**To           :              Headteachers; Chairs of Governors; Foundation Governors; Ex-officio clergy; Deputy Headteachers; RE Coordinators**

(and please forward widely to your contacts & networks)

**From     :               Jeff Williams**

**Date      :               16th  November 2022**

**Re           :              Fortnightly bulletin and resources from the Diocesan Education Team**

Dear colleagues

***‘I’m not really disabled – it’s the environment that disables me’ (Sol)***

This Friday, **Sol, a Northern Irish boy** who uses a **wheelchair** will grace our screens on prime-time BBC evening entertainment. He has a rare form of dwarfism known as SED. His wisdom and life-insights are incredible and humbling in equal measure. I quote him above. For me, his words are a truism. If you have a loved-one in your family or community who uses a wheelchair, you’ll know how Sol’s words may evoke anger, sadness, frustration about some of the challenges that could easily be removed -  but above all, I trust his words inspire and encourage action to see equality and justice for people who use wheelchairs.

**Pause :** *I wonder how your environment (aka school, classroom, church building) disables or enables people with additional physical needs?*

Wheelchair rugby features on our TV screens currently (just mentioning, given Wales’ triumphs!) and you previously heard me enthuse and shout amazement after the paralympic **wheelchair rugby coverage** when I pondered on the pre-PC nomenclature as **‘murderball’** – such is the excitement, physicality and skill of the players.

**Pause :** *Are you aware of surf schools, ski schools, canoe schools and forest trails that enable people who use wheelchairs to enjoy the exhilaration of these sports and activities that able-bodied people take for granted? If not – do enjoy YouTube clips – for admiration, encouragement and enjoyment – and importantly, tell others.*

My able-bodied and super-sporty sister climbed **Kilimanjaro**, so I know the training and pressures involved. Therefore reading about **Matthew Hibbert**’s wheelchair climb this year (he’s now a differently-abled survivor of the 2017 **Manchester Arena Bombing)** and widely publicised (Gold Paralympian) **Aaron Phipps MBE**’s wheelchair climb in 2020, brings full-on ‘respect’. Thousands of people walk **El Camino de Santiago** every year, and I know many of you have walked all or part of the route. I’m currently reading a book recounting the journey by two friends, one of who uses a wheelchair, so was pulled and pushed throughout the route by his mate – an inspiring read (details below)

**Pause :** *How often do you naturally, or intentionally cite such personal or public examples in everyday conversations -  or in prepared talks at school or church?*

Wheelchair basketballer and TV presenter **Ade Olayiwola MBE** is a high-profile and well-known media person who inspires children and adults who use wheelchairs. He offers hope; he encourages high aspirations; he is just – visible! How visible are those in our communities who hail from Global Majority Heritage backgrounds; those people who are differently-abled; or friends, family, learners, teachers, worshippers, leaders, neighbours and others who are marginalised or not represented because of, well, difference? Visibility affirms.

**Pause :** *Do we naturally, instinctively and joyfully present and represent all God’s children - on our walls, publications, conversations and formal talks?*

I volunteered in the deaf community some years ago, and was impacted greatly being told by a deaf person that he understandably felt that parts of the Bible equate disability with sin, and was sad that we read that Jesus ‘heals’ and ‘makes better’ those with disabilities, rather than celebrates their difference – which made him feel ‘officially’ ostracised. There’s some truth in his comments, but the New Testament also encourages us to actively offer hospitality, and value and welcome people with disabilities. It also dawned on me when told that for deaf people, seeing a crucifix says even more to them, as Jesus’ hands (and therefore related to them, his means of communication) was doubly silenced. Recently I had an interesting theological conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair about Imago Dei – being made in the Image of God. Clearly the ‘image of God’ here isn’t meant to be anthropomorphised, but equally, and especially as we approach advent, we recall how God did reveal Himself in human form. Seeing God reflected in the form of someone who uses a wheelchair is something to prompt good discussions with Christian friends/colleagues?

**Pause :**  *How might you and I as individuals, proactively reach out to show Christian love to someone with disability in the coming weeks?*

Thank you for your presence and service in our communities.

