

# Proposals for increased provision

- 5.1** The present provision of Church schools is largely the product of the huge commitment made by the Church to providing elementary education for the poor in the nineteenth century and different decisions taken by individual dioceses over many decades. It does not reflect the needs of a Church that sees its schools at the centre of its mission to the nation. Against that criterion, it is seriously lacking.
- 5.2** The current provision is characterized by:
- a major imbalance between the provision of places in primary as opposed to secondary schools, i.e. in 2000:  
774,000 primary places  
150,000 secondary places
- which means that taking a national overview only one in five children in a Church primary school can be offered a place in a Church secondary school, although there are considerable disparities in access from place to place;
- large discrepancies in provision between dioceses, with six dioceses having no secondary schools;
  - under-representation in the suburbs and especially in outer London;
  - more Voluntary Controlled than Voluntary Aided schools: 2,638 Controlled as against 2,058 Aided, with major differences between one diocese and another.
- 5.3** In Appendix 2 we offer an analysis of the current provision of Church schools by diocese.
- 5.4** We do not wish to argue for uniformity. Decisions have been taken in the past for good reasons, and often there is no one course that is better than another in all respects. But such past decisions taken for good reasons do not mean that they are still the best for the present time. The present is a time when society is more secular than ever before, but partly because of this many parents are seeking education for their children in Church schools. The main national political parties are showing goodwill to a constructive partnership with the Churches in the provision of education. At local level, too, many authorities are welcoming to Church schools and working in a spirit of partnership in the local structures established under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. This, therefore, is a time of welcome to the Church in education, and a time when the Church schools offer the gospel to a large number, young and old, who would not choose to attend formal church services.

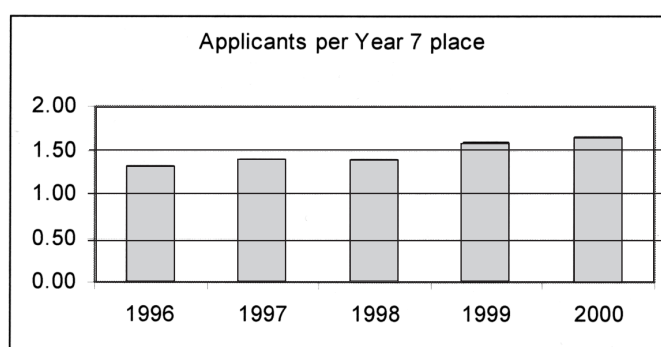
- 5.5** It is not simply in the secondary sector that there is a large imbalance in provision between dioceses. By applying a demographic analysis to the number of Church schools, we have found that our primary provision varies markedly from one diocese to another, with a diocese at one extreme having only about one tenth of the provision of the best provided diocese. That represents a large difference in provision. Dioceses that are particularly underprovided in primary schools are the densely populated urban dioceses in the south east and the industrial north and midlands. These have been the areas of rapid population growth and housing development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Suburban areas are generally underprovided. For some of those dioceses to aim for the national average provision for Church primary schools would mean doubling or even tripling their primary provision. That is not feasible even as a long-term possibility for those dioceses, but the imbalances in primary provision should prompt some dioceses with below average provision to seek an increase. We already know of schemes being undertaken by some dioceses to do this.
- 5.6** Accordingly, we recommend that dioceses should review their existing primary provision with a view to improving it in the light of identified local need as a long-term aim where the present provision is seen to be very low. We suggest that dioceses should use the well-known national average statistic that one in four primary schools is a Church of England school (educating about one in five pupils) as a possible reference point for beginning to identify future need. Statistics are of course no more than a starting point, but they are useful in suggesting areas for examination.
- 5.7** It is important to say here in relation to our recommendations for an increase in both primary and secondary provision, that the Church is not in the business of creating surplus places by displacing other schools that are already providing valued service to the community. Its task is to respond to need and to work by agreement with partners at local level. It must proceed by consent, recognizing that other providers will have their own legitimate aspirations.

