We wish you all
a very happy summer holiday

Circulation

This termly Newsletter is sent to church school headteachers, priests with a church school in their parish, senior diocesan clergy, members of the Diocesan Board of Education, members of Diocesan Synod and other interested people.

Heads: Please let your RE Co-ordinator have this copy once you have finished.
Welcome to Herts

Lizzy Rackham—Dagnall (Sept 16; from Senior teacher)
Charlotte Tudway—Essendon Primary (Sept 16, from St Helen’s Primary, Wheathampstead)
Shirley Arnold—St Andrew’s Primary, Stanstead Abbotts (Sept 16; from Deputy)
Sarah Bridgman—Tonwell St Mary’s Primary (Sept 16; from St Helen’s Primary, Wheathampstead)

Farewell to Herts

Rachel Heath—Dagnall (Aug 16; early retirement)
Barbara Young—Essendon Primary (Aug 16; to Cambs LA)
Rosemary Woodall—St Andrew’s Primary, Stanstead Abbotts (Aug 16; early retirement)
Alan Wright—Tonwell St Mary’s Primary (Aug 16; to Norfolk)

Welcome to Beds

Nancy Sheehan—Dunton & Wrestlingworth Lowers (Apr 16; from Acting)

Hope we’ve not missed anyone out!

Very many thanks to the deputy or acting head for your sterling work!

... Geoffrey Williams, who in May was awarded the Order of St Albans by the Bishop of St Albans. This is a means of honouring lay people in the Diocese who have offered faithful and committed service over a substantial period of time. Geoffrey served on the Diocesan Board of Education for very many years, for most of them as a wise and insightful Vice-Chair, of much assistance to the Schools Team behind the scenes ...
... and to Deborah Weston who was awarded an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours for services to Religious Education and inter- and intra-faith dialogue. During the past year Deborah has led courses on Islam for diocesan church schools. She works tirelessly for RE, both as a teacher and in a national capacity.
SCHOOL NEWS

Silsoe Lower School—new school site!

Pupils expressed their wishes and dreams for their new school at a ceremony to mark work on the building reaching its highest point. A topping-out ceremony took place in April to celebrate the latest landmark in the construction of Silsoe CofE Lower School’s new site.

Built on the former Cranfield University campus off Barton Road, Silsoe, the school is due for completion in time for the 2016/17 academic year when it will be able to offer 240 places, an increase on the 135 available at its current High Street location.

Sophia, Sophie, Libby, Joshua, Isla, Jacob, Harry and Tayla read aloud their classes’ wishes and dreams for the new building. They included hopes that:

- it will be a fantastic place for learning with fun activities, and that everyone will feel safe and welcome too
- it is a caring, safe, calm place where we can have fun
- it is a place where everyone shows kindness by working together and helping each other
- that we respect our toys, our friends and our new classrooms

Joining children, staff and school governors at the event were a host of invited dignitaries including Central Bedfordshire Council Chairman Cllr David Bowater, Central Bedfordshire’s Assistant Director (School Improvements) Helen Redding and Deputy Diocesan Director of Education Lizzie Jeanes.

Cllr Bowater said: “Last time I visited this was just a muddy building site where work was just beginning. It’s amazing how quickly things have progressed over the course of a few months and it’s evident what an impressive building this will be. “You can see by the number of new homes being built here what a popular place Silsoe is to live, and it’s important that we match that pace of growth by being able to offer children a place at a good, local school. “I look forward to returning soon to see the completed school.”

Susan Purdue, headteacher of Silsoe Lower School, said: “This is a very exciting time for the school. Visiting today, you start to visualise how everything is going to look and what the new facilities will look like.

“We are very much a values-based school, and in their inimitable way the children have summed up all of our aspirations and values in their wishes and dreams which they expressed today for the new site.

“If we commit all of our plans and aspirations to God he will help us to build an outward-looking, values-based and God-centred school where we all strive to work hard, achieve our potential within a wonderful environment and, most importantly, learn from and care for each other.”

The expansion scheme is part of the Council’s ongoing commitment to provide 6,500 new school places across Central Bedfordshire over a five-year period to 2017.


A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. 
Proverbs 25:11
And more congratulations, to ...

... St Paul's Primary, Chipperfield, who won through to the JRock southern final. Headteacher Caroline Moore tells ...

**A Tale of Temptation**

On 22 June we headed for the JRock southern final in Portsmouth with 77 pupils and an army of staff and parent volunteers. We managed to come second out of twelve finalists, which is the most amazing achievement – we still can’t quite believe it! Anybody who has ever been to a Rock Challenge final will appreciate the high standards of performances.

JRock is the junior version of Rock Challenge, a performing arts competition which promotes healthy lifestyles and that feeling of a “drug-free high”. The challenge is to stage a short performance to a soundtrack that we have produced ourselves. We won the heat in our region in February, earning a place in the final. Every year the standard increases so we were amazed to be placed second and presented with ten Awards of Excellence, for choreography, soundtrack, performance skill, entertainment, stage crew, stage use, visual enhancement, costuming character, inclusion and healthy lifestyle.

Our theme, “A Tale of Temptation”, was based upon the fairytale “Hansel and Gretel”. We chose this as it had a spooky forest section, giving great scope for scenery. We then thought about how we could introduce different characters to add peer pressure and try to lead Hansel and Gretel astray, after being inspired by films like “Into the Woods” and “Maleficent”. Children are always faced with having to make difficult choices so we thought we would represent that in the performance.

Our JRock is like a club, consisting of a mix of curricular and extra-curricular activities. As well as the performance itself, we deliver our JRock experience to the children through the Christian values that we teach at school: respect, perseverance, courage, friendship and co-operation. They get to work more closely with staff and children from different classes; with all of the different staging elements that make up our performance, the development of teamwork skills is a major focus for us. We also promote positive inclusion: there are no auditions and all pupils from the relevant age-groups are positively encouraged to participate. Virtually all pupils choose to join, including those who would not ordinarily volunteer to participate in the performing arts. Many of these children push themselves with performances which take them beyond their comfort zone, so developing new skills and building self-esteem.

This has been a true community event, helping to bond our school community with hours of commitment and hard work from staff, pupils and parents. The process started last summer with various fundraising events such as cake sales, competitions and healthy tuck shops. We also received generous donations of materials from local parents and former parents, and a cheque from our local village club which allowed us to purchase more resources. A fantastic group of parents worked on costumes, hair, make-up, props and scenery – it literally has taken months and months of hard work and dedication. Sarah Smith, our Year 6 teacher and leader of JRock, said: “I am just so proud of our fantastic team of children, parents, staff and former pupils; I feel lucky to be part of such a collaborative community. Seeing the pride and excitement in everyone’s faces afterwards made all the hard-work and effort well worth it.”

There certainly has been a fantastic “feel-good factor” and buzz around the school since the event. The children have developed so many different skills along the way and, most importantly, have really enjoyed their experience – a incredibly happy memory to be treasured forever.

*Photographs courtesy of Nick Scott*
Poem for Rock Challenge

Hansel and Gretel are so grown up
They’re ready to go on their way.
Let’s see if they make the right choices
So that their lives are more than okay.

But temptation is round every corner
How strong do you think they can be?
Can they stand up to pressures?
Let us all wait and see.

A gang of wolves - they’re strangers,
A mob who promise such fun.
Should they be trusted as friends?
Or perhaps t’would be better to run.

Gretel should be so happy
With what she has chosen to wear,
But red cloaks are the new fashion
So she finds her stuff hard to bear.

Goldilocks choosing a crime-d life,
A vandal, a thief and so cruel,
Breaking rules isn’t what they wanted
But it’s tempting to join someone so cool!

An evil queen lures them with poison:
It’s not something they should eat,
But it’s hard to say no when it looks good,
Wrapped up in an enticing treat.

