

# Dear Friends and Colleagues -

Saturday was St. Nicholas Day (6<sup>th</sup> December). This is a feast that celebrates the life and legacy of Nicholas of Myra, a 4th-century bishop known for his quiet generosity, deep faith, and legendary gift-giving. Long before Santa Claus was sliding down chimneys, St. Nicholas was tossing coins through windows to save families from hardship—his kindness landing in shoes drying by the fire.

In many European countries, children still leave out shoes or boots on the eve of December 6th, hoping to find sweets or small gifts in the morning. In some traditions, those who've misbehaved might find a twig or lump of coal instead (a gentle reminder that even saints had standards!).

For all of us who work in education, St. Nicholas Day gives opportunity to not only think about chocolate coins and festive folklore, but to reflect on the power of quiet generosity. Nicholas didn't seek recognition; he simply saw a need and met it. In our busy classrooms and schools, we too have countless opportunities to give—whether it's a word of encouragement, a listening ear, or a moment of grace extended to a struggling pupil or colleague.

The lectionary reading this week also echo this spirit of hope and restoration, "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." Isaiah 11:1

This vision of renewal reminds us that even in seasons of weariness or challenge, new life can emerge. Just as Nicholas gave hope to the poor, we are called to be bearers of light in our communities.

And in the book of Romans, Paul offers a blessing that feels tailor-made for all who work in our schools, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."  
Romans 15:13

Complementing the spirit of St. Nicholas Day, this verse reminds us that our acts of kindness and generosity, however small, can overflow with hope and reflect the love of Christ in our schools and communities.

I hope you find many of those moments in your school this week.

June Richardson  
**Schools Effectiveness Advisor**



The Bishop of Lincoln's

# Ready for school fund

**Supporting children and young people who need financial support to fully engage in the life of school and benefit from educational opportunities.**

**The fund is faith in action to meet an important social need. It is witness to the generosity of God's people that the funding can assist with...**



## Essential items

*Bedding, clothing, shoes, uniform, books, stationary, lunchboxes, bags, additional needs resources.*

## School activities

*Excursions, residential visits, theme days, pantomimes and drama productions, equipment for clubs.*

## Wider activities

*Out of school club memberships and equipment for community-based clubs or events.*

## How to apply

Schools are encouraged to apply for grants of usually **up to £150 per child** on behalf of families in the church school community.

Simply fill in the online form or send physical applications to: [education@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:education@lincoln.anglican.org)

[lincolndiocesaneducation.com/grants](http://lincolndiocesaneducation.com/grants)



## Joining the conversation on SEND reforms

Church of England schools are committed to serving all children, including those with special educational needs.

An inclusive education with tailored support and interventions which caters to the unique needs of pupils allows them to flourish.

This week the DfE began a nationwide conversation about SEND reforms. The attached document provides a useful overview of the DfE's 5 principles of reform. It also poses questions which are to be explored through the DfE's engagement sessions.

We encourage school leaders, especially Heads, SENCOS and governors to attend one of these engagement sessions to share their views.

You may also invite parents of pupils with SEND to attend these sessions too.

To be part of the conversation follow the link on this page [SEND Reform National Conversation - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

## LDBE Professional Development Offer

In January, we'll start planning our Professional Development offer for 2026–2027, and we'd really value your input.

We'd love to hear what you've found most useful this year and your thoughts on what you and your school will need in the future. Your feedback will help us make sure our support is relevant and useful for you. It's a short survey and if at all possible, it would be great to have your response before the end of term, it will only take a few minutes:

[Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education Professional Development Offer to Schools 2026-2027 – Fill in form](#)

## LDBE Courses - January 2026

Date	Time	Course		Book Here
15/01/2026	10:00-12:00	Governor Church School Induction	Online	<a href="#">BOOK</a>
20/01/2026	16:00-17:00	Collective Worship Cluster	Online	<a href="#">BOOK</a>
28/01/2026	16:00-18:00	Developing the Spiritual Life of the School	Online	<a href="#">BOOK</a>
29/01/2026	10:00-11:00	Headteacher Briefing	Online	<a href="#">BOOK</a>
29/01/2026	17:30-19:00	Governor & Clerk to Governor Briefing	Online	<a href="#">BOOK</a>

## Explaining Ofsted changes to parents

Some of our headteachers and governors have expressed concern about how they will explain the new Ofsted grading system to parents. They are concerned that parents will make unfavourable comparison with the old grades.

This week, Ofsted released a new video (3mins) which explains the changes. We would recommend that school leaders use this when sharing Ofsted outcomes under the new framework. [New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)

It specifically states that overall grades have gone; new grades don't compare to old and that the expected standard is a high bar.

It further makes it clear that, needs attention is not a fail and states that schools may see spikey profiles across evaluation areas.

## Get Information About Schools

Please can all school leaders check they have processes in place to make sure GIAS is regularly updated.

It is particularly important to make sure that under 'Diocese' Lincoln is listed and that your governance details are up to date. It is a requirement that GIAS should be updated whenever changes occur. Please note that some changes do require DfE or LA approval before they appear on your school's record.

"An establishment's record should be updated as changes occur, and at a minimum of once a month if required. This is for the details tab and the governance tab." GIAS FAQs

This data informs information that the DfE, the diocese, Ofsted, SIAMS and other providers collect about a school. Thank you.