### **Church of England secondary schools: an invitation and a challenge**

- 5.8** In our July 2000 interim report to the Archbishops' Council, we commented on the big disparity in provision between our primary and secondary schools, and drew attention to the large geographical gaps in our secondary provision. In large areas of England and Wales, it is not possible to attend a Church of England (or Church in Wales) secondary school simply because there are none there. We invited all dioceses to consider the feasibility of increasing their secondary provision by the equivalent of two schools (or three if the diocese had no secondary school or only one) over the next five years. That would mean the equivalent of 100 additional Church of England secondary schools if our challenge could eventually be realized across all the dioceses. That, in itself, would only go a modest part of the way to reducing the current mismatch of 625,000 places between our primary and secondary schools. Our demographic analysis has shown that even to go half-way towards parity of provision with our primary schools, we would need an additional 250 secondary schools. We made this

observation in order to illustrate the need to improve the current balance of provision.

- 5.9** In making our recommendation in July 2000, we were conscious of the unsatisfied demand for places in many Church of England secondary schools. A recent survey we carried out with the cooperation of the Association of Anglican Secondary School Headteachers confirmed large levels of over subscription for places at many Church secondary schools. Some 80 secondary schools took part in our survey. In these schools the average level of over subscription in 2000 was 1.6 applicants per Year 7 place as compared with 1.3 applicants per place in 1996 (with a steadily increasing ratio in the intervening years).



- 5.10** We know that a number of dioceses are already making plans to increase their secondary school provision, or have long-term aspirations to do so. During the course of our work a number of new Church schools have been announced and two new Church of England secondary schools have opened in the Diocese of Bradford, which together provide places for some 2,500 pupils. The challenges of such an ambitious programme of expansion as has been undertaken in Bradford are very great indeed and will continue into the future, but this example indicates what can be achieved where there is strong local support from the community, a strong and creative partnership with the local education authority, and a commitment to inclusiveness.
- 5.11** In their consultation responses, dioceses have shown that they see differing scope and opportunities for the development of secondary provision. Whilst some are keen to expand provision and are actively engaged in discussion with local partners, some others have pointed out that their capacity for expansion is constrained by local demographic factors, and have pointed to the fact of falling rolls and increasing numbers of surplus places in their areas generally. Some dioceses have said that they would prefer to consolidate and strengthen their existing provision before attempting any expansion, and to develop better links with Community or independent schools. Many dioceses have said that while they want to increase secondary provision they see it as a longer-term process than the five years we suggested last summer. Others have pointed out that their limited financial resources are an inhibiting factor to expansion.

- 5.12** Since dioceses made their responses to the Consultation Report the Government has published its Green Paper on Schools (CM 5050) which widens the scope for faith communities in education, and proposes a reduction in the governors' capital contribution to the costs of Voluntary Aided schools from 15 to 10 per cent. This will enlarge the opportunities for increased Church provision in partnership with LEAs, and reduce the financial obstacles to additional provision. We have noted elsewhere that LEAs are sometimes willing to contribute to capital costs and, of course, where a Voluntary Controlled school is concerned, no capital contribution is required. Some funding for Church schools is available under the Private Finance Initiative (see 5.25). With the reduction in the capital contribution to 10 per cent, the option of Voluntary Controlled schools and the possibility of some assistance from national fundraising, we hope that dioceses will see the financial dimension of increased provision to be somewhat less daunting. But funding will remain an issue with many dioceses and we therefore propose a national fundraising initiative (see 5.22–5.31).
- 5.13** Some other constraints to expansion are very real. Dioceses can only proceed where there is opportunity, and the national need for additional secondary schools will be modest: secondary school pupil numbers are expected to peak in 2004 and thereafter to decline to their present numbers by 2011. The provision of additional Church schools and the enlargement of existing Church schools will therefore depend very much on local schemes of school reorganization, responses to schools in difficulty, and on detailed discussions with LEAs and Schools Organization Committees on Church proposals.
- 5.14** Nevertheless, with increasing demand from parents for places in Church schools, the goodwill of the main national political parties and many local educational authorities, and the clear need to expand secondary provision if Church schools are indeed to be at the centre of the Church's mission to **the whole** nation, we recommend that either through additional schools or through the expansion of existing Church schools, the Church should aim to increase its secondary provision by the equivalent of 100 schools. This would mean a rise in the Church's current share of secondary places from approximately 5 per cent to 8 per cent (assuming an average secondary school to have around 900 places) but would still leave a high imbalance between secondary and primary provision. We envisage that new schools established because of basic need will only be a small proportion of the 100 schools. Most will, therefore, have to come about as a result of school reorganizations or partnerships or where the Church is invited to take on a struggling Community school (see our proposal in 5.35–5.37).

