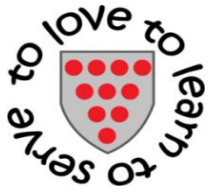


The challenges currently facing church schools and how we can most benefit from the links between schools, churches and parishes

1 Peter 4:10

Each of you should use whatever gifts you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms

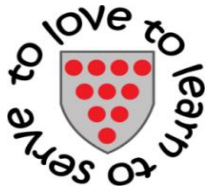




Outline

- Overview of the issues raised in the Paper – DS (23) 6
- DBE / Education Team support to address some of the identified issues
- Overview of how church schools can benefit from links with their churches and parishes
- Questions to Synod (identified in DS (23) 6)
- Headteacher Panel – Questions from Tim Reid and Synod Members



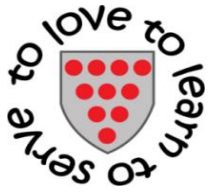


Challenges Facing Church Schools

- **Academisation**

- Financial uncertainty / deficit position / transfer of finances
- Size and rurality of some schools
- Governing Body and Headteacher engagement in academisation discussions and openness to change
- Directive Academy Orders create negative connotations
- Adhering the safeguards in place for church schools



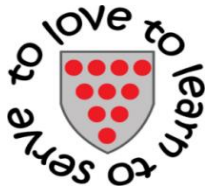


Challenges Facing Church Schools

- **Financial Constraints**

- Insufficient change to school funding formulas
- Staffing and pension costs
- Falling numbers and birth rates (schools are funded per pupil)
- Staffing restructures
- Limiting resources, narrowing curriculum quality
- Reduced funding to Local Authority – impact on funded external support
- Impact on building maintenance and development

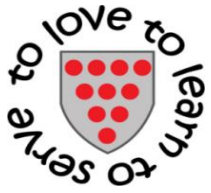




Challenges Facing Church Schools

- **Staffing Recruitment and Retention**
 - National shortage of teachers (rise of 42% in one year)
 - Pressure and intensity of work leading to fewer numbers entering the profession
 - Less career stability and fewer permanent contracts through funding concerns and constraints
 - 15% of Early Career Teachers leave after the first year in the profession
 - Fewer applications for headteacher positions and the emergence of the 'career deputy'
 - Support staff recruitment affected by better paid, more flexible positions, with less accountability outside of the education sector



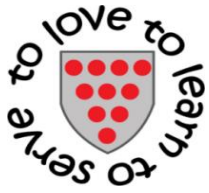


Challenges Facing Church Schools

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

- Current education landscape has led to 81% of school leaders and 70% teachers report the role having a negative impact on their mental health
- School leaders work 57 hours per week on average
- 70% of those leaving the profession cite mental health and wellbeing as the primary reason
- Pressures on pupils leading to a huge increase in stress, anxiety and depression with no additional funding for schools to address this
- No recognised agreed structure to how mental health and wellbeing should be addressed for pupils



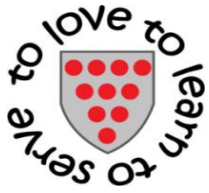


Challenges Facing Church Schools

- **The Inspectorate**

- Culture of fear created by the inconsistencies in inspections and inspectors
- Ofsted are their own complaints authority
- High profile cases of the pressures school leaders are under in relation to inspection and negative outcomes
- Less successful inspections can result in directive academy orders, falling pupil numbers and job insecurity particularly for headteachers



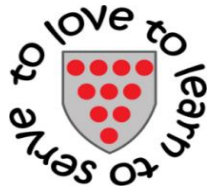


Challenges Facing Church Schools

• School Governance

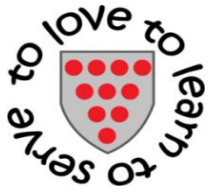
- Growing number of Ex-Officio (a gift to clergy) places vacant on church school Governing Bodies
- Growing number of Foundation Governor vacancies (both DBE and PCC appointed) on Governing Bodies (particularly apparent on Voluntary Aided boards that has majority foundation governor constitution)
- Volunteer sector still struggling to recover post-Covid





Diocesan Board of Education / Education Team support to address some of the identified issues