Hansel and Gretel are tired
Is it time to give up and go back?
Staying at home was so easy.
Keep going - you’re on the right track!

You’re learning as you journey onwards.
There are so many people who care.
You’ll soon figure out the right thing
And, of wrong choices, be very aware.

The last test - it’s such a big one.
Hansel cannot stay strong.
One bite has dire consequences.
Luckily Gretel knows that it’s wrong!

Trapped by temptation -
Maybe Gretel has a plan;
To free Hansel from his prison -
Let us all hope that she can!

Have they both learnt their lessons?
Will they really go the right way?
The signpost of life’s choices before them -
What will their choice be today?

Recipe for preserving children

1 large grassy field
6 children
3 small dogs
flowers
narrow strip of brook with pebbles
hot sun
deep blue sky

Mix the children with the dogs and empty into field,
stirring continuously.
Sprinkle the field with flowers.
Pour the brook gently over the pebbles.
Cover all with a deep blue sky and bake in hot sun.
When children are well browned they may be removed.
Will be found right for setting away to cool in bathtub.

Lieutenant Ellis

St Mary's High School is located on Lt Ellis Way in Cheshunt.
Have you ever wondered who Lt Ellis was?

He was the unfortunate pilot of a US B24 Liberator bomber which crashed on 12 August 1944, on Maxwells Farm, just west of what is now the A10. Despite a serious malfunction on all four engines, the pilot managed to steer towards open ground, thus avoiding crashing on homes in the villages (sic) of Waltham Cross and Cheshunt. Grateful residents made a collection for families of the crew. Part of this collection was set aside for two memorial plaques to be made: one is in Cheshunt Library and the other at the US National Cemetery at Madingley, Cambridge.

Shortly after impact the plane exploded. Lt Ellis, his navigator and one of the gunners were buried at Madingley; the remains of the other crew members were flown home.

And so Lt Ellis lives on, in the name of an increasingly busy road. Do pause for thought and remember these brave young men when you next drive over that way.

Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.

CS Lewis
THE BISHOP OF ST ALBANS’ PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

to Diocesan Synod, June 2016

Last autumn a new book was published which quickly became a best seller. You can find it on the shelves of every airport bookshop. It is called *Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction* and was written by two American academics, Philip Tetlock and Dan Gardner. They look at the way that experts attempt to predict the future, such as what is going to happen to the financial markets in the coming year. It’s telling, however, that Tetlock has concluded that in a wide range of subjects “there was very little difference between the accuracy of so-called ‘experts’ and guesses made by the man in the street”.

Well, that’s what we re-discovered this past week. Most of us went to bed on Thursday night believing the opinion polls’ view that there was a small margin in favour of the United Kingdom remaining in the EU. International money markets agreed and the exchange rates and share indexes reflected this consensus. When we awoke, either during the night or in the morning, we discovered that we had decided to divorce our immediate European neighbours after a forty year marriage and we now want to have a different set of relationships with other countries.

I was saddened by the past four months of debate, which was often small-minded, self-centred and lacking in any vision of the common good. There was virtually no substantial discussion about the UK’s contribution to building a stronger and safer world. Another regrettable aspect of the campaign, on both sides, was the use of threat and fear. I was disappointed that some of our European partners were demonised. At other points in the debate, some of the world’s most vulnerable people, such as those fleeing for their lives and begging us for asylum, were used as political footballs. It was a pity that frequently the discussions simply descended to the level of “What’s in it for us?”

But now the decision has been made and we have to move forward, whether we are elated or depressed at the result. We do so against a background of a divided country, with 51.9% of the voters who wanted to leave the EU and 48.1% of the voters who wanted to remain. There is a division between London and the north of England, and there is division between England and Scotland, with the likelihood of another referendum for Scottish independence. Both of our largest political parties have been torn apart, especially the Conservative Party, and there are questions for the Labour Party and the extent to which they are in touch with their traditional voters, especially in the north. These divisions are likely to take generations to heal. As I know from discussion and correspondence, some of our congregations are also divided. So what should we do now? What does this mean for us as Christians?

Firstly, after a great deal of talking, lecturing, persuading and hectoring, we need a period of listening. The second of the two great commandments is “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” and that means seeking to understand others. This

(Continued on page 8)

Congratulations to schools on achieving their REQM Mark:

**Gold:**
- Pulford Lower, Leighton Buzzard
- Roxton Lower
- St Andrew’s Primary, Stanstead Abbotts
- Tring

**Silver:**
- St Nicholas Primary, Elstree
- St Nicholas Primary, Harpenden
- St Paul’s Primary, Langleybury
- St Andrew’s Primary, Much Hadham
- St Mary’s Primary, Rickmansworth
ASHTON MIDDLE SCHOOL CLOSES ITS GATES FOR THE LAST TIME

Ashton’s main building and grounds began as Dunstable Grammar School, founded by Frances Ashton in 1728 and built in 1887. It officially took on its middle school name and status in 1973, becoming Ashton C of E Middle School.

Ashton Middle is a church school and at the heart of the school are the Christian values on which the school was founded by Frances Ashton in 1888. Since its inception in 1973 all have striven for high standards in every aspect of school life and Ashton has always been a place where all aspects of achievement are celebrated.

In its 2015 SIAMS report the school was described as follows:

“Ashton is a compassionate and caring school where worship and learning are at the heart. One pupil described the school as her ‘second home’. Every person in the school community is valued as a child of God, and there is exceptional support for vulnerable pupils and their families.”

A particularly poignant activity during this school year has been the commemoration of former pupils killed in the First World War. As well as attending a KS3 WW1 workshop, pupils held a special remembrance Service in Dunstable Priory. Pupils, staff and parents worked together to create a WW1 Memorial Garden, taking as inspiration a school trip to the Somme, and a memorial plaque in the school library on which are the names of students at Dunstable Grammar School who lost their lives in WW1. The marching boots were donated by the 170 (Infrastructure Support) Engineer Group and have seen action in Iraq, Afghanistan and Nairobi. Pupils planted them with poppies as a symbol of peace.

In August 2014 the Executive Committee of Central Bedfordshire Council made the decision to close Ashton Middle School in 2016, as part of a reorganisation of schooling in Dunstable.

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of the school was held in Dunstable Priory on 4 July.

The beautiful Grade II listed building will now be carefully converted into flats.

One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.

John F Kennedy
listening is especially important, as powerful people and the media will continue to try to tell us what to think. Yet, as the referendum has shown, the voices of large numbers of people have not been heard. Of course that listening does not mean that we have to agree with everything we hear. Indeed, selfish or racist voices will need to be countered. Nevertheless, we need to listen, especially to those who are marginalised and voiceless and that will include some of our brothers and sisters whose ethnic roots lie in other parts of the world and some of whom are feeling very threatened.

Secondly, we need to work for and speak on behalf of the voiceless. As always, the rich and the powerful will lose out least in whatever changes come about over the coming months. Huge promises have been made during the campaign that our economy is going to thrive as never before outside the common market of the EU. We have to do all we can to ensure that any benefits are shared and that we seek to become a more equitable society.

Thirdly, we have to resist giving into fear. When we face uncertainty, there is a natural human tendency to retreat and put up the barricades. However, this is the very time when we need to be open to others. It is here that our Living God’s Love prayer is especially relevant, as we pray week by week that we may live “with generosity and joy, imagination and courage.”

Fourthly, we need to redouble our efforts to build relationships with Christians in other countries. Just because we are going to withdraw from the EU does not mean that we need to pull back from our ecumenical links in other countries. Indeed, just last week, the Bishop of Linköping was with us at the St Albans Pilgrimage. He and his party expressed the hope that we would remain part of the EU. Well, that’s not going to happen, but we can continue to build our links across the Anglican Communion and with our Lutheran and Roman Catholic brothers and sisters across the world.

