

Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Education Service

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Dear Colleagues,

As we reach the end of another year it is an opportunity for us to reflect as a diocesan community on the year which has passed, the achievements of individuals, schools and academies across the diocese and the successes we have enjoyed together.

Firstly, may I congratulate the many primary schools and academies whose data show impressive progress in key areas. DfE tables for our Local Authorities unequivocally show the value added by a Catholic education! There are so many primary schools that have achieved highly against various performance measures that it is impossible to name each school individually! However, may I take this opportunity to thank all Primary staff, teaching and non-teaching, for their hard work, commitment and determination that every child be given the opportunity to reach their God-given potential.

Secondly, may I congratulate the secondary schools on another year in which DfE tables are once again dominated by Arundel and Brighton schools. The picture across Sussex is very encouraging and is as follows: West Sussex, 1st: St Paul's, Burgess Hill; 4th: St Philip Howard, Barnham; 12th: Chatsmore; and 15th: St Wilfrid's, Crawley. In East Sussex, St Richard's, Bexhill is 3rd; and in Brighton and Hove, Cardinal Newman is 5th. The DfE table for Surrey is particularly impressive and is as follows: 1st: SJB, Woking; 2nd: St Peter's, Guildford; 3rd: Salesian, Chertsey; 5th: St Andrew's, Leatherhead; and 7th: St Bede's, Redhill. My thanks and congratulations to all involved for this incredible feat!

I know I have said it before but at the risk of sounding repetitive I think it is worth re-stating that, like you, I am mindful that whilst league tables give us an indication of performance and progress, they do not reflect the child behind the data. Diocesan schools and academies enable children and young people to thrive in an authentic Catholic environment where Gospel values underpin everything. In primary and secondary schools alike, your belief in children and their right to an outstanding Catholic education transforms children's lives. The great strength of Catholic education is that every child **is** treated as unique, known and loved by God, and I can only thank you again for everything you do for the children and young people in your care.

As you are all acutely aware, this academic year has seen the introduction of a new Ofsted framework. After years of prioritising outcomes and data, Ofsted has signalled a change, focussing once more on what's being delivered rather than just on outcomes. Five primary schools have been inspected thus far, with four reports published thus far: St Mary Magdalene, Bexhill; St Clement's Ewell; St Mary's, Worthing; and St Mary Magdalen, Brighton. All four schools have been judged 'good' and all were praised for particular strengths, including Catholic values forming an integral part of daily life, the highest pastoral and academic ambitions for all, and a culture where all staff feel valued. Congratulations to all for these richly-deserved accolades. Particular congratulations to St Mary's Worthing which has been on an incredible journey since its Academy Order back in early 2016!

Catholic School Inspections (formerly known as Section 48) have also taken place this term at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Crawley, and St Joseph's Specialist Trust, Cranleigh. Both schools have been judged outstanding with particularly high praise for the vision and commitment to ensure that all pupils thrive academically, socially and spiritually. Again, many congratulations to both schools – their reports are an absolute pleasure to read, and the praise is entirely deserved. As ever, Ofsted and CSI reports are available on our website at www.abeducationsservice.org.uk

Inevitably, the end of term means some are leaving for pastures new and we are particularly sorry to say goodbye to two long-standing, inspirational and hugely popular Headteachers: Chris Donovan (St Anne's Banstead) and Jacqui Lance (St Bernadette's, Brighton). Chris has spent his entire career in the diocese and has led St Anne's since September 2006, bringing a quiet sense of reflection and spiritual depth to everything. Chris is a wonderful musician and many of you will remember the beautiful hymn he composed for the Year of Mercy and sung at the Good Shepherd. Chris will be continuing his current inspection work with Ofsted whilst discerning what God is calling him to next. He has promised not to disappear and we all hope to see him around the diocese for years to come!

Jacqui Lance is retiring this Christmas after ten years as Headteacher at St Bernadette's Brighton, having joined the school back in 2000. Jacqui is known and loved not just for her wonderful leadership of St Bernadette's but also for her unstinting involvement in all aspects of diocesan life, including being a key member of the DASB and Primary Steering Committee, and representing the diocese on a number of Brighton and Hove LA Forums. Sadly, Jacqui is currently unwell and our prayers, thoughts and very best wishes go to her and her family. Please keep Jacqui, and all those within our diocesan community who are unwell, in your thoughts and prayers this Christmas.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Chris and Jacqui for all that they have done throughout their time in the diocese to bring the Good News to all and to enhance children's lives. They will both be enormously missed, both personally and professionally.

A very big 'thank you' to Anita Philbrook who did an excellent job as acting Headteacher at Our Lady of Lourdes, Rottingdean this term! Anita has prepared the way for Paul Barber who will be joining the school in January as the new Headteacher. I know Paul will be made to feel very welcome by all within the diocesan family of schools and we all look forward to getting to know him over the coming months.

Lastly, thank you all for everything you do to protect, preserve and enhance Catholic education in Arundel and Brighton. Your steadfastness in these challenging times, and total commitment to the children in your care are great examples to all of us in the DES.

On behalf of all DES members, may I wish each and every one of you a very happy, peace-filled Christmas. Despite the busy-ness of the season, I hope Christmas affords you time to relax, re-charge and unwind after a long term. We all look forward to seeing you again in 2020!

Best wishes,



Marie Ryan