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**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools:
Developing a series of inter-related and focused research-based papers
employing evidence from the Diocese of Truro**

by

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Declarations

Declaration

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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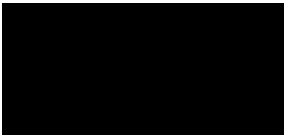
Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Abstract

This thesis was designed to explore the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools through the lens of the reflective teacher practitioner approach to educational research. The context is set by an analysis of three themes: the historical development of church schools; philosophical, theological, and operational thinking about church schools; and methodology in church school studies appropriate for the reflective teacher practitioner approach. This contextualisation is followed by six empirical studies conducted within the author's multi-academy trust of church schools within the Diocese of Truro. Drawing on an appropriate range of qualitative and quantitative methods, each study is documented in the recognised style for scientific presentation in an educational journal. The first three studies employed qualitative methods. Governors' perceptions of their role within church schools were explored by interviews. Pupils' religious experience through a labyrinth experience was explored through focus groups. Pupils' generation of intercessory prayer was explored through applying the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer. The other three studies employed quantitative methods. Pupil attitude toward Christianity was explored by the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. Pupil appreciation of the distinctive ethos of church schools was explored by the Lankshear Student Voice Scales. Pupil spiritual health was explored through the Fisher Feeling Good Loving Life measure that distinguishes among four domains of spiritual health (personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental). Together these six studies make an original contribution to knowledge to the specific field in which it has been shaped, concerning: school governors, religious experience, intercessory prayer, pupil attitude toward Christianity, pupil attitude toward school ethos, and pupil spiritual health. Second, taken together the six studies add new knowledge to the literature concerning the contribution of the reflective teacher practitioner approach to educational research.

Abbreviations

apSAFIP	ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer
CofE	Church of England
CoRE	Commission on Religious Education
DBE	Diocesan Boards of Education
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for education and Skills
FGLL	Feeling Good, Living Life
FSAC	Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
LGB	local governing body
LSVS	Lankshear Student Voice Scales
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education
PSHE	personal, social, health and economic education
QOLIS	Quality Of Life Influences Survey
RE	religious education
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education
SATs	Statutory Assessment Tests
SHALOM	spiritual health and life orientation measure
SH4DI	Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index
SIAMS	statutory inspections of Anglican and Methodist schools
SIAS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
SMSC	spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge

SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWBQ	Preliminary Well-Being Questionnaire
SWBQ2	Well-Being Questionnaire 2
SWBS	Spiritual Well-Being Scale
UK	United Kingdom

Introduction

This thesis has arisen from and been set within the context of my professional engagement as a teacher working within an Anglican church primary school in the Diocese of Truro. The primary research question has arisen from my interest concerning the ways in which schools of this nature are presented and perceived within the current context of primary schools within the state-maintained sector in England.

Rooting the research in the system of school inspections

This interest has been shaped by the growing emphasis, arising from the Education (Schools) Act of 1992, on identifying and subjecting to statutory inspection aspects of these schools outside the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) system of inspection applied to all schools. It is this additional system of statutory inspection, currently known as Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), for which the governing body of church schools holds responsibility. The most recent documentation concerning SIAMS, published by the National Society in 2018 and updated in September 2022 makes explicit the assumptions on which the system is based.

The core assumption underpinning SIAMS is that church schools are different, that church schools are distinctive. The assumption is that this distinctiveness is rooted in the school's Christian vision. The intention of the SIAMS inspectors is to examine the effectiveness of the school's Christian vision. This is made clear in the introduction to the current documentation by Dr Margaret James, National Director of SIAMS who writes as follows

SIAMS inspection retains its primary focus on the effectiveness and impact of the school's Christian vision... . School communities will be encouraged and enabled to share stories and narrative evidence of ways in which their Christian vision has enabled and continues to enable them to bring about flourishing in the lives of those whom they serve and with whom they work. (National Society, 2022, p. 3)

It is in this spirit of the way in which SIAMS conceptualises and speaks about distinctiveness and effectiveness that the title for and primary research question of the thesis has been framed. The SIAMS system is not concerned to assess distinctiveness in a comparative sense (for example by comparing with schools that are not church schools) but in a descriptive sense. What do church schools say about their distinctive nature? Then having established the nature of the distinctive claims made by church schools (arising from their Christian vision), SIAMS focuses on the effectiveness of these claims in the sense of asking whether church schools display what they claim to display.

The method employed within this thesis to examine the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools (in the sense in which SIAMS applies these concepts) has been shaped by my professional involvement within the schools that form the basis for this study. Specifically, the researcher has positioned herself as operating as a research-based reflective practitioner. This notion of the research-based reflective practitioner is distinguished both from 'reflective practice' in the iterative sense in which that term is applied in discussion of theological reflection and from the 'action research' in which teachers often engage. The notion of the research-based reflective practitioner is rooted in the conceptualisation of Johannes

van der Ven in his discussion of *Education for reflective ministry* (van der Ven, 1998).

Van der Ven's notion of research-based reflective practice concerns equipping the professional practitioner with research skills that enable the practitioner to function more effectively within her professional context. Van der Ven fosters connection between the practitioner's professional context and the rigorous environment of the academy. By undertaking this doctoral programme my intention had three potential outcomes: personally I aimed to become a better teacher working within the context of Anglican primary schools within the state-maintained sector; professionally I aimed to demonstrate within the network of schools in which I worked the value of serious teacher engagement with the research community; academically I aimed to contribute to the relatively small but growing body of peer-reviewed literature that currently provides a rigorous foundation for exploring the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools in the sense in which the SIAMS inspection system employs those concepts.

Thesis review

In this introduction to the thesis, I plan to outline the unfolding trajectory of thought marshalled in the dissertation. The dissertation comprises three core sections. In the first part there are three chapters. These chapters were designed to establish the conceptual framework for the research.

In the second part there are six chapters that present six focused empirical studies that were designed with two concerns in mind. The first concern was to

deploy a range of research methods (both qualitative and quantitative) relevant to advancing the field of church school studies and intended to develop my range of research skills that could be deployed in future studies working as a research-based reflective practitioner. The second concern was to identify a range of precise research questions (appropriate for different research methods) that could build on existing literatures and extend those literatures with new and original findings, and in so doing contribute to knowledge about the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican primary schools in the sense in which the SIAMS inspection system employs those concepts. The six empirical studies presented in chapters 4 to 9 are offered as part of what could have been a much larger collection of studies. The specific research questions that they address are in no sense exhaustive of the field in which they are located. They simply represent what may be an achievable aim within the context of a doctoral thesis.

The third part comprises a single chapter that draws together the findings from the research, assesses the contribution that has been made to knowledge, and offers pointers for further research.

Defining the research questions

The primary research question addressed by this dissertation concerns identifying and testing the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools in the sense in which these terms are implied in the SIAMS system designed for the inspection of church schools. This over-arching and general research question gave rise to the nine specific research questions addressed in each of the following chapters.

Chapter 1, concerning ‘the development of church schools: the historical context’, addresses the research question, ‘What is distinctive about the historical narrative from which the current provision of church schools has arisen?’ This chapter starts with the development of the National Society in 1811 in the provision of school places to educate the nation’s children, how other voluntary organisations came to provide school places, and how the state became involved. Key dates, education acts, school standard frameworks, inspecting for accountability, and the emergence of different types of schools are chronicled which inform the narrative. Throughout there has been a continual struggle about whether schools should be church or state run. The 1944 Education Act was instrumental in securing the Church’s continued role in education where schools could choose to become voluntary aided or voluntary controlled, thereby providing appeasement to those who opposed church schools. Both Church and state continue to be fully involved in the education of today’s children. The chapter concludes that this distinctive historical narrative supports the claims of the SIAMS system for the distinctiveness of church schools.

Chapter 2, concerning ‘philosophical, theological, and operational thinking about church schools’ addresses the research question ‘What is distinctive about the ways in which the Church speaks about church schools in respect of its philosophical, theological, and operational thinking?’ This chapter examines the ways in which such thinking has developed since the founding of the National Society in 1811. This chapter chronicles how the Church of England developed in its thinking with regard to its church schools. It starts with looking at the Durham

Report of 1970 which was instrumental in examining the role the Church had for its schools. It then reports on key documents written over the next four decades, including the forging of partnerships culminating with the Church of England's guidance of 2021 regarding collective worship. With the state's involvement in education this meant that the Church of England needed to explain and justify the place its schools has within the education system. Though church schools are instrumental in educating a good proportion of the nation's children, the thinking has evolved regarding what constitutes providing education within the ethos of a church school environment. The chapter concludes that there has been considerable documentation about the nature of church schools that underpins the claims of the SIAMS system regarding the distinctiveness of church schools.

Chapter 3, concerning 'methodology in church school studies', addresses the research question, 'What are the methodological issues raised by the present thesis?' These issues arise from two distinctive features of the thesis. The first feature concerns the teacher as researcher working within her own educational setting. The second feature concerns the way in which the empirical component of this thesis has been constructed around six distinct studies, each of which was grounded in a defined body of literature and drew on an appropriate research method. The chapter concludes that van der Ven's positioning of the teacher engaged as research-based reflective practitioner provides a strong platform for the present research perspective.

Chapter 4, concerning 'how governors perceive their role within a church school', addressed the research question 'Do governors in church schools regard their role as impacted by the school's Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS

inspection system?’ This chapter builds on studies carried out in the Diocese of Oxford, the Diocese of London, and the Diocese of Chichester in the 1980s looked at a cross-section of church school governors, and concluded that foundation governors were more committed to maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of voluntary aided schools, but raised the question of whether the next generation of governors put at risk the identity of the future of Church of England schools due to the decline in their church attendance. The present study looks at how governor perceptions in the 2010s compare to these conclusions drawn from research conducted in the 1980s. This is a qualitative study that employed semi-structured interviews in 2017 with five governors from one local church school governing body. These interviews were analysed to evaluate the governors’ perceptions of a church school environment, and to examine contributions they made to maintain the Christian character of the school. The chapter concludes that the foundation governors hold a key role in maintaining the distinctive Christian vision of the church school.

Chapter 5, concerning ‘investigating pupils’ religious experience through a labyrinth’ addresses the research question, ‘Do church schools provide creative opportunities for religious and spiritual experience, as implied by the SIAMS inspection criteria?’ This chapter builds on the work of ap Siôn and Windsor (2012) and Francis and ap Siôn (2013) who employed Ninian Smart’s seven dimensional phenomenological approach to religion as an analytical framework to show how people experienced religion. This present study uses this approach to explore whether pupils can encounter a religious experience through an activity such as a labyrinth. It is a qualitative study which involves analysing pupils’ experiences via three focus groups from one school, St Jude, comprising six pupils in each of the

three age classes: 4- to 6-year-old pupils, 6- to 9-year-old pupils, and 9- to 11-year-old pupils. The findings suggest that Ninian Smart's seven dimensional approach could be applied to the labyrinth experience. Even though all of the seven dimensions could be included in the labyrinth activity, it is the ritual, experiential, ethical, and material dimensions which appear more evident. This chapter concludes that within a church school context Smart's seven dimensional approach proved a useful tool to provide evidence of pupils' spiritual development through a religious or spiritual experience.

Chapter 6, concerning 'applying ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer among primary school pupils', addresses the research question, 'Do church schools provide creative opportunities for pupils to engage with prayer as a core component of the school's Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?' This chapter builds on the ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP framework). This framework has been applied across a range of ages and places. The purpose of this chapter is to find out if this framework can be applied to prayer requests written by primary school pupils. This framework was employed to analyse 352 prayers from one small school comprising 62 pupils, collected during 2019. There were 78 infant pupil prayers and 274 junior pupil prayers. Findings suggest that the context of location, timing and purpose of prayers are important factors in enabling pupils to write a range of prayers. Prayers written by infants are comparable with the majority of previous studies where prayer requests related to other people, whereas prayers written by juniors differ from previous studies where prayer requests related to global issues rather than to other people. Using the framework enables comparisons to be made between prayers

generated by these pupils and previous studies. This chapter concludes that within a church school context the apSAFIP framework serves as a useful tool to provide evidence of pupils' engagement with prayer.

Chapter 7, concerning 'applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils' addresses the research question, 'Are church school communities within which the school's Christian vision is reflected in a positive attitude toward Christianity?' This chapter builds on the work of Leslie Francis who developed an affective instrument to measure religion and spirituality by means of a questionnaire, known as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC). This instrument has been used across a range of ages in studies among primary pupils, secondary pupils and adults, both in denominational and non-denominational contexts. The present study uses this instrument to explore pupils' attitude toward Christianity from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of whom 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four age groups across the junior years (7- to 11-year-old pupils), over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show similarities with previous research studies: personal prayer is a clear indicator of attitude toward Christianity; female pupils have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than male pupils; attitude toward Christianity declines with pupil age; and attitude toward Christianity reduced over time. This chapter concludes that within a church school context the FSAC serves as a useful tool to provide evidence of the extent to which pupils reflect the school's Christian vision.