Lastly, the scriptures encourage us to pray for our leaders: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2. 1-2). I hope that every church, school and chaplaincy in the diocese will make this prayer a priority.

**Transform Burkina**

Please sit down this harvest.

Transform Burkina, a small UK-based charity, is asking schools to “Please sit down” this harvest to support education in Burkina Faso.

The charity has produced free, simple to use harvest materials which can be downloaded at [http://www.transformburkina.org.uk/Please%20sit%20down%20in%20school%20final.pdf](http://www.transformburkina.org.uk/Please%20sit%20down%20in%20school%20final.pdf).

Through this scheme the charity is asking those involved to raise money to provide rural schools in Burkina Faso with desks for pupils. Visit the charity’s website at [www.transformburkina.org](http://www.transformburkina.org) for more information.

Details of the **Bishop’s Harvest Appeal** have already been sent to schools. This year’s project focuses on bringing clean, safe water to communities in Madagascar.

We do encourage schools to support this project but are well aware that there are many other deserving causes.

Further information of the Bishop’s Appeal can be found at [http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/bishop-s-annual-harvest-appeal/](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/bishop-s-annual-harvest-appeal/)

**Harvest Services** for diocesan Church Schools will take place in St Albans Cathedral on Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 October and promise to be a joyful celebration.
On Friday 10 June the whole community of Ardeley St Lawrence Primary School came together to pay tribute to the occasion of the Queen’s 90th birthday. Over 200 children, parents, staff, governors, volunteers and members of the local community joined together on the school field in glorious sunshine to celebrate together this once in a lifetime event.

The party started with a prayer for the Queen led by Father Mike Leverton and everyone was most generous in providing goodies for the bring-and-share picnic. A range of activities included a Royal Treasure Hunt, a Queen Quiz for grown-ups, and a mown grass sculpture competition (as our groundsmen had efficiently mowed the daisies that had been destined for the daisy crowns!).

The children also had to find people who had been born in each of the decades of the Queen’s life and, although the 1920s proved difficult, we had people of all ages and were able to fill in every other decade with the name of someone who was at the party.

The children had shown their creative sides by designing and making birthday cards for the Queen which were on display in the school hall and which have now been sent to Buckingham Palace. These had been judged by Curt Adams, the Site Manager of Newland Construction, the company that is working with us to build a brand new classroom specially designed for our Early Years children that will be completed in July and “open for business” in September.

Everyone had a wonderful afternoon which concluded with the singing of the National Anthem and the flying of kites decorated with the Union Flag. It was humbling sight to see so many happy, running children along with helping parents and the sky filled with the flag of the nation.

**Lucas Salinger** from Potten End Primary, who designed the winning logo for the celebrations, was invited to join members from the Church of England Education Office in London.

**Being in space, you realise what matters most on earth: look after each other and the planet.**

*Tim Peake*
Karen Bingley at Clophill St Mary’s Lower writes:

Amazingly, in-between showers, we managed to celebrate the Queen's birthday on 13 June and held an afternoon tea party for the children. The day began with the children learning about the royal family and creating lots of queen and royal-themed artwork. The afternoon began with a special worship in our spiritual garden where the children heard stories from people who have met the Queen and celebrated her long reign over our country. We then had our tea party. The children ate cheese and crackers, fruit kebabs that they made themselves and then homemade, beautifully decorated cupcakes which were donated by the parents. These were displayed on Union Jack cake stands and looked very patriotic. A great day was enjoyed by all!

On Friday 10 June, Raynsford Church of England Academy participated in a street party out on the playground. The afternoon began with an assembly in the Hall where the children shared what they knew about the Queen, and we watched a photo presentation showing the transformation of the Queen from a baby to present day, and a news clip showing highlights from the Queen's 90th Celebrations in Windsor. Assembly finished with the whole school singing the National Anthem.

Then it was outside to the playground for our street party, with Union Jack-themed plates, red, white and blue cups and everyone was delighted to receive a Union Jack party blower. (The teachers were not so impressed.) All children in the school from the pre-school through to Year 4 took part and the afternoon culminated in a wonderful rendition of Happy Birthday. Everybody had a superb afternoon and many parents commented on how much their children had enjoyed.

Ponsbourne St Mary’s Primary had a tea party to celebrate the Queen's birthday and invited some local residents, including a lady who was also 90 years old this year. They have received some lovely thank you letters from neighbours who enjoyed sharing stories about their experiences of the school over the years.

At St Andrew’s Primary, Stanstead Abbotts, the headteacher dressed as the Queen (with rude remarks from her husband about her age!). Numerous activities took place: from crown-making to celebration worship; “royal” games to staff baby quiz; royal sing-song to National Anthem; learning the Charleston as well as the Queen’s favourite songs; and fish (or pizza) and chips out of paper using fork and fingers to tea party.

St Andrew’s Church gave every child and member of staff a commemorative booklet to mark the event and to celebrate the Queen’s long service to her God and her country.
Despite forecasts of torrential rain, the sun shone for St Paul's Primary School's (Chipperfield) celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday. The school hosted a cream tea in the school grounds, with the help and support of staff, parents and Year 6 pupils. Local resident and regular school volunteer, Mrs Driver, was invited to represent the people who have celebrated their 90th birthdays this year, along with the Queen. As well as enjoying the great English tradition of scones, cream and jam, the children also incorporated the Queen's Scottish heritage by enjoying a spot of ceilidh dancing.

On Friday 20 May Roxton Lower School held a super Birthday Party for the Queen. It was organised by the school council who did a terrific job putting it all together.

Everyone came to school in red, white and blue to mark the event. In the morning each class helped make cakes, sandwiches, decorations and flags and in the afternoon we were all able to enjoy the results. We had a Crown competition as well as dancing and party games on the field.

It was lots of fun and we have sent photos to Her Majesty so she could see what we had been up to.

Toddington St George CE School hosted a school and community celebration for the Queen's 90th birthday. The afternoon was a great success and children enjoyed entertainment from “Smarty Arty”, team sports events, maypole dancing—and eating cake, of course!

At St Leonard's Lower, Heath & Reach, the children could come dressed as Kings or Queens for the day, or wear red, white and blue. We had a cream tea coffee morning for our parents, grandparents and the local elderly community, and the children had a picnic lunch “street party” on the playground.

At the end of the day each child received a commemorative coin.

Where there is life, there is happiness, and there is a great deal more to come.

Pierre Bezukhov in Tolstoy’s War & Peace
St Giles Primary, South Mimms celebrated the Queen’s 90th birthday with a morning of Friendship Group activities consisting of traditional games such as Jacks/five stones, skipping, cat’s cradle, marbles, elastic round your legs, balls against the wall, hopscotch, stick and hoop etc. We all enjoyed our picnic lunch on one long table in the playground, after we had paraded, waving our Union Jack flags, past Queen Elizabeth II herself, who was watching from the balcony! The rain held off and a good time was had by all! We even had a fly past from the red arrows!...

Wormley Primary School organised a DT week based on Queen’s celebrations. All the children designed and made plates as souvenirs for this historic day; they made crowns to wear at home and school; they created bunting inspired by a book called The Queen’s Knickers and had a DT exhibition. The week culminated in an afternoon tea and party and a Monday morning service.

At Ursula Taylor C of E School we celebrated the Queen’s 90th Birthday with a whole school street party organised by our Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. We all came to school in our red, white and blue clothing, made crowns and bunting and were invited for an extra special picnic with pack ups and flags. The whole school joined together to sing ‘God Save the Queen’ and Year 4 performed a rendition of ‘Rule Britannia’ We had a wonderful afternoon in the sunshine, sharing a special event together.

St Michael’s Primary, St Albans held a British Values Week, during which the children learned all about the monarchy and how Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne.

