

20th August 2020

Dear Colleague,

Today your pupils will have collected their GCSE results and I want you to know that you, like them, are much in the thoughts and prayers of the churches and people of Lincolnshire.

The past few months have been unlike any we have ever known. Our whole way of life through lockdown has had to be very different and the impact of this has been huge. Each of us has been affected in different ways, but in the Diocesan Board of Education (which helps support your school) we have been particularly conscious of the impact this has had on your pupils in this their GCSE year and therefore yourself.

There has been much debate around how GCSEs have been graded this year. I imagine that this week, as the method by which grades have been arrived at has been debated and changed, you have probably been feeling more concern than perhaps you might otherwise. Indeed I know how angry this situation has made people, not least because much of it could have been avoided. I am really sad that you and particularly your pupils have been put in this position and I have written to the Secretary of State for Education about this and the wider issues that this situation has raised.

I know many of you will now be involved in supporting and encouraging your pupils – as you always seek to do. We celebrate with those who have achieved all they hoped for and I know you will compassionately help and advise those who are disappointed by their results or uncertain about their next steps.

The diocesan family of schools always seeks excellence in everything we do. One of our core commitments around education comes from words that Jesus speaks in John's gospel 'I have come that they may have life and life in all its fullness'.

Education is about far more than passing exams and test results - important as that is. It is about the whole person, our character our values our creativity - in short it is about how we flourish as humans. That is why those words of Jesus are so important to us in the diocesan family of schools. They remind us that our experience of education needs to prepare us for life in all its fullness and variety.

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We live in difficult and challenging times and you, as teachers of what is being called generation COVID, are at the sharp end of much of this. Today is but one small step on the huge journey of life for your students. We hope and pray that whatever the next step they take will be one that leads them on a path of fulfilment and flourishing. Know that you have supported them on that path.

Each person is unique made, we believe, in the image and likeness of God. Every person matters and in our schools we want to see that everyone flourishes, discovers their gifts and reaches their potential and that includes the staff.

You are in our thoughts and prayers as you support your students on their next steps. Thank you for all that you do. Teaching is not just a profession, it is a vocation and in forming our young people you do great and valuable work. If you can see a particular way in which we might be able to help or support you in all this, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Enjoy the rest of the summer break.

With all good wishes,



The Ven Mark Steadman, Archdeacon of Stow and Lindsey
Vice Chair of Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education