

# Dear Friends and Colleagues -

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to extend my very best wishes to all our church school headteachers, staff, governors, pupils, and families. I hope that over the summer break you have had the opportunity to rest and recharge, enjoy your hobbies and interests, and spend precious time with family and friends.

I would also like to offer a particularly warm welcome to all those who are beginning a new chapter this September. Whether you are a newly appointed headteacher, a member of staff joining a new school, a governor taking up a new role, or a pupil starting in one of our church schools for the first time, we are delighted to welcome you into our church school family. We hope that you quickly feel a sense of belonging, support and encouragement, and that you will discover the unique joy and privilege of being part of a community where education, service and human flourishing are at the heart of all that we do. We pray that your new beginning will be filled with opportunities to learn, grow, contribute and thrive.

A new school year always brings fresh possibilities: new relationships, new learning, new achievements, and new ways in which we can serve our communities. While we know there will be challenges along the way, I pray that we face them with courage, hope, and determination, confident in all that we can achieve together.

During the summer, many people reflected on the remarkable life and legacy of Dolly Parton, who died on 25 August 2026 at the age of 80. Throughout her life she demonstrated extraordinary perseverance, generosity, faith, and compassion, inspiring millions of people around the world. Her journey from humble beginnings in rural Tennessee when she wore a coat of many colours her mother made for her to becoming a globally admired singer, songwriter, actress, and philanthropist is a powerful testimony to the impact of hard work, resilience, and kindness.

I find myself reflecting particularly on Dolly's life because, during the summer holidays, I had the opportunity to visit the Great Smoky Mountains, Dollywood and Nashville, just a few days before her death. Seeing first-hand the area where she grew up and learning more about her story brought home to me the profound impact one individual can have on a community. Her love for her home region remains visible everywhere, not only through the opportunities she created for local people and families, but also through the pride and hope she inspired in others. At the same time, her influence extended far beyond Tennessee, touching lives across the world through her philanthropy, advocacy for literacy and commitment to helping others.





One of Dolly's greatest achievements was the establishment of the Imagination Library. Inspired by her father, who was unable to read and write, and by the frustration and limitations this caused him, she was determined to help children experience the joy and opportunity that reading brings. Since its launch in 1995, the Imagination Library has provided more than 300 million books to children around the world, including many children in the Diocese, particularly in North Lincolnshire.

Dolly spoke openly about her Christian faith and often acknowledged God's guidance and blessing in her life.

She understood that gifts and success are not simply for personal gain, but are opportunities to serve others. Her life reminds us that true greatness is found in using our talents generously and in helping others flourish.

One of her most memorable sayings captures this spirit beautifully:

"Dream more, learn more, care more, be more."

These words resonate strongly with our mission as church schools and sit comfortably alongside the encouragement of Scripture:

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9

As we embark on this new school year, may we dream boldly, learn enthusiastically, care deeply for one another, and seek to be the very best that God calls us to be. May we work hard, persevere through challenges, and show kindness and generosity in all that we do.

I wish every headteacher, member of staff, governor and pupil a happy, successful and fulfilling year ahead. May God bless each of our schools and communities as we work together in His service.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Thompson".

**Canon Paul Thompson  
Diocesan Director of Education**

## New addition to the **DBE** team

I am pleased to announce Georgina Day has agreed to join the LDBE team for one day per week this year.

Many of you will know Georgina as she is currently the Headteacher of Kirkby on Bain Church of England Primary School. She is also a SIAMS inspector and has worked with the DBE before as a Diocesan Associate Adviser.

In these roles, Georgina has developed a wealth of knowledge and experience in church school education. She is extremely well placed to support leaders to further develop the Christian character in church schools.

Georgina will be active across the diocese this year undertaking a range of duties including Headteacher Performance Management, School Improvement and SLA visits. I am sure you will join me in welcoming Georgina to the team.



## **Consultation** on the Proposal for a New Church Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) in the Diocese of Lincoln

Dear Colleague

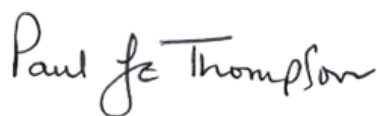
Please find attached to this email, a consultation document, inviting you to share your views on the five Expressions of Interest we have received for establishing a new church MAT in the Diocese of Lincoln.

As a valued and key stakeholder in church school education, your views are very important to the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE).

