Diocese of Leicester
Board of Education

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Newsletter – October 2026
Please do read through the attached newsletter as there are important updates and reminders.

Dear school and trust leaders (copy to Chairs, Clerks & Clergy)
In addition to my role in Leicester, I have been working in the Diocese of Coventry this term as they are currently without a Diocesan Director of Education (DDE). Any of you who have engaged with the ICONS work from Coventry Cathedral will know that a key theme in Coventry is Reconciliation.
This reminded me of a Called, Connected, Committed Podcast recorded back in 2020 which explored the leadership practice of seeking reconciliation. This then prompted my thinking afresh about the importance of conflict in our leadership teams; the importance of disagreeing well. It reminded me of the leadership thinker and writer Patrick Lencioni who cautions against 'artificial harmony' and encourages leaders to 'mine for conflict' to develop team cohesion. This speaks into the need for diversity in our teams in every sense of the word.
In the Podcast, the Chaplain at Blue Coats School in Coventry explained that a peace-building culture does not mean an absence of conflict. It's not about being perfect and it's not about everyone agreeing. It's about how we can live well together even though we have differences. By simply 'going to the conflict' and acknowledging that the conflict is there, we can effect a powerful transformation – sometimes as important as conflict resolution.

As a Christian, I am also reminded that I have a restored relationship with God through Jesus:
All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5:18-20

How has conflict shown up in your leadership so far this term? How have you approached conflict as the spiritual leader of your school? What does a peace-building culture look like in your own school context?

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!

Governor Annual Return - Due December 2026

The Annual Return helps the Board of Education to receive up to date information to enable effective communication and an n-depth knowledge of each of our diocesan academies and schools. The details will form part of our database as well as provide qualitative information about Christian Distinctiveness and the Effectiveness of the Governing Body.
We ask that governors complete an Annual Return each year by December.
Please use the following link to access the form:
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/K46Ge1KQEu

Pop UK

Free songbank for schools
https://email.popuk.org/cr/AQi4uhQQtZPJAxj_88Q0MKPqyRKXmh8moeZfD1XIOKgfbHRgRpHUzm1BXRZo4gMhAtSi1w

Capital Works – a reminder for ALL schools and academies

All Church of England schools are required to seek the consent of the DBE when undertaking capital works. If your school is in a MAT, please ask the MAT's central team whether this is a school or MAT responsibility within your trust.
Please check our website for guidance:
https://www.leicesterdbe.org/buildings/

Pre-School, SEND or Flexi-School Provision – a reminder for ALL schools and acadmies

All Church of England schools are required to seek the consent of the DBE when planning Pre-school, SEND/AP or Flexi-School provision. You will need to provide a business case which should be submitted to the DBE for consideration.

Please check the guidance on our website:
https://www.leicesterdbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/School-based-nursey-provision-guidance.pdf

Growing Faith Research Opportunities in Early Years

Are you interested in delving deeper into the impact of church, school and home working together in the Early Years space? You maybe a nursery or reception practitioner, you may work with babies or pre-schoolers in community and voluntary spaces or in church, you maybe an academic or adviser in the sphere. Whatever your role we would love you to apply to play and learn with us!
For more information please read our application guidance and apply here
Read our application guide and apply here
If you would find a conversation helpful prior to applying please contact
mandy.christopher@churchofengland.org

Admissions Policies for 2028/29 – a reminder for Voluntary Aided schools and all Academies

Your school's Admissions Policy must be reviewed and agreed every year. If your school is an academy in a MAT, please check with your MAT central team how this is done as different MATs have different arrangements.

If your school's policy has not been consulted on for seven years then you must undertake a consultation. The Schools Admissions Code outlines that church schools must laiise with the DBE before launching the consultation. The deadline for submitting any proposed policies for the DBE to check before consultation has passed so please do send any in to the DBE staff team ASAP if this is the case. We will endeavour to check and respond to you with plenty of time for you to then run the statutory consultation.

