

MONTH YEAR NEWSLETTER

Please do read through the attached newsletter as there are important updates and reminders.

Dear school and trust leaders (copy to Chairs, Clerks & Clergy)

Welcome back – although I expect it already feels as if you have never been away!

September is very much a time of new beginnings. For those of you in primary schools, you will be welcoming 4-year-olds into their reception year and for secondary schools of course, a whole new cohort of 11-year-olds. During these days we see big changes.

The new Y7 students are busy making their mark with teachers and fellow pupils. Those new to reception will be mark-making of a very different kind and soon they will be writing their names; often for the very first time. Have you ever considered the writing of a name to be a spiritual act? Well, it is!

As I read the Old Testament, I can see that the Hebrews placed great importance on a name. A name is not just a label but also expresses something about the person; who they were and their character. The Hebrew word for name is 'shem' and it's linked with the Hebrew word for breath: 'neshemah'. And so, we see that our name is the very essence of who we are – our breath in and our breath out.

Over recent times I have thought a lot about my own name, particularly as I got married in June! I believe that I am not simply defined by the people I am related to but I have my own essence, my own being - my own breath. As a woman of independent and feminist spirit, I am known by my birthname. Fundamentally, I am known, named and loved by God.

As you teach children to write their names (or make their mark in secondary school!) you are doing something quite remarkable. You are helping them to connect with their own individuality, their own essence, their own spirituality. Thank you.



As you send out the first letters of the school year to your communities, you will sign them off with your own name. As you so do, connect with your own individuality, your own essence, your own spirituality. What is the essence of you that you are bringing to your leadership this coming year? You too are known, named and loved by God.

With every blessing

Carolyn Shoyer

Diocesan Director of Education

Book a slot to meet with the Director

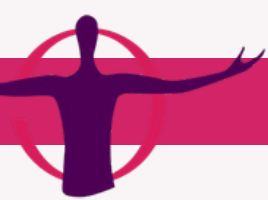
Carolyn is keen to meet routinely with headteachers. These meetings don't necessarily need an agenda but are an opportunity to share news and hear about the school. Most importantly though, they are an opportunity for the headteacher to speak in confidence. There are so many pressures facing school leaders 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](#)



Procedure for Appointing Foundation Governors – Update

Please be aware that any nominee to become a director or trustee of a MAT or a Foundation Governor at a maintained school, single academy trust or at a school in a MAT must meet with the Diocesan Director of Education as part of that process. Nominees should book a time to meet with Carolyn Shoyer online via this link: [Book time with Carolyn Shoyer](#)

Details are available on the DBE's website:

<https://www.leicesterdbe.org/foundation-governor-appointments/>

The Enduring Inclusion Toolkit

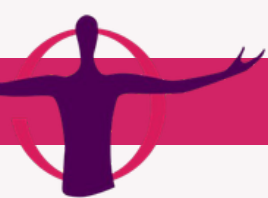
Tier Blundell, founder of Excluded from School, has developed the Enduring Inclusion Toolkit; an evidence-informed resource designed to help church schools and trusts strengthen inclusion, reduce suspensions and exclusions, and support a culture of belonging and flourishing.

Many school leaders will know Tier from our headteacher conferences and value both his professional expertise and lived experience. For further information, visit:

<https://www.leicesterdbe.org/inclusion-resources/>

SIAMS Framework update

The SIAMS framework has recently been updated and needs to be used from September 2026. The only changes that have been made are only to ensure that the updated Statement of Entitlement (SoE) is linked on the framework and that references under the IQ 6 and 7 sub questions reflect the language of the SoE. The revisions are minor and simply ensure that your school's RE practice remains aligned with the SoE. The updated Framework can be found [here](#) and this is the link for the [2026 Statement of Entitlement](#). Do email tracey.manns@leicesterdbe.org if you have any questions.