Chapter 8, concerning ‘applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils’ addresses the research question, ‘Are church schools communities in which the pupils recognise the characteristics promoted by the SIAMS inspection system as reflecting the church school ethos?’ This chapter builds on the work of David Lankshear who developed a set of scales to measure pupil voice, known as the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS). These set of scales were developed with pupils from year 5 and year 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils) completing a questionnaire in Welsh primary schools with the intention to help school governors in determining the ethos of the school to which they are affiliated. The present study employs this scale to find out what can be learned about a school’s ethos from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of when 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four age groups across the junior years with 7- to 11-year-old pupils, over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show: female pupils have a more positive attitude toward school than male pupils; attitude toward school declines with pupil age; and attitude toward school declines over time. This chapter concludes that the LSVS serve as a useful tool within a church school context to provide evidence of the extent to which pupils reflect the Christian vision for the school’s ethos.

Chapter 9, concerning ‘applying the Fisher model of spiritual wellbeing among 7- to 11-year-old pupils’ addresses the research question, ‘Are church schools communities in which pupils experience a good level of spiritual wellbeing as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?’ This chapter builds on the work of John Fisher who developed a number of spiritual health measures which could be used

with specific aged pupils in school. In 2004 Fisher developed the Feeling Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL) which was developed with primary school (5- to 12-year-old). The purpose of this chapter is to examine the spiritual health of pupils by employing the measure developed by Fisher, Feeling Good, Living Life (FGLL) among pupils from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of whom 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four junior years (7- to 11-year-old pupils) over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show: responses from female pupils are slightly more positive compared with responses from male pupils; and spiritual health responses decline with pupil age. This chapter concludes that the FGLL instrument serves as a useful tool within a church school's context to provide evidence of the extent to which pupils reflect the school's Christian vision for promoting spiritual wellbeing.

Finally, chapter 10 draws together the findings from these nine specific research questions that had been selected to illuminate the over-arching and general research question concerning identifying and testing the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools in the sense in which these terms are implied in the SIAMS system developed for the inspection of church schools.

Part one: Setting the context

Chapter 1

The development of church schools: the historical context

Abstract

This chapter, concerning ‘the development of church schools: the historical context’, addresses the research question, ‘What is distinctive about the historical narrative from which the current provision of church schools has arisen?’ This chapter starts with discussing the development of the National Society in 1811 in the provision of school places to educate the nation’s children, how other voluntary organisations came to provide school places, and how the state became involved. Key dates, education acts, school standard frameworks, inspecting for accountability, and the emergence of different types of schools are chronicled which inform the narrative. Throughout there has been a continual struggle about whether schools should be church or state run. The 1944 Education Act was instrumental in securing the Church’s continued role in education where church schools could choose to become voluntary aided or voluntary controlled, thereby providing appeasement to those who opposed church schools. Both Church and state continue to be fully involved in the education of today’s children. The chapter concludes that this distinctive historical narrative supports the claims of the SIAMS system for the distinctiveness of church schools.

Introduction

It was not until the early nineteenth century that the aim of educating the nation’s children first became fully established as a viable possibility. This education came in

the form of churches supporting, developing, and funding schools. These schools became known as church schools. Church schools have been in existence for over two hundred years. This chapter reviews the historical development of church schools in England and Wales from the early nineteenth century to the early years of the twenty-first century. It provides a useful insight into how church schools have progressed over the period.

The historical setting

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain was in the epoch of the industrial revolution (roughly 1760 to 1840). The country's population was increasing, and due to this industrialisation child labour among the poor was widespread. This child labour was perceived as a problem both socially and politically. Pessimists claimed that for children the work conditions were intolerable and that industrialists were taking advantage of them. On the other hand, optimists claimed that the work conditions were not too bad and that children working provided the family with more income (Tuttle, 1998). At this time Sunday schools, founded by Robert Raikes in 1780 (Francis, 1986a), was the only main form of free schooling available for these poor children. The popularity of Sunday schools increased to 1803 (Wickham, 2013).

Voluntary initiatives

It was during the early nineteenth century that voluntary initiatives began to build the system on which today's state-maintained provision of schools still rests. Two men, Joseph Lancaster in 1798, and Andrew Bell in 1801 set up two different types of schooling. Though their teachings were similar they differed with regard to religious

instruction. Lancaster's provision was unattached to any denomination with a directive of "a general basis of common Christian belief, based on the Bible" (Louden, 2012, p. 18), whereas Bell's provision was to make children progress from good students, men, people in society to becoming good Christians where the word Christian "in Bell's eyes had only one meaning: Anglican" (Louden, 2012, p.19). Lancaster had many followers and 1808 marked the founding of the Royal Lancasterian Institution, established by Joseph Lancaster and Free Churchmen. However, there were split views on whether the education provided should be undenominational, backed by the non-conformists, or should be based on Church of England doctrines, backed by the Anglicans.

The history of the founding of the National Society has been chronicled by Cruickshank (1963), Murphy (1971), and Francis (1987, 1993a). By 1811 members of the Church of England led by Joshua Watson and backed by a goodly number of Anglicans, founded the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor, which later became shortened to the National Society, in answer to the Royal Lancasterian Institution. Joshua Watson's simple theology was to provide better conditions and to educate the poor: the goal of the National Society was to "instruct and educate the poor in suitable learning, works of industry and the principles of the Established Religion according to the Established Church" (National Society, 1812a, p.5), where the 'Established Church' referred to the Church of England, and religious instruction was to comprise: doctrines, catechism and liturgy. Originally the National Society was not so inflexible that it required all children should receive religious instruction if their parents objected. However, this later changed when Anglican Sunday church attendance became an entry requirement.

In 1814 the British and Foreign School Society emerged from the Royal Lancasterian Institution, supported by non-conformists and liberal Anglicans (Francis, 1993a). These British Schools were to advocate “the education of the labouring and manufacturing classes of society of every religious persuasion” and religious instruction was limited to scripture and “general Christian principles” (Francis, 1987, p. 12), thereby countering the doctrines of the National Society schools.

For these schools to operate there needed to be a financial source. So once a school had opened it could apply for a funding allocation to cover the costs of the buildings, this was in the form of a grant and based on the wealth of the parish. For schools to cover the daily cost this had to come from parochial donations. By 1813, with increased public subscriptions to the National Society, the aim was to build a school in each parish. There were now two hundred and thirty schools receiving grants, and thirty new schools were being built. It was the duty of the parish priest to oversee religious instruction and teachers were required to belong to the Church of England. From 1817 it was obligatory for schools to use Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) materials, and for children to attend they needed to regularly take part in Sunday services. From 1820, due to the growing population, it became difficult to accommodate children in church, which in turn led to schools being unable to impart religious doctrine. It became the duty of parish clergy to regularly examine and inspect the children. The number of schools continued to increase but financing them was coming to crisis point. By 1832 a total of 6,730

parishes had a church school. From 1830 National Society schools outnumbered the schools of the British and Foreign Schools Society.

The 1833 Factories Act (Parliament, UK, 2012) attempted to protect children by stipulating that children under the age of nine were not to work, and children aged nine to thirteen, working no more than a forty-eight-hour week, should have two hours of schooling a day. However, there was still a long way to go.

Government grants and calling schools to account

The state entered into education in 1833 providing funds in the form of grants to the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society for school buildings. Each voluntary organisation had to raise 50% of the cost of the buildings and needed to ensure they were able to meet current costs. Due to the Church of England having more monetary resources, by 1839 they received 80% of the government grant (Cruickshank, 1963; Murphy, 1971; Francis, 1987, 1993a). It was not long before the government imposed tighter regulations, such as schools no longer being required to use SPCK religious books, because the parish clergy were now required to manage religious instruction.

Other denominations, the Methodist Church and the Roman Catholic Church, wanted to come on board too in educating the nation, so in 1843 Methodist voluntary day schools emerged, obtaining their first grant in 1847 (Francis, 1986a). The Wesleyan Society accepted children of any denomination unlike the National Society who were insistent that religious instruction was denominational. The Roman Catholic Church succeeded in 1847 informing the Catholic Poor School Committee

(Francis, 1987), which after some delay was recognised as a body able to receive grants from the government.

From 1839 there was a requirement to call schools to account: if schools were to receive grants from the government, then they would need to be inspected. However, the National Society declared that the Church alone should provide inspectors for their schools due to a church school ethos and their denominational religious instruction. The National Society established their own inspection system from the dioceses comprising clergy and officers from the Society with the intention to inspect schools every three years. Eventually, there was an agreement between the Government and Church whereby the Archbishops would be informed prior to arranging a Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) inspection for church schools. In 1844 there was a complete turnaround from the National Society regarding inspections, fully understanding that schools receiving government grants needed to be accountable, and these should be in the form of state inspectors.

During the 1850s government grants to schools became more available. To make schools accountable and raise standards of education it was suggested that teachers' pay should be based on results. In 1862 The Revised Code recommended that the allocation of government grants should be based on pupil attendance and examination results (Marcham, 1981). Examination results in turn brought about a narrowing of the curriculum to a focus on the 3Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic).

In 1852 the Catholic Westminster Synod said that all denominations should have their own school. Urban areas were in a better position to do this due to more

funds being available, whereas rural areas were only able to fund one type of school and thereby became monopolised by the Anglican school. Non-conformists refused to send their children to an Anglican school because of their teachings on the prayer book and catechism (Francis, 1987).

Cruickshank (1963) commented that where there was only one type of denominational school resentment grew because of Anglican refusal to “concede rights of conscience” (Francis, 1987, p. 14). The Committee of Council on Education in 1860 refused to give grants where there was only one school type of school available unless “a conscience clause were included in the constitution of the school” (Francis, 1987, p. 14).

Between the 1850s and 1860s there was much debate about whether education should be left to voluntary organisations, and about the relationships between Church and state, the state’s involvement in education regarding providing grants, who was responsible for providing religious instruction, and whether this should be left to the Church. During this period there was a discrepancy of views between voluntaryists and ‘radicals (Francis, 1993b). The voluntaryists comprising non-conformists backed the view that the state should not be involved in religious instruction, and it should be left to voluntary organisations, whereas the radicals backed a non-religious approach in schools and argued that religious instruction should be left to Churches rather than within education. There were also other Anglican views: the Church should be solely responsible for education; education should be a partnership between Church and state; non-religious education and religious instruction should be independent; and non-religious education and religious instruction should be inseparable.

However, by the 1860s it was obvious that the Churches would be unable to provide enough schools for all children, even though there were now twelve thousand church schools. According to the Newcastle Commission of 1861, even though the grants had increased from the government, areas of greatest poverty were unable to raise the required funds so were not eligible to receive the government grant, resulting in many children still not being taught (Francis, 1987). In 1869 the National Educational League was founded in Birmingham due to insufficient school places and parental lack of financial means to pay the school fees, and soon extended to others towns. These schools initially were secular, devoid of religious instruction. However, the founders realised that people were not ready to accept secular schooling.

The development of board schools

By 1870 voluntary bodies were still delivering the schooling, but there were still many children who were not receiving any education. It was in 1870 that the state came on board with taking a more involved approach in educating the nation's children.

The Education Act of 1870 (Murphy, 1972) gave provision for two types of schools: voluntary schools could still receive grants from the state, but board schools were set up where there were insufficient funds to set up voluntary schools. The stipulation about how these schools were funded are mentioned by Loudon (2012): "Board schools would get their money from rates, fees and government grants; voluntary schools, as before, from subscriptions, fees, and government grants.

School fees were limited to 9d a week: a substantial amount” (p. 40). Board schools’ funds from rates came from local people, whereas voluntary schools relied on subscription fees of churchgoers. A board school would be guided by a board of between five and fifteen members. The board members could decide, if they so wished, to make school attendance mandatory for children aged five to thirteen years, fining parents for children’s non-attendance. This, however, did not take hold. Voluntary schools liked the idea of making schooling mandatory for children as numbers on the registers would guarantee a larger grant from the government.

These school boards were permitted to charge fees. Board schools were to plug the gaps in the shortage of school places not to override school places provided by voluntary bodies. This acted as an incentive for voluntary bodies to increase their allocation of schools. The act said that voluntary schools could continue with the religious instruction in their schools according to their denomination. Board schools were able to choose whether to include religious instruction or not. According to the ‘Cowper-Temple clause’ (Louden, 2004; Jackson & O’Grady, 2007), board schools were not permitted to teach a religious catechism or religious formulary of any denomination.