If you are not required to consult this year, please send us your proposed arrangements by 30th November at the latest. We will be in touch if we have any questions about your policy.

There is detailed advice and guidance on our website. Please do familiarise yourself with it: https://www.leicesterdbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Admissions-Advice-2026.pdf

https://www.leicesterdbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Admissions-checklist-2026.pdf

https://www.leicesterdbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Admissions-Guidance-2026.pdf

SEND Chaplain - St Peter's CofE Primary School, Market Bosworth

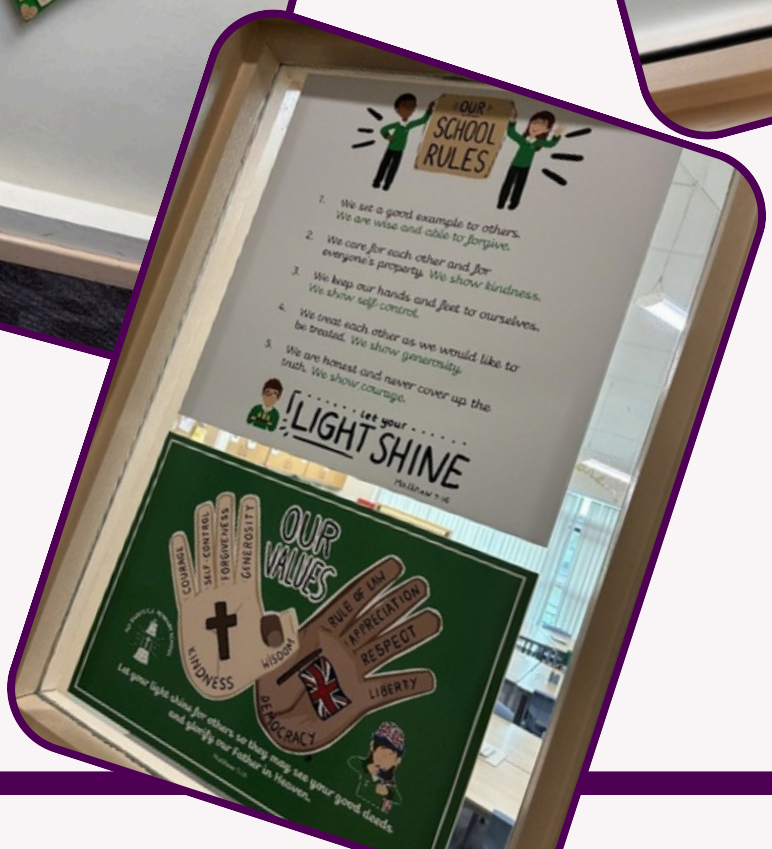
Are you passionate about making a difference in the lives of young learners? We are a welcoming Church of England primary school, part of a dynamic multi academy trust, dedicated to providing a nurturing and inclusive environment for all our pupils. We are currently seeking a dedicated and enthusiastic SEND Chaplain to join our team from October 2026
https://www.eteach.com/careers/stpeters-marketbosworth/job/send-chaplain-1573931/?lang=en-GB

School spotlight

Every newsletter, we are going to start to have the ‘school spotlight’ where we share something of the school visits we have been on. Rachel and Tracey visited All Saints Coalville last month and were blown away by the meticulous displays and how embedded their theologically rooted Christian vision is everything they do around school. The pictures below show examples of how the vision encourages pupils to nominate for different ways children have shone their light and RE work on the character of God.







Images of children in school

The below visual may help you to consider how you might change the way you photograph children within school. This thinking has come from the realisation that emojis that may be used to conceal the identity of children can actually be removed with AI tools.



Christian Aid

'Back to school' is the focus for one of Christian Aid's supporter campaigns this autumn – focusing on the issues of climate and debt justice and highlighting the importance of access to education globally.

