



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

DBE Schools News

A new academic year

September 2019
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A very warm welcome back from the whole of the Diocesan Education team.

I would like to extend a particular welcome to colleagues who are taking up new posts this September and have joined our family of church schools. It is hard to believe that it is now two years ago when I began my new role, as Diocesan Director of Education and so much has happened over these two years. I made a commitment then to visit each of our schools, and whilst it has taken longer than I had anticipated, I am pleased to have been able to visit each of our 115 schools in this time.

It has been a wonderful journey and a huge privilege to see first-hand the great work that is taking place across the Diocese and the strength of Christian leadership that exists within our church schools. It has also enabled me to grasp a better understanding of the context, the opportunities and the challenges each of our schools are facing. At a time where schools are dealing with increasing financial pressures and contending with two new inspection frameworks, we wish to be able to offer our support and encouragement, strengthening the partnership that exists between the DBE and our schools, working alongside you, as we seek to enable all of our children and young people to flourish and experience life in all its fullness. Last year was a particularly



busy year for the DBE, which has seen several changes and improvements both in terms of the central team of officers and the services available to schools through the Family of Schools, of which we have nearly 100% membership for 2019-20. We have been delighted to welcome Jen McIlveen and Mark Whitehill to our Education team during this year. Both have brought energy, expertise and welcomed additional capacity, enabling us to offer increased involvement and support for our schools.

Over the summer, the team have been busy preparing a range of new resources, courses and training programmes and communications to provide all of our schools with quality support and guidance throughout the year. Alongside the reintroduction of a revamped bi-monthly newsletter, we will also be launching a Twitter account to keep you updated on the latest news and events from

the Diocesan Board of Education. This term also sees the introduction of a 'breakfast briefing' for Heads, Chairs and Incumbents. If successful, we will look to extend these across other areas of the diocese.

One key event I wish to highlight is our Headteacher & Senior Leaders' Conference which takes place on the 21st - 22nd November. This year's theme is 'Beacons of Hope'. Andy Wolfe, Deputy Chief Education Officer for the Church of England will be our keynote speaker as we look to explore the 'Hope and Aspirations' strand of the Church of England's Vision for Education. I hope that you will be able to attend with members of your senior leadership team, which I'm sure will be another inspiring and thought-provoking conference. Booking details are

provided further in the newsletter.

As we embark on a new school year ahead, and the uncertainty we face with the outcome of Brexit, can I offer these words of encouragement from Romans 15:13;

¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Chris Penn

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New members of the team

Mark Whitehill School Effectiveness Officer



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I am delighted to have been appointed as the School Effectiveness Officer for Chester Diocese earlier in the year. This new post was created expressly to support the schools within the Diocesan family and to identify important areas for development, both at individual and wider group school level. My ambition is that as the role develops, we will be able to establish open sharing of good practice across our schools and to set up effective working groups to engage all within our family for lasting benefits to enhance and develop practice. A key part of my role involves analysis of school-level and group data to inform the support work that the Diocese carries out, so that we can ensure that our work is targeted effectively within the working contexts and understanding that we have of our schools.

My background is very much rooted in schools, particularly with 33 years' worth of experience at Primary education level; I have worked in three different Local Authorities as a senior leader, including eighteen years as a headteacher in Chester and Wirral. I have been privileged to work actively within collaborative leadership groups, seeing the mutual benefit that this brings to many aspects of school practice.

I am excited to be able to apply this wide range of experience to support schools within the Diocese. I have had the opportunity to meet many of you since I started work in April and I look forward to working with as many of you as possible as the work within this exciting role develops.

Jenny McIlveen

Christian Character & CPD Officer

I joined the Chester DBE team in November 2018 from a background in primary school teaching and consultancy work with Liverpool Diocese. My part-time role as Christian Character and CPD Officer centres around the planning and delivering of our CPD training programme. This covers courses, conferences or bespoke work with schools; 1:1 support, staff meetings or Inset training, all with particular focus on encouraging our schools in your mission to be distinctively Christian in your work. My role also includes supporting our schools in the SIAMS inspection process and the exciting challenge of seeing a Christian vision impacting the whole of school life!