In 1888 the Cross Commission (Cross Commission, 1888), founded in 1886 to investigate education, noted that most board schools did not barr religious instruction teaching. The Birmingham school board, in 1873 (Richards, 1970), tried to do this by only allowing religious instruction to be taught outside schools hours by those who did not advocate secular teaching. This was carried out by clergymen, but

they had to pay to use the classroom. In 1879 there was opposition to this although the headmaster was allowed to read a Bible reading.

The 'Cowper-Temple clause' was understood in different ways by different school boards. Thus, in Sheffield no denominational teaching was taught, but in Manchester denominational teaching was permitted as long as there was no catechism or formulary (Francis, 1987).

The 1870 Education Act meant that voluntary schools and board schools could work side by side, but in reality, board schools were financially better off as there was more money per child in board schools compared to voluntary schools (Murphy, 1971). This resulted in many voluntary schools being unable to keep up with the quality of educational provision. Many voluntary schools transferred to become board schools and many voluntary schools were closing yearly. However, at the close of the nineteenth century "voluntary provision still accounted for 71% of the nation's schools and provided 52.2% of the school places" (Francis, 1987, p. 16). Cruickshank (1963) puts forward that there was a form of partnership between church and state, which became known as the 'dual-system', where the state and the church were responsible for educating the nation.

By 1881, there were now 935,993 additional voluntary school places, whereas board schools had acquired 1,082,634 school places since 1870. Religious instruction within voluntary schools could not be inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs), so an alternative inspectorate system from the Church of England

had to be provided. However, the National Society was anxious that voluntary schools would revert to board schools because of inadequate pecuniary aid.

The dual system

From 1902 to 1944 this 'dual-system' continued, even though there were attempts to introduce a unitary system. According to Loudon (2012), in 1902 voluntary schools numbered 14,275 educating 3.1 million children 11,804 schools of which were provided for by the Church of England, whereas Board schools numbered 5,878, educating 2.3 million children. Voluntary schools only received 75% of funds per child compared to a child educated at board schools. With the 1902 Education Act (Gillard, 2011) school boards were replaced by local authorities. Board schools became 'provided' schools and voluntary schools 'non-provided' schools. Both these schools received grant aid. Children were taught a secular curriculum; denominational teaching could only be taught if the teaching and building were paid for by the Church. 'Non-provided' schools now received funds from the local education authority but these funds did not need to be equal to the funds that 'provided' schools received.

In 1906 voluntary schools were to come under control of the local authority with the intent of eliminating religious education. There was a continual battle to suppress the Church of England's control on education.

The Fisher Education Bill in 1921 (Akenson, 1971) attempted to introduce a unitary education system, however this system failed despite churches struggling to finance and uphold their responsibility to schools. In 1924 some local education

authorities wanted to engage with churches, and one way they saw this happening was to entrust them to produce a religious instruction syllabus which could be used in 'provided' schools. Cambridgeshire was the first authority to produce a syllabus, and by 1930 eight other counties had also written their own. The aim of these syllabuses was to improve teaching standards. With the churches involved in producing local agreed syllabuses for religious education, managers in church schools were more prepared to switch their schools to the local education authority. Religious education became available for all children.

With the 1936 Education Act (Gillard, 2011) local authorities undertook the building of senior schools; local authorities also went into agreement with the churches to assist with the building of senior schools known as special agreement schools. By 1942 each Diocese was required to set up an Education Committee which had a Diocesan Director, and church schools were now required to work with the diocese to strengthen their schools.

The 1944 Education Act

The next momentous event in education came with the 1944 Education Act (HMSO, 1944). There was to be secondary education for all, national free statutory schooling was established for everyone from 5- to 15-years-old funded by the local education authority. In discussion a unified education system again was raised, involving an end to church schools and for all schools to be run by local authorities, thereby bringing to an end the 'dual-system' of secular and church schools. Non-conformists and the Free Churches, though in favour of Christian teaching, begrudged the Anglican control it held over its schools. They were in favour of the 'Cowper-

Temple clause' of 1870 where the teaching of religious instruction was not attached to any religious denomination. The Free Churches were not pleased with the Anglican control and its numbers of church schools.

However, the Anglicans and Roman Catholics would not be content if their schools were taken away. The 1944 Education Act and its provisions showed that England was still very much a Christian country and that the churches should still, with the state, share responsibility for the education of the nation's children. Lord Butler (Butler & Butler, 1971) in trying to resolve the call for a unified education from the non-conformists and the Free Churches, and satisfy both the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics, proposed that voluntary schools could choose to become either controlled or aided. Controlled status would result in these schools being fully financed by the state, the local authority, rather than the church and a requirement to follow a locally agreed syllabus for religious teaching. By this stage, the Cambridgeshire Local Agreed Syllabus, first written in 1924 by a group of Anglicans, Free Churchmen and teachers (Butler & Butler, 1971), was being used in over 100 local authorities; it was not attached to any religious denomination. With aided status, the state, the local authority, would pay for the teachers' salaries and school's running costs, but the church in the form of its managers would be responsible for its buildings, and denominational worship and religious education in aided schools would be permitted.

The 1944 Education Act attempted to provide an opportunity for the state and Church to work in partnership. Opportunity for this was set out through nine fundamental religious expectations. The first required that both county and

voluntary schools should provide a daily act of worship. The purpose of this was to prepare children to take their place in the worshipping congregations of their churches within their community. The second required both county and voluntary schools to provide religious instruction. This could lead to the relinquishing of the need for the church to maintain church schools since religious instruction would be an integral part of every school's curriculum. The third gave Churches a pivotal role in the development of agreed syllabuses for religious instruction. Churches were of the opinion that religious instruction needed to be theological as well as educational, and that, as the Church, they should be fully involved in this process to make sure that religious instruction would not be affiliated with a particular denomination. The fourth gave parents the right to withdraw their children from religious instruction and worship. This withdrawal protected the rights of those who objected to religious education. The fifth gave Churches assurances that they would be involved in training teachers for both county and church schools. Churches presumed that by investing in training teachers this would have an impact on the pupils when their students graduated to teach in school. The sixth permitted voluntary schools to opt for controlled status. Controlled status gave the Church an opportunity to retain denominational worship in its schools but without having to finance them. The seventh permitted Churches to decide which of their voluntary schools should opt for aided status. Aided status gave the Church opportunity to continue with denominational teaching and denominational worship in their schools. The eighth permitted Churches to develop a church school distinctiveness in their denominational schools. The distinctiveness of these schools would serve the needs of their denominational community. The ninth gave parents opportunity to obtain

free transport for their children to their designated denominational school. This safeguarded the rights of the Church's members.

There were split views "in the Church of England between those who felt a truly Christian atmosphere and teaching could come about only in church schools and those who felt the 'agreed' syllabus was sufficient" (Butler & Butler, 1971, p. 99). Aided schools would, therefore, be more distinctively Christian than controlled schools as the Church would retain more control, the eighth point listed in the fundamental religious expectations of the 1944 Education Act. The Free Churches would be satisfied with the controlled status of church schools. This could then be seen to be a compromise.

In fact, three categories of school came about for church schools following the 1944 Education Act: aided, controlled, and special agreement in accordance with the 1936 Education Act, as chronicled by Francis (1986a, 1993a).

In a non-provided school which acquired aided status the Church was responsible for the financial costs of repairing school buildings externally where the local education authority deemed a requirement to maintain the building to the satisfactory standards. These schools were able to apply for government grants, initially 50%, which over time increased to 85% by 1974. The 1944 Education Act also gave an opportunity for Churches to apply for new church schools to be built depending on need. All other funding would come from the local authority, including payment of teachers' salaries. In return the school could select a greater number of managers or governors to administer religious instruction and worship

according to their denomination. If aided school status became a financial problem, then the managers or governors could decide to acquire controlled status.

A non-provided school which acquired controlled status limited the church's control. The benefit of obtaining controlled status was that the local authority would be responsible for all of the cost of the school. In return, churches were able only to appoint a limited number of managers or governors, schools were required to follow the local agreed syllabus for religious instruction, and parents could only receive denominational instruction for their children if they asked. Up to a maximum one fifth of teachers, known as 'reserved teachers', could be employed capable of delivering religious instruction. Once a school had become controlled it was impossible to revert to aided status, until this was revised in 1986 when a controlled school could receive aided school status if they so wished.

A non-provided school could also acquire special agreement status. This meant that the school could keep the same agreements arranged between the Church and the local education authority based on the 1936 Education Act. The second world war disrupted this agreement. A 'special agreement' school had the same status as an aided school with regard to religious instruction, worship, financial affairs, and how the school was managed apart from employing staff.

Catholics refused to accept controlled status, not wishing to relinquish control over their denominational teaching. Catholic schools in the majority of cases chose to acquire aided status.

Thus, the 1944 Education Act was concerned that all schools had arrangements for religious instruction and collective worship whether these schools were voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, special agreement or county, which were the requirements listed in the first and second points in the fundamental religious expectations of the Act. In the eyes of the Church, the dual system of state and Church appeared to go from strength to strength.

By 1973 the Church had revised their aim from a school in every parish, to the furtherance of religious education delivery in accordance with Church of England principles for all children in Church of England schools world-wide. The National Society sought excellence in religious education teaching with particular attention to the teaching of Christianity. Two national RE centres were set up to develop this: at St Gabriel's College, London, and St John's College, York.

Education Reform Act of 1988

The next big shake up came with the 1988 Education Reform Act (HMSO, 1988) where acts of worship needed to be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, and Christianity the dominant religion taught in religious education lessons. A new type of school emerged in the form of the grant-maintained school. Instead of the local education authority funding these schools, funding would come from central government. There were other significant changes to do, and the following introductions were made: League tables were introduced based on schools' exam results at secondary school, and Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) results at primary school; the National Curriculum, where schools would need to teach the same content for a set of curriculum subjects identified as core or other foundation;

religious education stood outside the National Curriculum and was identified as a basic curriculum subject. Local Education Authorities still remained responsible for providing syllabuses according to the legislation set out in the 1944 Education Act, and there was a condition for each local authority to have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was set up with the task of carrying out school inspections. Formula funding was introduced, by which schools received funding based on the number of pupils in a school. Open enrolment enabled parents to apply for their preferred choice of school for their child. A school which became oversubscribed was permitted to select pupils according to specific criteria. Curriculum and assessment councils were also formed. This led to major reforms in the education system, most notably with regard to the testing of pupils and how schools were inspected.

School inspections

The Education (Schools) Act of 1992 (HMSO, 1992) brought in an inspection regime for voluntary schools with a religious foundation in accordance with their trust deeds with a focus on the school's religious ethos. This inspection became known as section 13. Ofsted were not able to inspect the religious character of a denominational voluntary school, as there was not any assurance that the Ofsted inspector would have the required qualifications. The National Society trained and arranged their own set of inspectors within dioceses. Section 13 inspections focussed on a school's religious distinctiveness, character, school leadership, and collective worship. In aided schools, religious education was also to be inspected under section 13.

School funding reform

The 1998 School Standards Framework (Britain, G. STATUTES, 1998) set new categories for schools funded by the local education authority: community, foundation, and voluntary schools. County schools were to be renamed community schools, voluntary aided and controlled schools were to retain their voluntary status and characteristics, and the expectation was that grant-maintained schools should become foundation schools. Church voluntary schools were to have a religious character; a governor appointed from a religious faith or denomination to stand for that faith or denomination; a trust that the property be used for religious intents; and the school would be run according to the religious doctrines and customs of a religious faith or practice.

It was at this time that church schools became oversubscribed; parents wanted a school with a particular sort of character for their children. Church schools appeared to provide this character. Church schools with their distinctively Christian ethos enabled all involved in the school to have a worthwhile sense of belonging because of the sharing of a set of Christian values (Louden, 2012). By 2000, church schools were educating 20% of the school population (Parker and Freathy, 2020).

The government white paper of 2001 (Department for Education and Skills, 2001) accepted increasing the number of schools with a religious character and proposed that the building costs for governors for these schools be reduced from 15% to 10%. The purpose of church schools was reaffirmed: church schools needed to be Christianly distinctive, affiliated with the local parish, and be inclusive to all

whatever religious or worldview was held (Dearing, 2001). There were now around 4,500 primary and 200 secondary church schools.

In 2002 the Ofsted inspection changed, bringing in a shorter period of notice. This caused difficulties for the National Society with its church school inspections, formerly known as a section 13 inspection. This had changed to become a section 23 inspection and then a section 48 inspection. Church school inspections were planned to coincide with a school's Ofsted inspection. It was not until 2005 that the National Society was able to match the new Ofsted arrangement, and the church school inspection framework became known as a Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS).

