

# **RDBE NEWS BULLETIN**

## **AUTUMN TERM 2022**

During Advent, we join Christians throughout the world in a journey to a tiny manger. I wonder...what preparations might help us with this year's Advent pilgrimage. How much are we carrying? What moments to slow down might we create? And, in that preparation, how might we discover anew the transformative impact of the words of **HOPE, PEACE, JOY** and **LOVE** as we gaze into the silent echoes of the Advent candles? I wonder which words others might see reflecting through our lives...offering them, just maybe, a glimpse of a tiny baby born in a manger. Praying God's blessing on your Advent pilgrimage.



### **FROM JOHN CONSTANTI, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

As we approach Christmas, which is such a special time in schools, we are very conscious of the new pressures now being faced. These present additional challenges for you all particularly coming so soon after the pandemic.

As ever, thank you for all that you have and continue to do for the benefit of your pupils and the school community – it is deeply appreciated.

If there is any way in which we can assist or support, please do get in touch.

With all best wishes for a well-deserved, relaxing, and peaceful Christmas break, when we hope you will be able to spend some time with friends and family.

## DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

We are delighted, after a period of 4 years since our last conference, for us to be able to come together on Wednesday 8 March 2023.

The focus will be on Leading and Enabling Flourishing for Our School Communities. We welcome our new Bishop, Rt Rev Jonathan Gibbs, to open the conference, and then various practitioners and experts will lead our morning sessions. In the afternoon, we hear from Jonny Benjamin and Neil Laybourn who share their insights borne out of moving and relevant experience.

Further details can be found at [Leadership Conference](#)

We encourage early bookings and very much look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.



JONNY BENJAMIN MBE IS AN AWARD-WINNING MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNER, FILM PRODUCER, PUBLIC SPEAKER, WRITER AND VLOGGER.

NEIL LAYBOURN IS A HEALTH AND WELLBEING EXPERT CONSULTANT AND SPEAKER

SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS INCLUDE THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF FEGANS, OUR SCHOOL SUPPORT PARTNERS AND JONNY BENJAMIN AND NEIL LAYBOURN

Diocese of  
**Rochester**

**LEADING AND ENABLING FLOURISHING FOR OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

Wellbeing and Mental Health

**8 MARCH 2023**  
**9AM - 4PM**

MERCURE MAIDSTONE  
GREAT DANES HOTEL  
HOLLINGBOURNE  
NR MAIDSTONE  
KENT, ME17 1RE

REGISTRATION:  
[louise.liddy@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:louise.liddy@rochester.anglican.org)

**EARLY BIRD**  
**£100+VAT**  
**(IF BOOKED BEFORE**  
**28 OCTOBER**  
**2022) £150+VAT**  
**THEREAFTER**

## SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The number of schools subscribing totals 82 so a huge thank you to all those that have subscribed.

For those 7 schools who have not joined, we would encourage you to reconsider.

Subscribing schools are entitled to discounts on many of the services we offer and, out of fairness to subscribing schools, we may need to charge non-subscribing schools for certain services.

## SCHOOL INSURANCE

The Department for Education's (DfE's) Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) has been operating for academies and free schools since 1 September 2014 and from 1 April 2020 LA maintained schools have been able to join the RPA.

The RPA is not an insurance scheme but is a mechanism through which the cost of risks that materialise will be covered by government funds.

Cover is comprehensive and the cost at £21 per pupil is competitive and could result in cost savings.

Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>

## TRAINING

Our 2022 – 2023 training programme (both in person and virtual) can be found at [Training Directory](#)

We would also encourage you to use our website <https://www.rdbe.org.uk/> which includes many useful resources.

## EDUCATION POLICY

After some thirty-two hours of debate in the House of Lords, a total of 171 amendments were tabled. There was cross party opposition to the proposals which resulted in a government U-turn and the removal of clauses 1 to 4 and schedule 1 from the Schools' Bill (approximately a quarter of the document).

Following the changes in Government leadership since July, which has resulted in 3 Prime Ministers and 5 Secretary of States for Education, it is not currently clear whether the new prime minister and the new Secretary of State for Education support all elements of the Schools' Bill and that all schools should become academies by 2030.

It is rumoured, given other pressures facing the government, that unsurprisingly the Schools' Bill might be withdrawn. We shall continue to monitor the situation and advise accordingly.