The PTA provided jelly and cakes for every child to have at a tea party on 10 June. Tables were set up on the playground at Top School and all the children were able to enjoy the party together. They even sang “Happy Birthday” to HM The Queen and HRH Prince Philip who happened to turn 95 years of age on the day of the party!

After the party, the children returned to their classrooms and were able to watch the party being held at Buckingham Palace via a live link which was also viewed by children all across the Commonwealth at the same time!
At **St Mary's Primary, Rickmansworth**, we had a spectacular day which started with a service at St Mary's Church led by the Revd Snowball. We then held a celebration gathering back at school for all children and 90 members of the local community, all born between 1926-2016 for each year of the Queen’s life. We provided lunch for all our visitors, and let off 90 balloons. The Nursery children thought their balloons would reach the moon! We had afternoon cream tea provided by people from the local church for our visitors and children, and finished the day off with a royal hat and crown exhibition!

This was a fantastic community event. Children made and decorated Queen's handbags, which they added to the wonderful flower displays in church. St Mary’s Church kindly provided afternoon cream tea for all the children and staff in the school, and for all the visitors. The visitors joined the classes for their cream tea, and the children were able to ask them questions about their lives and what they knew about the Queen. The children were exceptionally well-behaved and made the visitors feel very welcome.

The school provided a light lunch for all the volunteers who gave up their time to come and join in the celebration with us. It was great to get the local community together for this, and for the school to be able to show its service back to the community.

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it.
RECENT COURSES

The annual Headteachers’ Conference took place at the end of April, again at Putteridge Bury. The focus this year was “Making a Difference in RE—developing concepts and best practice in Religious Education”. The morning’s keynote speaker was the Revd Mary Hawes, National Children’s Work Adviser. She spoke very enthusiastically about how children think theologically, with some real insights about stages of faith and awareness.

The act of worship took a different format, being non-Eucharistic, and more reflective, led sensitively by the Revd Ruth Pyke, a former teacher and Diocesan Children’s Work Adviser, now working closely with the three schools (two of them church schools) in her benefice. Members of the Abbey Primary School choir joined delegates, leading singing and performing a couple of delightful solo items.

The afternoon session saw practical examples from RE teachers (Antonia Sheppard from Townsend, Lucy Chapman from Sutton Lower, Ryan Parker from Alban) on how to engage pupils at all levels from early years through to GCSE. Again, these presentations were very insightful.

As usual, Putteridge Bury looked after us very well. The buzz of networking headteachers was enhanced by delicious food. Being seated cabaret-style for the talks was very popular as it meant everyone could see, and provided instant discussion groups.

Next year’s Headteachers’ Conference will be a little later, on 6 June 2017, because we have booked the highly recommended (and very busy!) keynote speaker David Wells.
The theme of the Senior Leaders’ Conference, held on 29 June 2016, was “Building effective partnerships between church and school communities” and it was very pleasing to be able to welcome some members of the clergy who accompanied their senior school leaders to the conference. It was a very successful day. Shahne Vickery, the Assistant Director of Education for the Diocese of Gloucester, led the day, supported by her husband Jo, who is a team vicar in the parish of Christ Church, Downend in the Diocese of Bristol. As usual, Shahne brought with her lots of really interesting resources from Imaginore. Jane Chipperton, Diocesan RE Adviser, also sold resources from RE Today.

The day was divided into four key themes: Sharing Vision and Values in a church school, Worship, Celebrate and Serve. In between Shahne’s presentations were three keynote speakers from outstanding church schools in the diocese who have built strong partnerships with their local churches. The first presentation was from Julie Winwood, Headteacher of Aston St Mary’s, with her vicar, the Revd Jenny Gray. The second was from Lucy Chapman, Headteacher of Sutton Lower School in Central Bedfordshire with her vicar, the Revd Gill Smith. The third presentation, after lunch, was from Heidi Otranen, Headteacher of All Saints Primary, Bishop’s Stortford. All of these were really thought-provoking and excellent to listen to.

Evaluations from the day were overwhelmingly positive:

Another inspiring day to remind us of what we already do, but to share so many good ideas / experiences of things working so well in other schools. I have a big “to do” list of things I want to go back and get started on right away. Thank you.

A great day. Many thanks. Going away with loads of ideas and I have done some fab networking!

Next year’s theme will be “Developing pupils’ awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural, global faith”, so please look out for the date being advertised and make sure that you come along!!

Two leadership development opportunities are currently being advertised within diocesan schools:

The first is “The Diocesan Action Learning Set” which involves five half-day visits to outstanding church schools in the diocese with a group of up to ten aspirant church school leaders.

The second is a two day programme called “Learning to Lead in a Church School” which involves one day in November and one in March at the diocesan office in St Albans, with an intersessional task to visit a local outstanding church school and report back on this visit.

Further details of both these opportunities are available from Ruth Garman at Diocesan Office.

Judy Ruff
Diocesan Consultant on Leadership Development and Succession Planning

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.

Dalai Lama
The National RE Conference, Center Parcs, 18 June 2016

We began the conference in the style of a TeachMeet, with RE teachers and consultants offering a five minute input on what they felt was the Purpose of RE. Since 1944, we have moved from having Religious Instruction on the timetable to the Religious Education of the 1988 Education Act. Since then, however, RE has linked with a variety of initiatives including SEAL, PHSE, SMSC, Community Cohesion, to name just a few. So it has become important to re-define what we mean by RE in our own schools. Lat Blaylock often makes the connection between RE and the creative arts, which many schools experience when involved with Spirited Arts [link]. Below are some excerpts from the speakers at our conference. The full script can be found on the downloadable part of our website: [link]. The password for this is ‘stalbans’.

Jane Chipperton

The Purpose of RE

Sarah Payne, Middle school teacher

RE can provide pupils with a depth of understanding of beliefs, practices, identities and values which will help them to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and non-religious groups and issues. It is an indispensable part of a complete education because of the influence of religions and beliefs on individuals, culture, behaviour and national life. Most religions and beliefs offer answers to life’s deepest questions. And most young people are seeking answers to those questions, as they grow into independence and work out how to live a good life.

Juliet Lyal, Infant teacher

Is there a purpose or even point of teaching RE in EYFS/KS1?

Do children as young as four actually need RE? Yes! and Yes!

Starting school for a four-year-old is often the child’s first encounter with the behaviour, values, needs, culture, belief and views (religious or non-religious) of people outside of their own family. On many occasions it is also a first encounter for the parents of that four-year old.

With family life comes “family traditions” - whether acceptable or not to others, it is often all that a four-year old will know. Discovering that other children don’t share this can be a shock and confusing, often challenging for both child and their parent.

The point of RE in EYFS and KS1 RE is to enable our children to explore and know “what all this is” about: for them and for others and to begin on that journey of learning about religion and belief.

We have the wonderful and privileged task of “opening up the world” to these young children so that they can

- begin to learn about and understand what religion and belief means to themselves and to others.

Andy Lewis, Roman Catholic teacher

RE may be a catalyst for community cohesion; good RE leads to greater understanding of other religions and therefore to greater respect for those of other faiths. It may be an outcome, but it should not be an aim. Being respectful of difference and expressing difference in a way

[Insert image and text regarding the conference details and the Spirited Arts project.]
which is sensitive to the rights of others, is not a skill which is exclusive to RE.

Catholics have a distinctive vision of education, but we are not alone in our passion for educating. The wider world of RE in 2016 poses both challenges and opportunities. Catholic RE teachers are engaging now more than ever. We may not agree, but there is common ground.

Ed Pawson, Secondary RE Consultant

RE needs to help children to develop self-knowledge, with dialogue at its heart. RE should beware of getting caught up with defining itself by the “core knowledge” teachers are expected to impart, giving the impression that learning is only about stuff that's out there. Learning is growing, and understanding others has to start with the readiness to be open to change in your own mind.

