

Teachers, teachers, teachers

- 6.1** If in thirty years' time a committee like the present one is appointed to advise on Church schools we hope, in reflecting on the first thirty years of the twenty-first century, it will be able to say something like, 'the Church's realization that the whole future of its schools was dependent upon its ability to recruit Christian teachers, retain them in the profession, and develop them for leadership positions in schools – and its response to that realization – was the foundation of the growing strength and the esteem Church schools have achieved with all sections of society over the last thirty years'.
- 6.2** In education, every study should begin and end with pupils and teachers and this is especially so of the Church at this time, when society is showing that it would welcome more opportunities for children to go to Church schools. At the same time, in an increasingly secular society the seedbed of young Christians from whom Christian teachers can be drawn needs to be nourished. Unless the Church can act successfully to find the teachers needed for the schools it already has, and for the increased provision recommended in our report, nothing will be achieved. Without an effective programme of action, a lack of Christian teachers could set everything at naught.
- 6.3** The long-term provision of Christian teachers and especially of head and deputy headteachers must therefore be the principal concern of this Review Group.

Three immediate issues for action by the Church

- 6.4** Within the wider field of action that is needed, we identify three issues that are especially urgent and requiring action. They are:
- (a) To raise the respect for and the morale of teachers in our society**
- 6.5** Teachers feel undervalued in our society. The respect that was once theirs is often hard won and too often lacking. Where this is so, it undermines their authority and effectiveness in the classroom and their standing with parents. It bears directly on the willingness of people to enter the profession and on the retention of those already in the profession. **This is an issue for the whole nation. But it is one that can and should be tackled by the Church. Church schools should stand out as places where teachers and other staff are valued and respected. The headteacher should be able to look to the parish church as a source of unfailing support and encouragement. Governors, particularly the Chair, as well as the parish and the diocese all have a part to play; it is their business to know the headteacher, to help, to sustain and to encourage.**

- 6.6** Many governors are selected and appointed by the Church at parish or diocesan level. **The Church needs to recognize that to be a school governor is one of the most important roles that a Church member can take.** It is good if some, or at least one, of the school governors is also a member of the PCC, and the role of governor should be recognized as being at least as important as membership of the PCC. For most, the time taken to be a governor will be much greater than the time taken to be a member of the PCC. The role of Chair is comparable to being a churchwarden.
- 6.7** As we say in Chapter 8 governors have a key role in the appointment of headteachers and of other school staff. Having appointed staff, and got to know them in the process, governors need to build on that acquaintance and show how much staff are valued for themselves as people as well as for their professional work. **Governors should see it as a core part of their role to relate personally to all members of staff individually.** In a large school this may need to be done on a departmental or some other suitable basis. All staff should feel that at least one governor makes time to talk and listen to them and seeks to help them.
- 6.8** **Governors also have an important task with parents.** They should do everything they can to present the good work of the school to the parents and, in particular, to help parents understand how much the teachers and other staff are doing to ensure the well-being and progress of their children. **Parents need to be encouraged by governors to show their appreciation of the work of teachers by expressing thanks and showing that they value the care which teachers are taking to help the children.** Such action is important in raising the standing of teachers in the eyes of the community and hence in helping to raise their morale.
- 6.9** Teachers are potentially the best, or most critical, ambassadors for their own profession. Unless they feel valued they will not encourage their own pupils, friends and Church members to enter the profession. If they feel valued they will be the best people to encourage some of the very large number of qualified teachers, many of them practising Christians, who are not currently teaching, to return to the profession. Sadly, at present many do not feel able to recommend the profession in this way.
- 6.10** **In the interests of high standards, churches have a duty to support teachers in whatever way possible.** In particular, Church members should show that they value what teachers do. They should show an interest in the teachers as people as well as in the schools as institutions. **Headteachers, or other suitable teachers, should have the opportunity to talk regularly to PCCs.** Indeed, where possible, the headteacher should be a valued member of the PCC. Parish magazines should contain news of the schools in the parish and should seek to show the good work of the staff.
- 6.11** We counsel that Church members, school governors and headteachers should keep in touch with teachers from the school who have left the profession before retirement, whether to have a family or to try some other apparently more attractive job. If they feel valued they are more likely to consider returning to the school. To this end, schools should make sure that such people continue to be invited to events, special services and other functions if they are still living in the area and keep them informed of the progress of the school and their former pupils.