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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Following a series of difficult Christmases, churches across the Church of England are hoping that 2022 offers a chance to welcome people back to services and events that haven't been possible recently. In planning your Christmas events, there might be some ready-made options here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/advent-and-christmas/resources-advent-and-christmas>

### MUSIC FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

On a recent school visit, one of our headteachers asked about sources for Christian songs. In pointing towards some of these, I would urge you to make sure that they are appropriate for your context and that they serve your collective worship by being inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Remember that some songs might be more suitable for listening to rather than being sung by the school community.

### A message from Praise-along

I'm Jane from **Praise-along**, a new collective worship project, uniting UK primary schools through Christian songs. I'd like to provide you with some information about the project.

**Praise-along** songs will help your schools to:

- Deliver meaningful collective worship
- Follow Christian themes throughout the year
- Unite in shared values

- Encourage children to explore and experience faith for themselves
- Support children’s social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
- Achieve your schools’ SIAMS objectives (Anglican and Methodist schools)
- Enhance children’s emotional well-being
- Give children a positive start to the school day

The songs have been written by leading children’s song writer Kelly Fort and will be available at [www.praise-along.com](http://www.praise-along.com) from January 2023. Here you will also find more details about what we offer in due course. To see an example of Kelly's work, please paste the following link into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QjtfQLtmdU>

**PopUK <https://www.popuk.org/>**

I have sent you various free tasters from PopUK as they have come to me. Here are some free Christmas resources [https://www.popuk.org/christmas-2022?dm\\_i=76M0,BHHS,YOAT5,1E4CM,1](https://www.popuk.org/christmas-2022?dm_i=76M0,BHHS,YOAT5,1E4CM,1) but there is plenty more to explore on their website.

*‘PopUK songs are carefully crafted. They set out aspirations and values that cut across all backgrounds and cultures - the importance of self-esteem, respect, tolerance, citizenship. These powerful messages endorse the day-to-day learning experience of every child’*

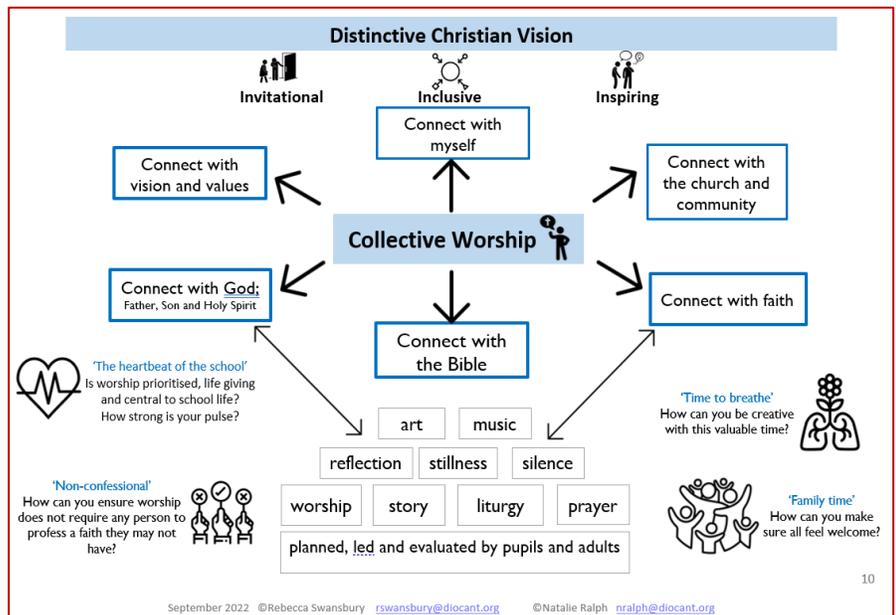
- this and similar endorsements appear on their website.

**DEVELOPING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – CONTINUING THE JOURNEY**

The Collective Worship leaders’ support group network offers a way of making sure that you engage with the latest thinking and information which is based on our Fresh Approach to Collective Worship guidance. We are seeking to make sure that collective worship flows from your Christian vision and becomes the ‘heartbeat’ of your school.

For details of the free sessions in the spring and summer terms, see:- [Training Directory](#)

<b>Term 3</b>	Zoom	24 January 2023
<b>Term 5</b>	Zoom	16 May 2023



## **SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Spinnaker [www.spinnaker.org.uk](http://www.spinnaker.org.uk)**

Since 1986, Spinnaker has been developing opportunities for children in schools to engage with Christianity. They operate in primary schools in London and the South East delivering Collective Worship and RE lessons. They offer training and support, and value the warmth of their professional relationships with headteachers and staff in the schools they visit. They write their own material, creating Worship and Learning resources, both digital and non-digital, for use by their team, other schoolwork organisations, schools, parents, and churches. Much of it is freely available for schools to access, use and adapt.

