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To: Headteachers, CEOs, Chairs of Governors and Trustees of Church schools

Dear colleagues,

Yesterday the Secretary of State for Education published, “Opportunity for all”, his Schools White Paper. The White Paper includes much that we will want to digest over the coming weeks. We welcome the pledge to invest in teachers, including in relation to starting salaries, as long as there is funding to match. We will also want to respond carefully to the consultation that is being launched in relation to the long-awaited SEND Green Paper which has been published today.

However, this letter is about one of the intentions in the White Paper, namely the academisation of all schools. The government envisages that “by 2030 all schools will be in a strong multi-academy trust or with plans to join or form one” which means that “most trusts will be on a trajectory to either serve a minimum of 7,500 pupils or run at least 10 schools.”

As I explained to Headteachers at our recent conference in Poole, for several months the LDBS has been working behind the scenes with other dioceses to represent the interests of Church schools in England to the DfE, as well as considering how we might move forward together in London as a strong family of schools.

You will know better than anyone that we are an inclusive and successful family: together, we serve a diverse cohort of 58,000 children and young people, who make better-than-expected progress and attain highly in our schools. The Voluntary Aided model has served most of our schools very well, and our Single and Multi-Academy Trusts have also enjoyed significant success. Each school is unique and each one is strengthened by connections with its parish and community.

The White Paper will be received differently across the communities we serve. Our priority is to work with all Church schools to make sure that, as a family, we embrace the opportunities without compromising our distinctiveness or strengths so that children and young people can continue to flourish.

How you can get involved

As I outlined in Poole, I plan to set up a Headteacher Consultation Group to provide direct input as we weigh the range of options and models that are open to us in developing strategy. We would like to include a Headteacher from each borough and to include maintained and academy schools. The initial commitment for those joining the group is to monthly meetings in the summer term as well as working with your LDBS adviser to co-ordinate local feedback and opportunities for discussion so that every school has a voice. If you are interested in joining this group please email academies@london.anglican.org by Tuesday 19 April with a (short!) email outlining why you would like to join and what you think you can offer.

We are also keen to hear from Chairs of Governors and Chairs of Academy Trusts who would like to play an active role in this process.

Heads and Chairs are also most welcome to use this same email address to get in touch directly, at any time, with questions, comments and views. We will consider everything that is raised and respond through a dedicated page on our website <https://ldbs.co.uk/academies-strategy/> , the Headteacher Consultation Group and deanery meetings.

We will also provide updates through our Friday bulletin (to subscribe please contact stuart.webster@london.anglican.org).

Dr Simon Camby led an excellent session at the conference about being adaptive school leaders. Thank you for the way you have continually adapted to the complex challenges of the last two years, and I look forward to working with you as we seek to serve our children and young people through the changes that the next few years will bring.

As we head towards the end of term and the much-deserved Easter break I invite you to join with me in praying that, in the words of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the living flame of the Easter hope may be a steady guide as we face the future.

Yours sincerely,



Penny Roberts MBE

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