

Telephone: 020 3837 5152

Mobile: 07826 423 322

Fax: 020 7932 1111

email: penny.roberts@london.anglican.org



London Diocesan House

36 Causton Street

London SW1P 4AU

www.ldbs.co.uk

28th January 2021

Dear Headteachers and Chairs of Governors,

It was a joy to see so many of you at our meeting with Bishop Sarah earlier this month, and very encouraging that conversations which started that evening have been continuing in different ways around the diocese.

As promised, I am writing to share with you a summary of the afternoon.

Bishop Sarah set out the Diocese of London Vision 2030 for every Londoner to experience the love of God in Christ. In Church schools this is often reflected in the vision of flourishing for all in the context of Jesus' invitation into life in all its fullness. Bishop Sarah explained that children and young people are at the very heart of the vision, and she emphasised the important and valued role that Church schools play in furthering the mission of the Diocese. She thanked schools for their exceptional response and ongoing hard work amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

You can read more about Vision 2030 here: <https://www.london.anglican.org/our-2030-vision/>

Thank you to everyone who responded to the LDBS review last term. At the meeting I shared four of the clear themes which emerged:

- The demographics of London are changing: the population is rapidly shrinking in areas which had seen a decade of growth. Many schools face the challenge of falling rolls and financial pressure.
- Although we are still in 'crisis management' mode in relation to Covid-19, it is quite clear that the effects will be with us for years. The needs and priorities of schools may be different after the pandemic than they were before.
- The review highlighted the value of local networks, with the opportunities they provide for problem solving and sharing best practice.
- Many of you highlighted the potential that exists in some places for churches and schools to work more closely together for mutual benefit.

This fourth of these issues was the subject of our break-out discussion groups. Here is a summary of the main themes that you raised in these small groups:

1. It is important that clergy are visible within the school community. Do all staff feel comfortable around the clergy? How is that relationship developed and deepened?
2. Greater clarity is required about how new clergy are inducted into school. Is this a joint responsibility? What role does/should the adviser have in this process?
3. How effectively are we equipping the whole leadership team (not just HT) to lead a Church school?

4. How can we ensure that the partnership between Church and school is balanced? Is there mutual support? Is the partnership evident from the school and church website and newsletters?
5. What opportunities do we provide for all members of staff team to develop an understanding of the Christian faith? What do we do to create opportunities for their spiritual growth?
6. How do schools make families aware of opportunities for their spiritual growth? For example, are there opportunities for them to explore the Christian faith, baptism and confirmation?
7. Greater clarity around admissions would be helpful, particularly with regard to the expectations from the Diocese around open places.
8. Consider the use of/ introduction of school prayer groups.

For all of us, 2020 was a year of dramatic change for the context of our work. Our LDBS commitment to serving and supporting schools does not change; but we know the way we support you will need to change as your own priorities and needs are changing.

Therefore, in the light of Vision 2030, and in response to changing needs including those highlighted by our review and the break-out discussions, this term we are taking a robust approach to reviewing our strategic direction. We are preparing strategic priorities to meet our vision, to address the challenges that face us all, and to provide a clear steer as we look to the future.

We look forward to sharing this work with you in due course: in the meantime, please feel free to get in touch about these or any other issues.

With schools closed for most pupils until at least March this letter comes with sincere thanks for your ongoing resourcefulness and adaptability, and your continued efforts for the benefit of your children, families, and communities.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Roberts". The letters are stylized and connected, with a cursive-like feel.

Penny Roberts
LDBS Executive Chair