

Dear Friends and Colleagues -

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a happy and peaceful Christmas. For many people, Christmas is a joyful time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus and enjoy the festivities with family and friends. It can also be a difficult time for some, especially those who feel lonely or grieving the passing of loved ones. I hope it was a comfortable time for all.

New Year and returning to routine may also bring mixed emotions. For some, it is sad that Christmas is over for another year and that we must go back to school or work. For others, there may be a feeling of relief of no more mince pies and that a familiar rhythm of life can be resumed.

However you are feeling, I think we can be optimistic about the future. I know there are troubles in the world which create division and conflict. I am sure there will be challenges that lay ahead in the world of education this year – there is every year!

But we have each other and the love of God to give us the hope and strength we need to enjoy a prosperous new year. It is at this time of year when we set our goals or resolutions. You may have told yourself that you are going to exercise more or eat more healthily for example. These are all worthwhile goals but be honest – how long is it before you sneakily eat a chocolate or put the running trainers away for another year. I’ve tried and failed many New Year resolutions in the past.

I have come to the conclusion that a more impactful approach for improving life, education, health and well-being is by developing a shared vision and plan with the people around you. When you agree the purpose, the drivers, the milestones, actions and goals with others, you have much more chance of success.

The best church schools have very clear vision statements rooted in theology, tailored to the community and there is ‘buy-in’ from everyone. Everyone plays their part to implement the action plans and live out the school vision. The shared vision is not a quick fix but a flourishing school that is secured on strong Christian foundations realising high aspirations for all.



Last term, at Wootton St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, the newly appointed headteacher, Michelle Radge took the opportunity to develop the school's vision with the school community. She wanted to ensure the school was well placed to enable all adults and children to flourish. In doing this work, the community honoured the past, celebrated successes to date and then considered the goals for the future and how they would 'journey together' to achieve success for all.

The first photograph below shows the Wootton school community in 1989 holding the flag of St Andrew outside St Andrew's church. The other photograph shows the school community rooted in the same place, proud of their Christian foundation but with a newly developed vision for the future.

Mrs Radge said: "In the bottom right-hand corner stands a young child clutching the flag - now Mrs Kirsty Mager, a much-loved teacher at our school. In a delightful continuation of the school's story, her own daughter, Ilona, also attends Wootton St Andrew's, weaving new threads into the school's rich tapestry of community and continuity."

Mrs Radge went on to say: "Our new vision draws inspiration from St Andrew and the courage he showed—qualities we hope will guide us on the next stage of our school's journey." As part of the refresh, the value of courage has been introduced, inspired by St Andrew himself, that the school hopes to foster in its children." If you would like to know more about the new vision at Wootton, there is an article via this [link](#).



Photograph credited to Donna Clifford (Grimsby Live)

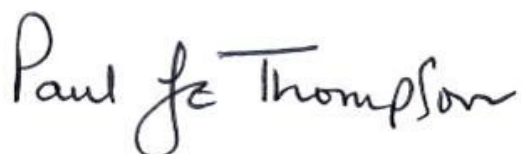
If your school is planning any visionary work and you would like the support of the DBE team or you would like to share your experiences, please get in touch.

As you know the DBE is always by your side to help you achieve what you want to achieve for your church school community. Our Christian foundation will keep us strong to weather any storm and our 'togetherness' will help us achieve more than we can alone.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together," (African proverb).
I wish you every success for the New Year.

Canon Paul Thompson

Diocesan Director of Education



Racial Justice Sunday 8th February

We are working closely with the Cathedral to ensure our schools are fully represented in the Racial Justice Service on Sunday 8th February.

For anyone who missed it, details of the original letter (Mon 5th Jan) suggesting ways in which schools can be involved in Racial Justice Sunday, is attached to this bulletin.

To ensure we know the space we need available for display etc, please can you let June know whether you are intending to contribute items for this service. June.richardson@lincoln.anglican.org

Diversity calendar

The NAHT have once again created a helpful diversity calendar so you can map events to tackle justice and responsibility.

This may be helpful to share with school councils too so they can shape some of their work around these special days.

[NAHT EDI calendar 2026](#)

January's Courses & Events

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

Celebrating Vision - Halton Holegate

When I arrived as the newly appointed Headteacher at Halton Holegate C of E Primary School in 2024, there was a very good vision in place. We felt, however, that it was not personal enough to our school family. As the local church is dedicated to St Andrew, we decided to link our vision to him. This worked very well as he had travelled afar from humble beginnings as a fisherman; the same qualities we want for our children.

Therefore, on 28th November (two days early due to the weekend), the school went to church and celebrated the patronal festival of St Andrew.

The church had been decorated with colourful fish that the children had made in school. As the children arrived in church, the bells were ringing to welcome them. Whilst the school visits the church quite often, arriving to a peal of bells was not something they had experienced before. Some of our older children read about Andrew's life, and a posy of flowers was laid beneath his window in the sanctuary. I had been inspired by the Agapé meal that we experienced at a Diocesan Conference last year, so this seemed the perfect time to enjoy this. St Andrew was present at the Last Supper giving this a significant meaning. Some children broke the bread and held a goblet before all children staff and parents enjoyed a breadstick and a grape. The whole service was something quite different for the children but thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Richard Baldock, **Headteacher, Halton Holegate C of E Primary School**