*As an example of a Community school that has become a Church school, the Trinity School (Diocese of Rochester) grew out of the Picardy School, a mixed secondary modern school operating on two sites in the 'Picardy' area of Belvedere. Of the school's translation to Church of England Voluntary Aided status, achieved with the full support of the LEA, its first headteacher, Mr Ray Slade, has written:*

*'The concept was right. A Church of England School, with Christian values was just what was needed in our locality.*

*The support given by the governors, by the diocese through the school's voluntary aided status and by the wider community has been magnificent.*

*The splendid and sustained hard work of the staff, teaching and non-teaching has been essential – without that no school can succeed.*

*But above all, Trinity School is God's work. His handiwork sustained by the prayers of his people.'*

- 5.15** Assuming responsibility for a Community school that has been in difficulty will be a demanding exercise. It should only be considered where the Church has the resources to ensure effective management of the transition and the leadership necessary to develop a new sense of purpose and achievement within the school. We would emphasize that strong support for the headteacher of a new school during the first few years is essential, especially when the Church is assuming responsibility for a school community that has previously been in difficulty. There are already examples of good practice, where the Church has helped in such situations, such as the foundation partnership between a well-established Church school and a new Church school on the model of St Peter's Collegiate School and the King's School in Wolverhampton. The growing number of 'Beacon' schools may also be in a position to give help and support to others.
- 5.16** In sustaining our earlier recommendation of the equivalent of 100 additional Church secondary schools we recognize that our initial proposal of two additional schools for most dioceses and three where the diocese has no secondary school, or only one, needs to be refined in the light of a detailed analysis of existing provision in relation to school populations. For some dioceses which already have two or more secondary schools, the number of Church school places in relation to population may nevertheless be notably limited, and an increase in provision of one, two, or more schools would be desirable. For others, where provision is strong and generally well balanced, an increase of one, or some expansion of existing schools, may be a measure of what is desirable in relation to an overall figure of 100 additional schools.
- 5.17** As to the timescale, this is only partly in the Church's hands. There are issues of opportunity, finance, school leadership, and diocesan resource. Whilst the proposals in the February Government Green Paper are certainly helpful, and there is much that the Church itself can do over time to address issues on the lines suggested in this report, we recognize that a five-year timescale was extremely ambitious. In responding to the Resolution of the

General Synod as set out in our terms of reference, we thought it right to challenge the Church and to invite it to be ambitious. Rather than five years, however, we have concluded it would be more realistic to be thinking of, say, seven to eight years, albeit with dioceses setting themselves objectives for the next five years.