Running alongside this, as a part of our global citizenship education and courageous advocacy resources, we are developing some new learning materials to help primary and secondary pupils explore these issues. This will be through a series of interactive activities using critical thinking and creative skills and will provide an opportunity for pupils to use their voice to call for a fairer future where everyone has the opportunity for a good education.

If you want to find out more email Josh (jgrear@christian-aid.org) and we will be in touch with more information. These resources will also be available via our webpage from mid-October onward.

If you are currently looking for resources to help celebrate Harvest then do take a look at our Harvest assembly resources.

The Global Neighbours scheme now includes extensive CPD and online training for all schools via our learning platform. You can also now start Global Neighbours at any time that suits you - Look here to discover more about enrolling.

This term we are offering a range of webinars for schools who are on the Global Neighbours accreditation journey. There are 2 sessions before half-term:

- Tuesday 6 October 2026 3.45-5.00pm: Curriculum development with a focus on Religious, Values and Ethical education
- Wednesday 14 October 2026 3.45 - 4.30pm: Global Neighbours Clinic

For more information about each webinar log in to the Global Neighbours Learning Platform.

https://emails.christian-aid.org/c/AQis4RUQw92yAhjt8uR_IIT1tBcowM6ZCsiK2-Lf8VCsY0D7dnSwv6qOaqv3gStlhvoNagj0Y9TY

Free NSPCC safeguarding resources

Our free NSPCC safeguarding resources help children understand their right to feel safe, recognise who they can turn to for help, and know how to speak out if something is worrying them. We offer a range of free safeguarding resources designed to help schools create safe environments for children. Whether schools are looking for assemblies, lesson plans or guidance for staff, we're here to support you throughout the year.

Our key resources include:

- Speak Out Stay Safe – our flagship safeguarding programme that helps children recognise abuse and know who they can turn to. This includes additional resources for children with additional needs and our inclusive, adaptable SEND programme (please see this incredible video by Fury from Gladiators). We also have resources for alternative provisions and resources for children being home educated.
- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-schools/speak-out-stay-safe/

- Common Sense Media (Online Safety Resources) – supporting schools with online safety education through age-appropriate, evidence-based materials.
- https://www.commonsense.org/education

- Talk PANTS – simple, child-friendly messages to help parents and early years settings introduce the basics of body safety. This includes Makaton and SEND specific lessons.
- https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/pants-underwear-rule/

- Talk Relationships : resources to deliver sex and relationships education | NSPCC Learning supports teachers and leaders to confidently deliver effective and inclusive Sex and Relationships Education in Secondary settings. Including our SEND specific resources.

Over the Autumn term schools will have lots of opportunities to include these into the curriculum to link in with:

- International Week of Deaf People: September 21st to September 27th
- World Mental Health Day : 10th October
- Anti-Bullying Week 2026 : Break the Silence - Monday 16th to Friday 20th November

Farmington Institute

Farmington scholarships give the gift of time and space to Headteachers and teachers, enabling them to pursue a project of their own devising within in school hours. The Institute awards Scholarships to UK-based Headteachers, to primary teachers in any subject, and to secondary teachers of Religious, Philosophical, Moral or Ethical Education.

FARMINGTON INSTITUTE
HARRIS MANCHESTER COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Upcoming Dates - Autumn Term 1

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

Upcoming Dates - Autumn Term 2

Wednesday 4th November - 9.00am - 3.00pm - Primary RE Development Training - Global Christianity
Wedenesday 11th November - 11.30am-12.30pm - Governor Briefing - Collective Worship and spiritual flourishing
Wednesday 18th November - 1.00pm-4.00pm - Subject Leaders - New RE Coordinators
Wednesday 25th November - 9.30am - 11.30am - Church School Leadership Session - Collective Wroship and spiritual flourishing
Thursday 26th November - 9.00am-3.00pm - Retreat Day at Launde Abbey
Thursday 10th December - 1.30pm-2.30pm - Church School Leadership Session - Christmas reflection and celebration
Thursday 10th December - 2.30pm - 3.30pm - Governor Briefing - Christmas reflection and celebration
.
You can book your space here: https://bookwhen.com/ldbe

Eco and Net Zero News

In early 2025, St Michael and All Angels CE Primary School in Rearsby faced significant disruption when severe flooding caused extensive damage to the school. The school community showed tremendous resilience, with pupils and staff continuing their education offsite for several months while extensive repairs and refurbishment took place.

