

Romans 15 v13

'May 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'

Dear Colleagues

It has been great to see so many of you at our Diocesan Briefings over the last couple of weeks. We have been joined by over 150 of you which has been a great encouragement for us. I hope that the format using Zoom has been a positive one for you. These days are a time of learning and experimentation and it had never been our plan to deliver Briefings through Zoom. However, we do seem to be reaching high numbers and I am hoping it is taking less time out of everybody's day. Having said that, we value person to person contact in as many circumstances as we possibly can and over the coming months, we will be looking to find ways to make the most of technology as well as face to face contact. This is particularly true of our training offer, currently, we are mainly offering online training, and this is particularly focussed on areas relating to governance and RE / SIAMS. Do have a look on the website <https://schools.chichester.anglican.org/training/> for further details and we will continue to keep you informed as new courses are offered.

One event that we are expecting to be carried out on a face to face basis, is our Headteacher's Conference. This is scheduled for Friday 26th March 2021 and it will be on the theme of our "Growing Partnerships" document. Many places have already been booked with the majority of last years delegates moving their booking into this year. However, we have managed to secure more places so if you would like to join us please get in contact soon to make sure that you can get one of the remaining places. We really would love to see as many of you there, as we hope this will be a time for both development and restoration.

I would like to expand briefly on our Growing Partnerships document. This is the work that we are doing to develop the partnership that exists between our parish churches and our schools and you will be receiving this document soon after half term. It is designed to be an example of strong practice. It is not compulsory, but we do hope that you will engage with it and use it to move your relationship with your parish church forward. We will be launching it with a number of events over the next few months culminating in our Headteachers Conference in March. I have approached a small group of schools to act as case study schools for us so that they can be a resource for any of you who are facing similar challenges. I will explain this further when I send the document to you, but essentially we have looked to work alongside a number of schools in varying circumstances so that they can share their experiences and the lessons learned in the journeys they have undertaken. Look out for the "Growing Partnerships" document in your inbox soon after half term.

In our Briefings we have also directed schools to our revised Academy Policy. The Academy Policy has been clarified rather than hugely adapted and is in response to the strengthening policy the Government are likely to be showing towards academies in the months ahead. We would emphasise that we would be wanting any of our schools to be joining our own church led MAT options. Currently the options we would ask you to consider are DCAT, BOAT, Bishop Luffa

Learning Partnership and TENAX. The Diocesan Board of Education agreed to two schools exploring other options, but these were extremely exceptional circumstances and all our diocesan options were fully explored and exhausted at that time.

At our Briefings, I updated you about the exciting project in our Horsham schools who are working with Fegans to set up a locality led counselling provision. This is in partnership with local churches. We are very keen to support any other localities in such a project so do contact us if you would like us to put you in touch with the key partners engaged in this project.

With the clocks going back there is the sense of ongoing progress towards Christmas! This year is going to be very different and I know many of you will be looking to explore ways of ensuring it remains a special time in your school communities. You will be doing this, however, amidst the ongoing pressures and tiredness that you have had to endure. I would like to point you towards some encouraging words in the book of Isaiah 40 vs 31

‘But they that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not be faint.’

With everything that you have been going through since March, I know many of you have been relying fully on your faith and on God our Father. I encourage you to continue to do so as we enter a challenging and tiring phase of the school year - but also a time of shared joy and celebration. Be encouraged by all that you have achieved but also know that God will continue to be alongside you; caring for you, guiding you and protecting you in the weeks ahead.

With my very best wishes

Trevor Cristin
November 2020

Learning with meaning and purpose: to know God and shape the world