For your views to be considered as part of the application process, please can you kindly complete and submit the Microsoft form via the link in the letter attached by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2026 (12 noon).

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes



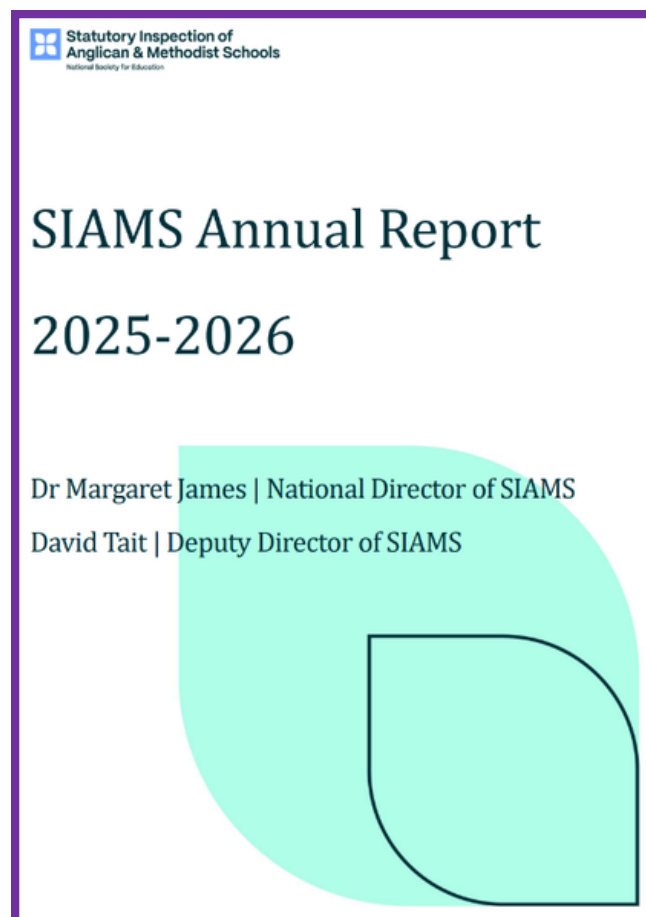
Canon Paul Thompson  
**Diocesan Director of Education**

# SIAMS - Report & Updates

Dr Margaret James (National Director of SIAMS) and David Tait (Deputy Director of SIAMS) have recently published the [2025-26 Annual SIAMS Report](#). This report provides an overview of SIAMS inspections nationwide in the previous academic year. It identifies strengths of church school education, including strong evidence of vision-driven flourishing across the majority of church schools, and raises a few key priorities for further development, including governance, spirituality and RE. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the key messages of this report; we will also be sharing further details at upcoming briefings and training sessions.

## Minor updates to SIAMS inspection framework

The revised Church of England RE [Statement of Entitlement](#) comes into effect from September 2026. There have been some minor updates to the SIAMS inspection framework to reflect the language of this document. This particularly impacts Inspection Questions 6 and 7. You can find the SIAMS inspection framework [here](#).



# Foundation Governor Vacancies



## Great Ponton Church of England Primary School

Could you help our school community continue to flourish?

Great Ponton Church of England Primary School is seeking Foundation Governors to join our dedicated Governing Body.

We are a small school with a big heart, where every child is known, valued, and encouraged to shine. Our size is our strength, allowing us to build meaningful relationships, tailor support to individual needs, and create a genuine sense of belonging for every child and family.

Our Christian values are at the heart of everything we do. They guide our decisions, shape our relationships, and inspire our vision for helping children grow academically, socially, and spiritually. Visitors often comment on the warmth and friendliness of our school community, something we are incredibly proud of.

As a Foundation Governor, you will play an important role in supporting the school's Christian ethos and helping to shape its future. Working alongside fellow governors and school leaders, you will provide support, challenge, and strategic oversight to ensure the very best outcomes for our pupils.

We are looking for someone who:

- Cares about children and their education.
- Wants to make a positive difference in the local community.
- Supports the Christian vision and values of the school.
- Can contribute time, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn.

No previous governance experience is required. Full training and support will be provided. This is a rewarding opportunity to use your skills and experience to help ensure that every child at Great Ponton CofE Primary School continues to thrive, flourish, and reach their full potential.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact the school via email at [enquiries@greatponton.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@greatponton.lincs.sch.uk)

Join us in helping our children grow in wisdom, compassion and confidence.