



From *Paul Thompson*, Deputy Diocesan Director of Education –

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you have had a restful half term and you managed to recharge the batteries for the term ahead. During the half term, we turned the clocks back an hour and I’m sure you will have all been thankful for the extra hour in bed. However, as we return to school, it is not pleasurable going to work in the dark and returning home in the dark. The shorter daylight hours and longer nights can be tough going for us all. The toughest thing will be continuing to live with the pandemic through the winter months. The national lockdown beginning this Thursday will be difficult for us all.

But together we are strong and we have faith, hope and love to help us navigate the most challenging of times. We look to God and to each other for inspiration and strength. Oscar Wilde wrote,

‘When it rains, look for rainbows. When it’s dark, look for stars’.

As school leaders, you have already proved over the past few months you can lead schools in times of adversity. You have grappled with ever changing guidance, you have drawn up numerous versions of risk assessments, you have implemented safety measures in school; you have worked hard to ensure bubbles don’t burst; you have maintained constant communication with families; you have developed remote learning and you have shown great resilience and creativity as leaders. Our school communities are truly blessed.

But we need to find the strength to keep going and we need to support each other. Headteachers need to continue networking with each other. Governing Boards need to continue supporting and constructively challenging school leaders, especially in relation to professional health and well-being. If school leaders neglect their own health and well-being because they are too focussed on supporting others, they will find it difficult to sustain the leadership and support for others in the coming weeks and months. The Diocesan Education team and the LA are there to support you through these times.

We will not be beaten by this. We will come through this stronger.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^{ed} it. John 1:5.



Poet Tom Roberts wrote a very thought provoking and emotional poem called ‘The Great Realisation’ in May of this year. It is full of optimism on the future post COVID-19. It is worth watching him read this poem to his child on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw5KQMXDiM4>

So, in these winter months ahead, we pray, we hope and we support each other. The Diocesan Education team are on the end of the phone and e-mail. You will find lots of resources and guidance, including health and well-being videos on the website: <https://www.lincolndioceseeducation.com/>

The diocesan training programme will continue to be virtual in the Spring term and they will continue to be offered at the discounted rate. A list of courses is attached to this email, and more information/booking can be found [here](#).

Paul Thompson

Resources/News from the Team

Reflection

Our EDO Lynsey Norris continues her series of reflections – these can be found [here](#), and attached to this email.

Prayer & Reflection Videos

We continue our series of prayer videos – with an instalment from the Chair of Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education, the Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain, Bishop of Grantham.

These can be found [here](#).

Called, Connected, Committed

The latest newsletter from the Church of England Education Office can be found [here](#).