### **The Family Trust <https://www.familytrust.org.uk/>**

This organisation is passionate about inspiring the next generation to explore Christianity and this is at the heart of all they do. They have a track record of providing fun, engaging and educational activities to children across Maidstone, Medway and Swale.

They are keen to facilitate greater links between local churches and schools strengthening relationships and providing increased opportunities for volunteers to serve their community. They want their activities to remain relevant to young people's needs so they frequently review our projects to ensure they are responding to current issues such as the environment, wellbeing and equality.

### **Wintershall [www.wintershall.org.uk/wintershall-education](http://www.wintershall.org.uk/wintershall-education)**

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*'The experience of attending a production here at the Wintershall Estate is more than just watching a play. Rather than tell the tale to a silent, observing audience, Wintershall encourage and remind the crowds that they too are part of the story. Your school group witness the same events that the actors do and walk with them as they journey with Jesus. There is no better way to learn the Christian story than by being immersed in it'. (From the website)*

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Some of our schools have made the journey to experience 'The Life of Jesus' and had an amazing day which they will never forget.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### FOR KENT VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS ONLY – revised Kent Agreed Syllabus (KAS)

The message here is to 'Keep Calm and Carry On' for now. Please be reassured that there is nothing to worry about in terms of the revised Kent Agreed Syllabus, as only minor changes are being made. The new units are supplementary for schools to use if they would like to. If you are following the Diocese's planning, there is not a requirement to change anything, unless beneficial for your school context. If you do not change anything, you will still be meeting the requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus. My advice would be to save these documents for now and wait to consider them when we are together during 2023.

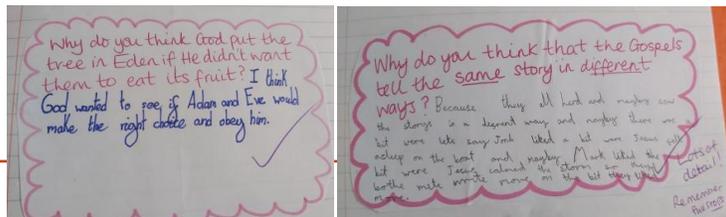
If you have any questions, please do get in touch with me.

### OUR RE SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS – Autumn term 2022

It is good to see numbers steadily rising for our in-person RE support group meetings. The autumn materials were sent to all schools so that those who attended and those who could not were able to access what we thought about together. One focus was that of marking which might be a wider conversation for a slot in a staff meeting:

Marking work in RE - meaningful, manageable and motivating  
Think about what is being recorded in the first place.

- Is **thinking** being encouraged and acknowledged?
- Is it in line with your school's marking policy?
- Are high quality questions being asked for the children to respond to and then acknowledged?
- Are grammar / spelling errors corrected?
- Is it manageable for the work load/well-being of staff?



<b>Term 4</b>	Bishop Chavasse CofE Primary School, 2A Baker Lane, Tonbridge TN11 0FB	21 February 2023
	Chancel, Diocesan Offices, Rochester ME1 1SL	23 February 2023
<b>Term 6</b>	Southborough CofE Primary School, Broomhill Park Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0JY	6 June 2023
	Chancel, Diocesan Offices, Rochester ME1 1SL	8 June 2023

The full meeting details for the spring and summer terms can be found in the training directory: [Training Directory](#)

## OUR RE CONFERENCE

### RE LEADERS CONFERENCE

A great opportunity for RE Leaders to gather to share good practice and ideas to revitalise their RE provision in school. RE Leaders who have been part of the InspiREd leadership programme will be sharing their research projects to inspire practice back in school. More details to follow.

**Audience:** RE Leaders  
**Format:** In person  
**Time:** 9-30am – 3pm  
**Led by:** Natalie Ralph, Rebecca Swansbury & Virginia Corbyn  
**Cost:** **SLA £50 + VAT Non-SLA £75 + VAT**

**Term 4**

Lenham  
 Community  
 Centre, Groom  
 Way, Lenham,  
 Maidstone, Kent

23 March 2023

## THE GROWING FAITH FOUNDATION

Growing Faith is the movement that exists to put children, young people and families instinctively at the heart of all the mission and ministry of the Church by changing the culture of the Church of England. It comes from the vision set by the House of Bishops and endorsed by General Synod in 2019. It involves **churches**, **schools** and **households** working together to help children, young people and families have life in all its fullness.

