



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **EDUCATION AND MISSION: SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND FAMILIES**

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I. INTRODUCTION

There are both challenges and opportunities in the current educational landscape, especially for schools. Among the challenges are increasing financial pressures, growing population, recruitment, and relentless focus on standards. Among our opportunities are new, formal relationships between the diocese and a range of different types of schools and colleges, especially in Multi-Academy Trusts; an increasing urgency of vision; new resources, and stronger diocesan training for teachers and ministers for richer service in schools.

The mission of the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Education is to:

- Promote life in all its fullness through Education across Essex and East London.
- Support transforming presence that offers life enhancing encounters with Jesus Christ.
- Provide schools of Christian character for the common good.
- Our priorities are to resource and equip schools, colleges and parishes to
 - go more deeply,
 - range more widely
 - relate more closely

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

(i) Academies

- Although it is no longer government policy for every school to become an academy, academisation remains the trend. Among our 139 schools, 37 are already or in process of becoming academies. Many more are considering the options.

- The diocese's own Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust, currently has 16 primary schools, with 2 more in process. It has developed a good track record of school improvement. It continues to strengthen its practical Christian identity.
- Our strategy has been to develop a range of MAT provision for church schools such that a good home is available to every school that wishes to become an academy or is required to convert. As well as the Vine there are:
 - Church school led MATs. There are currently (or in process) 6 of these.
 - HEARTS (Wickford and Basildon area)
 - Great Oak (Gt Chesterford and Debden)
 - Canonium (Kelvedon)
 - Genesis (Walthamstow and Barking)
 - All Saints (Halstead and (Feering – projected))
 - Mid Essex (Shenfield and (Mountnessing – projected))
 - New formal partnerships through which the Diocese becomes a shareholder in carefully chosen existing or new Trusts. There are 6 of these either established or in process. They are:
 - Burnt Mill (Harlow, Epping and Newham areas)
 - Osborne Trust (Thurrock and Brentwood area)
 - Samuel Ward (Havering and Suffolk area)
 - Epping Forest Partnership (Loughton and Epping area)
 - E-MAT (Essex area)
 - LIFE (Havering)
- **This third development offers new opportunities for churches and Mission and Ministry Units (MMUs) to connect with schools that are not church schools.**
- There are currently 32 schools that are not church schools in these partner MATs. 6 of them are Secondary schools.
- Taken together, the Vine Schools Trust, our church school led MATs and new partner MATs serve some 28,000+ pupils (not all in our diocese).
- The church schools of the diocese (LA maintained schools and academies) also serve approx 28,000 pupils.
- **All the schools that now belong in some way to our extended diocesan family - whether church schools or not –serve about 46,000 children.**

(ii) Renewed Vision and Resources

The Church of England Vision for Education, *Deeply Christian Serving the Common Good* was published in Autumn 2016. It stresses our priorities for education that promotes Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity rooted in scripture and the Christian narrative. It reaffirms the hope that children should be offered a 'life enhancing encounter with Jesus Christ'. This vision, together with *Transforming Presence*, is foundational to the Board of Education's new Mission Statement published in 2017.

- The recently established Church of England **Foundation for Educational Leadership** offers new courses and resource and held two national conferences. Bishop Stephen addressed the February 2018 event.
- A new and stronger **church school inspection framework** (SIAMS) will be introduced in 2018. Training for schools has already begun in advance of its publication.
- Some 60 schools have now engaged in the training we are delivering to use a new Religious Education course, **Understanding Christianity**. Its key purpose is to help teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and understanding of the Christian faith as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.
- The diocese has now held four well-attended annual **Being Good News in Schools** day conferences around the diocese, most recently at Loughton on February 3rd on the theme of '*Creatively sharing the love of Jesus*'. They are designed to inspire, affirm and equip the many people, especially volunteers, who give their time and energy to a wide variety of school ministries.
- **Cathedral ministry** with young people and schools is growing and expanding. Regular *Church School Days* offer the chance for primary pupils to walk through the whole Bible narrative in story, music and activity. Schools that are not *church* schools are welcomed through a developing programme.
- 1000's of **Lord's Prayer cards** have been printed and are being distributed across the diocese. A new leaflet has been published of **50 ideas** to help churches and schools to connect. Children themselves are being invited to '**Have your say**' about what we could or should be doing.
- A first day conference about **Chaplaincy** is being organised by one of our school chaplains in Brentwood in the autumn.
- An outstanding development in Chaplaincy is the provision established at the **London Design and Engineering University Technical College** in Newham. This UTC is the only one nationally co-sponsored by an Anglican diocese. About 50% of students are engaged in some sort of Chaplaincy activity. Something of this unfolding story will be shared with Synod.