Schools and academy status

In July 2010 the Academies Act (Parliament, UK, 2010) was passed and schools, whether maintained primary, secondary or special, were able to apply to become academies. Applying for academy status meant that schools would be funded from central government rather than via the local education authority, thereby receiving the full budget for the school. Opting to become an academy this would not affect the school's religious or non-religious status. However, the removal of the local education authority would put an end to the arrangement made to Church of England schools in the 1944 Education Act. Free schools were also introduced in 2010, and these too were independent from the local education authority, with an option to combine primary and secondary schools under one establishment. These schools could be set up by parents, teachers, charities and businesses. The purpose was to provide more parental choice for their children. By September 2013 there were 174

free schools. For a school to become an academy a provider needed to be found. For a church school this could not be any provider since the land of voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools is owned by the Church. It was then left to Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) to decide on the change of status for the school, this safeguarded the foundational interest of church schools as reported in *The church school of the future review* (Chadwick, 2012) publication. This publication also suggested that the voluntary aided ideal should be replicated in all Church of England schools, irrespective of there being previously voluntary controlled, when they converted to academy status, and this should also be applied for the future development of church schools. Spiritual development was now at the forefront of Church of England's claim for the distinctiveness for church schools. The Church of England have played a vital role in developing religious education, in an advisory capacity with local RE syllabuses, through advisory staff in the dioceses, in the training of teachers, and in developing national policies.

Conclusion

This chapter chronicles the historical narrative regarding the development of church schools. It starts in 1811 where the aim of the National Society was to provide free education to the poor. Initially education was provided by voluntary organisations with a religious affiliation: Anglican, Roman Catholic and Methodist. Though the intention was to provide free school places, if insufficient funds were received from parochial donations, public subscriptions and government grants then fees would be charged. Likewise, from 1870 when the state came on board providing education in the form of board schools, if insufficient funds were received from rates and government grants then fees would be charged. Progress over the last two hundred

years has evolved with regard to fees: today schooling is free to all in all varieties of schools receiving funding from the government whether established by Church or state.

The National Society's aim in 1811, besides to "instruct and educate the poor in suitable learning, works of industry", was to "instruct and educate...in...the principles of the Established Religion according to the Established Church" (National Society, 1812a, p. 5) where the Established Church referred to the Church of England. However, there had been contention even before 1811 as to whether religious denominational teaching should be included in the education of the nation's children. There has been opposition from both secularists and from other denominational groups such as Non-conformists, Roman Catholics and Methodists. From the 1840s onwards other denominations have had schools providing for their congregations, from the 1870s onwards secularists have had schools which are not denominational controlled and are exempt from denominational control. However, there has continued to be a move to call a halt to denominational control and have a unified education system. This came from the Royal Lancasterian Institution in 1808, the 'radicals' in the 1850s and 1860s, the National Educational League in 1869, and in 1906 where voluntary schools were to come under control of the local authority with the intention of eliminating religious education control. What resulted with the 1902 education act was a 'dual system', where education was still to be provided from the voluntary and state sector. But with the 1944 education act a unified education system was raised again by the Non-conformists and the Free Churches. This act, however, reinforced the voluntary involvement in the education system with aided and controlled schools, although a voluntary school becoming

controlled would have less hold from the Church than an aided school, thereby providing options to please both the Church of England and Catholic Church, and the Non-conformists and Free Churches. All schools whether state or voluntary were to teach religious education. Churches were to support this with the development of religious education agreed syllabuses: something Churches had been involved with since the development of the Cambridgeshire Local Agreed Syllabus in 1924. The 1944 Education Act also stipulated that all schools funded by the state, whatever their status, should hold a daily act of collective worship. The act attempted to provide an opportunity for state and Church to work in partnership.

In 1973 the Church has sought to further develop religious education in accordance with Church of England principles for all children in Church of England schools world-wide and to ensure excellent teaching in religious education specifically with regard to the teaching of Christianity. With the 1988 Education Reform Act, religious education and collective worship were still on the agenda. The act called for Christianity to be the dominant religion in the teaching of religious education, as well as specifying that collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a Christian character. The Church still had a prominent presence not only in the provision of schools but also in the development of religious education syllabuses, with prominence given to Christianity within the religious education curriculum. The Church and state were continuing to work in partnership.

From 1839 voluntary schools, the only provider of schools at the time, were being called to account through an inspectorate system. This call to account was revisited and updated for both voluntary and state schools in 1992 with the

Education (Schools) Act of 1992. Both types of school required inspection but the inspection of voluntary schools for collective worship and in aided school for religious education would be provided by the National Society. This is reminiscent of the National Society stipulations that they should provide their own inspectors from 1839 to inspect schools, and then from 1870 the requirement that religious instruction for voluntary schools had to be provided by the Church of England. However, in 1992 not only was the National Society responsible for inspecting religious education but also the Christian distinctiveness of these schools in accordance with their trust deeds. In addition, the 1998 Schools Standards Framework stipulated that voluntary schools could be run in accordance with the religious doctrines of a religious faith or practice. The state inspected all schools funded by the government whether state or voluntary with the exception of religious education and collective worship for voluntary schools which the National Society was required to inspect in the form of Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS). It was not until 2005 that SIAS aligned itself to Ofsted inspections.

The development of academies in 2010, which led to the weakening of the local education authority, would also result in an end to the arrangement made to the Church of England in the 1944 Education Act. However, voluntary schools have been left to Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) to decide their status and safeguard the interests of the Church.

Today church schools continue to work alongside schools provided by the state and are still seeking to educate the nation's children. This historical narrative shows both the evolution of church schools and church school inspections. Due to

church schools being religiously affiliated it chronicles how the Church has been solely responsible for inspecting its schools, with specific focus on collective worship and religious education. The current provision for inspecting the distinctiveness of church schools is through the SIAMS system.

Chapter 2

Philosophical, theological and operational thinking about church schools

Abstract

This chapter, concerning ‘philosophical, theological, and operational thinking about church schools’ addresses the research question ‘What is distinctive about the ways in which the Church speaks about church schools in respect of its philosophical, theological, and operational thinking?’ This chapter examines the ways in which such thinking has developed since the founding of the National Society in 1811. This chapter chronicles how the Church of England developed in its thinking with regard to its church schools. It starts with looking at the Durham Report of 1970 which was instrumental in examining the role the Church had for its schools. It then reports on key documents written over the next four decades, including the forging of partnerships culminating with the Church of England’s guidance of 2021 regarding collective worship. With the state’s involvement in education this meant that the Church of England needed to explain and justify the place its schools has within the education system. Though church schools are instrumental in educating a good proportion of the nation’s children, the thinking has evolved regarding what constitutes providing education within the ethos of a church school environment. The chapter concludes that there has been considerable documentation about the nature of church schools that underpins the claims of the SIAMS system regarding the distinctiveness of church schools.

Introduction

The purpose of the National Society in 1811, in its initiative to found a network of church schools, was to “instruct and educate the poor in suitable learning, works of industry and the principles of the Established Religion according to the Established Church” (National Society, 1812a, p. 5). The ‘Established Church’ referred to the Church of England, and religious instruction was to comprise: doctrines, catechism and liturgy. From 1870 the state became more fully involved in education in the form of establishing machinery to create board schools. This development was essential due to voluntary organisations being unable to provide enough school places. From 1870, the existence side-by-side of voluntary schools and board schools brought about differences in how children were taught. According to the Education Act of 1870 voluntary schools were able to continue with denominational religious instruction, whereas board schools could choose to decide whether to include religious instruction or not. Later the ‘Cowper-Temple clause’ (Louden, 2004; Jackson & O’Grady, 2007) stipulated board schools were not permitted to teach the religious catechisms or religious formularies of any denomination.

The dual system between voluntary schools funded by the Churches and schools directly founded by the state was continued, although modified, by the Education Act of 1902 and the Education Act of 1944. The consequence was the continuing strong presence of church schools (especially Catholic and Anglican schools) within England throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the time when there were growing signs of secularisation and consequent questioning about the involvement of the Churches within public institutions. It was against this background that the Church of England was forced to think more closely about the philosophical and

theological underpinning of its continued involvement within the state-maintained sector of education. Under the chairmanship of Bishop Ian Ramsey, a substantial and significant report began to tackle these issues as part of wider examination of the role of religious education in schools. This report was known as *The Durham Report*, since at that time Ian Ramsey was Bishop of Durham.

The Durham Report

It was not until the landmark document of the Durham Report (Ramsey, 1970) that established ways to think seriously about the distinctiveness of church schools came about. Ian Ramsey, a theologian and philosopher of religion, blends philosophical and theological insights in developing the core distinction advanced by this report, namely the distinction between the domestic function and the general function of church schools; the general function “to serve the nation through its children” and the domestic function “to equip the children of the church to take their places in the Christian community” (Francis, 1990, p. 351).

The Durham Report acknowledged that historically for Anglican schools the general and domestic functions were intertwined. However, for Anglican schools now the importance lay in providing a general education for children that was distinctive from denominational religious instruction (Ramsey, 1970), with emphasis primarily on the general function. Initially this was to provide education for those in the immediate locality. This differed from Catholic schools where the primary function was to provide a domestic service for the requirements of the Catholic community (Hirst, 1981).

The domestic function

The domestic function, grounded in a theology of Christian nurture, was characterised as one to which Anglican parents could look to rear their children. Anglican church schools were promoting Christian support and religious shaping among their children by providing a service to the church, which could be supported at church, home and school.

Hull (1981) compares the Christian emphasis of nurture with that of analytical evaluation. He claims there is a difference between a theology of Christian nurture, in which a good general education is open and examining, compared to one of indoctrination. Thiessen (1984), and Degenhardt (1986) support the rational theology of the former as this is clearly seen as a positive form of the domestic function of Christian nurture.

Francis (1990) looks at the historic background of perspectives on Christian education and nurture. He mentions three perspectives. The first perspective is that the Anglican Church, which within the context of the 1944 Education Act places emphasis on the training of Christian teachers for county schools, a point supported by Gay (1988). Francis, however, sees this as out-of-date within a pluralistic society. The second perspective is that Christian education and nurture can be implemented through the home and church congregation as recommended by the British Council of Churches report (1976) *The child in the church* and the Church of England report (1988) *Children in the way*. Francis, however, suggests that expecting the church congregation to be responsible for Christian nurture might be too great a burden within available resources. At that same time, this view may underestimate the

influence of the state school where secularisation impacts on a child's religious growth. The third perspective supports the Catholic view that nurturing found in the home and church would only be successful where there was a supportive network of church schools working either denominationally or ecumenically.

How, when looking at the domestic function, does this Christian nurture lie within the present social context? Based on the context of Christian nurture Francis reports on three areas: first, Churches should not expect at the present time county schools to be active in nurturing for the future Christian Church despite what was written in the 1988 Education Reform Act with regard to the teaching of Christianity at the expense of other major religious traditions within Great Britain (Hull, 1989); second, Churches should not expect to be able to provide adequate Christian nurture solely within the context of congregations; third, Churches should forget about denominational competition in relation to church schools. With these three points in mind, Francis suggests it may now be time to look at inter-denominational schooling as an alternative to the secular education system. According to Chadwick and Gladwell (1987) some Catholic schools were now seeking to become ecumenical, due to the fall in the numbers of Catholic pupils and staff.

The general function

Francis (1990) describes the general function, grounded in a theology of service, as providing a service to everyone, whether they belong to a church or do not belong to a church. Historically the Churches have been involved in responding to national demands by providing fundamental support to society in areas such as housing, health care and schooling. Francis suggests it might now be an appropriate time

within education to re-examine the way in which the Church deals with the needs of children and young people.

Francis describes the historical involvement of the Churches in education where a theology of service ran alongside a theology of nurture. However, following the Durham report, this theology of nurture seems to be regarded as less appropriate for the present time. Whereas in the past church schools were responsible for the Christian faith development of the nation's young, this is less clearly the case; church schools are now seen as being primarily responsible for the educational needs to the nation's young. Today church schools provide a service to the nation open to everyone whatever denomination, faith or non-faith. According to Francis, if the Church intends a theology of service to operate within church educational establishments, then the aim and ethos of a church school should be based on academic rather than religious principles. The type of church schools determines the Christian distinctiveness: voluntary aided schools provide a system where a theology of nurture can be observed for Christian families who require Christian schooling for their children, whereas voluntary controlled schools provide a system of theology of service free from a theology of nurture.

Whereas the Durham Report looked specifically at the Church's domestic and general functions, Francis proposes a third function: a theology of prophecy.

Theology of prophecy

Francis argues that it is the role of practical and empirical theology to examine and assess secular educational theory and its practice, and then to consider and to critique

such theory and practice in the light of the Christian gospel, whether within church schools or within schools without a religious foundation within the state-maintained sector.

Francis argues that the prophetic function can be addressed both to those who belong to the Christian faith and to those who do not belong to the Christian faith. However, there are difficulties when directing the prophetic function to those outside the Christian faith: using a language which is understandable; using a language of imagery which makes sense to those outside the faith. Therefore, according to Francis, for theology of prophecy to make a worthwhile contribution to the educational debate Churches need to continually analyse education, they need to establish a universal vocabulary which can be shared and is comprehensible to the secular educationalist.