Kathryn Wright, RE Consultant

The purpose of RE is to enable children to hold an informed conversation about religion and belief.

It is about securing religious literacy.

This means children and young people should engage with:

- the theological
- the philosophical/ethical
- the social/anthropological

The theological means children engage with the big concepts of religion and belief such as God. Issues of authority and diversity in terms of interpretation of truth or doctrine are grappled and wrestled with. The reason why people do the things they do is at the heart of this. It is about meaning and understanding. I think we rarely see this in schools.

The philosophical/ethical is about questions of meaning, purpose and truth. Issues such as why am I here, is morality important, does happiness exist .... I think we see this in some schools, but it is not rigorous or challenging, it often descends into what pupils think. This aspect is perhaps seen more often in secondary schools.

The sociological/anthropological is about the lived reality of beliefs in the 21st Century. Issues of plurality and diversity are explored. This aspect is perhaps seen more in primary schools, but is often actually about the lived reality of religion, but the

Congratulations to …

... Elliott Swinburne from Yr 8 at Edward Peake Middle School who won the Diocesan Schools Art Competition in May, which was on the theme of Compassion. Elliott was awarded a certificate and his prize by David Morton, the Diocesan Director of Education at an assembly at school.

Highly Commended were pieces of art submitted by:

Yasymn Gooding in Yr 9 at All Saints Academy Dunstable

Millie Boxall in Yr 6 at St Michael’s Primary School, Bishop’s Stortford

Hannah Smith in Yr 3 at the Thomas Coram School, Berkhamsted

and Kacey Perry in Reception at St Nicholas Primary School, Elstree

All winners received vouchers for www.jacksonsart.com.

Many thanks to pupils and schools for their participation in this competition.

The winning entry is shown on the left.

If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

African proverb
“construct” of religion or a “textbook” or “chocolate box” approach. There is no engagement with plurality within or between expressions of belief.

If the purpose of RE is to be fulfilled, ie for children and young people to hold an informed conversation about religion and belief, then all three aspects are essential.

#RE-AmIBothered? Well it appears that many are very passionate about RE taking centre stage in the curriculum, but primary or secondary, faith or secular school. Over 50 teachers travelled to Center Parcs in Bedfordshire to spend a day being bothered.

The conference opened with Dilwyn Hunt making the point that if RE is not on the timetable then the children are missing out on the chance to engage in current affairs, to develop an enquiring mind, to develop “autonomous thinking” and to learn what it means to be human. By this means RE can lead to community cohesion, perhaps with Brexit now on the horizon—a necessity for many multi-cultural schools. This was followed by views on the purpose of RE from panel members.

Delegates then attended seminars of their choice, of which there were many and I would like to have been able to attend more (but gives me an excuse to return next year!).

After lunch Andy Lewis and Juliet Lyal spoke to us about TeachMeets and Social Media. What can I say? It was very interesting but I am sad to say I still feel like Neanderthal man when it comes to Twitter/Facebook and any other means of electronic communication. My ambition is to persuade one of my children to drag me into the modern world so I can (sensibly) join in #RECHATUK.

The day was an opportunity to make contacts, chat with others who share the same passion and explore good practice. I am looking forward to next year, and—who knows—I might even have conquered social media.

It just remains to say a huge thank you to everyone who so obviously put in so much time and effort to ensure the day was interesting and challenging. For me, it was a Saturday well spent.

Lizzie Spalding, Wenlock VA CofE Junior School

On Saturday 18 June—yes, a SATURDAY!—I went along to Woburn Centre Parcs to attend the #REAmIBothered conference.

Having taught RE in school for a number of years and attended a quite a few training sessions over the years, I was keen to see what else I could pick up and take back to the classroom with me. The use of # also had piqued my interest as I enjoy using technology and one of my other “hats” at school is computing.
The keynote speaker and panel were certainly very impressive and from this I knew I was in for a most inspiring day. Just a few key points I picked from this were that RE is about initiating young people into the meaning of life and into questions about the truth and worth of religious and non-religious beliefs, views and practices. It is about encouraging them to ask questions, about using it to help formulate their own beliefs, behaviour, values and views and, most importantly, to appreciate and value the views and beliefs of others.

This resonated with me as I often have children say to me “Why do we learn about Islam, Judaism, Sikhism etc? I am a Christian”. Unless we learn to appreciate and appraise the beliefs of others, how can we create a more tolerant and peaceful world?

That RE is about exploring and understanding what it means to be human was a clear message that I personally have taken away with me.

The seminars I attended each gave me plenty to think about and implement within my own teaching. Islam led by Dilwyn Hunt was the first one and the session seemed to fly by. I personally had not realised how much emphasis I should be placing on certain aspects of this faith, particularly with regard to my teaching in KS1. We also had quite an in-depth discussion on some of the difficulties of teaching without using imagery (ie drawing) and role play whilst still respecting the faith. Dilwyn gave some very useful ideas about using visualisation as a means of delivering lessons.

Unbelievably, by this time, it was lunchtime and that was delicious!

This also gave me an opportunity to look at some of the literature which was there to purchase as well as connect with others offering workshops and events such as Suhma Sahajpal and Nina Leigh. I am certainly hoping to use their services in the future, school finances permitting!

I have to confess that I had not read my programme properly and so after lunch I missed part of the Teachmeets and Social Media, but again this provided me with really useful information on linking up with other affiliated groups such as NATRE, or just with other teachers of RE in a less formal way, which very often focus on pedagogy, practical ideas and solutions. Also these can provide great sharing opportunities as to

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Springs Dance Company presents *The Magic Paintbrush*

A captivating, enlightening and cross-curricular performance for your school

*‘You are the light of the world.’ Matthew 5:14*

Bursting with life, *The Magic Paintbrush* makes the perfect resource for the whole school to enjoy. No coach trips required, we turn your school into a theatre!

Follow our brave young heroine on a journey of discovery as she paints her world into a brighter place and finds the confidence to share her light. Can our imaginative artist break away from the colourless and oppressive world in which she lives and vanquish the mighty shadow of greed?

This colourful performance can:
- encourage pupils to be confident,
- inspire children to be lights in the world,
- challenge everyone to stand up against injustice.

The work links to RE, including *faith expressed through the arts, PSHE, Literature, Dance, Drama and P.E.* The show will aid the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

*The Magic Paintbrush* appears on the Oxford Reading Tree: Primary School Literacy Resource, listed in the Traditional Tales, making it the perfect work to explore with your school.

Created for everyone aged 3+. Springs is inviting schools to host a performance of *The Magic Paintbrush* and workshops, between Autumn’16 and Spring’17. For further information visit our [website](http://springsdancecompany.org.uk), email [touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk](mailto:touring@springsdancecompany.org.uk) and contact 07876 752 910.

[www.SpringsDanceCompany.org.uk](http://www.springsdancecompany.org.uk)

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Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.

*Aristotle*
what worked and what didn’t work.

Understanding Christianity with Fiona Moss left me very much looking forward to September and attending the courses for this new scheme of work and developing pupils’ understanding of Christianity through exploring core theological concepts in addition to how their learning from Christianity can be applied to their own experience of the world. The challenge of matching a concept with a picture was interesting and certainly made us think. I always enjoy sessions which are interactive and where I actually have to do some thinking, as I believe this helps me to think about the best way to approach things with the children.

Active RE led by Sarah Payne was the final seminar and this was certainly very active with loads of ideas for engaging children in an enthusiastic way rather than sitting still. I have taken many ideas away from this and the A-Z of ideas for getting the children involved in taking part, experiencing for themselves and thinking about how they personally can engage in RE will be much used in the future. It was a perfect seminar for me, personally, and a brilliant way to end the day.

