

Catholic Diocese of Arundel & Brighton Education Service

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Dear Colleagues,

It seems incredible that the academic year is drawing to an end and we are already looking forward to the Summer holidays! I am very conscious of how hard staff and governors alike work throughout the year, until the end of the academic year and into the holidays, in order to ensure the very best for the children and young people in your care. I hope each and every one of you enjoys an enjoyable and well-deserved break when the end of the school year arrives.

I am writing this letter to you on the afternoon of what may apparently be the hottest day of the last decade! The heat seems appropriate - preparations for this weekend's Diocesan Jubilee celebrations have reached fever pitch at DABCEC and the printers are in danger of over-heating due to apparently unceasing use! A huge thank you to all the primary and secondary schools which have worked so hard to rehearse choirs, to prepare some incredible art work, to choreograph liturgical dancers etc., in preparation for Sunday. As I said at the start of my letter, I am all too aware of what an incredibly busy time of the year this is for schools, and your extraordinary commitment to the Jubilee is all the more appreciated as a result. The Education Service Office is awash with stunning art work from a host of schools and we are looking forward to mounting it on Saturday as we decorate the East Stand's Education Zone in readiness for Sunday's celebrations! Education Service staff are offering a number of exciting and fun activities for children on Sunday and we hope as many of you as possible will visit the Education Zone during the course of the day. We are also intending to use the day as an opportunity for raising consciousness about the roles played by Foundation Governors, what it means to teach in a Catholic school, etc. To this end we have worked hard to prepare a range of attractive, informative and user-friendly materials on Diocesan Schools, Becoming a Foundation Governor, Working in Diocesan Schools, etc. We hope these will bear fruit in the months and years to come. Grateful thanks to those who have generously volunteered to help staff stalls and to support us over the weekend. We look forward to seeing you on Sunday!

This morning I attended the Woking Deanery Primary Schools' Mass for Year Six children at Arundel Cathedral. It was a truly lovely occasion and the children were an absolute credit to St Augustine's, St Dunstan's, St Hugh of Lincoln and The Marist. Special thanks to Michael George, Headteacher at St Hugh of Lincoln, for organising such a lovely event and to Fr Richard for such a warm, friendly Mass. I drove away feeling both moved and inspired and have already got several ideas which I will reflect on over the next few weeks. As part of the offertory procession, representatives of each school offered a basket of candles, containing children's commitment to let the lights shine. Each of the four schools also presented a candle which was lit and placed on the altar as a symbol of their commitment to work together as a family of schools. The commitment made by the Woking deanery at the Cathedral today to work together as a family of schools is more essential than ever and one that I hope every deanery would feel able to make - as Catholic schools, we face challenges from

many quarters in an increasingly secular environment and it is imperative that we stand together united as a community.

This commitment to working as a family of schools is one which is essential to the diocesan vision of cluster MATs and I hope as many of you as possible will be able to attend the Academies event to be held next Thursday, 9th July, from 1-3pm at Cardinal Newman Sixth Form Centre, Hove. I am delighted to say that Bishop Richard will be with us, as will Diocesan Trustees. I am aware that Hove is not the most convenient location for some but, as I am sure you will understand, finding a school large enough to accommodate us during the school day has been extremely challenging. We are very grateful to James Kilmartin, staff and Governors of Cardinal Newman for hosting our event. Every school has been invited to send the Head and Chair, but I fully understand this is not possible in all cases, so if necessary please feel free to send a representative. If you have not yet managed to do so, please confirm attendance by emailing Gill Sajnog (gill.sajnog@dabnet.org). Refreshments will be available from 12.45pm, and we will start promptly at 1pm. Please note: parking is extremely limited, but Cardinal Newman is within walking distance of Hove train Station.

All diocesan Headteachers have been invited to meet Bishop Richard at St Wilfrid's Catholic Secondary School, Crawley, from 4-6pm on Monday 13th July. This will afford Headteachers an excellent opportunity to hear Bishop Richard share his vision for education across the Diocese and also to chat to him on a range of issues. I am very grateful to Michael Ferry, staff and governors at St Wilfrid's for accommodating us. We will be serving refreshments from 3.45pm and hope that all will find it an enjoyable and informative event. We look forward to seeing you there!

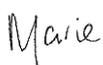
You may remember that in my first letter of 5th January I said that as a result of the team's initial discussions about how the Education Service might best serve our diocesan schools, we chose the theme of 'Service and Servant Leadership' for our January retreat day with Fr Rob Esdaile. We followed this up last term with a retreat day led by Fr Peter Andrews on our chosen theme of 'Servant Leadership and our role as Evangelisers'. As a team, we had two wonderful days with Fr Rob and Fr Peter, and are now really looking forward to our retreat day on Thursday 16th July with Fr Chris Dobson. We have agreed as a team that our theme for this retreat will be a reflection on our role as servant leaders over the past six months, and looking forward to the Year of Mercy.

Bernadette Connor and I will soon be meeting with Bishop Richard and members of the Pastoral team to consider the forthcoming Year of Mercy and to explore how we might develop this with schools. Bernadette and I have already come up with a number of ideas about this and I am looking forward to sharing these with you early in the new academic year!

Our CPD Handbook for next year will be in schools before the Summer holidays. Thanks to those of you who took the trouble to respond to our request for feedback about course content – we have taken account of your responses, which were very helpful, and have incorporated your suggestions into our offer for next year.

Lastly, some of our longest-serving Headteachers are leaving at the end of this academic year after long and distinguished careers, and I will be writing personally to these individuals to express my thanks and appreciation for their unwavering commitment to Catholic education.

In conclusion, whether you have been part of the Diocese for forty years, or for a term, please accept my very best wishes for a happy and fully-deserved Summer break and my grateful thanks for all that you do,



Marie Ryan