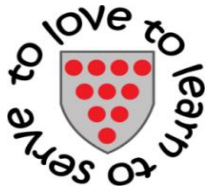


DBE / Education Team Support

- **Academisation**

- A clear Academisation Policy and Strategy to support schools
- Briefings for Headteachers and Governors on academisation
- Onsite visits to Governing Bodies to support academisation discussions
- Regular meetings with CEOs of Multi-Academy Trusts that have church schools within them to discuss growth strategies and how church schools feature
- Strategy meetings with the DfE and Regional Director responsible for Academisation



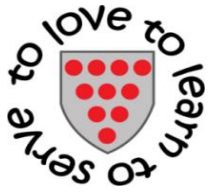


DBE / Education Team Support

- **Finance**

- Challenging to have impact when funding changes are desperately needed
- Sharing of concerns with political leaders alongside all Diocesan Directors of Education and Local Authority colleagues
- Freezing the costs of DBE services to support school budgets
- Supporting schools with staffing structure and school organisation
- Working with schools and Local Authority's to develop school deficit recovery plans

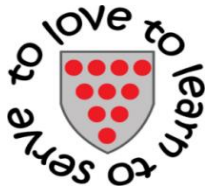




DBE / Education Team Support

- **Staffing Recruitment and Retention**
 - Free support for Governing Bodies to run headteacher recruitment processes
 - Free, two-day induction for new headteachers and mentor provision from an experienced church school headteacher
 - Free Induction and network for Early Career Teachers (ECT)
 - Training for Deputy Heads to support aspirations for Headship
 - Input at Worcester University for final year teaching students
 - Delivery of the full suite of National Professional Qualifications to support professional development and retention of support staff, teachers, middle leaders, senior leaders and headteachers



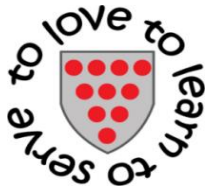


DBE / Education Team Support

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

- Bespoke Diocesan Funded Package of Mental Health and Wellbeing Support for Schools including:
 - Day retreats for school senior leaders
 - Onsite training and support for school staff
 - Bereavement support
 - Confidential, regular senior leader conversations and support
- National Professional Qualification for behaviour and culture



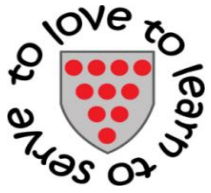


DBE / Education Team Support

- **The Inspectorate**

- On-going conversations with the His Majesty's Inspector regional lead on concerns, inconsistencies and changes needed to the inspection framework
- Conversations with the lead inspector on every inspection of our church schools
- Support for school leaders pre, during and post Ofsted and SIAMS inspection



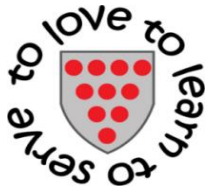


DBE / Education Team Support

- **School Governance**

- Introduction of 'Bishop's Representative' to fulfil the role of vacant role of the Ex-Officio, applications have to be supported by clergy and Archdeacon
- Free training for all schools on the role of governors, Foundation governors and Ex-Officios
- Specific training for 'Nurturing church and school relationships'
- Lunchtime learning session for Clergy and wider church communities
- Day training for clergy on church schools as part of ordination training

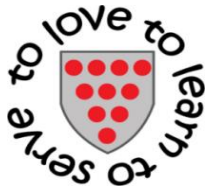




How can our church schools benefit from the links with their churches and parishes?

- **Pastoral Support**
- **Community Engagement**
- **Collective Worship**
- **Religious Education and School Curriculum**
- **Governance**
- **Gather**

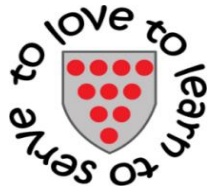




Questions for Synod

- What would most help you engage with your local church school?
- How do you feel we can best engage with the church community to encourage closer work, possibly with opportunities to discuss 'Gather' and support for church school governance?

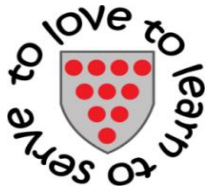




Headteacher Panel

- Gemma Martin – Headteacher - Himbleton CofE Primary School
- David Dunn – Headteacher – Pedmore CofE Primary School
- Nadia Underwood – Headteacher – Elmley Castle CofE First School





Questions for Headteachers

- What does it mean to you to be a church school headteacher?
- Are any of the challenges we have mentioned this evening particularly pertinent to your schools?
- How do you currently engage with the Diocese, what support do you access?
- How do you currently engage with your local church and clergy?
- What would help you to develop better links with the church?
- Can you share how you feel your school is a worshipping community?
- How has 'Gather' impacted your school as a worshipping community?