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Simon Geddes

Finance & Buildings Officer

I joined the Diocesan Education team as School Building & Finance Officer in September 2018. Prior to this, I've worked in Finance, HR and Media for charities and non-profits; as well as being involved in creating a Christian-themed play centre in Trafford. As part of my role as buildings office, I work closely with our VA schools, overseeing the LCVAP funding allocations and projects. I also work alongside school's building consultants and Local Authorities to ensure schools building suitability and planning development schemes. In addition to this, I am the first point of contact for any land and building legal queries and issues.

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DBE Family of Schools' membership

Thank you to the schools who have already returned their membership requests for the Family of Schools, we have had nearly a 100% uptake for 2019-20. In addition to the core membership, the DBE is again offering further services for school improvement through its enhanced membership. As well as the range of services of support, advice

and guidance that is available access through the Family of Schools, schools can also request a session in connection with Church school distinctiveness, RE or collective worship. If you have any queries in relation to the Family of Schools or would like more information, please contact charlotte.somers@chester.anglican.org



Sue Noakes
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Updates from Sue Noakes

Governor Training

Dates for the governor training programme for 2019-20 are now on our on-line booking system 'Bookwhen'. Please remember that places are free for schools that buy into the Family of Schools. The sessions are on aspects specific to church schools and are open to all category of governor. Currently our programme runs during the

day as in previous years we have had a poor uptake on evening sessions. We are happy to keep this under review (including twilight sessions) and we are also happy to consider running the sessions elsewhere in the diocese if schools would join to together and offer a venue. Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further.

Collaboration

With ever tightening budgets many schools are looking at possible federation or Multi-academy Trusts. If you are

considering any of these options, please let us know as soon as possible as we can support and advise on the steps to take.

Small schools

The Diocese holds termly meetings for our small schools to meet to look at ways that we can support one another. Schools with less than 100 on roll are invited to attend but if your school does not quite fit into this category and you feel these might be helpful for you please do let us know. The group met last term with a focus

on SEND in small schools and is looking at curriculum and mixed age teaching in the next set of meetings. The next meeting is 9th October at 1.30 at Church House. We aware that this may be difficult for schools further east in the Diocese and I would be keen to hear if there is an appetite to set up an additional group in this area.

Admissions

VA schools and academies must consult on their admissions policy if there are any amendments to criteria, the PAN is to be reduced and every 7 years. As the last admissions code was 2014 if you have not consulted in this period

you need to do so this year. This consultation would be for the 2021 intake. The consultation must take place between 1st October and 31st January for a minimum of 6 weeks.

IMPORTANT

A recent adjudication found against a school as it stated that the waiting list would be held until the end of the autumn term and not the 31st December. Our previous example policies are thus now incorrect. Please

ensure that your policy states that the waiting list will be kept until the 31st December in the year of admission (you are free to keep the list open for longer than this as this is the minimum but the date must be stated).



Jenny McIlveen
Christian Character & CPD
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Updates from Jenny McIlveen

Christian Leadership, Making a Difference

To quote one of the delegates from last year's programme, "It does what it says on the tin!"

This year long programme is tailored to give a distinctly Christian perspective and understanding to leadership within schools, from your own vision for being in education and leadership style, to the way you lead on areas such as spiritual development, worship, courageous advocacy and your own school's Christian vision. This varied programme of a residential, keynote speakers, workshops, school visits and reflective journaling has been transformative to many previous delegates, both personally and in making a difference to their own

journey and the schools they lead.

It is delivered for delegates from the five North West Diocese; Blackburn, Carlisle, Liverpool, Manchester and ourselves in Chester, allowing opportunities for networking and gaining a regional perspective on working in Church schools and a greater understanding of the Church of England's national Vision for Education. The course is aimed at those in Senior Leadership roles within school (Head Teachers, Deputies / Assistant HT.)

Contact

charlotte.somers@chester.
 anglican.org to request an
 application form for 2020-21.

