

Introduction

An important characteristic of Anglicanism is its generous and open commitment to education. Most Anglican parishes offer opportunities for children, young people and adults to learn more about the faith and about themselves. Anglican churches and halls are often used to host educational and cultural activities. Wherever the Anglican Church flourishes, it has created schools and universities or colleges. Usually these initiatives have welcomed pupils and students regardless of their own faith background.

As a reader of this book, you are almost certain to be involved in this Anglican enterprise of education. You may be a governor, a teacher, a member of staff, or a parent at an Anglican school. You may be, or have been, a pupil or student at an Anglican school or college. You may have been to Sunday school, scouts, guides, playgroup or adult education class run in church premises, probably partly funded or subsidized by the church. A great many people in England and Wales have been in contact at some point in their lives with the Anglican Church's educational work. You are probably now making, or planning to make, a significant contribution to this work as a governor or as a teacher in an Anglican school.

This book serves as an introduction to Church schools generally and Church of England and Church in Wales schools in particular. It is designed to help teachers, other staff and governors understand how their work fits into the vision of a Church school as a whole. It cannot be a comprehensive guide. It contains, however, a number of routes into the most comprehensive resource for Church schools that has been produced by the National Society in its 200-year history. The web site to which this book serves as an introduction is available to every Church of

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England and Church in Wales school. All the issues in this book are considered in more detail in the Church school management section of the National Society's web site, which can be accessed by using the following address: <http://www.churchschools.co.uk>. The Church schools management section of the web site is organized so that it is easy to use if you need more information about a topic mentioned in this book. Since the site was launched, it has continued to develop with detailed information on all aspects of the management of Church schools. The book and the web site together are intended to complement and support the help, advice and training available from the diocese.

Every diocese has a diocesan director of education (DDE) with a professional team responsible to the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) for supporting the work of schools and colleges in the diocese. If you do not know how to contact your diocesan director of education, your school will be able to give you this information or you can contact the National Society.

Before reading the main sections on different aspects of Church schools, it is important to put today's Church schools in their historical context. Many of our schools have their roots in the generosity and foresight of Christians who lived at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. At this time there was a great movement to provide formal education for all children in England and Wales, which included initiatives taken by SPCK, the Sunday School Movement, the Welsh Trust, the Gruffydd Jones' Circulating Schools and some enlightened landowners who provided schools for the children of the poor of their parishes. This movement was given focus by two great Church societies: the British and Foreign Schools Society acted on behalf of the Free Churches and the National Society on behalf of the Church of England (which then included Wales). The National Society continues in active support of Christian education throughout England and Wales.

Between 1800 and 1870 most of the schools founded to provide elementary education for the children of the poor were established by the Churches, albeit with some help from government grants to the two Societies and building grants to individual schools. Only after the Education Act 1870 were schools provided by School Boards (from 1902, School Boards were replaced by the new Local Education Authorities). Since 1870 the partnership between Church and State has developed through a series of changes and reforms that reflect the demand for higher standards of educational achievement for all our children.

When the first edition of this book was written the most recent reform was the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which contained an important reaffirmation of the partnership in education between Church and State.

In November 1998, the work of Church schools was debated at the meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England. Although there were some criticisms of particular events or policies in individual Church schools, no one spoke against the Church's involvement in education or the existence of Church schools within the maintained system. At the end of the debate, the Synod passed the following resolution without a single member voting against it:

That this Synod, believing that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation:

(a) strongly urge:

- (i) Diocesan Synods, in the light of the School Standards and Framework Act, to review the resources available to Diocesan Boards of Education to enable them to be involved in all aspects of statutory education;
- (ii) each PCC to discuss how it can serve all schools in the parish;

- (iii) each PCC to commit itself to the greatest possible active support for Church schools in its area;
- (iv) each Deanery Synod to consider how it can assist parishes in providing active support for Church schools which serve several parishes within its area;
- (b) welcome the opportunities for Church schools to move to the voluntary aided category and encourages dioceses to support governors in so doing, where appropriate; and
- (c) invite the Archbishops' Council to review the achievements of Church schools and to make proposals for the future development of Church schools and Church colleges of further and higher education.

In autumn 1999, the Bench of Bishops considered the contribution of Anglican schools to the work of the Church in Wales. They approved the following statement:

The Bench of Bishops of the Church in Wales:

- Supports the continuing contribution of the Church in Wales to the dual system of education in England and Wales;
- Acknowledges the role of the National Society in enabling this support to be effective;
- Encourages the Church's Provincial and Diocesan Education Officers to develop their work in statutory education in co-operation with the Local Education Authorities and the National Assembly;
- Welcomes the new opportunities presented to the Church in Wales by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- Supports, subject to the decision of the Diocesan Trust, any voluntary controlled school wishing to change its status to that of a voluntary aided school;

- Maintains that Church schools are central to the Church's mission to the nation;
- Invites the whole church community at parochial, deanery, diocesan and provincial level to share in this vision and to promote teaching as a Christian vocation.