The Growing Faith Foundation seeks to benefit children and young people, helping them create the world they want to live in, specifically through the lens of the Christian faith. Every Diocese has appointed one or more Growing Faith Champions to take forward the Growing Faith mission locally. The Growing Faith Foundation is developing work in four main areas: Networks, Learning Hubs, Programmes and Research.

For more details, see:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/growing-faith-foundation>

We will keep you updated about how the Diocese of Rochester plans to develop this exciting initiative in the coming months.



The new national team for  
 The Growing Faith  
 Foundation

## SIAMS 2023 – Radically different, Radically the same

I hope that most of you have picked up that there is to be a new framework for SIAMS inspections from 2023 and that the documentation is now available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>

For those of you that appear on the national list for inspection in 2022-23

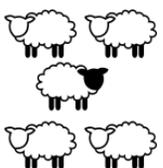
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/List%20of%20schools%20likely%20to%20be%20inspected%20in%202022-2023%2028112022.pdf>

the current schedule will apply. However, if your inspection is not carried out before September 2023, then we would look to support you in being ready for inspection under the 2023 framework. For now, I have the same information that has been given to you, but be assured that I will keep you updated as more training is rolled out to advisers and to inspectors.

For now, keep at the front of your mind that:



**It isn't something else to do ...**



**Radically different, Radically the same**

[www.churchofengland.org/education](http://www.churchofengland.org/education)




and that



**SIAMS 2023 ...**



<b>Radically different</b>	<b>Radically the same</b>
For inspectors	For schools

[www.churchofengland.org/education](http://www.churchofengland.org/education)




We are all on the same journey – I will seek to be an effective navigator!

## **GOVERNANCE AND ADMISSIONS**

### **GOVERNANCE**

Thank you to all who serve on our Governing Bodies and Boards. You give generously of your time and talents to walk with our school communities on their journey to be the best church schools that they can be. There can be a challenge in ensuring that the places for foundation governors of all categories remain filled. We are grateful to schools and parishes for seeking to find governors to serve their communities with a good understanding of their local context.

Please could you ensure that the details about your governing body and your clerk/governance professional remain up to date on your website as this is a crucial point of initial information for all those looking from the outside in, including for inspection purposes.

### **ADMISSIONS**

Thank you for those of you who have consulted with us to any changes to your Admissions for 2024. Please ensure that it is clear how any oversubscription criteria will be reasonably satisfied to avoid challenges further down the line as national feedback suggests that this continues to be an ongoing weakness in admissions policies.

## **ST BENEDICT'S AT WEST MALLING – AN INVITATION**

A number of you have enjoyed the peace and tranquility of St Benedict's Centre when attending a meeting or event there. The Centre offers so much more than a meeting place. It is also a haven for those needing to take a little bit of time out. For individuals, we can offer a day of rest and renewal if you need to step aside briefly from the pressure and busyness of life in school. Alternatively, it might be a time to come away from school to work in a peaceful environment because wifi is available. For a charge of just £10, you will be given the use of a private room and access to tea, coffee and biscuits. Please contact Virginia if you would like to take advantage of this generous offer from the Centre and she can provide you with a voucher with which you can make a booking directly. This is offered as a subsidised gift to you in order to make a positive contribution to your wholeness and wellbeing.



Remember too that the Centre is available for school meetings that might be better held away from school – please contact the Centre directly for meeting bookings at <https://stbenedictscentre.org/contact/>

## **UPDATES FROM CAROL MORRIS (who is on our team of associates)**

### **DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION**

The DfE have published further conditions of grant funding for the national professional qualifications (NPQs) to support teachers and leaders to participate in NPQs. To support leaders and teachers working in smaller settings, who may find it more challenging to engage with professional development and to access NPQs, from autumn 2022 state-funded schools and 16 to 19 organisations with between 1 and 600 pupils will receive £200 for every teacher or leader they employ who takes an NPQ. These grant payments are in addition to government funded NPQ scholarships available until the academic year 2023-24.

Following publication of The SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) green paper, published in March this year and noted in the previous RDBE bulletin, the new Education Secretary (Gillian Keegan) has written to schools. Ms Keegan acknowledges significant change is required to SEND and AP systems and will use information gathered through the consultation to inform an Improvement Plan. In addition, two measures were announced ahead of the Plan in the form of new funding for educational psychologists and for assistive technology.