- 6.12** Underpinning all this is a triangular relationship between incumbent, parish and school (children and parents) which we illustrated in Chapter 1. This is what is needed if Church schools are to be at the heart of the Church's mission to the nation.
- 6.13** The dioceses have a key part to play in caring for staff. Gatherings for new headteachers and for new staff, preferably on a residential basis, are much valued because they offer an opportunity to establish a network of people sharing the same kind of experience. We refer in Chapter 7 to the helpful and important role of the clergy in schools.
- 6.14** The headteacher has, of course, a central role in developing and fostering respect for teachers and, if need be, in structuring the kind of action by the governing body outlined above. Fostering respect for teachers also means that where there is weakness in teaching performance the headteacher and, where necessary, the governing body should be ready to put matters right, first by identifying the causes, and then by taking whatever action is needed to re-establish high standards.
- 6.15** Action on the lines we have illustrated in this section is crucial at this time to the Church's ability to attract and retain Christian teachers, to the quality of the work of the teachers themselves, and to the achievement of the schools. Teachers who know themselves to be highly respected and valued will moreover be more likely to build up self respect and self-confidence among the pupils they teach. **We therefore strongly urge the Church at all levels, and the governing bodies in particular, to commit themselves to the practices described in this section, which are aimed to raise respect for, and foster a genuine sense of being valued in the teaching profession. We recommend accordingly.**

(b) To develop a corps of heads and other school leaders

- 6.16** If the action we have proposed to increase the number of Church schools is to succeed, the Church will need to find the headteachers and senior staff who can provide the leadership to make them places of Christian nurture and 'successful schools' in the conventional usage of words. **It must be seen as a major concern of the Church at national and diocesan level to identify, develop and recruit committed leaders from Christian teachers in all schools.** The challenge to these future heads will be especially great when the Church assumes responsibility for a school in difficulty. Without the right Christian leaders the Church cannot responsibly accept the challenge of such schools.
- 6.17** Of course, this issue extends beyond the need for heads and other leaders for new schools. Its successful resolution will bear directly on the ability of Church schools to recruit the Christian teachers they need to give them their distinctive character. It is the long-term issue, more than any other, upon which the future of Church schools depends.
- 6.18** We would recommend that the response must include action now to identify on a national basis, diocese by diocese, Christian teachers of all ages, young and old, who have the potential to provide the necessary leadership. The dioceses must see that these teachers have the in-service development needed to move on to senior positions. This preparation will encompass training

in the practice of management in schools and the development of their knowledge of Church schools and religious education. For the former, we welcome initiatives taken by the Association of Anglican Secondary School Headteachers. The new National College for School Leadership and other regional leadership centres also provide valuable opportunities, and we welcome the appointment of the head of a Church school to the governing body of the former. Modules need to be developed by the National College for School Leadership that are particularly relevant to the leadership of Church schools. It is of particular concern that there is at present no element specifically dealing with Church schools in the National Professional Qualification for Headship, and we invite the Church of England Board of Education to raise this matter with the College.

6.19 The Church colleges of higher education are the natural partners of the Church in this task of developing leaders, and teachers should be able to look to them for opportunities to learn about issues specific to Church schools. The development of the Church Colleges' Certificates on a national basis and their availability by distance learning are necessary so that the need can be met. (We refer to this further in paragraphs 6.29–6.31 and 9.27.) We welcome the contributions that Church schools are already making to the supply of teachers through the provision of opportunities for teaching practice and in contributing to school-based training initiatives such as the Graduate Teacher Programme. We would also welcome the more widespread application and development of schemes such as the Diocese of York's Archbishop's Training Certificate for Church of England School Teachers, preferably with some form of national accreditation.

6.20 As an important signal to the inclusiveness of the Church's mission to the nation and of the high value it places on teachers from ethnic minorities, **we recommend that the Church should find new ways of encouraging the recruitment of teachers from minority ethnic groups.** There is also a concern that the proportion of men teaching in primary schools is very small. Ways of encouraging more men into the profession need to be found.

(c) Help for primary heads in small schools

6.21 The 1990s were characterized by increasingly heavy administrative demands on teachers and headteachers as Governments introduced successive initiatives in the pursuit of high standards of achievement. **We advocate now a period of greater stability** so that the benefits of all these initiatives can be realized, with teachers needing to commit less time to planning for, and administering, change, to the benefit of the energies they can devote to teaching. Even so, in a rapidly changing world schools will never be free from change. In view of the sustained pressures on schools to achieve, the extensive consultations in which we have engaged have given us a particular concern about the heads of small primary schools which are typical of village communities and whose well-being matters very much to the character and identity of the whole community.