Centenary of the Leicester Diocese

Leicester Diocese is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a programme of events throughout the academic year, including a visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Find out more here:

<https://leicester.anglican.org/news/diocese-marks-centenary-with-celebrations-of-faith-and-a-visit-from-the-abc.php>

Schools are invited to take part through the Collective Worship resources already shared and a Centenary Competition. If you have not received these materials, please contact tracey.manns@leicesterdbe.org.

Collective Worship Resources

Schools within the Partnership Agreement have access to a wide range of recorded training, resources and a 39-week Collective Worship values programme. Log in using your office email address and existing password. If you need assistance accessing your account, please contact officedbe@leicesterdbe.org.

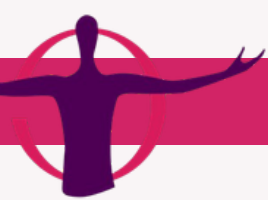
Free resources are also available via the pink Resources button on the DBE website: <https://www.leicesterdbe.org/>

Harvest

As you plan for the new school year, explore Christian Aid's Seasonal Resources to support learning and collective worship around Harvest and Christmas. These engaging materials help pupils connect faith with global justice issues, with new and updated resources being added regularly.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>





Free Sustainability Webinars for Schools

Looking for practical support to strengthen sustainability in your school? Join Climate Education's free webinar series covering:

- ✓ Climate Action Planning
 - ✓ Energy Saving and Cost Reduction
 - ✓ Whole-School Sustainability
 - ✓ School Site Development and Biodiversity
- Find out more and register: [Your paragraph text](#)



Picture News

Please see below for upcoming Picture News events and resources. Relevant attachments are included with this newsletter.

- Welcome to Picture News Live Session
- Ideal for new and existing schools looking for a refresher or fresh ideas.
- Thursday 3 September, 11.00-11.30am
- <https://picture-news.co.uk/training-register/welcome-to-picture-news-primary---september-2026/> (open to all primary schools).
- Display Set (attached)
- A ready-to-use What's Happening in the World? display pack featuring current news stories, perfect for schools with available display space.
- Year of Reading Resources
- In partnership with Reading Rocks and Teacher's Pet, Picture News is offering live assemblies and resources to support the 2026 Year of Reading campaign.
- <https://picture-news.co.uk/blog-details/get-ready-to-read-with-our-exciting-new-reading-project/> (open to all primary schools).

Restart A Heart 2026

Former MAT colleague Chris Hall survived a cardiac arrest thanks to the quick actions of lifeguards trained in CPR. Sadly, fewer than 10% of people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and these incidents can occur in schools too.



Dare to Ask® is an enquiry-led approach to Religious Education that helps pupils develop knowledge, curiosity, critical thinking and oracy skills through dialogue and meaningful questioning.

Built around the belief that good learning begins with good questions, Dare to Ask® encourages children to explore religious and non-religious worldviews, consider different perspectives and engage thoughtfully with complex ideas.

Alongside developing secure knowledge, this approach encourages pupils to ask deeper questions, reflect on evidence, listen to others, challenge assumptions and develop their own informed viewpoints.

Dare to Ask® is a pedagogical approach, not a curriculum. It is supported by high-quality classroom resources which include progressive questioning frameworks, enquiry prompts, dilemma cards, pupil journals and professional development. While the initial focus is upon RE, the intention is to see it developed across the whole curriculum.

Influenced by Philosophy for Children¹ and contemporary approaches to disciplinary knowledge, Dare to Ask® aims to develop confident learners who are willing to explore uncertainty, consider alternative viewpoints and engage respectfully with the big questions that shape human life.

Dare to Ask® has been designed for primary schools nationally and is compatible with any locally agreed syllabus or curriculum. It will be launched initially through regional events in the East Midlands during autumn 2026.

Dare to Ask®: because the best learning begins with the courage to ask.

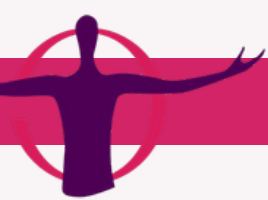
Dare to Ask® launch events

Tuesday 29th September 2026: Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester, LE4 7GY, 9.30am – 12.00pm.

