



Vision and Values

The Church of England Birmingham Diocesan Board of Education has a strong commitment to ensuring that all people within its schools have the opportunity to flourish, within an understanding of what God desires for humanity. Believing that human beings are 'created in the image of God' (Genesis 1.27) our schools should be places where each may learn and grow to become more fully what we were created to be.

Jesus proclaimed, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness" (John 10.10); so our schools have a vital role in promoting and illustrating this vision and in being places where community members can be part of that understanding, both in the present and in the future. Jesus provided a precis of that quality of life when speaking of the most important commandments: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.' and 'Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39). Therefore the purpose of education in our schools is the development of whole people, who can flourish in all areas of their lives; who recognize their connectedness to others, and who are willing to engage with the world around them. In short: transformed lives with the potential to transform the world.

Believing that all children are loved by God, the vision of the Diocesan Board of Education is that all its Church of England schools will be successful in making a positive difference to the lives of all pupils and their families. To do this they are expected to offer a broad and balanced curriculum, with consistently good or outstanding teaching, which can be suitably tailored to meet the learning needs of all pupils, enabling them to make a positive difference to the society in which they live. All schools need support and challenge, external and internal, to ensure they deliver the very best outcomes for all pupils in keeping with their calling as church schools.

Taking the pattern of Jesus, we expect our schools to embody welcome, the offering and receiving of forgiveness and respect for integrity, as well as pointing to the better way. We would wish the welcome to be open to all children and staff whether they come from a Christian family, a family of a different faith, or a family of no particular faith background. Our schools are to be places where all can flourish and where children (and adults) have the opportunities to learn about the Christian faith, but have the chance to practice their family faith, and to be true to their identity, without fear of prejudice or bullying. Pupils should gain the message that their value is independent of their achievements or success – that it derives from being God's child and that every child matters to God.

The Board of Education expects all staff in church schools to experience high quality professional development and performance management so that their professional skill and expertise is of the highest calibre and able to meet the learning needs of pupils from diverse cultural backgrounds within the context of a distinctive Church of England setting.

'Ultimately the question is posed: is every child's life enriched because of the distinctive ethos of your Church of England School?'

Expectations and aspirations for pupil experience were articulated in the DBE: Birmingham Church of England Guarantee. These expectations are **aspirational** arising from the Board of Education's response to the Church of England's *Church School of the Future Review (2012)*.

In Anglican schools in the Diocese of Birmingham, we would wish pupils to encounter:

Religious Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear presentation of the Christian story and Jesus Christ as Christians understand him to be, within Trinitarian theology ✓ Positive portrayal of the multi-cultural and global nature of the Christian faith ✓ Teaching about the two Church of England sacraments (baptism and holy communion) ✓ Promotion of key gospel themes: e.g. love, worth, stewardship, justice, forgiveness, sacrifice, hospitality, grace, acceptance, growth / change etc... ✓ Regular use of Bible stories within the curriculum to explore these themes and link them to Christian values, so that every child will achieve some biblical literacy. ✓ Accurate, sympathetic teaching about beliefs and values in other faiths ✓ Visitors to the school who are effective communicators about faith ✓ Visits to places of worship of major faiths during school life
Prayer and worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A distinctive appreciation of time, that there is more to life than busyness, which should be put aside for prayer at least once a day. ✓ High quality Collective Worship which is engaging, inspiring and transformational ✓ Invitations to contribute to worship ✓ Where possible, <i>at least</i> annual services in local parish church
Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An expression of Christian spirituality which is more than awe and wonder; to include facing fears and failures and experiencing confession, forgiveness, and thankfulness for good things not deserved. ✓ The rhythm of the Christian calendar ✓ Presentation of a Christian understanding of what it means to be a person ✓ Encouragements to consider how what they most value affects their commitments and choices
Valuing pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The message that their value is independent of their achievements or success – that it derives from being God's child and that every child matters to God ✓ Freedom to express or practice their faith without fear of prejudice or bullying, as appropriate ✓ Enjoying praise and recognition through achievement assembly or similar (gifts and talents) each year, as well as private praise ✓ Having a piece of their work on display during the course of the year – something they can be proud of... ✓ Teaching which enables them make at least expected annual progress annually – or be in receipt of targeted support. ✓ Teaching across the curriculum about relationships and health in the light of faith values, in an inclusive way.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The natural world, as God's creation, as a key resource onsite and during study visits out of school ✓ Full access to extra-curricular activities including peripatetic music on offer – regardless of personal means ✓ The chance to have a residential visit ✓ Opportunity to learn a musical instrument, regardless of family means ✓ Chances to experience and participate in the arts ✓ Encouragement to serve others

In order to achieve the above, the school should undertake :

- ✓ To make Christian ethos and distinctiveness evident throughout the school
- ✓ To commit the governors to reviewing this ethos annually
- ✓ To reappraise this ethos every 3 years in a way that seeks to engage the whole school community.
- ✓ To commit to attracting and retaining staff members (including linking with Initial Teacher Training) who will actively support the Christian character of the school
- ✓ To make the development of Christian ethos a key focus for governor training – alongside standards and progress agenda
- ✓ To offer guidance, resourcing and evaluation to all who regularly lead Collective Worship whether a member of school staff or a visitor
- ✓ To ensure that competence in leading Collective Worship and teaching Religious Education are key elements in continuous professional development for all staff

Distinctiveness and effectiveness of schools within the Diocese of Birmingham can be seen in the following ways:

Overt signs of proclamation, in signage and on display boards, showing to the outside world as well as those inside, the school's Christian foundation.

Articulation of Christian values which underpin the life and work of the school, including a recognition of Jesus' reminder of the commandments to love God and love one's neighbour as oneself, as well as those values elected by members the school community as best representing their priorities.

Christian faith is given expression through Christian spirituality in the practices of prayer and worship and in recourse to the Bible as an authoritative guide to life, but where respect for the faith of others is embraced.

Christian relationships in and beyond the school based on forgiveness and new starts but also seeking the best for each other. Good relationships will be seen particularly with the local parish church, but also with local Christian denominations and other communities of faith.