It is questionable whether a common vocabulary can be both suitable for the secular educationalist and for the theologian. Hirst (1965) manages to create a common vocabulary; he raises comprehensible questions which are appreciated by secular educationalists and these questions are also theological in their enquiry. These questions, according to Hirst and Francis, are important for the forming of young people and society.

For the Church's prophetic voice to be valid, church schools are important. Therefore, the Church's investment in education through its voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools is summed up by Francis (1993b) as vital "to test and

implement its prophetic voice in direct relationship with its theology of nurture and theology of service” (p. 63).

A future in partnership

The next main announcement from the Church of England on its church schools after the Durham Report came in the form of the green paper, *A future in partnership* (Waddington, 1984). The principal ideas were, first, that the Church should work in partnership with other bodies, and second, that the Church should build a model for church schools based on the doctrine of the Trinity, comprising ten characteristics (Waddington, 1993, pp. 48-49): a safe place; an ecumenical nursery; a place of distinctive excellence; stepping stones to and from the local community; a house of the Gospel; a place of revelation and disclosure; a foster home of enduring values and relationships; a beacon signalling the transcendent; a place where you can see the wood for the trees; and a creative workshop. Waddington suggests that the secularist would object to the ten characteristics of a church school listed, with regard to their character and pursuits, as being controlled solely by Christians. Two points arise with this: first, though the Christian teacher values worship and developed theological thinking, Christian teachers would be grateful if they could share similar principles with their secular colleagues; and second, if they could share similar principles with secular colleagues this would enable Christian teachers to work in both county and church schools. These ten characteristics are also, according to Brown (2013), identifiable as what church schools should aspire towards today. If church schools are working in partnership alongside county schools, then the government is not in total control of dictating educational guidelines and methods, giving the Church’s validity in its involvement of education (Francis, 1987). If

church schools are to be “an ecumenical nursery” (Waddington, 1993, p. 49), then they are identifying with diversity and displaying sympathy to others’ beliefs, even to the point of welcoming students belonging to other faiths. The green paper approves of the development of the spiritual dimension across the whole curriculum as this could be utilised by partners in both Christian and secular settings. To do this there must be a universal language which is understood by both partners whether secular or Christians, and this will only result if there is an open dialogue (Palmer, 1984).

Some of these aspirations are further developed by Duncan (1986) who focusses on church schools and service: reviewing church school developments he revisited the key idea from the Durham Report of church schools being a service to both the church and the nation, and latterly “Church schools in service to the community” (Duncan, 1988). There are six developments which Duncan reviews regarding his discussion of the future of church schools. The first development Duncan reviews concerns the statistics regarding the number of voluntary schools. In 1902 over 71% of schools within the state-maintained sector were voluntary schools, but by 1985 the proportion of Church of England voluntary schools had declined to 21%. The main reason for this was due to the small number of pupils in many of these schools which resulted in the closure of schools. The second development Duncan reviews concerns the change in the local demographics which has now changed due to a more multicultural population. The third development Duncan reviews concerns the need for schools to redefine what is distinctive about their school within the community they are serving. The fourth development Duncan reviews concerns the need for more research, including local studies, so the Church

knows actually what is happening in its schools. The fifth development Duncan looks at discusses the need to share the distinctiveness and the role of the church school with its staff and governors, and provide them with support and training, thereby equipping teachers to work in church schools, and governors to see the important role of serving in a church school. The sixth development Duncan looks at is for a church school to be clear with regard to its aims and character.

Duncan's response to the Durham Report is that church schools need to have a vision which retains the Church's values and beliefs whilst providing for an ever-increasingly multicultural community, thereby developing a theology of service. Duncan also suggests that the Church needs to decide if its schools are going to be part of the forever changing world, and in doing so become an important partner in the future of education.

In the light of the Education Reform Act 1988, Lankshear (1992a) focuses on the Christian distinctiveness of church schools. Ten points are debated with regard to this distinctiveness: pupil attendance; the curriculum; religious education; a balanced curriculum; the hidden curriculum; collective worship; engagement with the parish; engagement with parents; school management; and teaching.

The first point looks at pupil attendance. Though a church school's admission policy can determine which pupils are admitted if a school is oversubscribed, Lankshear proposes an embedded Christian theology context which recognises that all pupils are made in God's image, and recognises God's commandment of loving one's neighbour.

The second point looks at delivering a school curriculum which adheres to the gospel, and which is empathetic towards the beliefs of others through areas such as values education, spiritual experience, consideration of life, and creativity. These can be applied to all curriculum subjects.

The third point addresses religious education. In a church school religious education needs to be excellent, especially with regard to the teaching of Christianity. Pupils also need to be empathetic towards people of other faiths which can be looked at through the study of other religions within the religious education curriculum. By studying other faiths, these will also contribute to the pupils' understanding of the behaviour of others, as well as contributing to their behavioural choices. Religious education gives pupils opportunities to reflect, question, discuss, examine, and explore questions within a safe environment.

The fourth point looks at church schools' provision of a balanced curriculum. This can be achieved by giving pupils the opportunities to: reflect on spiritual experiences through the study of world faiths and Christianity; develop both academically and practically; and develop skills needed for daily life. These opportunities will be valuable in their contribution to society as adults.

The fifth point, the hidden curriculum, looks at how pupils behave, their interactions with others, and their attitudes and beliefs. Taking the gospel as its foundation, besides being a learning community, the church school may serve as a "therapeutic community... which cares for more of the individual" (p. 67).

The sixth point looks at collective worship, and distinguishes what constitutes worship rather than an assembly. Worship is a legal requirement and it is important to provide pupils with a worthwhile experience which will not alienate them from worship in the future.

The seventh point looks at the school engaging with the parish. Having a positive relationship with the parish is both beneficial for the school and the local church. From a school perspective, positive relationships with the parish will be beneficial in providing the school with support for both the curriculum and worship. This can result in the school visiting the church as well as the involvement of the parish priest in leading and supporting collective worship in the school. From the church perspective, there is the opportunity to connect with and welcome parents and pupils into the church community.

The eighth point looks at the engagement of parents where Lankshear advocates developing a partnership with parents for the benefits of the children's education. "This partnership should be based on a gospel inspired view of the way in which human relationship should be conducted" (p. 96). This partnership focusses on first impressions of welcoming, and on the information given out, as well as the provision of support given to parents.

The ninth point looks at school management, and how its business is managed through the roles deployed by the governing body, such as managing school finances and school buildings. In a church school this can be achieved

through “the love of God for each human being, the responsibility to be good stewards of resources that are in our care, a delight in beauty, order and goodness and a straightforward honesty in dealings with others” (p. 107). Lankshear argues that it is the task of those involved in the management of the school to ensure that their actions and policies are informed by these insights.

The tenth point extends the philosophy put forward in the *Education Reform Act 1988* which is “the importance of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils in the context of a balanced and broadly based curriculum, which is more than just the subjects in the National Curriculum” (p. 110) with its focus based on the gospel. Those who teach in a church school are required to be supportive of the Christian foundations. Whilst accepting that societies are diverse, Lankshear advocates that church schools through bearing testimony to the gospel will be able to connect with communities and will see through the Body of Christ the special partnership with the parish, diocese and wider church (Lankshear, 1992b).

The Dearing Report

The Dearing Report (Dearing, 2001) was the next milestone in the theology of church schools. The report makes a statement about church schools being deeply established in the theology of mission. This means that the task of church schools “must derive from the mission of the whole Church” (Francis, Village, Robbins, Lankshear, & ap Siôn, 2014, p. 10). This mission is explained in four conditions (Dearing, 2001, p. 11): “to proclaim the gospel; to nourish Christians in their faith; to bring others to faith; and to nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in

human beings through service, speaking out on important issues and to work for social justice as part of that mission". Church schools offer children "the opportunity to know Christ, to learn in a community that seeks to live by his word, and to engage in worship" (Dearing, 2001, p. 10), and opportunity to make contact and involve parents. The report outlined the aspirational plan for church schools at national, diocesan, and school level inspiring them to be distinctiveness and inclusive; this led to school expansion.

The church school of the future review

The *church school of the future review* (Chadwick, 2012) explored the identity of a church school and how this could be safeguarded and developed in the present educational climate. It reviewed the current statutory regulations, present framework, and the further requirements needed for progression.

The current statutory regulations recognise a church school: religious character; denominational ethos, adherence to its trust deeds; a governing body where the majority comprises foundation governors; governor responsibility for appointing staff; denominational religious education and collective worship practices; acceptance of Church of England inspections; and admissions guidelines set by the governors which includes allocating places according to religious criteria.

Present frameworks making church schools distinctive look at the admissions guidelines in that they provide both a service to the local community as well as to denominational families; and undergo denominational inspections to prove their

accountability with specific focus on religious education, ethos, and values, educational climate, and evidence of strong links with the church community.

The review recommended the following requirements: the establishment of new church schools would model the voluntary aided framework; improvements to religious education would be determined by working with other professional partners and other faiths; forming partnership with church higher education establishments to develop teachers' subject knowledge in religious education; to look at developing a new Christianity resource; to look at developing a church school curriculum; and to look at "wellbeing".

This review looked not only at church schools but how the Church could contribute significantly towards education, and all schools.

Making a difference? A review of religious Education in Church of England schools

Making a difference? A review of religious education in Church of England schools (Archbishops' Council Education Division, 2014) was the Church of England's response to two Ofsted reports (Ofsted, 2010, and 2013). In summary, the Ofsted reports criticised the teaching of Christianity in schools stating that pupils found the teaching of Christianity disorganised and confusing, it purposeful sequential learning progression, and there was insufficient theological understanding, if any, when studying Jesus or the parables. The National Society's response in the *Making a difference* report called for a more academically challenging and systematic

curriculum with regard to Christianity where pupils could develop their religious literacy, think theologically, and develop theological enquiry.

The result of this report saw the development of a Christianity resource which had first been suggested as a much-needed requirement in *The church school of the future review* document (Chadwick, 2012). The Christianity resource developed was called *Understanding Christianity* where the main purpose was to provide pupils with a means to progress in their understanding of Christianity as supporting pupils' understanding of the world and their involvement within the world. The aims of this resource for pupils were for Christianity to: be portrayed as a living world faith through the exploration of a core set of theological concepts; encourage making sense of texts from the Bible, and how these texts influence the everyday Christian; and how pupils can connect their understanding of Christianity as a religion and faith with their own experiences and beliefs (Pett, Blaylock, Christopher, Diamond-Conway, Matter, & Moss, 2016). This resource had implications not only for church schools but also for county schools. Pett and Cooling (2018) commended the *Understanding Christianity* resource as one that can “contribute insights that enhance both quality of pupil learning and academic rigour in the teaching of Christianity more generally” (p. 257) by providing a coherent academic teaching approach which enables pupils to understand some core Christian concepts.

Other initiatives proposed for the religious education curriculum came in the form of a document called *Big ideas for religious education* (Wintersgill, 2017) which looked at a clear approach to planning and assessment. The result was the

development of six big ideas for religious education which provided progression and continuity throughout the four key stages of school. The aim behind its development was to reduce the content, provide a sequential meaningful curriculum, and engage with pupils today. The document states that schools teaching of religious education should “aim systematically to prepare students for the spiritual and intellectual challenges of living in a world with diverse religions and beliefs as well as non-belief” (p. 5). The document also states the benefits of studying religious education: pupils learn about everyday religious and non-religious worldviews; pupils learn how to live together with other people; and pupils learn about how other people live.

Fruits of the spirit

Fruits of the spirit (Church of England, 2015) looked at what constitutes a good character, and how this can be developed in schools. The Church of England’s focus has been to develop the whole child, and if people are created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27) then the Church wants to support this with its vision of education of “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10) and enable every child to flourish. This publication first defines the language of character and character education, discusses the pupils’ relationship to Christian worldviews, how they might be expressed and welcomed in a plural society, and the ramifications this could have on how character education is taught across the school.

In government documents, character education is also mentioned in *Educational excellence everywhere* (Department for Education, 2016) in paragraph 6.33: “A 21st century education should prepare children for adult life by instilling the character traits and fundamental British values that will help them succeed: being

resilient and knowing how to persevere, how to bounce back if faced with failure, and how to collaborate with others at work and in their private lives” (p. 94). The government’s *Character education framework guidance* (Department for Education, 2019) stipulates that a school’s character is inherent in excellent schools in so far as they have “a rigorous and stretching academic education...and outstanding wider personal development.... These and other aspects of the school’s work all contribute to forming well-educated and rounded young adults ready to take their place in the world” (p. 4). The Government’s *Character education framework guidance* also outlines six character benchmarks: the type of school it is; behaviour expectations; curriculum provision to develop resilience and confidence; extra-curricular activities provision; service to others; and how all pupils benefit from the provisions provided.