Certificate of Church School Studies (CCSS)

Are you involved in Teacher Training? School's Direct Programmes? Then you are invited to be a part of a growing, exciting training programme for your student teachers. Gaining national interest, the CCSS course has been developed by advisors across the North West Region, keen to give student teachers a clear understanding of what it means to work in Church of England schools and what makes them distinctive.

CCSS is a blended learning programme, delivered in conjunction with Liverpool Hope University. Spanning over six months, Students will have a face to face training day, then are required to access online materials and discussion forums, one unit per month covering areas such as ethos, vision, spiritual development, worship and teaching RE. Students must evidence a minimum of one-hour

engagement with each topic and complete a reflective journal – which is then presented and assessed on the final face to face day.

Due to funding from the Jerusalem Trust, this programme is currently free to access, the only cost to the Teaching Alliance / School's Direct Provider would be to facilitate a mentor to deliver the face to face days and monitor online engagement.

"The course is a brilliant way to engage and prepare ITT students for working in a Church School." Michelle (Blackburn Diocese)

"The Students were really inspirational – I was so impressed with their learning and reflections." Wendy (Carlisle Diocese)

Contact

Jen at Church House; 01928
 718834 ext 245

Pumpkin Heroes

World Vision has created a resource to support churches and CE schools in working around the topic of Halloween. Pumpkin Heroes is a pack that enables schools to engage with Halloween in a positive way and can help you include and implement global citizenship. The resources will help children in your school learn about Biblical Christian values, discover more about God's love for all and find out how we can share what we have with others; especially children living in other parts of the world where life is very different.

This year the theme of Peace and Friendship also gives your children the chance to make and send Buddy Bracelets to children living in refugee camps where World Vision works. And later, they'll let you know where the bracelets went and share photos of the children receiving them too.

It offers an opportunity for Church and school to work together, either in a 'messy church' capacity or

a special afternoon 'off curriculum' to share a different message with your pupils. Pumpkin Heroes is totally free, and World Vision's simple prayer is to help schools

create a more hope-filled Halloween that inspires children to share God's love with others. Working in partnership with Scripture Union, there is also a helpful Q&A resource that will help staff to engage with confidence in those tricky conversations about why your school doesn't celebrate Halloween in a way that many children may culturally expect: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/story/real-big-questions-about-halloween>



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Updates from Simon Geddes

Capital Work

As our VA headteachers will know, the LCVAP funding structure will change as of the 2020/21 financial year, with funding going directly to the Diocese to distribute to capital projects rather than being co-ordinated by Local Authorities. The new funding, School Condition Allocations (SCA), has given the DBE a unique opportunity to update its procedures. Schools

will have recently received a copy of our latest Capital Funding Guidance by email and we will be providing several training days on the new funding in early 2020. Book details will be provided soon. I would recommend that VA school headteachers, bursars and chair of governors make it a priority to attend one of these courses.

Deferred payments for capital projects

As parting of the new School Condition Allocations (SCA) capital funding for VA schools, the DBE is updating how schools who can't pay their 10% liability apply for deferred payments. Governors wishing to defer their liability payments will need to contact the DBE (via Simon Geddes) at the time they bid for the project. DBE officers will be able to discuss options with the school and, if appropriate, will provide the governors with

an application form to defer payments. This application will then be submitted to the DBE's Finance & General Purposes committee for discussion and scrutiny. If deferred payments are approved, governors should note that they will not be able to apply for subsequent SCA funding (except for emergency projects) until all outstanding liability payments have been made.

DBE 2019-20 Training Courses and CPD Programme

An exciting and extensive programme of courses have been compiled for the new academic year. This is in response to schools' requests and our commitment to provide a comprehensive and structured training offer for key stakeholders. We will again be offering along with our distinctive NQT and RQT programmes and the headteacher well-being programme. Family of Schools' enhanced members can use training credits for all these courses.

Information relating to each course/programme can be found the Education section on the Diocese website, where you will also find a link to [Bookwhen](#), our on-line booking system. We will also be providing schools with an A5 brochure (in hard copy) detailing this year's programme.