- 5.18** Within the total, we include **City Academies**, two of which so far commissioned have a Church of England involvement. We encourage the Church in partnership with the local community to seek actively to increase the number subject to consultation with the local authorities, and to support fundraising to that end. Our consultation has shown evidence of active interest and activity in several dioceses. We would also encourage dioceses to respond to initiatives of the kind canvassed in the Green Paper for Voluntary Sector Sponsors to take responsibility for a school under the terms of a fixed term renewable contract (CM 5050 paras 4.23–4.24) and the Church nationally to ensure that it has the organizational structure to engage proactively in them. **We see some of the strong existing Church secondary schools providing opportunities for helpful partnership with Community schools that may come into the Church community in response to the Green Paper proposals (see 5.32–5.37). Whilst not included in the total of 100 we welcome affiliation arrangements with Community schools of the kind introduced in the Guildford Diocese.**
- 5.19** There may also be opportunities for involvement in post-16 provision and partnerships with Learning and Skills Councils and other community-based learning programmes.
- 5.20** In considering additional provision, we invite dioceses to have an especial commitment to expanding provision in areas of economic and social hardship. It was the call to serve the poor that took the Church so magnificently into education in the nineteenth century. Today, the Church is still committed to serving those in the most deprived areas of society, in the inner city and in rural areas where deprivation may be less visible because it is dispersed but is no less real. **It should be an especial care of the Church today to renew that commitment to those who have least in life;** to the children who are most likely to lose out in the life ahead of them. We live in a society where the gap between the affluent and the poor causes much concern, and where there is a very real risk that the children of the poor are destined to remain poor, unless their talents can be nourished and their aspirations raised through an education that is excellent and that gives real hope. **This is an issue that the Church would do well to see as a mission in which it must engage. We so recommend.**

## **A national policy**

- 5.21** To sum up, we recommend that the Church should:
- at the primary level, increase provision where it is most evidently lacking;
  - aim to increase secondary places, whether by the expansion of existing Church schools or through additional Church schools (including transfers from the Community sector), by the equivalent of 100 schools over the next seven to eight years;

- consider within each diocese what can be achieved over the next five years, and to roll forward its thinking annually by a further year;
- in increasing provision, see it as part of its special mission to serve the most disadvantaged in society, and children with special educational needs;
- foster an ecumenical approach where this is appropriate and be careful not to destabilize existing faith schools;
- engage in national fundraising;

We suggest that the Archbishops' Council should review progress annually.

### **Financial resource implications: a national appeal**

- 5.22** Where a new Voluntary Aided school is created, the governors have been required to contribute 15 per cent of the capital cost. As we said earlier, the February Green Paper proposes to decrease the 15 per cent to 10 per cent. That is both welcome and very relevant to the Church's ability to increase provision. Even so, with the addition of Value Added Tax (which applies to Voluntary Aided schools but not to schools funded entirely by the local authority) for a new Church Voluntary Aided school the contribution could be in the range of say £1.25 million to £1.8 million. For new primary schools the sums are smaller but still material. Where an existing secondary school passes to the Church, the sum required may also be very much smaller and these are likely to constitute the main opportunities for increasing provision. Without question the financial resourcing of additional provision will be a big factor in the consideration of our recommendations, the more especially as there will be calls on finance for the continuing process of repair and improvement of existing schools. Dioceses will also have to resource the revenue costs of setting up additional schools and consider the cost of Church contributions to their long-term maintenance.
- 5.23** The evidence we have received from dioceses suggests that only a limited number of them would have the capital resources to finance one new Voluntary Aided secondary school. In a very small number of cases a diocese might be able to finance two. This reflects the uneven distribution of diocesan trust funds. We do not suggest a pooling of these funds since no diocese is excessively resourced in relation to its needs.
- 5.24** However, the financial dimension need not be as daunting as the figures above may suggest. We have found that the cost of a new Voluntary Aided school is a matter for negotiation case by case. Sometimes, the capital contribution can be met in part by developers from 'development gain'. In other cases, the local authority may be willing to contribute very substantially towards the capital contribution. For City Academies, which we envisage being part of the response to our proposals for additional secondary schools, the Government made clear that it saw part of the envisaged capital contribution coming from a donor, as has happened in the two announced in 2000 in which the Church is a partner. Where the Church takes on responsibility for an existing Community school, for example as part of a reorganization scheme, any capital sum involved will be far less than that for a new school. We envisage that the great majority

of the additional secondary places we canvass will in fact come from the Church taking responsibility, in agreement with an LEA, for an existing school. In the case of a Voluntary Controlled school, the capital costs are met by the LEA, and if finance is lacking, designation as a Voluntary Controlled school can be the way forward.