**Jeff**

**Let’s talk about disability, wheelchairs and ‘same but different’ :** following my reflection above, may I humbly recommend the following books. Thankfully the percentage of books that feature people with disability is increasing. Such books are people-influencing; good reads; great library purchases; class readers; personal shelf additions and Christmas gifts. Clearly excellent for communities that have someone who uses a wheelchair, but even more important for communities where the experiential and visually present aspect of a wheelchair is unseen.

**For schools, children, churches and any adult like me who benefits from reading *“children’s”* books :**

*What happened to you?* James Catchpole

*The same but different.* Molly Potter

*Winnie’s wonderful wheelchair.* David R. Morgan

*When Charley met Emma.* Amy Webb

*Amazing.* Steve Antony

*Don’t call me special.* Pat Thomas & Lesley Harker

**A book for adults:**

*I’ll push you – A journey of 500 miles, two best friends & one wheelchair on El Camino de Santiago.* Patrick Gray

**Notification of Ofsted inspection** : I receive the official notification email direct from Ofsted that is also sent to Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and Local Authority colleagues. Recently, firewalls and virus blockers have meant that some of these have been delayed, and in the context of minimum notification and often just a one-day inspection, this has compromised our ability to respond and support you. Can I ask Headteachers and Governors to email me please on notification of your inspection, as we are routinely asked to liaise with HMI for a conversation as part of the inspection, and to organise diocesan representation at the feedback meeting. Thank you.

**Potential or actual media engagement with a Diocesan School :** as schools that are designated as Church of England, broader media considerations apply. Sometimes the media will inappropriately infer or state a school’s / Headteacher’s quote as representative of the Diocese and/or The Church of England. You are good at alerting me to any press or radio/tv interest or potential matter developing in your context – thank you. Can I place a general reminder, but specifically to new HTs and new Chairs of Governors that you always need to liaise with me, even if the LA is supporting any media matter. We work closely with LA media officers, but I must always agree any release, quote or interview, given that ‘CofE’ will be the focus, even if the matter seems simple and uncontroversial, leave alone concerning sensitive matters. For Winchester Diocesan schools, please note that Luther Pendragon is no longer our PR partner, so would you please remove email and phone contacts with LPD colleagues**. For any potential media matter, or reactive media issue, please always contact me, and copy my pa. For ease of reference and to save, details are :** **Jeff.williams@portsmouth.anglican.org****Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org** **Tel :  07841 020836 and 02392 899680**  I will then liaise with our PR / Comms colleagues and will ensure we support you. Thank you.

**SIAMS – Briefings with Diocesan Education Advisors** : There is a new framework for SIAMS inspections from September 2023. Richard Wharton and Sue Bowen are offering virtual briefings to explain the changes and discuss what these will mean for schools in terms of ongoing practice and preparing for inspection. This will be helpful for all schools, whether or not they are due for inspection in the near future. If you would like to attend one of the dates below, please contact my pa Sam.Powell@portsmouth.anglican.org who will send you a MS Teams link:

Tuesday 29th November : 9.30-11.00am

Wednesday 30th November : 1.30-3.00pm

Thursday 8th December : 1.30-3.00pm

Friday 9th December 9.30-11.00am

**Christingle :** details of service ideas and practical arrangements are attached from The Children’s Society.

**Reverse Advent Calendar :** last year a number of schools/classes and Church groups took on this initiative. Attached is an example, but you can easily tailor-make one for your setting. Enjoy!

**Christmas Projects : An Angel Just Like Me & The Christmas Star:** both of these projects have been launched with details circulated. *The Christmas Star* is a children’s book about ‘how even the smallest and humblest of stars can shine.’ The book has beautiful, culturally sensitive illustrations and we have written an accompanying reflection that can be used in Collective Worship or as a class reflection in both church schools and community schools. It would also be ideal for children’s groups in parishes. The resources can be found on the [Diocesan websites](https://www.winchester.anglican.org/about-us/education-schools/resources-for-schools/project-booklets-and-resources/) The reflections would tie in well with the Church of England [Follow the Star](https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/advent-and-christmas-resources) Christmas materials, and our [Diocesan Christmas Project,](https://www.winchester.anglican.org/about-us/education-schools/resources-for-schools/project-booklets-and-resources/) based on the children’s book *An Angel Just Like Me,* which encourages schools and churches to explore the cultural stereotypes they may have around the Christmas story.

