

# EDUCATION IS NOT JUST ABOUT TESTS AND RESULTS WE ALSO NEED OUR CHILDREN TO FLOURISH IN CHARACTER AND SPIRIT



A former head teacher and now the Diocesan Director for Schools, Jo Osborne takes a look at how schools can juggle the pressures of achieving national standards and testing with giving our children a well-rounded education to help them to flourish as people.



← Helping children to flourish as individuals is key to what the church hopes to achieve in schools.

But most of us were not exactly unsympathetic. Because the fact is that the relentless drive for ever-improving results in English and maths, and the rapid and poorly thought-out introduction of new assessment systems and tests, are narrowing the primary curriculum in many schools.

a few. They are subjects we all need to explore as children. For all of us those subjects are part of a rounded education – and for many pupils they could be key to their future happiness and development.

The primary curriculum should be about more than just producing increasingly efficient “economic units”.

The Church of England has been involved in education for centuries, since before the concept of state education had even been invented, when it helped provide education for those children whose families couldn’t afford to send them to private schools.

**And I believe that the church’s vision today is as relevant and important as it has ever been, because it is about more than turning out those “economic units”.**

The Church’s vision for Education is of course Christian in its inspiration – with the promise by Jesus of “life in all its fullness” at its heart. But its guiding principles are ones that will benefit everybody, Christian or otherwise. Its aim is to inspire both church and non-church schools – to help enable everybody to flourish.

So yes, we’d like every child to fulfil their potential when it comes to exams. But we also believe it is crucial to embrace their spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development.

All of us in education accept testing, but we want to make it something that’s constructive and generally allows children to be challenged and to do their best.

And it cannot be at the expense of development in all those other subjects and characteristics, because they are essential if children are to flourish as well-rounded, happy individuals who are able to fulfil their potential.

**THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN EDUCATION FOR CENTURIES, SINCE BEFORE THE CONCEPT OF STATE EDUCATION HAD EVEN BEEN INVENTED, WHEN IT HELPED PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR THOSE CHILDREN WHOSE FAMILIES COULDN’T AFFORD TO SEND THEM TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Very few people in education could publicly voice support for the Let Our Kids be Kids campaign, not least as it called for parents to boycott the Key Stage 2 SATs exams last term. Not only would that have resulted in a pitched battle between schools and the Department for Education, it would also have jeopardised everybody’s results, for which children and teachers alike had worked so very hard.

Intensive teaching in ability groups, each led by an adult, can inhibit resilience, creativity, collaboration and character development among our children.

Literacy, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and maths are, of course, critical components of the education system. But they cannot be focused on to the exclusion of history, for example, or art, language, drama, music, sport - to name just



↑ Children from St Uny Church of England Primary School enjoy learning about the world around them.

# CHURCH WORKS WITH ACADEMIES TO FORGE A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR CHILDREN



ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Do the majority of parents care whether their child is in an academy or non-academy school? **Nope.** What parents really care about is that their children are happy, safe, and that they are making a good amount of progress – the right amount for them.

It can seem from the outside as though changing to an academy means a new name, a new logo, and some new governors. Oh, and a fancy new title and probably a pay rise for the person at the top. And quite rightly various people – from the House of Commons down - have expressed concerns about some academies becoming empires, or education hypermarkets where the needs of the individual are lost.

Although people’s views on academies are really wide-ranging, and the academies themselves vary in outlook, ethos and performance, Cornwall has one of the highest proportions of academies in England. So it is essential for our children’s futures that these academies are good – that all our children are happy, safe, and making good progress.

The Diocese of Truro is committed to being a significant partner in raising standards in schools for children in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. We

## CHURCH AND UNIVERSITY JOIN FORCES TO TRAIN TEACHERS

**The Diocese of Truro has formed a unique teacher training partnership with the University of St Mark and St John (Marjon) in Plymouth.**

The School Direct scheme gives trainees the opportunity to learn not only the skills and practices all teachers need to know, but also to gain valuable insights about the nuances of teaching in church schools.

The Church of England is the largest single provider of schools in England with more than 4,800 schools. It plays a key role in shaping change in the education system.

