

Dear Colleagues

Directors Reflection:

Welcome back to Term 4. I hope you had a helpful break from school with time out for rest and refreshment.

Last week I talked with three highly capable education professionals from different fields, none of whom had been born when I started teaching!!

It reminded me how wonderful it is to work with energetic, passionate people who want to see children flourish and are doing all they can to bring this about. I also felt very old!



Proverbs 16:31 says *“Gray hair is a crown of splendour; it is attained in the way of righteousness.”* That’s as may be, but I still went ahead and had my hair dyed.

Aging is one of life’s certainties. If we see aging the way God does, it reminds us that growing older is full of purpose, dignity, and beauty. Our worth is not tied to our youth but to the God who walks with us through every stage of life. Whether you are in your ‘golden years’, caring for aging loved ones, or simply reflecting on the passage of time, God’s Word provides wisdom and reassurance.

I wonder what your ‘worth’ is tied to?

“Even Youths Grow Tired and Weary, and Young Men Stumble and Fall; But Those Who Hope in The Lord Will Renew Their Strength. They Will Soar on Wings Like Eagles; They Will Run and Not Grow Weary, They Will Walk and Not Be Faint.” Isaiah 40:29-31

May you soar on wings like eagles through the challenges of the term.



Liz Townend
Diocesan Director of Education

The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. God is close to those who trust in him.

Nahum 1.7

Bishop's Awards

We know everyone is working hard and this leads to some exceptional practice happening in the schools in this diocese.

We are so proud of you and the Bishop of Swindon is providing an opportunity to celebrate some of the people and projects that are really making a difference to children and young people's lives. We are gathering good news stories and will be celebrating individuals and achievements at our first Bishop's Summer Garden Party (hopefully, but possibly an indoor equivalent!)

We would like to receive nominations from schools for the following:

- **Extraordinary practice within church school education** e.g. a fabulous SIAMS report, something special you have done relating to Christian character that needs celebrating, some super press coverage, or an award such as WIRE, Church School Partnership
- **Improvements to buildings and surroundings that will further enable children and staff to flourish** e.g. completion of a remodelling of a building space or grounds.
- **Sustaining Christian distinctiveness through change** e.g. joining an academy trust and protecting your Christian character and plans to help the trust understand the unique contribution you can make.

If you'd like to nominate another school – or your own school, please drop a paragraph explaining why you think the school/ individual should be nominated to my colleague Zoe at Education@bristoldiocese.org, where we'll read and look at all nominations and look forward to the garden party!

FREE Leadership Training with Andy Spens



You may remember from our Term 3 Newsletter that we have an upcoming Reflective Leadership Training opportunity with Andy Spens fast approaching for all current and aspiring leaders!

We are excited to announce that we are now able to offer this fantastic opportunity at **No Charge**. Please see below for more information.

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Called Connected Committed

THIS TRAINING IS BEING RUN FREE OF CHARGE TO SCHOOLS AND TRUSTS.

'EDUCATING FOR LIFE IN ALL ITS FULNESS' is the goal of our Church of England Vision for Education: 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'.

At the heart of our vision is the search for a wisdom that rings true both with the Bible and Christian understanding and with experienced educational practice in the twenty-first century. As such, we want to inspire a set of leadership practices that both exemplify Wisdom, Knowledge & Skills, Hope & Aspiration, Community & Living Well Together, and Dignity & Respect, and that also goes to the heart of educational purpose:

Called - inspiring the vocation of the education Leader.

Connected - enabling the flourishing of children, adults, teams and communities.

Committed - sustaining long-term engagement in realising this vision for education.

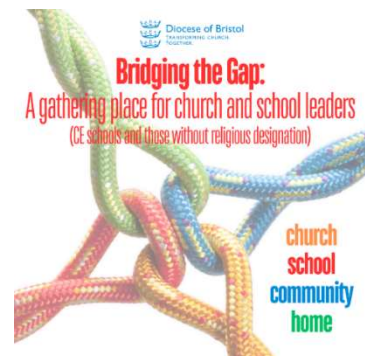
Aspiring church school leaders, middle leaders, DHTs and senior leaders and headteachers are warmly invited to attend this exciting opportunity to hear from Andy, leader on a national level in this inspiring area of learning.

[Book here:](#) Thursday 27th March 1-4pm at Hillside House

Upcoming Training & Events:

Bridging the Gap events 15th and 20th May 2025

We invite **ALL** headteachers and **ALL** incumbents to join together for a free lunch and afternoon of discussion, on how to make Diocesan, Church and School partnership truly impactful. Other church/school partners and non-church school leaders are also encouraged to attend.



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We will have people sharing short case studies about mutually supportive relationships with schools and families across the diocese and lots of time to discuss what might work in your area and next steps.

Please invite your vicar to join you and any school leaders in the local area who are in schools without religious designation – do encourage them to come along too as this event will not be scary, we promise!

Lunch will be offered between 12:00 – 12:30pm with discussions until 3.30 both days, so come to whichever suits you best. Please sign up on the Eventbrite links below or on the attached flyer for either [Thursday 15th May](#) or [Tuesday 20th May 2025](#).



DBE Annual conference - Friday 21st November 2025

Remember this is going to be **FREE** for all delegates this year, we are so excited to make this the case so that every school can be represented with their clergy, Chair of Governors and Headteacher – get booking asap so you don't lose the date!

Our complete training schedule for the 24/25 Academic year can be found [HERE](#)

Team Charity Day

Does your school have any niggling jobs that just never seem to get done? A garden refresh that needs some time? Assistance with School Activities? *If so, then the Education Team maybe just the people you are looking for!*



We, as a team, are looking to offer our services and our time to the schools that we work closely with to 'give back' to the community and celebrate the Bristol Diocese values and Christian Ethos.

If your school would like to take advantage of a couple of hours additional help then please drop details of your task / request to Education@bristoldiocese.org so the team can allocate time to assist with your worthy cause.

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A Prayer for this term

Heavenly Father

Please pour out Your blessings upon our whole school community so that everyone grows in the knowledge of Your truth, love, wisdom and peace.

We pray for all children - help them to explore what they can achieve and give them confidence to play their part in shaping our world.

We pray for all those who work in schools. Care for them as they care for our children.

We pray for all governors of schools. Grant them wisdom and sound judgement, and help them to keep children's well-being at the heart of everything they do.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen

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