



DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

Bishop's House, East Denton Hall, 800 West Road, Newcastle, NE5 2BJ
Tel: 0191 228 0003 | Fax: 0191 274 0432 | Email: bishop.robert@rcdhn.org.uk | Web: www.rcdhn.org.uk

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Dear Headteacher

It was a year ago yesterday that I was installed as Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle and exactly a year ago today that I had the pleasure of meeting you and your pupils at the special event at St Mary's Cathedral. I remember that day with fondness. I was moved by the welcome and by the gifts that I received. To be warmly welcomed by the Diocesan family of schools in such a way and to see first-hand your commitment to the mission of the Catholic education within the Diocese was overwhelming.

With the emergence and spread of COVID-19, we are now all facing a significant and unprecedented challenge. Public Mass and worship have ceased. People are being advised by the government to socially distance themselves where possible, or to self-isolate. Headteachers and school staff have found themselves to be integral to the collective response to the virus, to the support of vulnerable children, and to the maintenance of the provision of public services and the NHS.

I have been kept informed by Deborah Fox of the expectations that have been put on you and of the very generous and selfless ways in which you and those in our school communities have responded. I am especially proud of the efforts that have been made to support the most vulnerable children and families in our school communities and beyond. These actions are a real testimony to our Catholic faith.

I would like to encourage you and to affirm you at this very difficult time. Please be assured of my prayers and spiritual support as you face the daily challenges. I pray that you, your family and loved ones, and all in our school communities stay safe and experience the presence of God at this time.

With every good wish and blessing

✠ Rt Rev Robert Byrne CO
Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