Heading home – I felt that the day had flown by and, despite having “sacrificed” a Saturday, I had much to think about with regards to teaching RE and how I can adapt my lesson to ensure that children are challenged to think deeply, to develop understanding and tolerance of the beliefs of everyone, but equally to begin to find out who they are and what they believe on a personal, spiritual level.

Jane Wallis, Raynsford Academy, Henlow

Center Parcs was easy to find from the M1. There were helpful people at security and also on arrival at “The Venue” for registration. We ate a delicious lunch in a banquet-style room, with waitresses who looked after their guests with quiet efficiency. It was remarkable to see so many people, many fellow colleagues, on a Saturday to discuss “RE—am I bothered?” Clearly, we all were, and that is why we were happy to give up our Saturday to discuss RE away from the pressures and distractions of work and family.

The formal part of the day began with a warm welcome from Judy Ruff, and then followed a keynote speech from Dilwyn Hunt. Dilwyn captivated us with how he portrayed RE as intrinsically valuable, because it is meant to be challenging but respectful, to open minds and to nurture an honest willingness to take on challenging questions that evoke enlightenment and self-improvement, but not to evangelise our young people.

The keynote speech was followed with a short talk from each member of the panel with their viewpoint of RE. This was done with military precision since every panel member was allowed five minutes each, and Jane was timing them! A vast amount of information was covered in a short space of time to include identity, depth of understanding and transformational beliefs, questions of meaning, critical views that may be different from a pupil’s parents, to pupils becoming religiously literate. There was much to stimulate our thoughts, and that was even before we attended our chosen seminars where speakers engaged their audience through mini-lectures.

The seminars ranged from RE in EYFS to GCSE level, from “Active Learning” to the controversial “Assessment”, from “Understanding Christianity” to Islam—and the list goes on.

The day was truly remarkable, with some attendees finishing the day with a refreshing swim and a welcome meal. I hope there will be another super stimulating day in 2017.

My “finds” for the day? “The Teacher’s Guide” for RE and my very first children’s edition of “My First Qu’ran”.

Lynne James, St Augustine’s Academy, Dunstable
Understanding Christianity

Understanding Christianity, a new approach to teaching Christianity in RE, was launched at Lambeth Palace in May and is being introduced to schools from September 2016. Some schools have chosen to attend a whole school training day and others will hold a number of twilights. If your school has not yet signed up, please contact me.

The resource was written by the RE Today advisory team, in collaboration with more than 30 expert teachers and academics, and has been trialled in over 50 schools. It comprises a set of comprehensive materials, linked to training, offering a clear and coherent approach to teaching and learning about Christianity in RE for pupils aged 4-14.

Stephen Pett, RE Today Adviser and Editor of the Understanding Christianity materials said: “This is a substantial resource to support teachers in the classroom. It is based around a coherent selection of core concepts explored in a spiral curriculum. The materials give a new approach to RE, with a focus on texts, the impact of these in the lives of Christians today, and on the connections between pupils’ learning and their wider experience in RE and beyond. A rich variety of teaching and learning strategies, tasks and resources are supplied, along with essential background information for those who would like to feel a little more confident in their subject knowledge when teaching about Christianity in RE. Lots of teachers have tried it out – and feedback has been good. We are very keen for all schools to come on training and see for themselves!”

Primary teacher, Kate Penfold-Attride, who attended the launch said of the resource: “I’m really excited to hear about Understanding Christianity and its great potential for transforming the teaching of Christianity, in church and community schools.”

A secondary teacher from Kings Norton Girls’ School, whose pupils took part in the trial, was enthusiastic about how they had an impact on her students: “I really loved teaching with this resource, and the students loved learning. The pedagogy is well thought through, with detailed guidance for teachers, and it is brilliantly resourced. It is ambitious and sets high standards for all learners. I know I would love to teach students in KS3 who have received this kind of grounding in KS1-2.”

One of the most striking parts of this resource is the exceptional artwork by Emma Yarlett. Emma created a frieze, depicting seven of the core concepts explored in the Understanding Christianity materials, and giving a view of the “big story” of the Bible. It is a rich resource for the classroom, and comes with plenty of ideas for how to use it. You can see a little more about this on the Understanding Christianity website: www.understandingchristianity.org.uk

The Resource Pack includes:
- a Teacher’s Handbook
- 29 full units of work, from Foundation Stage 2 through to Year 9
- introductory booklets for each phase
- more than 150 photocopiable resource sheets
- the “Big Frieze” illustration by Emma Yarlett
- the “Big Frieze” guide book, setting the concepts within a wider biblical context

Understanding Christianity Accredited Official Resources are available to teachers and advisers to support the teaching in Understanding Christianity. Schools can be given the resources by signing up for a training course.

Understanding Christianity was commissioned by the Church of England Education Office with the support of Culham St Gabriel’s, the Sir Halley Stewart Trust and the Jerusalem Trust.

When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.

*Chinese proverb*
**Teach:RE at St Leonard’s**

At St Leonard’s Lower School in Heath and Reach, RE has always had a high profile, gaining a “good” assessment at our last Church School inspection. This time last year we were keen to move forward with our RE Quality Mark Assessment but reached a stumbling block as we did not have any specialist teachers of RE in the school, and this is one of the key criteria of RE Quality Mark and the Statement of Entitlement for RE.

Perhaps you are a small school like us, or even a larger school, that has a good reputation for RE teaching but has no staff specialism in this area? Have you investigated Culham St Gabriel’s Teach:RE distance learning course?

At St Leonard’s three of our members of teaching staff are taking the Teach:RE course over the course of a year, and are over half way through! The Teach:RE course can also be completed fast track (in three months) or super fast track (in one month). At St Leonard’s we would recommend the year if you have a teaching commitment!

The course starts with a short subject audit. This is followed by module one which consists of three shorter tasks: Why RE matters, research into two different faiths and Exploring pedagogy in RE. This module is not formally assessed but feedback is given.

Following this you must complete two more modules of your choice. A course tutor will be assigned and is there to guide you through the process and help you to make a choice from a number of available modules. Approximately four months are allocated for each module which take approximately 15-20 hours to complete. These modules are formally assessed with a pass, merit or distinction level awarded. At the end of the course you receive a certificate, which doesn’t seem much, but the benefits are far more than just a piece of paper!

Here at St Leonard’s we have found the course particularly helpful for finding excellent resources and advice for use in RE teaching. The subject leadership module is great for preparation for SIAMS assessment or for going forward with the RE Quality Mark. The final assessment was to produce a PowerPoint presentation on how RE contributes to SMSC in your school. Other modules include the planning of schemes of work (Banquets). Some of these are available to view at [http://www.reonline.org.uk/learning/](http://www.reonline.org.uk/learning/). We are very proud that the work of one of our teachers is due to be published shortly here. However, if you prefer a more formal written assignment, you might choose the module enquiring into religions and beliefs to deepen knowledge and understanding of a chosen faith or faiths.

Staff have thoroughly enjoyed the course to date and there is a refreshed enthusiasm for the teaching of RE within the school. The impact of the training is already clear through the quality of teaching and learning and the children’s attitudes to RE. On top of all of that it is great value CPD for just £150 per person.

Staff at St Leonard’s would be happy to answer any questions about the course. Please do contact the school if you would like to know any more.

Details of the course can be found by at [http://www.teachre.co.uk](http://www.teachre.co.uk).

Sarah Vincent, Headteacher, St Leonard’s Lower, Heath & Reach

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**SEEKING TO BOOK A BISHOP FOR A SPECIAL EVENT AT YOUR SCHOOL?**

PLEASE PLEASE please give plenty of notice as bishops’ diaries are very full. Either approach the bishops’ offices direct or contact Eileen Bigg.