- 5.25** It is also relevant to note that the provisions of the 1944 Education Act for loans towards the capital costs of new schools have been continued in force by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. There are also opportunities under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), which enables governing bodies to meet their percentage contribution to capital costs over the period of the contract. There are PFI credits available from the DfEE for building work in Church of England Voluntary Aided schools. The National Society is currently working on a bid for possible projects.
- 5.26** There will nevertheless be a need for new money if the Church can contemplate the provision of the equivalent of an extra 100 secondary schools. This will be needed to help dioceses make a contribution to capital costs, when the need arises, and to support dioceses in carrying forward the work needed to negotiate provision and support the new schools' headteachers in their initial year.

## **Fundraising**

- 5.27** Taking first the resourcing of the diocesan effort, the evidence we have received from dioceses and from the Church of England Board of Education and National Society Council has suggested that dioceses, in general, have small education teams and do not have the human resources available to undertake a programme of school expansion. In our Consultation Report, we suggested the establishment of regionally based task forces to assist dioceses in this task. These task forces would draw in expertise from a variety of sources – dioceses, local education authorities and others – and would be tailored to the individual needs of a project. We envisage that these task forces would provide back-up to the mechanism outlined in paragraph 5.34 for assessing the future of a struggling Community school, and assist in the work required to establish a new Church school. A number of dioceses have welcomed this suggestion, which is intended to share experience and good practice and to supplement dioceses' own staffing resources in response to perceived needs, whilst dioceses would themselves remain in overall management control of the project being undertaken. We envisage that such task forces could help in the project management area or in preparing bids for new schools such as City Academies, or in the much-needed support for the headteacher of a new Church school during the start-up phase. **We recommend that such task forces would have a nationally co-ordinated dimension in order to maintain the national overview of development and to provide access to national expertise. We also recommend that dioceses should review their existing support for their boards of education and that the resources of the Church of England Board of Education and National Society should be strengthened in response to this report. We estimate that over a period of say seven to eight years the additional costs could amount to £6 million.**

- 5.28** Turning to the capital contribution needed to supplement diocesan resources, we find very great uncertainties, for the sums required will turn on the balance of Voluntary Controlled as opposed to Voluntary Aided schools, the proportion of new as opposed to continuing schools and the extent to which the LEAs contribute or share ‘development gains’ from developers. Any estimate therefore could prove wildly wrong, but, to attempt some indication of the scale of an appeal, after including the £6 million revenue costs and assuming that the Church will be largely taking responsibility for existing schools rather than building new ones, **the total (excluding City Academies) could be in the order of £20 million** to be raised over a period of seven years. It could be decidedly more.
- 5.29** City Academies have not been included in this figure of £20 million because, with the higher required level of financial contribution (20 per cent rather than 10 per cent) and the relatively modest number of them, each will be a special case to be tackled individually through a donor or donors able to contribute sums ranging from say £0.7 million for improving an existing school to £2.5 million for a new school.
- 5.30** While we suggest the funding of City Academies needs an individual approach to financing, it will assist progress if there can be pump priming from the national fund and it would be desirable, if possible, to set the national appeal at £25 million. If good progress is to be made the whole fundraising effort needs to be led, managed and coordinated at national level. To that end we recommend the creation of an executive appeals group of people of standing, suitably supported, possibly by a professional fundraiser, to lead and develop an appeal for £25 million over seven years and to assist in raising funds for individual City Academies, where these are part of a locally agreed solution (see 5.18).
- 5.31** We see the appeal seeking support from individual benefactors, charitable foundations, trusts, and corporations (as opposed to an appeal to the parishes). Appeals to such bodies are often most successful if they relate to a particular project in a particular locality. We suggest that an important part of the task of the national committee, in consultation with diocesan bishops, would therefore be to identify potential donors across the dioceses who might be brought together at diocesan level.

### **Developing our provision in partnership with LEAs and Government**

- 5.32** In its Green Paper, *Schools Building on Success*, published in February 2001, the Government welcomed our proposal to increase the number of Church schools, particularly at the secondary level, and extended this welcome to all the churches and other faith groups. As we have already noted, the Green Paper has proposed a reduction in the contribution paid by the governors and promoters of Voluntary Aided schools towards the capital costs of a new school from 15 per cent to 10 per cent. The Green Paper also included a proposal to develop a model that would enable a private or voluntary sector sponsor to take responsibility for a weak or failing school on a renewable fixed term contract of five to seven years. There was also a proposal to extend this option to successful schools that wish, for example, to develop a more distinct identity.

