board of trustees and staff have been involved in all aspects of the process and the plan is to involve the pupils and their parents as we develop areas of the school. The new school is part of the community and local people will be able to benefit from the use of its facilities."

Chair of Governors and Chair of the Durham Diocesan Board of Education The Venerable Stuart Bain said: "It has been great to work with Cameron Hall Developments on this project and we look forward to this school providing outstanding education at the heart of the community. We have a really strong track record in providing primary years education across our Church Schools in this area where more than 97% are rated good or outstanding. We are very proud of the education that we are able to provide and believe that we offer fantastic education, grounded in the values of the Christian faith and something parents seem to value very highly."



The Ven Stuart Bain, Paul Rickeard, Roger Ward
Picture By: Keith Blundy

Prayer Spaces at St Michael's in Alnwick

On a summer's evening in Alnwick a group of adults were introduced by Year 4 pupils to the Prayer Spaces they'd been running in St Michael's Church of England First School for the last week. The grown-ups were allowed in for an open evening so that members of the church and other local schools could learn from the experience that had inspired both children and staff over the previous few days. Headteacher Gavin Johnston and his team were joined by Curate of St Michael's Church, the Revd Julia Myles, and by special guest Phil Togwell, leader of the organisation Prayer Spaces in Schools, which encourages and resources local churches across England to work with their schools to create Prayer Spaces and follow them up.



Celebrating God's creation by making models of some of His creatures (and people)

Prayer Spaces in Schools is an initiative that grew out of the 24/7 Prayer movement, whose roots in turn lie in the foundation of the Moravian Church in the Eighteenth Century and its tradition of continuous prayer. St Michael's was one of 16 English schools running prayer spaces that week, Phil said that he is aware of 1,250 or so having taken place to date.



Soluble sins... children learn how God deals with our sins as the tablet dissolves

The prayer spaces at St Michael's took over a large square IT classroom for a number of days, dividing it with fabric and screens into eight visually attractive 'prayer zones' where church volunteers would supervise children in activities which demonstrated the forgiveness of God, his love for people of all shapes and sizes, his response to prayer, our opportunities to spend time and share our hopes and fears with him, and more. The engagement of the children was evidence of their hunger for spiritual things, Phil said, and it gave them an opportunity to explore how we fit in the world, and sometimes what to do about the news.

Julia Myles praised the website (see below) for the wide range of resources and advice it carries, together with information on how participation in Prayer Spaces fits with OFSTED's requirements. Turning the tables for the evening, a group of Year 4 pupils was on hand to guide the adults around their prayer zones. The school staff have seen a variety of reactions: "Not all the children approach it at a deep and meaningful level (some are only three) – one just wanted to sit in the (dry) duck pond with someone!"

Volunteers from the church report that hosting the prayer zones is tiring but rewarding. Earlier that day a group of girls had asked to go into the prayer space at lunch time to sort out some issues at the 'friendship table' and the 'forgiveness space'; with reassurance from the adult volunteers they could now draw on what they'd already experienced there. "Prayer Spaces' job is to equip local schools and churches to work together to make this happen," commented Phil.

Visit the Prayer Space in Schools website to find out more: www.prayerspacesinschools.com

Prayer Spaces boxes are available to borrow from the Religious Resources Centres in Percy Main and Durham. These items are in high demand and we recommend booking well in advance. To find out more, search the online catalogue: <http://tinyurl.com/rrc-cat> or contact the RRC on 0191 3750586 or via email: enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Religious Resources online

Looking for new ways to engage your pupils with the big questions of life, faith or religion?



Then you need to head over to the *We're Thinking About..* section of the RRC website. Here we discuss and debate a range of different topics which all have links to the needs of the secondary school syllabuses for RE in the North East.

This coming term, our topic will be **LIGHT**

Light is a central symbol in many world religions. Light overcoming darkness is a powerful symbol for good triumphing over evil. In many religions, light is linked to God. We can see examples of this in Christian and Buddhist art and in verses in the Muslim holy book - the Qur'an - which are often also inscribed on mosque lamps.

Many religions have festivals associated with light or where light is an important element. For Christians, light is central to the Christmas story: from the Star of Bethlehem leading people to Jesus to the person of Jesus himself, described by Christians as the 'light of the world'. For Hindus, light has a special significance: during Diwali, the Festival of Lights, new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil are celebrated with lights and fireworks.

Topics we will be focusing on include:

- How and why is light important in religion?
- How is the importance of light shown?
- Festivals of light in world religions

We'll be posting:

- *Recommended Resources* from our stock
- Forums for discussion of the topic

Do take part – we'd love to know what you think!

To find out more, and to gain and share ideas and resources, head over to our website: <http://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/were-thinking-about/>

or join in via 

New Bishop of Newcastle Designate visits Northumberland C of E Academy



Students of Northumberland Church of England Academy with Assistant Bishop Frank White, Executive Director Andrew Day and the Venerable Christine Hardman

Picture by: Martin Sheppard/Diocese of Newcastle

Christine Hardman struggled to find the words to express her excitement at coming to what she described as "this vibrant, warm and proud part of the world."

Introduced with her husband Roger by Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt Revd Frank White, at a Wednesday morning event organised at the Northumberland Church of England Academy in Ashington, Christine was



Assistant Bishop of Newcastle the Rt Revd Frank White with Bishop of Newcastle Designate the Venerable Christine Hardman

Picture by: Martin Sheppard/Diocese of Newcastle

greeted by a school choir and a group of students with the Academy's Executive Director Andrew Day and some of his staff team.



With Northumberland Church of England Academy pupils

Picture by: Martin Sheppard/Diocese of Newcastle

Christine will be the 12th Bishop of Newcastle and the city's first female Bishop. There was only time for the new Bishop of Newcastle Designate to make the briefest of tours of the country's largest Academy before she was whisked off to Benwell in Newcastle's West End to visit Cornerstone, the church-based community centre with strong links to St James and other local churches.

Christine was also determined to pay a lightning visit to Church House in North Shields during her first trip to Newcastle Diocese in order to meet staff of the Diocesan Office, the Joint Education team, Lindisfarne Regional Partnership, the North East Religious Resources Centre, Inspired North East and various Supporting Ministers based there; she was warmly welcomed for a half-hour whistle stop tour organised by Diocesan Secretary Shane Waddle.



The Venerable Christine Hardman was welcomed to Church House in North Shields by Diocesan Secretary Shane Waddle

Picture by: Martin Sheppard/Diocese of Newcastle



Meeting Diocesan staff at Church House, North Shields

Picture by: Martin Sheppard/Diocese of Newcastle