**Pop UK Christmas Songs** : Pop UK have produced some free Christmas resources for collective worship, such as the Shepherds’ Song with a rap, which can be downloaded [here](https://www.popuk.org/shepherds-song?dm_i=76M0,ANSU,15G6E9,1ABMJ,1)

**Academisation Consultation : Phase 3 meetings : all schools need to attend, despite current government uncertainties**

As promised when we met before the summer holidays, at the next Phase of meetings I will outline a range of structures, models and academy destinations that the Diocesan Board of Education will consider. When the DBE is close to coming to a decision, we will engage in Phase 4 discussions with you. If there are specific questions or areas you’d like me to consider including at the next series of meetings, please email my pa Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org

**Please note** – **despite the current silence on Academisation, we still need a diocesan policy for those schools opting to become academies, and indeed for our Stand Alone Academies in determining their MAT destinations (and for all schools if/when the total academisation agenda is implemented). It is therefore really important that all schools are represented in these consultation meetings as the policy will apply to all schools. Your views and feedback to the DBE as it determines the policy are critical and will be binding for all CofE schools in our two dioceses.**

**It’s important that places are booked in advance** – please contact my pa Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org Thank you.

*(Thursday 10th November,  1.30pm – 3.30pm - St Pauls Church, Oak Road, Bursledon, Southampton, SO31 8DU*

*Thursday 10th November,  6pm-8pm. Online – MS Teams*

*Monday 14TH November, 10am-12pm – St Barnabas Church, Fromond Road, Winchester SO22 6DS*

*Tuesday 15th November, 10am-12pm – St Katharine’s School, Rolls Drive, Southbourne, Bournemouth BH6 4NA)*

**Tuesday 22nd November 12pm-2pm** – Christ the King College, Wellington Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5QT

**Wednesday 23rd November 10am-12pm** – Diocesan Office, Peninsular House, Wharf Road, Portsmouth PO2 8HB – no parking on site, please park at the ferry terminal (5 min walk)

**Prayer Cards for our Ukranian families.** Please see the creative prayer cards on our websites – we commend these to schools and parishes where you have Ukranian children and families. We’d be pleased if these could be forwarded widely to support schools and parishes who may not routinely receive this Bulletin.

<https://www.winchester.anglican.org/about-us/education-schools/resources-for-schools/prayers/>

<https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/education/resources/prayer/>

**Free : Natural Nations biodiversity training at HCC, Clarendon House, Winchester :** The LA has been working on an Erasmus+ project about biodiversity in school grounds and offer free training on the project & free resources will be available in the new year. The project covers four themes: **Habitats, Pollinators, Birds, Minibeasts** -  with resources for each theme: Information & lesson ideas across a range of curriculum areas; Surveys for school grounds & local spaces; Video animations demonstrating the surveys; A website for schools to upload their data for analysis by the team at Lund University in Sweden. The target age is upper primary and lower secondary, with adaptations for those with additional needs and younger pupils. **Sign up for one session : 1pm-5pm on 28th or 29th November, Clarendon House, Monarch Way, Winchester SO22 5PW** (flyer attached)

**2022-23 Diocesan Education Project – ‘Everyday Ubuntu : Growing & Developing Together’ :** our project was recently launched. Project details attached and can  be located at : <https://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/education/resources/projects/ubuntu/>                 <https://www.winchester.anglican.org/?s=%22Everyday+Ubuntu%22>

**Flourishing Together: CofE Foundation for Educational Leadership National Conference 2023.** The conference will take place on Friday 27th January 2023 at Union Chapel and St. Mary Magdalene Academy, Islington, London. Details on speakers, workshops and how to register can be found [here](https://url6.mailanyone.net/scanner?m=1od6OK-0001ZI-4l&d=4%7Cmail%2F14%2F1664268600%2F1od6OK-0001ZI-4l%7Cin6d%7C57e1b682%7C11094928%7C7440907%7C6332BAC468C05CC554BC9B5323DA411A&s=4iiaS4G_-o0yzyePZnBPx0lcP8Q&o=%2Fphth%3A%2Fctsnhurlfegcof.anrfaodt4nms0t%2F9.e3353).

Jeff Williams

Director of Education

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