- 5.33** We welcome this renewed commitment to a developing partnership between the state and faith-based schools, and in response have invited the Government to consider our own proposal for developing the provision of Church and other faith schools. Our own proposal emphasizes our partnership with local education authorities in meeting the educational needs of the community, and in the case of a failing Community school the possibility of the school becoming a Church school as one option for addressing failure.
- 5.34** Our proposal is as follows:
- In appropriate circumstances, say after a secondary school had been placed in special measures or serious weakness following its OFSTED inspection, or where a secondary school was struggling, the LEA would enter into dialogue with the local faith groups to establish which group or groups might have an interest. The Church of England would be an obvious partner with which to begin discussions since its schools serve the wider community. At this stage, it would also be perfectly possible to begin a dialogue between groups with a view to establishing an ecumenical school.
  - Assuming that a Church of England school would be considered, the LEA and the Diocese would each appoint a suitably experienced individual. Working together, these two individuals would then form an assessment of the options for the school. Those appointed might be eligible for funding from the Standards Fund, but funding could come jointly from the diocese, LEA and DfEE.
  - The LEA would retain responsibility for assessing the possible closure of the school, taking into account the availability of other places in the area.
  - Acting in a consultancy role, the two individuals would perform an assessment of the efficacy of a ‘Fresh Start’ (FS) kind of arrangement, in consultation with the diocese and LEA. Such arrangements would envisage two possible categories: (a) FS Community school; (b) FS Voluntary school.
- 5.35** Where it involved a change from a Community to a Voluntary school, the features of a FS Voluntary School would be as follows:
1. There would be a presumption in favour of it wherever there was no secondary school with a religious character in the geographical area.
  2. The two individuals appointed by the diocese and LEA would consult parents and the local community (including parishes) about whether they supported the school changing from a Community to a Voluntary Church school. Assuming that such support was forthcoming, the following points would apply.
  3. The ethos and practice of the new school would be distinctively Christian, but it would not proselytize.
  4. Parents would be informed of the implications of the change to a Church school.
  5. All existing pupils would be guaranteed a place in the new school and would be expected to stay. The LEA would use its best endeavours to find alternative schools for pupils whose parents did not wish them to continue their education in a Church school.

6. It would have been made clear during the consultation process that the new school's Admissions Policy would be structured so as to keep faith with the local community and the historic tradition of the school as the local provider. This would require a clearly defined priority zone for the local children. However, it would be possible for additional Christian children from outside the priority zone to gain admission if there was a degree of undersubscription. In the event of an ecumenical venture, some flexibility might be required in the admission arrangements so as to achieve the desired balance in admissions.
7. It could be accepted that TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) would apply since the employer would change. However, the LEA would use its best endeavours to find alternative places for staff who did not wish to work in a Church school.
8. The school site would be transferred to the new Church school's trustees and held on trust, with a reverter to the LEA in the event of the school closing.

**5.36** It should be possible, along the lines of the analogy with the Government's proposed 'Contract' schools, for a successful Community school to consider becoming a Voluntary Church school, where the school wishes it. In these circumstances, similar considerations would apply to those outlined above, with the normal statutory procedure for closure and for opening a new school applying. Existing pupils would be guaranteed places or given an alternative, with the Admissions Policy providing similar safeguards to the local children as in the case of a failing Community school that had been transferred to the Church.

**5.37** In the case of both a struggling or successful Community school that could be transferred to the Church, the School Organization Committee would have a duty to consider such a proposal, with appropriate guidance being given. In the event of a disagreement on the feasibility of such an option, the matter would be referred to the adjudicator, who would also need guidance on such proposals. However, any such proposal should have been thoroughly investigated and discussed between the LEA and the Diocese before its referral to the School Organization Committee.