(iii) Professional Training

- Our new diocesan **Church School Leadership Course** ran successfully 2016-17 and another is planned for 2018-19. As well as supporting serving and aspiring headteachers, its aim is to deepen vision and understanding of Christian education for teachers earlier in their career. The course includes two residentials as well as seminars across the academic year and is accredited by Anglia Ruskin University.
- In their first year, our **curates** spend a day engaging with education, especially collective worship and church school ministry. Included in the programme is a

chance to engage with a headteacher and parish priest who work closely together. In their second year they are now offered a week long placement in a church school and opportunity to reflect theologically about priestly presence in schools. This programme is perhaps now the most developed in the Church of England.

3. SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND FAMILIES

The Church's mission through education, formal and informal, in churches and schools, is not just about engaging with young people themselves. Listening to the voices of children and young people is a vital starting point. But our work in Education can open new doors also to local mission and ministry with parents and whole families. The challenge for mission through education and ministry with young people is too fundamental to be left to diocesan education departments!

A recent paper sent at the Archbishops' request to diocesan bishops argues for a 'radical and necessary transformation in church culture'. It poses the question, 'How do we ensure better integration of schools, churches and families in diocesan strategies and in deanery (and, for us, MMU) and parish mission planning?'. It asks also 'Where is the voice of children and young people in the structural life of the church at Diocesan, Deanery (and MMU) and parish level?'

Although it makes a number of specific suggestions about equipping church leaders and about ministry strategy, its main aim is to trigger wide discussion in dioceses. Culture change does not come from 'quick fix' bullet points.

There are more adults in English churches who work in Education than any other sector¹ (including the retired and not employed). As well as these professionals, there are huge numbers of volunteers such as school governors and church based activity leaders. One element in changing the culture might to affirm and make these ministries more visible in the way we do church. For example, can we share more widely stories and practical examples of what is working? In 2017 there was a very well attended series of roadshows called *School for Disciples* intending that every church in Chelmsford Diocese should be a School for disciples. Our schools need disciples in them too. We need disciples to connect with and listen to children and young people and their parents and families.

The new structural relationship with more schools that is developing through the MAT programme ('range more widely'), is one example of creating new opportunities for service and mission. How they are taken, rests on local church communities (not just clergy) to take intentional and sustained steps to 'relate more closely'.

Can we renew a practical and sustained commitment to develop a *culture* across the whole diocese so that more children and their parents may have life enhancing encounters with Jesus Christ that 'go more deeply'?

¹ Source: 'Talking Jesus: Perceptions of Jesus, Christians and evangelism in England' (Barna Group, Sept 2015)

4. MOTION

The Archdeacon of West Ham as Chair of the DBE to move that:

'This Synod:

- i) Note the Diocesan Board of Education mission statement: go more deeply, range more widely, relate more closely*
- ii) Affirm the work of the diocesan Vine Schools Trust, welcome the more recent development of new partnerships with other Multi Academy Trusts, and note the extended opportunities these partnerships provide for churches and schools to engage*
- iii) Require Mission and Ministry Units and local churches to give due priority to their work with their local schools and colleges, including exploration of new models and provision for chaplaincy in schools.'*