6.22 The Church has a particularly large number of small and very small primary schools, in which the head spends at least three or four days teaching. In addition, many primary school heads often have to go into classes to relieve curriculum coordinators or to cover staff absences. In rural schools, Church

school heads are an important part of the Church's supporting ministry for their surrounding communities, where there can often be a high degree of rural deprivation. But small schools are to be found in other areas too. The burden on these heads of running the school and at the same time coping with the flow of statutory requirements and initiatives, however desirable they are, can be overwhelming. This strain is reflected in the level of long-term sickness, early retirements and the small number of good candidates for headships. The successful teaching of the full National Curriculum and RE and ministering to children and parents are challenge enough and the heads of such schools need help or relief. In spite of these pressures, it is worth noting, however, that in terms of SATs results small schools are often highly successful.

- 6.23** It has been put to us that governing bodies should be vigilant to see that their heads in these small schools do not exhaust themselves by taking a greater teaching load than they should, and also to see that they take proper opportunities for professional development. We agree. For these and other heads, a sabbatical break during their term as a head could be an opportunity to gain refreshment, new ideas and a renewed commitment to the task.
- 6.24** We would strongly recommend that the Church at national level should see it as one of its prime responsibilities to work with the Government to achieve a reduction in the personal administrative load on the heads of small primary schools to a realistic level. We recognize that government has already provided some welcome additional funding to help small schools with their administration, but more needs to be done. It may be that a study should be mounted with Government and other interested parties to see how that can best be achieved. The analogy of the way Government has acted in the industrial sector to reduce the legislative and administrative burden on small firms may be relevant. There may be opportunities for developing 'cluster' arrangements for small schools, offering support through curriculum leaders and others, or for greater use of 'pyramid' structures in which secondary schools can play a part in helping small primary schools. **The Church should establish, in partnership with the DfEE and other interested bodies, a 'small schools unit' to foster best practice across the country.**

The wider issue

- 6.25** The issues facing the Church go well beyond the three actions we have identified as especially urgent, in improving teacher morale, in fostering respect for teachers, in developing new headteachers and other leaders, and in helping the headteachers of small schools. Although some dioceses report no difficulty in filling vacancies with good teachers who are also practising Christians, that is not the general experience. We have often heard of the dilemma facing governors and headteachers, in seeking to appoint the best teacher, of the choice between candidates who are practising Christians and those who are not. Unless action is taken by the Church to encourage Christians to see teaching as a valued profession and to show by its actions how it values its Christian teachers, both within and outside Church schools, the long-term prospect is daunting.

6.26 One diocese said in its evidence:

‘The Church needs to promote teaching as a vocation of equal status to the priesthood.’

We agree. We would add that vocation does not imply that teaching should be regarded as a profession that does not need to be appropriately remunerated. Indeed it must be if the nation is to get the quality of education our children need. We include as Appendix 5 to the report a brief memorandum by the Archbishop of Wales on Christian vocation. By a Christian vocation we mean not just a judgement by a Christian that teaching is ‘what I want to do’. We mean a realization that it is a ministry in, of, and to the body of Christ. For a Christian, a vocation to teach should be the context in which he or she understands himself or herself called to act and speak for God. In that sense, it is something wonderful that stands alongside a vocation to the priesthood. Although Christian teachers are vital for Church schools they are also of immense value in Community schools and Special schools. **We would therefore recommend that through the dioceses all parishes should be urged, not just once but repeatedly, to put before people what it means to be a Christian teacher and in appropriate cases encourage a vocation to teach.**

- 6.27** Parishes could, for example, provide opportunities for people to develop their teaching skills through voluntary work. Parish-based children’s work and youth groups provide a structured environment for developing their skills in planning and in teaching children. In encouraging the vocation to teach, parishes should know that dioceses can offer them information that will be helpful to those who are interested in becoming Christian teachers about equipping themselves to enter the profession. The Church colleges of higher education should come to mind as the kinds of institutions where Christians can look for a learning environment where it is comfortable to be a Christian and where the Christian faith is fostered. **We therefore invite parishes and dioceses to establish appropriate relationships and communication with the Church colleges.**
- 6.28** Turning to those in the profession, and the concern to retain teachers in the profession, as we have said in an earlier part of this chapter it matters very much that the Church should show through its actions that the vocation to teach by Christians is highly valued and respected. We have noted the emphasis placed by a number of bishops we have met on demonstrating this in their programmes of visiting and in the close knowledge they have of schools in the diocese. **Every bit as important is the support of the bishops and parishes for Christian teachers who are giving valued service in Community schools and Special schools where the confession of the faith may be difficult and where they may encounter hostility from some.**
- 6.29** One way of providing enhanced opportunities for Christians seeking Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) has been to offer specific additional qualifications designed to meet the needs of new entrants to work in Church schools. The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) and its recent variations have provided a well-established route for teachers

