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## YORK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Amy Johnson Way  
Clifton Moor  
YORK YO30 4XT

Tel: 01904 699 511  
Fax: 01904 699 501  
e-mail: [admin@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:admin@yorkdiocese.org)  
Web Site: [www.dioceseofyork.org.uk](http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk)

**Andrew Smith**  
**Diocesan Director of Education**

January 2017

Dear Colleague

### **Director's Newsletter – Spring Term 2017**

Welcome back to a new term and I hope that you managed some quality time off over the festive period with friends and family.

This term again promises to be a busy one. We are looking forward to holding our Leadership Networks days later in the term which will have a dual focus on both church school distinctiveness and school effectiveness. There is Collective Worship training for heads and worship leads and sessions for governors on effective governance in a church school. Please do watch the diocesan website for further details and an opportunity to book yourself onto the training.

As I mentioned last term, we are using Eventbrite as a booking system for our training going forward and we hope this will provide an efficient system for our training bookings. If you experience any difficulties with the booking process, please contact Anita in the office.

#### ***Education Team News***

We are delighted to welcome Claire Graham-Brown back to the diocesan education team following her period of maternity leave. Claire is responsible for overseeing the academy conversion process on behalf of the diocese, advises on governance matters, both within maintained schools and academies, and is the point of contact for admission policies and procedures.

Chelo Brooks has also been appointed to an established post as a school development adviser within the team. Chelo has her own group of schools with whom she works as part of the Service Level Agreement and also has a specific brief to support Alison Smith with school effectiveness work.

It is great to have a full complement of staff in the team and we look forward to working with you.

#### ***Understanding Christianity Update and RE CPD***

It is great to report that 105 of our 127 schools and academies have taken up the opportunity for training on the national Understanding Christianity resource. The

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final opportunity for Day 1 training is here at Diocesan House on 17<sup>th</sup> January and I know several schools are booked on this training.

Olivia Seymour has sent an email to all schools and academies who attended Day 1 training with arrangements for booking on Day 2 training. Please do contact her if by any chance you have not received this email.

I would also like to draw to your attention an opportunity for continuing professional development in RE that you may have missed.



Learn Teach Lead RE North is a programme funded by Culham St. Gabriel's Trust. It aims to support all teachers and leaders of RE through a programme of continuing professional development by training Professional Leaders of RE to run RE networks. The programme is managed by a steering group of professionals drawn from a broad spectrum of RE practitioners.

We are currently looking for Primary and Secondary Leaders of RE (PLREs) who will coordinate RE hubs in one of the following areas: **York, North Yorkshire, Hull and East Riding**. In order to fulfil this role, PLREs will receive two full training days (one in January and one in June) with supply cover and expenses provided and support through a free place at a conference to be held in York, October 2017. It is open to all schools and if you are interested, then please contact [helen.wren@yorkdiocese.org](mailto:helen.wren@yorkdiocese.org) for more information.

RE Survey: In order to help us with our RE network planning; it would be helpful if as many schools as possible could complete a survey. Thank you in advance. <http://bit.ly/2dt1bbv>

### ***Academies Update***

I have met with a number of schools and individual governing bodies over the last term with regards to academy conversion. The diocese continues with its strategy of supporting you to find local solutions in order to work with partner schools, be they church or community schools. I am happy to continue to meet schools individually or as part of a cluster and I will be giving an update as part of the Leadership Network days later in the term.

The Department of Education has published new guidance for Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and schools thinking of joining MATs. It is a very useful document which gives guidance on the establishment of new MATS and those who plan to grow. Importantly it sets out guidance on developing a successful trust with regards to governance, leadership, school improvement and managing risk and financial sustainability.

Download the document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust>

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### ***The Education Endowment Foundation – Opportunity for schools***

Following the huge interest the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) had from Church schools to participate in the Read Write Inc trial, EFF now have another opportunity for a literacy trial in primary schools. The EEF have commissioned a trial of Reciprocal Reading and this will be delivered in treatment schools in the academic year September 2017 - July 2018 and thereafter will be available for control schools.

Reciprocal Reading is a programme which uses guided reading to help pupils develop their comprehension skills. It will be tested with children in Year 4 as a whole class programme and with Years 5 and 6 as a targeted intervention. Schools will receive 2 days training, 3 half-day development support days in school and resources.

Although this trial will be based mainly in the North East, they will recruit schools in other areas as long as they are **grouped into 10 - 15 schools** (half would be randomised to receive the programme in year 1 and half to be control and continue with business as usual (this half could purchase the programme after 1 year)).

If this is of interest, further information about this trial can be found on the EEF website:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/our-work/projects/reciprocal-reading/>

### ***Connecting Classrooms***

Having personally been involved in this programme, I thought I would attach a briefing document to the weekly email in case it is of interest.

Connecting Classrooms is a programme run by the British Council to enable schools to partner with schools overseas in order to build professional partnerships with another school. It is aimed at both teachers and school leaders and involves a training programme element and an overseas visit, both of which are funded through a grant from the British Council.

The document states that:

*Professional partnerships are intended to provide the opportunity for teachers to compare approaches and build their confidence in their ability to plan and deliver core skills to young people, which in turn contributes to the overall programme vision: 'Young people demonstrate enhanced knowledge, skills and understanding for work in a global economy and how to contribute responsibly to society, locally and globally.'*

### ***School Effectiveness – DfE and Ofsted Update***

It is our aim to try and keep you updated with any national developments in case you haven't received them from another source.

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1. The DfE has issued its "fair funding proposals", replacing the current system with a **new national funding formula** due to start in 2018-2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/schools-national-funding-formula>

The DfE claims that

- more than 10,000 schools will gain funding,
- significant protections have also been built into the formula so that no school will face a reduction of more than more than 1.5% per pupil per year or 3% per pupil overall,
- for pupils with high-level special educational needs (high needs), where funding changes could be even more acutely felt by the most vulnerable young people in our society, no area will see their funding reduced.

The DfE have produced an Excel spreadsheet which can be used to look up how much your school is set to gain or lose under the current plans.

2. **Primary school performance tables** have been issued. The DfE has also issued "How to use school performance tables to see how a school is performing at key stage 2".

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

3. Ofsted has produced a survey report on **governance** arrangements in complex and challenging circumstances. The study found that governors at two-thirds of the 2,600 schools surveyed had not taken part in any self-evaluation work and had not identified any weaknesses until they were rated as "requires improvement" or "inadequate" by Ofsted. Ofsted suggested another way to address weak governance was to pay chairs of governing bodies. It found that paid chairs often have "more open and honest discussions" with headteachers. Ofsted also called on the government to publish "national quality standards" to encourage governors to undertake robust self-assessment.

Ofsted has now pledged to "report more robustly on the extent governors are committed to their own professional development" to secure "sustained improvements" in governance practices.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-governance>

With my best wishes for the term ahead,

Andrew Smith  
Diocesan Director of Education

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