The Department has also updated its lists of what schools must publish online including new sections on 'School uniforms' and 'School opening hours'. Details can be found on Gov.uk website.

At the time of writing, the latest issue of the DfE's School Governance Update was published in September. Please find a link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/school-governance-update-september-2022>

### **OFSTED**

The September 2022 version of the inspection handbook removed the 'transition' arrangements that had been included within the 'Good' grade criteria for the quality of education judgement. The update has made changes to the way in which inspections are referred. Section 5 inspections are now referred to as 'graded inspections' and Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools called 'ungraded inspections'. The purpose of each remains unchanged.

Since the last bulletin, Ofsted issued its corporate annual report and accounts 2021 to 2022 and has also published summary information on inspections of formerly exempt 'Outstanding' schools. The exemption from 2012 for schools that had been judged 'Outstanding' was lifted in 2020. It should be noted that all schools were previously inspected under a different inspection framework. The report 'A return to inspection' explains that over 80% of previously exempt schools that underwent a graded inspection did not retain their 'Outstanding' grade. Around 370 previously exempt schools had a graded inspection in 2021/22. On average, their last inspection was over 13 years earlier. When inspected, 17% remained Outstanding, 62% became Good and 21% were judged Requires Improvement or Inadequate.

### **OFQUAL**

In 2023 and beyond, students will have the opportunity to show what they know and can do in exams and formal assessments. The government and Ofqual have confirmed some of the arrangements for 2023 with a return to pre-pandemic grading whilst affording the 2023 cohort some protection against any impact of Covid-19 disruption.

Chief Regulator, Jo Saxton, explained that, broadly speaking, the protections would mean that 'a typical student who would have achieved an A grade in their A level geography before the pandemic will be just as likely to get an A next summer, even if their performance in the assessments is a little weaker in 2023 than it would have been before the pandemic'. It is expected that overall results in 2023 will be much closer to pre-pandemic years than results since 2020.

Whilst the DfE is clear that it does not foresee any situation where public examinations are again suspended, it has announced that, in the unlikely scenario that exams are cancelled in summer 2023, a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) approach would be implemented nationally. Guidance has been published by Ofqual 'Ensuring the resilience of the qualifications system' which outlines the steps schools should take in the coming months.

## **PUPIL PERFORMANCE 2021-2022**

A range of information reporting on pupil performance has been published since the last bulletin. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) profile results are the first set of results published since EYFS reforms were introduced. Children are defined as having a good level of development if they are at the expected level for 12 or more of the 17 early learning goals within the 5 areas of learning relating to: communication and language; personal, social and emotional development; physical development; literacy; and mathematics.

Key EYFS headlines:

- 65.2% of children attained a good level of development
- The average number of early learning goals at expected level was 14.1 per child
- A higher percentage of girls than boys were at the expected level of development.

Headlines from the first Key Stage One teacher assessments and phonics screening check since 2019:

- 75% pupils met expected standard in phonics screening in Y1
- 67% pupils met expected standard in reading TA
- 58% pupils met expected standard in writing TA
- 68% pupils met expected standard in maths TA.

The multiplication tables check involves Y4 pupils. Key attainment headlines for summer 2022:

- Of pupils who took the check, the mean average score was 19.8 out of 25
- Disadvantaged pupils performed less well in the check than other pupils
- Pupils with a first language of English performed less well in the check than pupils with a first language other than English.

National headlines of Key Stage Two attainment report:

- 59% pupils met expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths
- 74% of pupils met the expected standard in reading
- 71% of pupils met the expected standard in maths
- 69% of pupils met the expected standard in writing
- 72% of pupils met the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

The Key Stage 4 performance data for 2022 have been published. Headlines include:

- 49% pupils achieved grades 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs
- Average attainment score of all pupils is 48.7
- Percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate 38.7%

- The KS4 disadvantage gap index has widened compared to 2020/21, from 3.79 to 3.84 and is now at its highest level since 2011/12

Provisional information on the overall achievement of students at the end of 16 – 18 study for 2022 are available. Key headlines include:

- Average A level result was a B grade
- Average applied general result was a Distinction(minus)
- Average applied tech level result was a Distinction(minus)
- The disadvantage gap is at its widest since measures began for all examination cohorts

Due to the uneven impact of the pandemic on schools and varying arrangements for examination across recent years, the government advises that data users exercise caution when considering performance data, as any changes may not reflect variations in pupil performance alone.