The *Leadership of character education* paper defines character education as seeking to:

develop and celebrate the flourishing of individuals, communities, families and societies, through the cultivation and encouragement of an expansive range of moral, spiritual, intellectual, civic and performance character virtues. It is central to a Christian vision of ‘life in all its fullness’ and is concerned with developing virtues seeing them as ‘character in action’, grown through experience and demonstrated over time in word and deed. (Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, 2017, p. 6)

Clearly, the Church of England’s framework for character education includes a Christian outlook, whereas the government’s framework is secular.

Church of England vision for education: Deeply Christian, serving the common good

In 2016 the Church of England published its vision for education *Church of England vision for education: Deeply Christian, serving the common good* (Church of England, 2016). At this time there were 4,644 Church of England schools and academies educating 20% of the school population funded by the state. The Church viewed this vision not only for church schools but a vision for the whole of education. This vision was based on the involvement the church had in education over the centuries, and had both church schools and other schools in mind:

In Church schools the deeply Christian foundation for this vision will be seen explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum, and also in the authentically Christian worship and ethos of those schools. In other schools which are not rooted in an explicit Christian ethos, our vision for education can still be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that can inspire what the school is and does. (Church of England, 2016, p. 2)

The vision proposed does this through the Bible reference ‘life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10) by developing pupils’ spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, and socially, so enabling human flourishing. The vision aims for academic excellence by applying four theological principles: wisdom, hope, community, and dignity. This vision is viewed as applicable to all communities and environments, and open to everyone whatever religion or worldview. The publication concluded with three points: first, for children to have an excellent understanding of Christianity that will enrich their lives; second, for the Church of England to review how it has been instrumental in educating the nation’s children

and how it can contribute further; and third, to develop leadership for the furtherance of the Church of England's role in education.

Valuing all God's children

In 2017 the Church of England's next publication was *Valuing All God's children* (Church of England, 2017); this was an updated version of the report first published in 2014. The Church of England's vision for education was retained as 'life in all its fullness', and schooling was fully inclusive to anyone whatever religion or worldview was held. But it was more than just this. The theology was that God loves everyone, and that everyone needs to be treated with respect. Within this publication there was guidance on "All bullying, including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying causes profound damage, leading to higher levels of mental health disorders, self-harm, depression and suicide" (p. 1). An effective school would have the following in place: clear policies, an incident book, strategies to deal with anti-bullying, opportunities for staff training, pupil support systems, inclusivity in collective worship, safeguarding, curriculum opportunities in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) lessons, all of which would be inspected by the statutory inspections of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS). This report showed commitment to valuing all God's children.

Embracing change: Rural and small schools

In 2018 the Church of England's next publication was *Embracing change: Rural and small schools* (Church of England, 2018a). According to the publication over 70% of all the small schools in rural localities are church schools. The Church of England reviewed its commitment to providing excellent education, equipping children for

living in the world today, and how rural schools fit in with the Church's overall plan for education. Exploring what makes an excellent education according to Ofsted were where in schools there was "excellent leadership, teaching, and an imaginative curriculum" (p. 10). Ofsted reports for outstanding schools would refer to: the school as a family, pupils feeling safe, continually seeking to develop areas to improve, good leadership with a highly skilled governing body, high expectations from teachers where pupils made rapid progress, and good performance data. However, small rural schools, with 30 to 50 pupils, tended not to do as well as other schools based on the small cohorts within year groups where one child could represent 50% when analysing data. The 2016 white paper, *Educational excellence everywhere*, did focus on a skill and knowledge-based curriculum where "education should prepare children for adult life, giving them the skills and character traits needed to succeed academically, have a fulfilling career and make a positive contribution to British Society" (Department for Education, 2016, p. 20). However, for the rural schools' debate there was a need to know what constitutes excellence and good for a small school. This paper does not supply the answer but puts forward eight recommendations for help to support small rural schools. The recommendations are for: Diocesan Boards of Education to regularly reviewing their policy against a set of criteria; governing bodies to regularly review plans against a set of criteria and report conclusions to the Diocesan Board of Education; providers such as universities to research what makes a small school good and outstanding; the provision of leadership support from the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership through developing networks and training programmes; teaching schools to develop customised professional training programmes; Diocesan Boards of Education to work with those involved in the development of rural ministry projects;

the development of rural schools to ensure provision of what is best for children; and all involved in the school to work in partnership to ensure an effective curriculum for the future.

Religion and worldviews: The way forward: A national plan for RE

In 2018 the Commission on Religious Education published a report regarding a new vision for religious education known as the CoRE report (Commission on Religious Education, 2018). This report was based on two years of findings from various interested parties which included pupils, teachers, lecturers, advisers, parents, and people from faith and belief communities. The key reasons to look at religious education in a new light were threefold: the diversity of religions and beliefs that pupils come across whether locally or in the news; the quality of religious education varying from one school to the next; the legalities for religious education with regard to the locally agreed syllabus being no longer applicable due to the academisation of some schools.

The report suggests the subject name religious education is renamed as ‘religion and worldviews’ education which it proposes as more appropriate in line with current society. Religion and worldviews are regarded as an essential part in an all-round education; a multiple of religious and non-religious worldviews abound; and the need to learn how to live with others.

The reason to include worldviews with religion is because worldviews apply to everyone, whether religious or not; everyone views the world differently. The word worldview offers integrity and understanding to our actions, a worldview does

not have to be organised or conform to a stereotypical viewpoint whether this is religious or non-religious.

The report proposes a national plan which will ensure all pupils receive a religion and worldview curriculum which is both academically robust and rich. Eleven recommendations are put forward by the review: one, religious education should be renamed religion and worldviews education; two, religion and worldviews should become statutory for all public-funded schools; three, a National Entitlement for religion and worldviews education should be developed as a national curriculum; four, Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) should be freed from producing a locally agreed syllabus; five, sixteen-plus exams should be looked at with regard to the National Entitlement; six, teacher training should be allocated at least twelve hours of teaching for the subject; seven, religion and worldview training should be state funded; eight, the renaming of SACREs as Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews; nine, Ofsted and SIAMS are to report on the National Entitlement; ten, the effect of including religion and worldviews on school performance; and eleven, thinking about making religion and worldviews compulsory and abolishing parents' rights of withdrawal.

The Church of England's response to the CoRE report was a statement of entitlement for religious education (Holloway, 2019) where reference is made to church schools providing a curriculum where pupils can learn about religion and worldviews. This document, *Religious education in Church of England schools: A statement of entitlement*, also makes reference to the Church of England's vision for education (Church of England, 2016) in enabling all pupils to flourish. To meet the

legal requirement of church school inspections the religious education curriculum should be progressive and coherent, aiming for excellence. To fulfil this aim requires access to high-quality resources. Through the study of religious education pupils will also engage with the disciplines of theology, philosophy, and human/social sciences which also provides a more balanced curriculum as put forward by Chipperton, Georgiou, Seymour, & Wright (2018). This in turn will lead to religious education being regarded as an academic subject, which is proposed by the Church of England where there is a call for the subject to have a clear statement of intent, a means to show how it is implemented, and a means to assess its impact. The Church of England also stated the main aims and objectives of religious education for pupils as to: study Christianity as a world-wide faith with fundamental principles by analysing biblical texts; study other religions and worldviews to understand how other people live; ask and reflect on big questions; understand the cultures and traditions of Britain both past and present; and explore their own way of living. For religious education to be excellent there must be a designated subject leader for the subject, with a strong leadership team, working in partnership with the local Diocese, statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS), and the local church community.

More recently, the Church of England produced their latest guidance on collective worship *Collective worship in Church of England schools: Inclusive invitational inspiring guidance document* (Church of England, 2021). This document claims that collective worship should be central to a church school and provide a feeling of community wellbeing. The document resets what the expectation is of collective worship and makes reference to the Church of England's vision for education (Church of England, 2016) in enabling all pupils to flourish. Collective

worship is considered the *heartbeat* of the school. The collective worship guidance echoes the Church's vision for education:

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives.... Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this. (Church of England, 2016, p. 10)

The collective worship document by calling it inclusive, invitational, and inspiring provides a Christian hospitality which is supported through the development of character education in schools (Church of England, 2015; Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership, 2017; and Department of Education, 2019), as well as supporting other Church of England publications (Church of England, 2016). This document reinforces the historic trajectory for church schools within education reaffirming the 1998 Education Reform Act (HMSO, 1988) where the statutory requirement is for collective worship to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

Conclusion

The philosophical, theological and operational thinking of church schools within the ethos of a church school environment has developed significantly since the beginnings of the National Society's involvement in education in 1811. Its initial intention was to educate the nation's children by providing a theology of service,

which then became intertwined with a theology of nurture. The nature of church schools with regard to their distinctiveness has been well documented. The Durham Report (Ramsey, 1970) emphasised that Anglican church schools need to provide a general education, a theology of service, which should be separate from denominational religious instruction, a theology of nurture. From the 1980s onwards the Church of England has forged partnerships, it has looked at developing a universal language which can be understood by both non-religious and Christians, it has looked at how church schools can be distinctive and inclusive, and it has looked at how church schools can further contribute towards the education of the nation's children. The Church of England has looked at making a valid contribution to religious education in response to criticisms from national inspections from Ofsted which has led to the development of a national Christianity resource and a religious education national entitlement for church schools, it has looked at the development of character education alongside a character education framework from the Department for Education. Not only has the Church of England developed its own vision for education but also a vision which has all schools in mind. The Church of England has shown that it values and is inclusive of everyone in its *Valuing all God's children* document which upholds the Church of England's vision of John 10:10 by developing pupils spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, and socially, so enabling human flourishing by applying the four theological principles of wisdom, hope, community, and dignity. The Church of England is continually looking at supporting schools for the future and how they can take account of change. Lastly, the Church of England still wants an Anglican school to have a Christian distinctiveness which is put forward in its document on collective worship called, *Collective worship in Church of England Schools: Inclusive*

invitational inspiring guidance document. The Church of England has worked on forging partnerships, both church and state, as well as developing what it is that makes a church school. Church schools, thus, aim to develop the whole child and to do this within the distinctive ethos of a church school environment. This documentation illustrates how thinking has evolved concerning education provision within the ethos of a church school environment leading to the present SIAMS system for inspecting the distinctiveness of church schools.

Chapter 3

Methodology in church school studies

Abstract

This chapter, concerning ‘methodology in church school studies’, addresses the research question, ‘What are the methodological issues raised by the present thesis?’ These issues arise from two distinctive features of the thesis. The first feature concerns the teacher as researcher working within her own educational setting. The second feature concerns the way in which the empirical component of this thesis has been constructed around six distinct studies, each of which was grounded in a defined body of literature and drew on an appropriate research method. The chapter concludes that van der Ven’s positioning of the teacher engaged as research-based reflective practitioner provides a strong platform for the present research perspective.

Introduction

The aim of the present thesis is to explore the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools and to do so by focussing on the schools within the multi-academy trust in which the researcher works as a teacher across a number of schools. Within this context the approach taken is to identify a series of six studies, each of which addressed a specific aspect of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools, and to shape the thesis as the integration of these discrete studies. Each study draws on a defined body of literature, employed an appropriate research method, and offers an original contribution to knowledge. The purpose of this chapter on methodology is to consider the two core issues raised by this approach. The first issue concerns consideration of the role of teacher as researcher within her own educational setting. The second issue concerns discussion

of the range of empirical research methods available within the field of education studies. The third issue concerns the choice of research methods for each of the six empirical studies.

In terms of consideration of the role of teacher as researcher within her own educational setting, this chapter considers the following methodological issues: the reflective teacher practitioner approach, the purpose of the reflective practitioner in schools, and teachers developing their own schools as a laboratory for contextualising research questions of wider interest and relevance to the academic community. The consideration of these issues is followed by the contextualisation of the present research within the author's own educational setting, including description of the schools and consideration of the ethical issues involved in the research.

In terms of the range of empirical research methods available within the field of education studies, this chapter considers the following approaches: qualitative methods, and quantitative methods.

In terms of the choice of research methods for each of the six empirical studies, this chapter considers the following issues. The first research question explored how governors perceive their role and employed interviews. The second research question explored how pupils responded to religious experience generated by experience of a labyrinth and employed participant observation and focus groups. The third research question explored prayer requests generated by pupils and employed the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer. The fourth

research question explored pupils' attitude toward Christianity and employed the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. The fifth research question explored pupils' appreciation of the ethos of church schools and employed the Lankshear Student Voice Scales. The sixth research question explored the pupils' spiritual health and applied the Fisher Feeling Good Loving Life survey.