21 - 22 November 2019
The Park Royal Hotel

Headteacher & Senior Leaders Conference 2019



This year's conference will focus on the theme of our schools being 'Beacons of Hope' for its pupils, families and community.

In the context of on-going societal challenges, including the increasing demand for emotional and mental health support, we will be exploring how our schools and its leaders can provide 'hope and aspiration' for our future generations.

Our keynote on the main conference day (22nd November) Andy Wolfe, Deputy Chief Education Officer, will be exploring this through the 'Hope and Aspirations' strand of the Church of England's Vision for Education.

Following last year's positive feedback, we are again offering a residential option to the conference this year, that includes an afternoon seminar, worship and conference dinner. Further details of the programme will be provided in the coming weeks but to secure a place now, click on [Bookwhen](#).

1 October 2019
9:30am - 3:30pm
Church House

New Headteacher's – Welcome to the Diocese

A welcome for all headteachers, including those in interim roles, who are new in post this September. This is an opportunity to learn more about the role of the DBE and explore what it means to work in a church school. It is also a chance to network with other heads and receive information about the support provided by the Diocesan Education Team. To book, click on [Bookwhen](#).

Diocesan RE News

Ensuring Religious Education has a high profile in our church school curriculum driven by our distinctive Christian vision ensures pupils are given exciting, diverse and rich learning experiences.

Help me with my RE Teaching! 7 October

For any teachers interested in developing their ability to teach RE more effectively, especially useful for those who are new to teaching in a church school or worried about teaching RE. Book on [Bookwhen](#)

Understanding Christianity 14 November & 10 March

Last year we asked schools to have at least one staff member trained in Understanding Christianity which is a complimentary resource which can be used with our own Diocesan syllabus and any local agreed syllabi. We are delighted with the uptake so far of schools wishing to come on the Understanding Christianity training on November 6th which is full, so we have now put on extra training days beginning on November 14th.

This is an opportunity for schools who have not attended the training before to send a member of staff and for others who have had staff attend previously who may wish to refresh their use of the resource. Book on [Bookwhen](#)

SIAMS & RE 18 November

With the launch of last year's new SIAMS inspection there was a need for schools to revisit their self-evaluation in RE. This course offers practical advice to address the new changes.

SIAMS update

15 of our schools received an inspection during the last academic year, the first under the new SIAMS framework. Overall, headteachers reported this to have been a very positive experience, with all being judged good or better and seven receiving an 'excellent' outcome. Congratulations to;

To support schools in developing their knowledge and understanding of the SIAMS framework, we will be running a series of SIAMS training courses during the next academic year. The courses aimed at senior leaders, governors and RE leads, will look at different aspects and themes from the framework.

Many of our schools have been taking the opportunity to revisit and review their existing school vision, in light of its emphasis in the new SIAMS framework. Headteachers benefited from a 'taster session' on vision led by Jen McIlveen, that has been a focus at our Anglican Heads' Cluster meetings across the Diocese earlier in the year. Several schools have requested a follow up session with Jen to look at their vision with staff and governors.

RE Cluster Groups

Last year saw the launch of our new Diocesan RE Primary Cluster groups designed to develop and sustain good practice across our schools. We also gave ongoing opportunities for our smaller group of secondary schools to network with each other both locally and regionally. Look out for the new RE Cluster dates which will be sent out to all schools at the start of term.

New look website for RE

The new look RE Online website has a useful resource for new RE leaders to begin to think through the task. See the leading RE section. <https://www.reonline.org.uk/>

Diocesan Syllabus

Since the official launch of the Diocesan syllabus at the end of 2016, some of the web links referenced in the plans are no longer available. These are in the process of being updated and should be available on the Diocesan website by mid-September. School wishing to adapt the syllabus planning to suit their individual school contexts should contact the Diocese if they feel they need further support. There is also a new sample Diocesan long term plan available from our RE Consultant for voluntary controlled schools which matches the requirements of the new Cheshire West & Chester agreed syllabus launched in July.

Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship

Applications for the Church of England Professional Qualification for Headship (including NPQH) are now open on their website.