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I always wondered what a real crook looked like!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 September 2016</td>
<td>Media Training</td>
<td>9.30am—12.30pm; 1pm—4pm</td>
<td>Holywell Lodge, St Albans AL1 1HE</td>
<td>To help school leaders learn how to handle the media following an incident at school</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 September 2016</td>
<td>Headteachers’ Briefing (Bedfordshire)</td>
<td>9am—1pm</td>
<td>The Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine MK43 0PR</td>
<td>A half-day update on current developments in education</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 September 2016</td>
<td>Cathedral Evensong</td>
<td>4.50pm—8pm</td>
<td>Cathedral &amp; Abbey Church of St Albans</td>
<td>Evensong, followed by a tour of the tower, and a meal at Lussmanns</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 September 2016</td>
<td>Identity, Faith &amp; Belief</td>
<td>9.15am—3.30pm</td>
<td>Holywell Lodge, St Albans AL1 1HE</td>
<td>A day for KS2&amp;3 teachers on how to extend pupils’ ability to explore questions about faith and belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 October 2016</td>
<td>Being a School Governor—your role and responsibilities</td>
<td>9.30am—2.30pm</td>
<td>The Forest Centre, Marston Moretaine MK43 0PR</td>
<td>An induction course for new governors—also a refresher for serving governors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 October 2016</td>
<td>Parishes &amp; Schools</td>
<td>9.15am—3.30pm</td>
<td>The Rufus Centre, Flitwick MK45 1AH</td>
<td>For clergy and Readers supporting schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 October 2016</td>
<td>New Heads’ Day</td>
<td>9.30am-3.30pm</td>
<td>Holywell Lodge, St Albans AL1 1HE</td>
<td>An informative yet relaxed day on the special circumstances of church schools and the legal implications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 October 2016</td>
<td>Being a School Governor—your role and responsibilities</td>
<td>9.30am—2.30pm</td>
<td>Jordan’s Mill, Biggleswade SG18 9JX</td>
<td>An induction course for new governors—also a refresher for serving governors</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 October 2016</td>
<td>School Improvement through SIAMS</td>
<td>9.15am—3.30pm</td>
<td>Holywell Lodge, St Albans AL1 1HE</td>
<td>A day for senior leaders and governors to explore what being a church school contributes to school improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Further details of all our courses can be found on our website at [http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/courses/](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/courses/)

To book a place, please contact Ruth Garman: 01727 818168; rgarman@stalbans.anglican.org

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**ADVICE FROM A TREE:**
- Stand tall and proud
- Feel the wind and the sun
- Be content with your natural beauty
- Drink plenty of water
- Remember your roots
- Enjoy the view

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*Deep roots are not reached by the frost.*

*J R R Tolkien*
Other Courses:

Hinduism Workshops for Schools

Avesha Presentations offer a variety of resources on Hinduism, serving schools and educators all over England, Wales, and Scotland. They work with Foundation Stage, Primary, Secondary, SEN, University Religious Studies students, trainee teachers, and other professionals. They also run CPD courses and INSET sessions, specialising in dynamic, reflective workshops for teachers and students of all ages, experiential at all levels, with more academic content included where appropriate. The half- or full-day workshops are run by co-founder of ISKCON Educational Services Indriyesha Das and his wife Krishna, who provide a nationwide service.

For more information on workshop content and fees, visit www.hinduismworkshops.co.uk.

To make a booking, contact admin@hinduismworkshops.co.uk or bookings@hinduismworkshops.co.uk. Tel/Fax: 01923 351 209, Mob: 07940 963 014

Hindu Council UK: Questions and answers on Hinduism

The Hindu Council has set up a website that deals with question and answers on Hinduism, covering topics such as why there are many gods in Hinduism; a mature understanding of the law of karma; the caste system; reincarnation; and a Hindu take on abortion and euthanasia. Please visit the website to find out more: http://www.hinduismquestionandanswer.com/

Teach RE course

The TeachRE course continues to develop and meet the needs of all teachers of RE. Please look out for new versions of the course to be launched. There is a new TeachRE LITE version for use by those who work in primary initial teacher training and with NQTs, and also a module-only option of the course serving secondary teachers who want to develop their subject knowledge to teach the new GCSE and A level courses. Find out more at www.teachre.co.uk.

RE Conference

“Words Beyond Words: Inspiring Religious Literacy” conference which is the first ever joint event between NATRE, AULRE and AREIAC on 8-9 October 2016. Details can be found via the NATRE website www.natre.org.uk.

Sponsored by Culham St Gabriel's, the weekend is designed to bring together the wider RE community from classroom teachers to inspectors, ITTs to renowned academics as well as everyone in between!

Global Learning and SMSC

The Global Learning Programme (GLP) is a government-funded programme that supports a national network of 4500 schools who are engaged in deepening young people’s understanding of global issues at KS2&3. See http://glp.globaldimension.org.uk/page/11038 for more information.

A number of the schools involved with the programme have found that global learning has helped them to develop their SMSC provision – particularly their approach to “British values” – and this has been noted by Ofsted: Your recent introduction of “global learning” is enriching pupils’ understanding of the diverse world they live in and the core values that underpin being a good citizen. Ofsted report for Kirkoswald C of E School, 2016

Also, a recent Ofsted Inspection Update notes that, as the GLP maps onto the four Ofsted core judgements and to SMSC, schools on the programme should be able to set out how the GLP is contributing to their provision and outcomes for pupils.

The training and resources available through the GLP are free for state-funded schools. In order to help make NATRE members aware of what is available, they are offering a free taster session on global learning and SMSC development for your NATRE group. As well as explaining what the GLP is about and how schools can benefit from it, the session would also share practical activities and ideas to help schools take a global approach to SMSC development and “British values”.

If you would like to arrange for one of the GLP staff to come and run this session with your group, please contact Isobel Mitchell (National Leader (South East)) at Pearson UK on 07715 044071.

And it’s goodbye from me ...

This will be the last Schools Newsletter in this format. After 15 years in the job, I will be taking early retirement in October, immediately after the Harvest services. Many thanks to all with whom I’ve worked over the years—many only via e-mail or phone. It has been a real treat when I have met you and visited your schools.

We will let you know in September who has been appointed in my place.

Eileen Bigg, Schools Secretary
The RE Commission

A high-profile independent Commission has been established with a remit to make wide-ranging recommendations to overhaul religious education, reviewing the legal, education and policy frameworks for religious education in all primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges in England. The work will cover four tasks:

- to consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education
- to identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it
- to identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE
- to ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform

To do this, the Commissioners will investigate:

- the quality of teaching and learning in RE
- the legal and structural arrangements
- the public and professional profile of the subject
- teacher recruitment, Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development
- the range of school settings in which RE should be required
- the age range for which RE should be required
- the right to withdraw (parents or carers, pupils and teachers)
- whether or not there should be a common entitlement in RE,

and if so what the entitlement should be.

The 14 Commissioners, all experts in their different fields, bring together a wealth of experience from teaching, school leadership, academia, journalism and law, each chosen for their particular experience after extensive consultation on the range of expertise necessary for the Commission. Some of them may already be known to you:

- The Very Revd Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster (Chair), former Chief Education Officer for the Church of England
- Samira Ahmed, journalist and broadcaster of a range of culture and religious programme and documentaries across television and radio (who chaired last year’s Sixth Form Conference in St Albans Cathedral)
- Alan Brine, Ofsted National Advisor for RE from 2007 to 2014 (with whom Jane has worked closely)
- Dame Helen Hyde, Head of Watford Grammar School for Girls between 1987 and 2016, Commissioner on the National Holocaust Commission and chair of its education work stream
- Emma Knights, Chief Executive Officer, National Governors’ Association
- Juliet Lyal, teacher at Cunningham Hill Infant School, St Albans (and one of our SIAMS inspectors)

The wide-ranging, inclusive process of gathering evidence will start in autumn 2016 and last for two years, with a final report expected in mid-2018.

