

1st December 2020

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

As we reach the end of this second lockdown, after ten months of restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, we, as the Diocesan Board of Education, are writing to share our concerns over the continued pressures faced by the leaders of our schools across the Diocese of Truro.

Our school leaders face unprecedented times – unprecedented in terms of challenge and in terms of lasting impact. We appreciate that there are many competing priorities in this time, however we must note that there are key issues which would relieve some of the pressures they are dealing with.

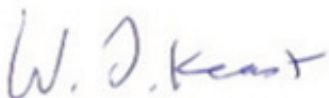
I attach a paper presented to us by our Director of Education to help you to understand the experiences of school leaders in an area that is largely far less affected by the pandemic than many others. This is what the new normal feels like in schools across Cornwall.

Some key issues emerge from this paper, which we wish to draw to your attention immediately.

- Will Ofsted inspection resume in January?
If Yes, in what format and with what focus?
- Will formal assessment happen as per 2019 and prior years in the summer of 2021?
If Yes, how will it be fair to those who have had long periods of absence due to Covid?
- How can the long-term impact of current financial burdens be carried forward into budgetary decisions later?
How can money spent on supply now be spent on staffing later?

These are not the only challenges, but they are current and pressing. We would welcome reassurance that they are recognised and being taken into account by your Department going forward, so that our school leaders can feel they have your support in facing the challenges remaining this term and into 2021.

Yours sincerely



John Keast, OBE
Chair, Truro Diocesan Board of Education