entering Roman Catholic schools. The energy invested in the Certificate over the years by Roman Catholic schools and dioceses has meant that it is now a well-established requirement for many teachers working in that sector. Some colleges now offer the certificate as an option within a programme leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The Church of England largely abandoned its provision of specialist courses at this level during the 1960s and 1970s, and it was only in the late 1980s that any attempts were made to re-establish the position. The creation of the Church Colleges' Certificate in Church School Studies has provided the potential to re-establish a basic qualification for teaching in Anglican schools. At the current time, a number of Anglican colleges offer this Certificate to their students and to teachers or governors working in Church schools. It would clearly be desirable for all new or recently qualified teachers in Anglican schools to hold this Certificate as part of their professional preparation for work in a Church school. We are a long way from achieving that goal.

- 6.30** We have noted the success of the CCRS and its popularity. Roman Catholic schools always require teachers who are seeking promotion within a school to hold the Catholic Certificate.
- 6.31** We invite the Anglican Church colleges to continue working together to develop the Church Colleges' Certificate in Church School Studies or Religious Studies and the award of credits towards professional qualifications. It may well be that some of the substance of the CCRS would be relevant to the Anglican Certificate in Religious Studies. A master's degree in Church School Education has been developed and is currently available from five of the Church colleges, either as a taught course or by distance learning (or a combination of the two).
- 6.32** We have referred in Chapter 4 to the importance of high quality religious education in Church schools. Taking the whole community of schools, we have been concerned to read a comment that for as long as OFSTED has been keeping records of school inspection reports, RE has been one of the subjects in which pupils' learning is weakest. We have heard that there are particular problems at Key Stage 3. The quality of learning in any subject depends to a large extent on the support it is given by the headteacher and the recognition given to subject teachers. **We would therefore invite the Church to work for the greater recognition and status of RE teachers in all schools by the provision of an appropriate career structure and corresponding salary scales and resources, and to support them in responding to the demands placed upon them and in fostering the take-up of at least the GCSE short course in religious studies which helps to give a focus and commitment to the subject at Key Stage 4.**
- 6.33** We have received many other suggestions for practical action which we would commend to the Church, and drawing upon these and the discussion above we list examples of these in our detailed recommendations shown below. In offering them, **we repeat that the need for sustained action by the whole Church in encouraging and supporting the teachers we have, and promoting the vocation to teach, is the most important issue facing us** if our schools are to be able to take the opportunities that are now apparent and which are a great encouragement in an age where the active practice of the faith through Church membership is less committed than in previous generations.

These recommendations are as follows:

- Christian teachers should encourage suitable pupils to think of teaching as a vocation and if it seems right for the pupils encourage them to think of going to a Church college for their higher education and their teaching qualification.
- Church schools should encourage pupils to take the GCSE in RE (see also 4.13).
- The Church Colleges' Certificates in Church School Studies and in Religious Studies should be made available by the colleges on a national basis, both through college courses and distance learning, and dioceses should actively encourage the take up of these qualifications by practising teachers as well as by entrants to the profession.
- Archbishops and bishops should affirm Christian teachers by pastoral visits to schools and through inviting Christian teachers in Church and Community schools, including Special schools, to appropriate events. Dioceses should work towards greater involvement in supporting associations of Christian teachers.
- Dioceses should show the importance the Church attributes to the appointment of headteachers by a Service of Commissioning of the kind that has been agreed in some dioceses.
- Education Sunday should be celebrated in all parishes and the service should actively involve Christian teachers. It should be an occasion when the clergy speak on the vocation to teach and the value the Church places on the work of Christian teachers in all schools. From time to time, the celebration of Education Sunday should involve invitations to teachers from across the diocese to attend a service in the Cathedral.
- Attention should be drawn to the support structures already available through, e.g., the Association of Anglican Secondary School Headteachers, the Association of Christian Teachers and the National Society.
- It should be recognized that training schemes for teenage volunteers who help in parish-based children's groups can provide for some participants the beginning of a sense of vocation.
- Diocesan vocations advisers should encourage a vocation to teach as well as to the ordained ministry.
- Materials should be prepared which will help all those who have the opportunity to encourage people to consider teaching as a professional vocation.
- Governors should see it as a core part of their role to relate personally to all members of staff individually and to encourage parents to show they value what teachers are doing for their children.
- Church schools should make it a particular care to maintain contact with qualified teachers who have left the profession to have children or to pursue another career.