



Diocese of **Leicester**
Board of Education

JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER

It was an absolute joy for me last week to get married! When sharing the news with a headteacher colleague recently, her first question was, 'are you changing your name again?!' No, you don't all have to update your email contact list - I'm retaining my birth name!

Many of you will be aware that I have been divorced and perhaps wonder about this in the context of the Christian faith and teaching. As with many things, there are a range of perspectives within the Christian traditions about divorce and re-marriage. Without wishing to enter into theological debate by newsletter (!), what I will say is that re-marriage has reminded me that God is a God of redemption and a God of hope. I believe that God takes me – broken and flawed as I am – and redeems me.

Some very dear friends of mine sent us a tree as a wedding gift called 'Wedding Bouquet'. Along with the gift, they sent words which spoke of the symbolism of roots and blossoming and growing. Again, a reminder of the redemptive love of God. As too is this poem by Philip Larkin:

PHILIP LARKIN

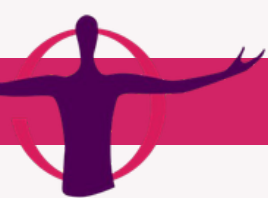
The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too.
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.





As the academic year draws to a close, we can each reflect on the annual cycle of the seasons and have confidence in our ability to 'Begin afresh, afresh, afresh'.

With every blessing

Carolyn Shoyer

Diocesan Director of Education

Book a slot to meet with the Director

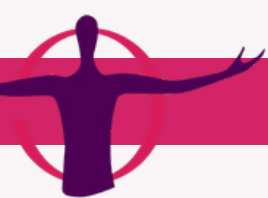
Carolyn is keen to meet routinely with headteachers. These meetings don't necessarily need an agenda but are an opportunity to share news and hear about the school. Most importantly though, they are an opportunity for the headteacher to speak in confidence. There are so many pressures facing school leaders and we are here to listen and support you as much as we can. There is a link in Carolyn's email signature to book a slot for an online meeting which is also found [HERE](#) – do please make use of it!



Admissions Appeals Guidance for Schools

Lisa Fish, the Chair of the appeals panel has created a short video for schools explaining the appeals process and what schools **MUST** do to prepare for them. If your school is attending appeals we urge you to watch this video to ensure you are equipped to state your case.

Please find this video, alongside our other appeals guidance [HERE](#)



Leaders Like Us Cohort 5

Applications are now open for Cohort 5

Are you a UKME/GMH teacher?

Do you want to upskill to become a Headteacher?

The Leaders Like Us Programme is an 18-month learning journey that supports middle and senior leaders from UKME/GMH (UK minoritised ethnic/global majority heritage) into senior leadership (including headship) roles within the next five years through our bespoke multifaceted programme.



PLEASE SCAN THE QR
CODE TO COMPLETE
OUR PARTICIPANT
APPLICATION FORM



 **Leaders Like Us**
National Society for Education

Leaders Like Us Cohort 5

Applications are now open for Cohort 5

Are you an experienced Senior Leader or Headteacher passionate about leadership?

Do you enjoy mentoring and coaching?

Mentors are essential for the ongoing support and development of our LLU participants. LLU participants are assigned a mentor for the duration of the programme. Mentors (if able) provide the opportunity for their mentees to shadow them, providing a close-up experience of headship. Mentors will be provided with training to fulfil this role. We welcome applications from experienced school leaders of all heritages.



PLEASE SCAN THE QR
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OUR MENTOR
APPLICATION FORM



 **Leaders Like Us**
National Society for Education

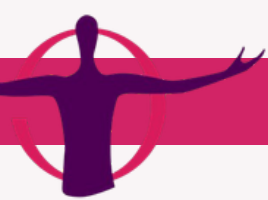
Free Athlete Visits for Schools

With the Commonwealth Games starting this month we have found that athlete visits have been a fantastic way to inspire your children to be more active at the start of the new school year.

Some of ActivKids UK athletes are competing in Glasgow this year so the children can really resonate with the current Athlete Superstar.

Each event would see the visiting athlete run a fun and challenging fitness circuit with the children followed by an inspirational talk about health and wellbeing as well as a talk about their own career. The athlete would finish the session with a video demonstration of their career highlights and have a Q&A with the children.

If you are interested in learning more, contact Nathan Dodd at nathan@activkidsuk.com



Arnesby School's Spirit-Filled Steps

Children and staff from Arnesby Church of England Primary School marked Pentecost with their much-loved annual pilgrimage to the neighbouring village of Shearsby, continuing a tradition that reflects the school's values of faith, community, and togetherness.