The programme takes a distinctively Christian approach to covering the NPQH, exploring the practical challenges of headship through ethical and value-based lenses, as well as offering the opportunity to build a professional network that will support you over the coming years. Participants have particularly valued not only gaining their NPQH but doing so within a group of school leaders who are together grappling with how to embed the Church of England vision for education into the life of their school.

All church schools within the Chester Diocese are eligible to apply for funding from the DFE that will cover your full course fees which may make this development opportunity accessible for you.

Please visit www.cefel.org.uk/cofepqh to find out more and make your application.

The Chester Festival of the Bible

The Chester Festival of the Bible is happening in October 2019, organised by the Kingsway Chapel, Chester. Throughout the whole month of October, churches will be opening their doors and inviting you to come and discover the amazing stories and teaching found within the Bible. As part of the Festival, schools are being encouraged to explore how the bible can inspire art, is an integral part of our history, as well as speaking to our current wellbeing and behaviour. Edsential are coordinating a project culminating in an evening celebrating various artistic contributions from school children. For more information visit <http://www.kingswaychapel.org.uk/bible.html>

Bollington St John's CE Primary

Children at Bollington St John's were thrilled when Liverpool Women's Football Club Manager, Vicky Jepson, joined them to celebrate sports day and give out medals. Vicky, fresh from commentating on the Women's World Cup, was an inspiration to all the young sports stars at the school, particularly the female ones. As a former pupil of St Johns', Vicky told the children her road from Bollington to top flight manager, as she held a special assembly and Q&A before the sports day. Head Melanie Walker, said, "We were thrilled Vicky could join us for what turned into a spectacular sports day. I am sure her words of encouragement will be remembered by the pupils for some time to come."



News from schools

Lower Peover CE Primary

Zoo Project - Over the last five weeks, the children at Lower Peover have been learning about the production of Palm Oil and its effects on the planet as part of a whole school curriculum project on conservation. We began our project by the children coming into school to find it boarded up, with a demolition order from the council; we then imagined how this is how it must feel for the animals who are having their habitats destroyed for Palm Oil. We visited Chester Zoo to observe some of the endangered animals and find out more about what Chester Zoo is doing to help the Palm Oil crisis. After this, each class set about to learn about the effects of Palm Oil through a different endangered animal. The children have written letters to large companies, created adverts to warn of the effects of non-sustainable Palm Oil, constructed emotive poetry to capture the devastation, put up posters around the school and local area to raise awareness, created sculptures and artwork to show the beauty of the endangered animals and sang songs in order to communicate their concern for the planet's future due to deforestation

from Palm Oil production. The children believe that one promise to change can make a difference and that as children of the future they must act.

All of the work culminated into a whole school exhibition in the school hall, which was transformed into a rainforest, to showcase the children's passion for learning and raise awareness in the wider community. Take a look at the pictures below to see some of the wonderful work produced and shown in the exhibit, which received some special visitors including workforce from Chester Zoo and The Knutsford Mayor.



Bishop Wilson CE Primary

School children from Bishop Wilson Church of England Primary School are celebrating the launch of a pioneering project arming them with vital life skills including how to save money and budget. The school is believed to be the first in the North West to unveil its own bank and general store as part of an ambitious business sponsorship scheme giving children practical experience of handling money. The Bishop Wilson Bank and Mere Stores opened in the summer term in a special celebration event hosted by the school's governors and drawing support from parents, pupils, teachers, training providers and business sponsors.

The concept has involved the development of a unique school currency, the Mitre. As part of a new performance scheme, pupils are being rewarded Mitres in recognition of good behaviour and commitment. Every child in the school from Year R to Year 6 has been invited to open a bank account and to save the Mitres they accumulate to buy toys and stationery from the school store. Interest is paid on their savings at a rate of 10%.

The idea not only challenges children to take ownership and responsibility for their money, it has also given pupils a taste of life in the real world with the youngsters themselves recruited for the roles of bank manager, assistant bank manager, cashier, shop manager, assistant shop manager and shop assistant.