The reflective teacher practitioner approach

The reflective teacher practitioner approach invites teachers to become researchers within the classroom. A grass roots research approach, in the initial instance, is attributed to teachers applying research methods to areas that can inform them about their teaching. Teachers, to make the most of their teaching in the classroom, are encouraged to be reflective of their practice, an approach that stems from initial teacher training and continues to qualified teacher status. Being a reflective teacher is regarded as good practice, as it is important that teachers deliver high quality lessons to their pupils in order to enhance their learning. The National Teaching Standards, with which all teachers and those training to be teachers need to comply, states that when planning lessons teachers need to “reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching” (The Department for Education, 2021, p. 11). Teachers, therefore, do need to reflect on their practice by becoming reflective practitioners. As reflective practitioners teachers need to be purposeful, with the aim that they perfect their teaching practice for the benefit of their pupils. Nowhere is there mention of one single approach teachers might use as a means to become effective reflective practitioners. Academics have provided various definitions of what reflective practice actually means. There are also a number of theorists who have developed reflective practice models which teachers

can use to reflect on and evaluate their teaching. The following are but some of the academic responses in attempting to define reflective practice.

Calderhead (1989) states that as part of teacher training common practice tends to ask teachers to reflect on their teaching with questions such as “How well did I teach? What were the effects of my teaching? What assumptions have I made in teaching this way? How else might I have taught the lesson? How will I do it next time?” (p. 48).

Alder (1991), based on a literature review of what it is to be a reflective teacher, attributes three different theorists’ positions with regard to what reflection means within the educational establishment: Cruikshank (1987), Schön (1983, 1987), and Zeichner (1981). Cruikshank’s position, according to Alder, is that “reflection is based upon learner achievement...to provide each pre-service teacher with information needed to hone his or her developing skills” (p. 140); Schön’s position views “the reflective practitioner as one who can think while acting and thus can respond to the uncertainty, uniqueness and conflict involved in the situations in which professionals practice” (p. 140); and Zeichner’s approach, taking into account the successfulness of teaching methods, the educational conditions, and a critical enquiry of one’s teaching and learning.

Larrivee (2008) defines reflective practice as “practices ranging from analysing a single aspect of a lesson to considering the ethical, social and political implications of teaching practice”, where practice “refers to one’s repertoire of knowledge, dispositions, skills, and behaviors”, and reflective practice “refers to the

on-the-job performance resulting from using a reflective process for daily decision-making and problem-solving” (pp. 341-342).

A number of theorists have played an important role in the development of reflective models which teachers can use to improve their teaching. These models are known as the reflective practitioner approach, and they give teachers the opportunity to look regularly at their teaching with the intention to fine tune and perfect their practice. The following researchers have applied reflective practice models in educational settings: Kolb (1984), Schön (1991), Gibbs (1998), and Rolfe, Freshwater, and Jasper (2001).

Kolb’s (1984) model uses an experiential approach comprising four stages. These four stages are cyclic starting with a “concrete experience” which are experiences the teacher encounters in daily teaching. This in turn leads to a “reflective observation” where the teacher reflects and reviews the experience encountered in teaching. This then leads to an “abstract conceptualisation” where the teacher’s reflection is analysed in greater depth through the support of research-based evidence, which results in the “active experiment” stage where the teacher puts into practice new ideas based on what has been learned. Kolb, in putting forward his approach, makes reference to his predecessors: Dewey (1938), Lewin (1946), and Piaget (1970), citing similarities and differences, all which use a reflective approach.

Schön’s (1991) model enables teachers to reflect on their teaching experiences both as they are happening and after they have taken place

(“Reflection-in-Action”, and “Reflection-on-Action” respectively), make an evaluation, and come to a positive development.

Gibb’s (1998) model is cyclic, and is a further development of Kolb’s (1984) model. It involves a six-stage process. The first stage describes an experience, the second stage looks at the teacher’s thoughts and feelings regarding the experience, the third stage evaluates the positive and negative aspects of the experience, the fourth stage analyses and tries to comprehend the experience applying research-based evidence, the fifth stage draws a conclusion and reflects on how the experience can be developed, and the sixth stage looks at producing an action plan to make revisions to the experience next time.

Rolfe, Freshwater, and Jasper’s (2001) model use the “What” model. This model poses three questions: “What?” which describes the experience; “So what?” which brings understanding and interpretations to the experience, including research-based evidence; and “Now what?” which involves an action plan to make revisions and developments for next time.

All these reflective practices discussed by academics and models put forward by theorists have had and have a place within the educational setting, both for a trainee teacher, or for a fully qualified teacher. Teachers as reflective practitioners use their own school setting, namely their classroom, to become reflective practitioners.

The purpose of the reflective practitioner in schools

Reflective practice in schools is used as a tool to develop and improve teaching.

There are several reasons why the reflective model might appeal to the everyday teacher.

Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz, and Lewin (1993) pose two questions.

The first question asks, what are the features that are characteristic of being a reflective teacher? The second asks, what plan can be applied using a research approach which will further enhance the meaning of reflectivity? Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz, and Lewin's response to the first question regarding the features that are characteristic of being a reflective teacher is based on twelve important features which they call "attributes". These attributes focus on the teacher's viewpoint regarding reflection, and what should be included in the reflective process. The first four attributes look at pinpointing the issue: a teacher is able to spot the problem, it is set in a real context, it is of noteworthy concern understood by the teacher, and solving the issue is crucial in providing effective teaching and learning. The next four attributes look at being able to solve the problem: the teacher is able to initially think of possible responses, these responses can be based on a teacher's own teaching experience or supported by valid research recommendations, the teacher through critically analysing their teaching can set actions for development, these actions will have a clear impact on pupils' learning. The next three attributes look at trying out the responses: a response is chosen, the response is put into practice, the response is reviewed. The final attribute looks at the learning resulting from applying the reflective practice process. The teacher having reflected will have acquired new knowledge regarding the issue and can

then move onto other issues which arise. Copeland, Birmingham, de la Cruz, and Lewin's response to the second question regard a plan that can be applied using a research approach to further enhance the meaning of reflectivity: looks at the effectiveness of the twelve attributes, connections between being reflective and other teacher traits, the types of reflections, and which reflective characteristics to advance.

Hatton and Smith (1995) consider the term reflection, and how reflection, and the methods used to advance reflection (such as action research, case studies, and curriculum tasks) are developed within student teacher education programmes. They suggest a number of problems associated with using reflective procedures. These problems comprise: students looking at reflection as not an immediate requirement of being a teacher; prior assumptions marring students' viewpoints; theory and experience are needed first to make reflection viable; the feeling of vulnerability when it is expected to share reflections with others; and lack of using a structured reflective process. To sum up Hatton and Smith suggest "reflection is unlikely to develop as a professional perspective in today's busy and demanding world of teacher's work" (p. 38). The only way for reflection to become successful is if methods are provided.

With so much discussion about reflection as a means teachers can use to develop their teaching not much has been voiced at results within the classroom. It is Larrivee (2008) who looks at developing a tool, in the form of survey, which teachers might use to improve their teaching through reflective practice. Maybe a

tool would promote the benefits of reflection within the classroom compared to the drawbacks voiced by Hatton and Smith (1995).

Developing own schools as a laboratory for contextualising research questions of wider interest

Reflection, though viewed as a grass roots research approach for teachers, takes place within teachers' own classrooms. Can teachers truly reflect honestly on their teaching especially when it is their own teaching they are reflecting on? Teachers, whether reflecting superficially or not, might still feel vulnerable to sharing these reflections with others (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

There are many other ways that teachers can look at their own practice, as well as looking at what goes on in the classroom, school, or educational establishment in which they are part. Burgess (1980) looks at the role of the teacher as researcher, the benefits this has for the teacher, and the problems which it raises. Research in education has frequently been carried out by educational researchers based within universities, detached from the educational establishment in which they base their research. This makes these researchers impartial to the educational establishment. However, research carried out by educational researchers, though of significance to the world of academia, is viewed with suspicion by teachers. According to Burgess (1980), academic research is regarded as less significant than what actually goes on in school, academic reports are frequently beyond the reach of the classroom teacher due to the way they are written, and often the researchers do not provide evidence of how the research will directly impact classroom practice. But the teacher as researcher is part of the educational establishment in

which they base their research. There is a purpose, however, in teachers taking part in research, by focussing on a problem within their own classroom or within their own school that would enable them to assess their own teaching, but to do this a teacher needs to become a researcher. This is supported by Stenhouse (1975) who suggests that for teachers to understand from their role as a teacher, they must become a researcher. Burgess (1978) suggests that, if teachers are to become researchers within their own classroom, they need to be informed about suitable methods which can be applied to class and school situations.

On the one hand, there are benefits for the teacher-based researcher: ease of access to their research source, both establishment and subjects. On the other hand, there are problems for the teacher-based researcher: who to inform with regard to asking permission to carry out the research; a risk of exploitation due to the teacher's role in school; a risk of bias because of familiarities with the subjects; and ethical issues regarding identifiability and confidentiality for the subjects. As to the reliability of the findings associated with the teacher as researcher, overfamiliarity could lead to a lack of objectivity.

According to Cope and Gray (1979) if teachers can overcome problems associated with the teacher as researcher approach, it will give them "the means for developing a complementary vision of the world, simplified but broader in scope, more public and therefore in many ways more powerful" (p. 250), and it can also "give teachers a capacity to operate in the world of policy, resources and curriculum innovation on a basis of relevant knowledge shared with government

and administrators, and perhaps to infiltrate into that world alternative modes of comprehending” (p. 250).

Within this context there are a number of examples of where teachers as researchers have contributed to the educational literature. One of these examples is Burgess’ (1983) study of the experiences of pupils and staff at a comprehensive school, Bishop McGregor School. The study is split into two parts: the first part is a focus on the school’s structure; and the second part is a focus on the school’s teachers and pupils, examining relationships. Burgess is the researcher as well as a part-time teacher at the school. However, in one concluding comment he makes regarding the teacher as researcher he suggests that teachers would benefit from support in collecting, analysing and delivery of the data.

A second example is a study by Ipgrave and McKenna (2007) which reports on an English primary school religious education curriculum project that used email “to bring together children from different cultural and religious backgrounds and contrasting areas of the country” (p. 215) to enable dialogue with one another. The research provided a valuable insight into interfaith dialogue and in providing further teacher training. However, this investigation also suggested that problems did arise with the teacher as researcher role especially as teachers had not been presented with the theory behind the project.

A third example is Deery’s (2019) study which investigates whether a diverse group of Australian pupils, aged ten and eleven, when taught a history unit on migration employing a structured approach can develop a more analytical and

deeper understanding about cultural diversity. The study found that using an ethnographic action research method provided evidence to support employing new teaching approaches. The research helped the researcher to support teachers in the teaching of a culturally diverse historical topic, it provided evidence that the Australian curriculum has promise, and the teachers working as a research group provided assurance that the study was credible. However, there is a suggestion that the project would benefit from further research.

Drawing on van der Ven's approach to research-based reflective practitioners

It is against the background of the previous three sections (discussing the reflective teacher practitioner approach, the purpose of the reflective practitioners in schools, and developing our schools as a laboratory for contextualising research questions of wider interest) that van der Ven's approach has an important contribution to offer. Van der Ven's approach was originally shaped in relation to Christian pastoral ministry and practical theology, but has equal applicability in relation to the role of teachers within church schools. Van der Ven's approach is different from the reflective practice approach, as applied either to the teaching profession or to religious professionals (in the form of theological reflection) precisely by its distinctive emphasis on being research-based. Van der Ven understands research in the way in which it is employed within the academy and leads to the scrutiny of the peer-review process and publication. For van der Ven reflection on personal experience and subjective evaluation is not sufficient. Research-based reflective practitioners need to be equipped with the skills to conduct rigorous research that generates testable evidence and to be equipped to base their practice on sound and well-established evidence.

Van der Ven's approach is also different from the action research approach that is popular in the context of teacher education. According to McNiff (2013, p. 90) action research is a method of systematic enquiry that teachers undertake as researchers of their own practice. The enquiry involved in action research is a process involving the following seven steps: identifying an issue we wish to investigate; asking focused questions about how we can investigate it; imagining a way forward; trying it out (intervention) and taking stock of what happens (evaluation); modifying our plan in light of what we have discovered and continuing with the action; evaluating the modified action; and reconsidering what we are doing in light of the intervention. For van der Ven the kind of research in which the teacher is engaged is more substantial than this, and the outcomes of the research must be of wider relevance than to her own practice and lead to outcomes within the research-based academic literatures.

Introducing the author's educational context as teacher and researcher

The schools used by the researcher comprised Church of England aided schools. The 1944 Education Act (HMSO, 1944) gave church schools the opportunity to become either aided or controlled schools. Church schools which were labelled as aided schools required the state, the local authority, to pay the teacher salaries and the running costs of the school. However, the Church, regarded as the school's manager, would have responsibility for the school's buildings, and in aided schools' denominational doctrine in worship and in religious education would be permitted. The Church of England aided schools used for this research are set in the Diocese of Truro.