The Very Revd Dr John Hall commented: "Religion is a powerful force for good in our world, and the perversion of it a powerful force for evil. If our society and our world are to benefit from the good and to avoid the evil, it is vital that children develop religious literacy and come to understand religious perceptions and motivations. They need to learn about their own religious or non-religious beliefs and practices and attitudes and learn to respect those of their fellow human beings. So Religious Education is an important, but often underrated, part of the school curriculum. I look forward to exploring with my fellow commissioners the changes that will allow RE to play its proper part in the formation of young people who will contribute to the sum of human happiness.”
The Creation of the Teacher

Lord God was creating teachers. It was his sixth day of overtime and he knew that this was a tremendous responsibility for teachers would touch the lives of so many impressionable young children.

An angel appeared to him and said, "You are taking a long time to figure this one out."

"Yes," said the Lord, "but have you read the specs on this order?"

- must stand above all students, yet be on their level
- must be able to do 180 things not connected with the subject being taught
- must run on coffee and leftovers
- must communicate vital knowledge to all students daily and be right most of the time
- must have more time for others than for herself/himself
- must have a smile that can endure through pay cuts, problematic children, and worried parents
- must go on teaching when parents question every move and others are not supportive
- must have six pairs of hands

"Six pair of hands," said the angel. "That’s impossible."

"Well," said the Lord, "it is not the hands that are the problem. It is the three pairs of eyes that are presenting the most difficulty!"

The angel looked incredulous. "Three pairs of eyes - on a standard model?"

The Lord nodded His head. "One pair can see a student for what he is and not what others have labelled him as. Another pair of eyes is in the back of the teacher’s head to see what should not be seen, but what must be known. The eyes in the front are only to look at the child as he/she acts out in order to reflect “I understand and I still believe in you”, without so much as saying a word to the child."

"Lord," said the angel, "this is a very large project and I think you should work on it tomorrow."

"I can’t," said the Lord, "for I have come very close to creating something much like myself. I have one that comes to work when he/she is sick, teaches a class of children that do not want to learn, has a special place in his/her heart for children who are not his/her own, understands the struggles of those who have difficulty, never takes the students for granted."

The angel looked closely at the model the Lord was creating. "It is too soft-hearted," said the angel.

"Yes," said the Lord, "but also tough. You cannot imagine what this teacher can endure or do, if necessary."

"Can this teacher think?" asked the angel.

"Not only think," said the Lord, "but reason and compromise."

The angel came closer to have a better look at the model and ran his finger over the teacher’s cheek.

"Well, Lord," said the angel, your job looks fine but there is a leak. I told you that you were putting too much into this model. You cannot imagine the stress that will be placed upon the teacher."

The Lord moved in closer and lifted the drop of moisture from the teacher’s cheek. It shone and glistened in the light.

"It is not a leak," he said, "It is a tear."

"A tear? What is that?" asked the angel. "What is a tear for?"

The Lord replied with great thought, "It is for the joy and pride of seeing a child accomplish even the smallest task. It is for the loneliness of children who have a hard time to fit in and it is for compassion for the feelings of their parents. It comes from the pain of not being able to reach some children and the disappointment those children feel in themselves. It comes often when a teacher has been with a class for a year and must say good-bye to those students and get ready to welcome a new class."

"My," said the angel. "The tearing thing is a great idea. You are a genius!"

The Lord looked sombre. "I didn’t put it there."
PRAYERS FOR SCHOOLS

Let us hold the schools of specific deaneries in our prayers.

In this issue, we pray for the church schools in:

**Stevenage Deanery**
- Aston St Mary’s Primary
- Graveley Primary
- Stevenage St Nicholas Primary

**Watford Deanery**
- St Paul’s Primary, Langleybury

**Welwyn/Hatfield Deanery**
- Codicote Primary
- All Saints Primary, Datchworth
- St John’s Primary, Digswell
- Countess Anne School, Hatfield
- St John’s Primary, Lemsford
- North Mymms St Mary’s Primary
- Tewin Cowper Primary
- Welwyn St Mary’s Primary
- St Michael’s Woolmer Green Primary

**Wheathampstead Deanery**
- St Nicholas Primary, Harpenden
- St Helen’s Primary, Wheathampstead

**Ampthill & Shefford Deanery**
- Clifton All Saints Academy
- Clophill St Mary’s Lower
- Greenfield & Pulloxhill Academy
- Raynsford Academy, Henlow
- Henlow Academy
- Meppershall Academy
- Silsoe Lower
- St Mary’s Academy, Stotfold

**Barnet Deanery**
- St Mary’s Primary, East Barnet
- St Nicholas Primary, Elstree
- St Giles Primary, South Mimms
- St Andrew’s Primary, Totteridge

**Bedford Deanery**
- St James’ Lower, Biddenham
- Cranfield Academy
- Holywell Academy, Cranfield
- Renhold Lower

**Berkhamsted Deanery**
- Aldbury Primary
- Victoria Infant & Nursery, Berkhamsted
- Thomas Coram, Berkhamsted
- Great Gaddesden Primary
- Little Gaddesden Primary
- Long Marston Primary
- Northchurch St Mary’s Primary
- Potten End Primary
- Bishop Wood Junior, Tring
- Tring
- St Bartholomew’s Primary, Wigginton

**Biggleswade Deanery**
- St Andrew’s Lower, Biggleswade
- Edward Peake Lower, Biggleswade
- John Donne Lower, Blunham
- Caldecote Lower
- Dunton Lower
- Alban Academy, Great Barford
- Northill Lower
- Roxton Lower
- St Swithun’s Lower, Sandy
- Sutton Lower
- Wrestlingworth Lower

Give support to all staff, pupils, parents and governors, particularly during changes fast approaching. Guide them in all that they do. Give them the comfort of knowing that they are safe in your arms. And bless them as they are refreshed and restored during the summer holidays.

Two things to remember in life:
Take care of your thoughts when you are alone,
And take care of your words when you are with people.
Education is increasingly outcomes-driven. We are measured, assessed, measured and assessed once again. Who we are and what we achieve is increasingly determined by a narrow set of outcomes. This process of constantly being measured against outcomes that regularly change creates a creative tension between "who we are" and "what we do".

As those committed to working in and running church schools infused with Christian Values and Virtues, we clearly communicate to our children and young people that who they are is far more than what they achieve, important though that is, that the formation of character involves the whole person - body, soul, mind and spirit. As I write, the country is coming to terms with the vote to leave the EU. The debate has been passionate on both sides and vigorous argument continues. We are living in a time of unparalleled change.

As the debate rages, many families across the diocese are deeply unsettled by the uncertainty that the result has caused and the potential impact it will have on their lives. There has been much talk of separation, division, of intolerance and injustice. In times of challenge, of change, even crisis, the Church has in the past spoken prophetically for the common good and is doing so again, speaking against separation, intolerance, injustice and exclusion and I commend to you the Bishop of St Albans' presidential address to the recent Diocesan Synod which is reproduced in this Newsletter [see pp 6&8].

The Board of Education's vision for Church Schools in the Diocese of St Albans articulates that our schools live God's love by being Distinctively Christian, Community-Focussed and by Serving the Common Good. Our schools seek to be inclusive, Christian communities, orientated towards the person of Jesus Christ, who offer hospitality and welcome to all and actively seek to live out Christian values such as love, reconciliation, justice, peace and joy. This is truly prophetic and a message of hope that can be lived out in the lives of the 28,500 children and young people in diocesan schools.

As school leaders, governors, teachers and support staff, we will move forward together. It is a characteristic of education, as one term finishes another starts; there is no going back. We go forward with a clear vision for the children and young people in our care—that they will experience true community and know what it means to be included, to be valued, to be loved irrespective of their race, their creed, their sexuality or their heritage.

Thank you for your passionate commitment to the children and young people you serve. Enjoy your summer break and I look forward to working with you in the new academic year.