The whole school took part in the pilgrimage, walking through the picturesque rural landscape that links the two villages.



The route, which follows fields, pathways and overgrown historic footbridges, gave them all the opportunity to appreciate the beauty of God's wonderful world, while strengthening their understanding of koinonia - a key Christian value of fellowship and shared life.

As part of this year's celebrations, each class created crafts inspired by elements of the Pentecost story, which they gifted to St Mary's Church in Shearsby.

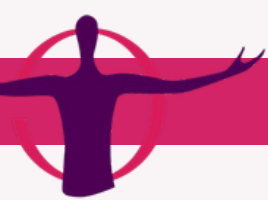
Peace Class brought windmills to show the rushing wind that filled the Disciples' Upstairs Room, Courage Class made windsocks decorated with flames and quotes from the book of Acts to highlight both the wind and the tongues of flame, and Endurance Class chose crowns capped with flames in different colours and shapes inspired by different examples of Biblical imagery.

The pilgrimage was symbolic in many ways including the representation of the celebration of Communion, walking through fields filled with growth and life, the fruits of the earth, and the creativity in the gifts of young human hands.



Revd Canon Chris Oxley and Matt Long, diocesan Youth Engagement & Intergenerational Communities Enabler, joined the school on the walk and shared in the joy, which ended with a service in church led by the children.

This annual pilgrimage continues to be a defining feature of life at Arnesby School, embodying the



relationships between the school, the church, and the wider community. Headteacher, Ruth James said: “The annual walk to Shearsby at Pentecost is one of the most important and unique aspects of life at Arnesby school. It is everything that makes this school so special!”

Matt very much enjoyed joining the pilgrimage and chatting to the children, calling it an amazing annual tradition and a beautiful way to celebrate Pentecost.

He said: “I walked alongside pupils, through fields of corn and over babbling brooks. The pupils talked to me about football and farming, faith and food!

“They recalled last year’s muddy pilgrimage... and the time they had to sneak past a bee’s nest... and what they’d learnt recently about the festival of Pentecost.

“After an hour of walking and talking, we arrived at church. The children led an assembly with colourful crafts, bible readings, and songs.

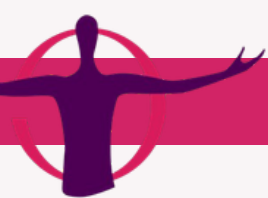
“We explored the story of Pentecost and prayed for God’s Spirit to fill our lives. Wind-socks, flame-crowns and windmills were left on the alter for use in church on Sunday. I was filled!”



Partnership Agreement Reminder

It’s that time of year again! Make sure you sign up for our 26/27 DBE Partnership Agreement before the 3rd July to access the early bird deal.

Access the form [HERE](#)



‘Only in Leicester’ Creative Arts Competition

St Philip’s Centre, supported by a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant, is launching a county-wide digital creative arts competition for children and young people across Leicestershire.

The competition invites participants to explore the theme ‘**Only in Leicester**’, celebrating the diversity, identity, heritage, and community life of the city.

What to submit

Students can create entries that comprise one of the following forms:

- Visual art (2D or 3D models, drawings, paintings, digital artwork created without AI)
- Poetry
- Creative prose (maximum 500 words)

All entries except the creative prose must include a short, written explanation from the artist/creator describing their work and ideas.(word limit 250 words)

Entries can be created individually, in pairs or be a collaborative group submission (for a group of up to four students).

The competition is open to:

- KS1
- KS2
- KS3
- KS4/KS5
- Special Schools (all ages and abilities, not restricted by key stage)
- Home-educated learners
- Faith groups and community youth settings

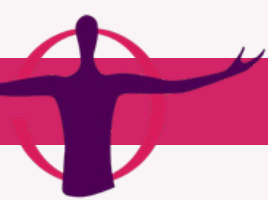
Deadline

The deadline for all submissions is **Thursday 9th November 2026**

Important! Please see full information for this competition [HERE](#)

Download the poster for schools [HERE](#)

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact Sean Dudley - sean@goldfinchheritage.com on behalf of St Philip’s Centre



Staying Safe over the Summer Holidays

A reminder that the NSPCC have a broad range of safety guidance and resources to support parents and pupils to stay safe over the summer holidays. Please look at what is available on their website and share this on with your school community.

NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Do remember to visit our [website](#) for lots of useful information and guidance.