Church school pupils and their parents expect the highest standards of teaching and opportunities for learning.

Diocesan Director For Schools, Jo Osborne, said: “School Direct trainees gain specific insight into teaching in schools with values founded on their Christian ethos and distinctiveness; schools that are committed to inspiring children to love learning, achieving good academic results, developing the whole child, and to the values of diversity and inclusion.

“They learn to be whole-hearted teachers enabling children to flourish.”



↑ Daniela Cheatham, one of this year’s trainees, saw the benefits of being able to link theory into practice and vice versa.

are already well on the way to playing an active part in the new school-led education system set out in the recent

White Paper: Educational Excellence Everywhere. **This involves providing expertise, training, support, challenge and grants in all the seven identified areas of excellence:**

- Great teachers
- Great leaders
- A school-led system
- Preventing under performance
- Curriculum
- Accountability
- Resources

The diocesan education department works not only with the 44 Church schools but also a large number

of community schools, as our representatives take up roles on the boards of multi-academy trusts that include both church and non-church schools. The focus of this work will always be on improving outcomes for children.

The central question we need to ask is what difference can the academy system make to real children? The answer is that the academy system gives us more control over the content of the curriculum at least and we have the opportunity to form strong, formally accountable partnerships that are united in the aim of providing an education where children thrive academically, spiritually and socially.

Working together, whatever the status of school, is the key to a bright future for ‘Connor and Emily’.



← Children from all five schools in the St Piran’s Cross MAT joined together in Truro Cathedral for The Big Sing.

## WHAT’S ON SEPTEMBER

### 1 - 8 Craft Fayre

St Swithin’s Church Launcells, Daily 10am to 6pm

### 2 - 16 Display of Mother’s Union Banners

Truro Diocese, 10am-5pm (Mon-Sat)

### 3 Prayer Day

St Petroc’s Church, Bodmin, Drop in

### 8 Yoga at St Euny Church

Redruth, 9.30am (every Thursday)

### 10 Coffee morning as part of Mothers’ Union 140th celebrations

St Stephen’s Church Saltash, 10am-12pm

### 10 The Orchestra of St Mary’s

St Mary’s Church Penzance, 7.30pm, Tickets £8

### 10 Flower Festival

St Ia Church, St Ives, 12pm

### 11 A Service of Reflection for People affected by Suicide

Truro Cathedral, 2pm

### 11 St Ives Church Concerts

St Mary’s church Choir Launceston, St Ives Parish Church, St Ives, 5pm-6pm

### 12 Treverva Male Voice Choir

St Ives Parish Church, St Ives, 7.30pm

### 13 Quiet Day

St Just in Roseland Church, 10am-4pm

### 16 Barque Music by Candlelight

St Ives Parish Church, St Ives, 9pm

### 17 Concert by Celtic Voices

Trevelmond Methodist Church, 7.30pm

### 17 Taizé service

Epiphany House, 7pm, all welcome.

### 19 Windows Into the Christian Faith Course: St Paul

The Pearson Room of the Cathedral Office, 10am-12pm, or 2-4pm or 7.30-9.30pm.

### 21 A Massed Choir Singing Event for World Peace Day

Truro Cathedral & Truro Methodist church.

### 22 ‘A Theological Reflection on the Encounter with Islam’ with Dr Christopher Hewer

Chapter House, Truro Cathedral 7pm.

### 22 Culdrose Military Wives Choir

St Ives Church, St Ives, 7.30pm

### 23 - 25 National Prayer Weekend

### 24 Budapest Café Orchestra

St Endellion Church, tickets@endellionia.org.uk

### 24 Concert by Celtic Voices

Callington Methodist Church, 7pm

### 30 Great British Choral Anthems

Truro Cathedral, 7.30pm

## OCTOBER

### 1 Craft Fair

St Nicholas and St Faith Church, Saltash, 10AM – 4PM

### 15 Taizé service

Epiphany House, 7pm, all welcome.

### 21 Quiet Day

St Just in Roseland Church, 10am-4pm

### 27 A joint Male voice choir concert with Loveny Male Voice choir and Arduwy (Men of Harlech)

Lanivet Church 7.30pm