The school returned to its refurbished building in September 2025, marking an important milestone in its recovery. Since then, significant measures have been introduced to strengthen the school's resilience and reduce the risk of future disruption, including door barriers, classroom water pumps, enhanced waterproofing and improved surface water management.

A particularly positive development has been the installation of two Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) – one outside Class 2 and another close to the EYFS classroom. The systems help to slow and store rainwater, allowing it to soak into the ground or be released gradually, reducing pressure on drainage systems and helping to lower flood risk.

The SuDS project was made possible through Severn Trent Water's grant funding, secured with the support of the school's PTFA. The school is hugely grateful to both organisations for helping to turn an important flood-prevention measure into an opportunity for environmental learning.

Pupils have been directly involved through the school's Eco Warriors, who helped assemble the SuDS units and took part in sessions exploring biodiversity, local wildlife and the importance of protecting ecosystems. The children will also help care for the SuDS and the habitats they create.

What began as an incredibly challenging experience has therefore led to positive, long-term change. The school is now better prepared for extreme weather, while pupils are gaining practical knowledge about sustainability, biodiversity and their role in caring for the environment.






Solar Panels Funding Opportunity for Schools

Looking to reduce your school's energy costs and carbon footprint? Solar for Schools and National Grid are offering grant funding towards the installation of solar panels in schools. This is a fantastic opportunity to invest in renewable energy, support your sustainability goals, and provide valuable learning opportunities for pupils.
To find out more about the funding available and how your school can get involved, watch the information video here: https://youtu.be/cnccuDiI08k
🌞 Take advantage of this opportunity to generate clean energy, save money, and support a greener future for your school community.



Let's Go Zero Competition

The OVO Foundation Nature Prize is back!

The OVO Foundation Nature Prize competition is back for its fifth and final round! Applications to win £500 for your nature project will open on Monday 12 October at 09:00, and close on Monday 16 November at 23:59.
The Nature Prize is an opportunity for schools, colleges and nurseries to improve nature access amongst their communities, equip young people with green skills, and build resilience to climate risks – all crucial steps in creating a sustainable future.
There are 30 chances to win £500 in one of three categories:

- Adaptation and resilience
- Community
- Green Skills

All projects should be primarily nature-focused and positively impact the school community. Judges are particularly keen to see projects that involve students in both design and implementation.

To find out more and ask questions, please join us for a webinar on Wednesday 14 October – register below.
To enter, you will need to complete the short application form, telling us about your proposed project and its impacts via our website.



Retreat Bursaries available for Teachers



Feedback from previous recipients:

'Wonderful to experience quality time away from the busyness of daily life, to be with like-minded people sharing a new experience'

'Thank you so very much for making a much-needed time of solace and recovery a reality!'

'This opportunity to find space and stillness away from the 'world' has given me much needed refreshment and solace at a difficult time.'

Do you find life in the classroom as tiring as it is stimulating?

Would you like time to rest, read, reflect and recharge?

In a new initiative, the **Association for Promoting Retreats (APR)** is offering **bursaries** for staff (*teachers, headteachers, teaching assistants, and pastoral/welfare staff*) in Church of England schools to go on retreat at any APR member retreat house in the UK

For more information, and an application form, please apply through the retreat house of your choice as listed on ***promotingretreats.org/where***, or contact the APR Administrator (promoting.retreats@gmail.com)

Association for Promoting Retreats

Tel: (01395) 272243

Email: promoting.retreats@gmail.com

More details and full Terms & Conditions are available on

promotingretreats.org/bursary



Do remember to visit our website for lots of useful information and guidance.