

The Bishop of Carlisle
The Right Reverend James Newcome
Bishop's House, Ambleside Road,
Keswick CA12 4DD

22 September 2020

To: Headteachers of Church Schools

Dear Headteacher

Now that the Autumn Term is well under way I am writing to let you know how tremendously grateful we all are for the imagination, good humour and sheer hard work that has gone into making all our schools such safe and enjoyable places for our children to be. Attendance across the county has been remarkably high, and the pupils (and parents), with whom I have spoken, have been outstandingly positive. So – thank you very much indeed for such energetic and inspirational leadership.

However I am aware of some of the underlying problems you are now having to face, not least with regard to finance – and, of course, the ongoing burden of cleaning. All that comes on top of illness (staff as well as children) and levels of fatigue that we would not normally expect at this stage of term.

So I do hope that the 'Heads Huddles' are proving to be a source of encouragement and support for you, together with the online briefings and training opportunities provided by our Board of Education. Knowing that we are not alone in having to overcome so many obstacles doesn't take them away – but may make the task a little easier to bear; as too can the reminder that the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith', Jesus, is always with us and will never let us go.

Indeed, perseverance is a constant theme in the Bible, and the present situation provides us with an opportunity to commend it, both by word and example, as a key Christian virtue. None of us knows quite what is going to happen next; and, to quote Gilda Radner, most of us have learned, the hard way, that 'some poems don't rhyme and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end'.

But we all keep going – and if, along the way, there are other things we could and should be doing to help, please don't hesitate to let us know. The vital ministry of education is a privilege we share together, and this letter comes not only to express our gratitude but also to assure you of our continuing prayers – for you and for the school communities you serve so faithfully.

With best wishes and many thanks,

Yours ever,