Thursday 15th October 2026: Pollyplatt Primary Academy, (in the Infinity Academies Trust training suite), School Lane, Lincoln, LN1 2TP, 9.30 - 12.00pm.

Dare to Ask® has been developed by Wendy Harrison, an independent RE Consultant based in the Midlands. As well as having subject expertise in RE, Wendy has experience as a school improvement adviser for two local authorities and as an Ofsted inspector.

¹ <https://www.thoughtful.org.uk>



Artificial Intelligence

We have recently been made aware that AI tools may be able to remove emojis and other overlays commonly used to obscure faces in photos, potentially revealing the original image. Schools, churches and families should be mindful of this when sharing photographs online.

For further guidance, subscribe to the INEQE safeguarding newsletters and explore their resources on protecting children's images in the age of AI:

- INEQE Shop: <https://ineqe.com/shop/>
- Resource Package: <https://shop.ineqe.com/products/protecting-childrens-images-in-the-age-of-ai-resource-package>

These resources provide practical advice and support for schools and organisations.

St Philip's Centre - Digital Art Competition

St Philip's Centre, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has launched a county-wide digital creative arts competition for pupils across Leicestershire.

The theme, 'Only in Leicester', encourages young people to celebrate the city's diversity, heritage and community life. The competition is part of the wider Living Together oral history project, promoting understanding and positive community relationships.

Find out more:

<https://www.leicesterlivingtogether.com/digital-creative-arts-competition>

ONLY IN LEICESTER CREATIVE ART COMPETITION

Get Creative. Share Your Story. Celebrate Leicester!

Celebrate the Diversity, Heritage, Identity and Community of Leicester! Show your thoughts and ideas in a creative way through this brand new competition.



What makes Leicester special? What stories, experiences, people, places, and cultures make our city unique?

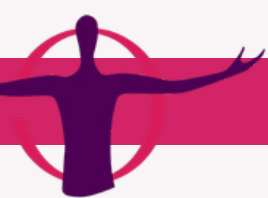
You can enter with:

- 🎨 Visual Art Drawings Paintings Digital artwork (created without AI) 2D or 3D models
- 📖 Poetry
- ✍️ Creative Prose Writing - Maximum 500 words

You can:

- ✅ Enter as an individual
- ✅ Enter as a pair
- ✅ Enter as a group of up to 4 people

For full competition details and dates, speak to your teacher or group leader!



Eco and Net Zero News

We are keen to celebrate and share Eco and Net Zero achievements from schools and academies across the Diocese and DBE.

If your school is involved in an environmental project, sustainability initiative, biodiversity work, energy-saving scheme, or any other eco-related activity, we would love to hear about it. Please send us a short summary along with a few photographs by email, and we may feature your story in a future newsletter.

Together, we can inspire others by showcasing the fantastic work taking place across our school communities. 🌍💚

Upcoming Dates - Autumn Term 1

Tuesday 15th September - 1.00pm - 3.30pm - Early Career Teachers - Why RE? Knowledge rich, creative, thoughtful and rigorous RE

Thursday 17th September - 10.00am - 11.00am - Church School Leadership session - Global Christianity

Thursday 17th September - 11.00am - 12.00 noon - Governor Briefing - Global Christianity

Monday 21st September - 3.45pm - 4.45pm - Collective Worship briefing - Global Christianity

Wednesday 23rd September - 3.45pm - 4.45pm - RE Networking Meeting - New Syllabus

Thursday 8th October - 10.30am - 2.00pm - New Headteacher Induction Programme - Welcome Meeting

Monday 12th October - 2.00pm - 3.00pm - Church School Leadership session - Vision and Hopes for the year ahead

Monday 12th October - 3.00pm - 4.00pm - Governor Briefing - Vision and Hopes for the year ahead

You can book your space here: <https://bookwhen.com/ldbe>

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