These resolutions represented an enthusiastic endorsement and affirmation of the role of Church schools and all who work in them. Following the debate in the General Synod, the Archbishops' Council set up a Review Group, chaired by Lord Dearing and of which Archbishop Rowan Williams was a member, to develop a strategy for the future of Church schools. Their final report, *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium*, was published in June 2001.

In the meantime, significant alterations to the funding of capital and maintenance work in voluntary aided schools in England had been negotiated between the Churches and the Government. These changes were enshrined in an Order approved by Parliament in March 2002. In November 2001, the General Synod debated *The Way Ahead* and passed the following resolution adopting the strategies within the report as the Church of England's official policy:

That this Synod ask

- The whole church to build up the relationships described in the report, especially to ensure that Church schools are distinctively Christian institutions, rooted in the life of the parishes whilst being open to the diverse communities they serve;
- The dioceses actively to explore the opportunities for new Church schools, bearing in mind the Church of England's historic mission to serve the whole nation and its special care for areas of social disadvantage and the desirability for such schools to be ecumenically based;

- The whole church at every level to promote the vocation to teach, and in partnership with the Church Colleges of Higher Education to explore ways of supporting the professional and spiritual development of Christian teachers;
- The Archbishops' Council to require each of its boards, councils and committees to discuss the implications of the report for their respective areas of responsibility and to draw up appropriate action plans to implement its recommendations;
- The Archbishops' Council to monitor progress on the implementation of the report's recommendations and to report back to Synod in due course;

And that this monitoring of progress pay particular attention (i) to the enhancement of the distinctively Christian ethos and approach in Church Colleges of Higher Education; and (ii) to the appointment of committed Christian staff in these Colleges where these may be made on the basis of merit for the posts.

In July 2002, Royal Assent was given to the Education Act 2002, which introduced the next round of educational reforms. The first edition of this book was published in January 2000 and has sold out. Since then, there have been a number of legislative changes and developments in Church education policy. Thus, instead of another impression, this is a new edition, which has been extensively rewritten, incorporating significant new material. Education policy and practice change constantly however. This edition has been prepared at the point when many of the regulations that follow the Education Act 2002 have yet to be published. Details of the implications of these regulations for Church schools will be explored on the National Society's web site as soon as possible after the regulations have been published. It seems likely that this edition will need to be replaced in two or three years' time. There is no hope of producing a volume that will stand for all time.

The publication of *The Way Ahead*, the first major Anglican report on schools and colleges for 30 years, is very significant for Church schools and all who work in them. For this reason, every chapter of this book begins with a quotation from the report. Hard copies of the report can be bought from Church House Bookshop and it can be downloaded from www.natsoc.org.uk. An accompanying video, *The Challenge of a Lifetime*, designed to stimulate local discussion of the report, can be borrowed from your diocesan director of education. We hope that this book and the accompanying material will help you to enjoy the work that you do in the Church's schools.

'Church schools', where it is used as a general term in the text, refers to all those schools in the maintained system in England and Wales that have a Church of England/Church in Wales foundation, or where the Anglican Church is a significant partner. This includes many schools in the voluntary and foundation categories. It also includes Academies that are Church of England foundations or that have a relationship with the Church of England, but there are no detailed comments here about such Academies, which are as yet few in number. Many independent schools also have an explicit Anglican foundation or character. They are Church schools and much in this book should be helpful to them but, since the law does not apply to such schools in the same way as to maintained schools, this book does not directly refer to them.

Broadly the book lays out the principles; the web site provides greater detail and the legal references. For example the section on the curriculum contains statements about the different requirements for religious education in different categories of school. If you wish, you can use the web site to check where these requirements are detailed in the law of education. The web site will also alert you to other issues related to religious education, which could affect the situation in a particular school.

Education law changes – between 1986 and 2002 there were 16

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Education Acts. The principles on which Anglican schools are organized are more constant. That is why the aim is for the book to deal with these principles and for the web site to deal with the details of the law. Inevitably this book must contain some detail, some of which experience suggests will become obsolete before a new edition. The web site will be regularly updated as far as possible to ensure that it reflects the current state of the law of education.

A word of warning

No publication, however sophisticated, can cover every event and every incident. These materials are not a substitute for seeking advice from your diocesan director of education or the National Society. This book is intended to serve as a general introduction to the governance and management of a Church school.

We publish with the benefit of excellent legal advice, but there will be further changes in education law and there are varying local practices. There may be ideas for improvement that can be incorporated in a third edition. Please help the process of improvement by contacting us.

If you wish to make contact, please write to us at:

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We hope that you find the material useful in your work.



Church House Publishing has published *The Way Ahead*.

For particular information about the quality of education in Church schools you should refer to:

The National Society's Handbook for Inspection under Section 23 (third edition), The National Society/Church House Publishing, 2000

or (for independent schools)

Christian Character, The National Society/Church House Publishing, 2001.

More detail on all the issues raised in the introduction can be found on www.churchschools.co.uk.