The Diocese of Truro is considered a relatively ‘young’ diocese having been formed on December 15th, 1876. Before that it was overseen by the Archdeaconry of Cornwall as part of the Diocese of Exeter. In the diocese there are forty-four Church of England schools, and twelve multi-academy trusts. The Diocese of Truro’s vision for education reinforces the Church of England’s vision for education as “Deeply Christian, serving the common good” (Church of England, 2016). This vision seeks to provide an excellent education to everyone, including provision of excellence in religious education teaching and pupil learning, Christian worship, and Christian ethos. Its vision hopes to encourage human flourishing for everyone. This vision is worked out through the application of the four key elements of wisdom, hope, community, and dignity, thereby educating pupils for “life in all its fullness” (John 10: 10) (Church of England, 2016, p. 6). The diocesan website (<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/schools/our-vision/>) also mentions that as part of its vision for education it aims to work in partnership with schools in raising standards for all pupils in Cornwall, as well as supporting governors and directors in its church schools. The schools used for this study comprise five schools in one Multi-Academy Trust within the Diocese of Truro.

Ethical considerations

When carrying out this type of research ethical issues need to be considered.

Simons’ (1989) discussion of ethical issues in *Educational Research and Evaluation* states that the participant has the right to “confidentiality, informed consent, anonymity and the right to privacy and knowledge” (p. 4). Simons (1989) draws attention to rules of conduct which should be adhered to when carrying out

research, such as: interviews need to be confidential, participants need to have agreed to the use of the data provided, reports need to be available to the participant, the “department”, then the school, and participants should have the opportunity to make changes to their accounts and improve them if wished.

To meet such ethical requirements a range of procedures were adhered to:

1. University of Warwick ethical policies and guidelines were followed and approval granted (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C).
2. Pseudonyms were used for each school in the transcripts.
3. Transcripts were secured and will be destroyed after the required time allocation (10 years).
4. No pupil or teacher names were mentioned in the observation notes.
5. Permission was sought from parents for their child to take part in the study via a letter.
6. Permission was obtained from all staff interviewed and all understood how their data would be used.
7. Before pupil focus groups took place, pupils were told about the research into labyrinths and were subsequently asked if they would be willing to take part.

Description of the schools

The first school, St Jude, is a rural school situated in the village of St Jude between two former market towns, the larger town now being categorised as urban. St Jude’s school was founded as a church school for the parish in 1845, with the school building completed by 1846. The school is a Victorian granite building, an extension having been added in 1991. The school is coeducational, educating 45

pupils in 2021 from two years of age to eleven years of age across three mixed-age classes. The unique selling point for the school is that, though it is a small school, it prides itself on belonging to a family of schools. The school's vision is to enable pupils, through God's love, to be in a place where they can learn, grow, and flourish as they encounter a varied curriculum where all subjects are considered valuable to develop well-rounded pupils, and where pupils learn that actions speak louder than words, in their development as future adult citizens.

The second school, St Sebastian, is another rural school situated in the village of St Sebastian equidistant from three former market towns. St Sebastian's school dates from 1863. The school is a Victorian granite building, which had significant refurbishment in the 2020s. The school is coeducational, educating 50 pupils from four years of age to eleven years of age across three mixed-age classes. The vision of the school is that it prides itself as belonging to a family of church schools. The school advocates itself as a loving and friendly place where pupils can learn and develop academically and socially within a safe and happy environment due to its committed and experienced staff.

The third school, St Theresa, is a rural school situated on the outskirts of a small former market town, close to a larger urban town and a small port town. The school dates from 1850, with additional classrooms added in about 1880 and 1890. The school is coeducational, educating 94 pupils from four years of age to eleven years of age across four mixed-age classes. The vision of the school draws attention to the family atmosphere which provides support and nurture for the pupils, with an inspiring pupil-led curriculum which enables pupils to express themselves with

creativity, imagination and dignity, and where teachers trust pupils to develop their own learning outcomes, and to set their own future goals. The commitment and community support enables everyone to flourish.

The fourth school, St Camel, is a rural school situated in the village of St Camel between a larger urban town and a small port town. The school dates from 1852. The school is a Victorian granite building, with an additional outside wooden classroom built in 2019. The school is coeducational, educating 38 pupils from three years of age to eleven years of age across two mixed-age classes. The vision of the school is that pupils are provided with a friendly and stimulating environment where they can feel secure to develop to their best within a strong supportive community. The school regards itself as “small but mighty”, where first-hand experiences through many educational visits produce well-rounded pupils.

The fifth school, St Cuthbert, is an urban school situated in a large urban town. Originally it was known as a National School, later becoming a Church of England Junior and Church of England Infant School, then from 1971 it became known as St Cuthbert’s Church of England Voluntary Aided School. The school was built in the 1970s, with extensions added in the 2010s, increasing the capacity of the school. The school is coeducational, of three-form entry, educating 601 pupils from four years of age to eleven years across twenty classes. The vision of the school is that the school prides itself on its nurturing and welcoming environment where pupils can feel safe, valued and part of a caring Christian family. The school aims to provide all pupils with the best of experiences to enable pupils to become caring, creative, confident and adaptable citizens, equipping them

with the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The school provides extensive grounds, a bike track, outdoor gym, nature area, and a school garden.

Finance across the education system has always been a cause for contention. There were problems regarding pupil numbers and funding staff when rural schools were allocated budgets according to the numbers of pupils on roll. There were debates around teacher redundancies should the pupil numbers dip, and there were questions about whether to keep rural schools open. In January 2010 with the retirement of the head teacher from St Jude's school, it was decided that two of the schools would form a federation. St Sebastian, the school in the next village, had a head teacher and to cut down on costs it was decided that St Jude would federate with St Sebastian. Both rural villages would still retain their schools, and their teachers, but to cut down on running cost, they would share the head teacher. The head teacher would become non-teaching.

In July 2010 the Academies Act (Parliament, UK, 2010) was passed giving schools the opportunity to apply to become an academy. The money would come straight to the schools from central government, and schools would receive the full budget, and would be able to decide how their money was spent. Under this arrangement schools could shop around for the best service agreements instead of being governed by contracts arranged by the county council. Again, schools were still struggling with their budgets. Schools could decide to become an academy by themselves, but for many rural schools this did not seem viable. There appeared to be more security if schools joined together to become a multi-academy trust.

Security in numbers where expertise in the management of schools could be pooled

seemed a safer option. There could be a strategic vision which could be shared across the schools, with teams to support finance, school premises, maintenance, and school improvement. In 2012 five schools joined to form a multi-academy trust, comprising the five schools engaged with in the present study: St Jude, St Sebastian, St Theresa, St Camel and St Cuthbert. At first multi-academies trusts were formed of a handful of schools. However, again the viability of small rural schools came into question, especially as a good number of Cornwall's schools were small and in rural locations. It seemed that to retain these small rural schools the more schools a multi-academy trust had, the safer each school would be. Five years later these five schools became part of a larger multi-academy trust when they merged with another multi-academy trust, increasing the number of schools now to twelve. It was within this time that the Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection framework was being revised where the focus would be on the school's distinctive Christian vision. In the document *Church of England vision for education: Deeply Christian, serving the common good* (Church of England, 2016) the Church of England had already looked at what their vision would be for education. Multi-academy trusts also started to look at what their vision would be which would overarch their schools. In the case of the multi-academy trust overseeing the five schools in the present study, the vision decided was "Nurture, learn, and achieve", together with the values of wisdom, resilience, compassion, and hope. The debate is still live that, if schools are to survive financially then multi-academy trusts need to increase the number of schools they have in their groups.

Empirical research methods within education studies

The research question addressed by this thesis was to explore what it is that makes church schools distinctive and effective. The research approach chosen to address this research question was one which would allow for both academic objectivity and also acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher. The reflective teacher practitioner approach was deemed appropriate for this purpose, but appropriately refined by using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods to address specific questions. The main approaches reviewed in the following sections are qualitative methods and quantitative methods,

Qualitative methods

First, this section looks at what constitutes an educational research approach using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods can be described as focussing on data which allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of an individual. Cohen and Manion (1989) describe such methods as favouring “the alternative view of social reality which stresses the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the social world” (p. 8). It is defined by Delamont (1992) as a term which covers interviewing with open-ended questions, oral histories, studying personal constructs and mental maps, and observational studies. Shipman (1985) describes qualitative research as the most appropriate method of research for education-based researchers because it “seems to be about observations that are the stock-in-trade of teachers, advisers and inspectors” (p. 2). Myers’ (1997) definition also underlines the purpose of this research as he describes the researcher’s intention to comprehend human society: observation and interviews being some of the ways in which to collect the most

effective interpretative data. According to Finch (1985) the advantages of qualitative research methods within educational research are that over time the aims of the research are of interest to both the teacher and the pupil resulting in both teacher and pupil becoming “research partners” and thus instrumental as “supportive of teaching and learning” (p. 102).

Burgess (1985) highlights the way in which interpretative research through the use of qualitative data allows the research question to develop with possible new areas of enquiry illuminated by the findings. Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993) warn, however, that the “temptation to make quick and simplistic assumptions about a situation based on one’s own prejudices is very strong, particularly for a teacher who is under pressure to take action” (p. 85). Also, Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993) point out that the researcher might find it difficult to access the true thoughts of the participant. However, Kincheloe (2003) argues that there are benefits in using qualitative research as a means of changing and improving education.

Teachers use the qualitative dimension as a path to empowerment for themselves, their colleagues, and their students... The power of the qualitative dimension can help us create new educational dimensions, new ways of knowing, learning and being that will create better individual and collective lives (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 205)

Quantitative methods

Second, this section looks at what constitutes an educational research approach using quantitative research methods. Quantitative research according to Cohen and

Manion (1989) is “where one subscribes to the view which treats the social world like the natural world – as if it were a hard, external and objective reality – then scientific investigation will be directed at analysing the relationships and regularities between selected factors in that world” (p. 8). Muijs (2004) defines quantitative research as responding to questions based on statistical evidence. Muijs elaborates on this by explaining that quantitative research, by being objective, seeks to find the answer to research questions by developing reliable measurement instruments, through which “we can objectively study the physical world” (p. 4). Golafshani (2003) explains that “a quantitative researcher needs to construct an instrument to be administered in a standardised manner according to predetermined procedures”, otherwise known as a test, where the importance of the test “is to ensure replicability or repeatability of the result” (p. 598).

Quantitative research methods provide a means to apply standardised measures through “universal laws, evidence, objectivity, truth, actuality, deduction, reason, fact and mathematical data to name just a few” (Winter, 2000, pp. 7-8). Quantitative research constitutes a consistent, reliable, and precise approach when the same instrument is used with a group of subjects in similar settings and replicated over time, resulting in comparable results (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2005). This is useful for the researcher as it builds up a picture of the trends and norms of respondents at a specific time as well as showing progressions over time. According to Holton and Burnett (2005) “Quantitative techniques are particularly strong at studying large groups of people and making generalisations from the sample being studied” (p. 30). To sum up, quantitative research is looking at breadth and numbers rather than the depth of the problem.

Applying the quantitative research method based on statistical evidence in this thesis allows the researcher to remain objective. Employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods allows for a best of both worlds approach: one as teacher and one as researcher. Muijs (2004) sums up the qualitative and quantitative debate as follows:

Many researchers take a pragmatic approach to research, and use quantitative methods when they are looking for breadth, want to test a hypothesis, or want to study something quantitative. If they are looking for depth and meaning, they will prefer to use qualitative methods. In many cases, mixed-methods approaches will be appropriate. (Muijs, 2004, p. 10)

By using a variety of methods for data collection, including in this thesis both qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher, when interpreting the data, can gain a clearer and more detailed picture from different perspectives. The six empirical chapters were constructed employing a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. Three chapters employed the qualitative research approach, and three chapters employed the quantitative research approach.

The six research questions and the methods selected to address them

The six empirical studies that provide the core contribution to knowledge advanced by the thesis each addressed a specific research question, located within a defined body of literature, and did so by selecting an appropriate research method. The research design diagram presented in Table 1.1 summarises the selected research approach. This is followed by a discussion of each chapter's research method.

The role of governors within a church school

The title for the first research chapter is “How governors perceive their role within a church school”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Do governors in church schools regard their role as impacted by the school’s Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?’ Three research sub-questions are raised in this chapter. The first sub-question looks at governors’ perceptions of the school’s Christian character. This question explores whether the type of governor they are determines how they view their role within the school. The second sub-question looks at how governors rate the importance of different aspects of the school’s identity for upholding the school’s Christian distinctiveness. The third sub-question looks at whether committed Christians have a distinctive view on the Christian character of a church school, and if to be counted as committed Christians they need to be regular church attenders. The researcher decided these research questions were best addressed by applying qualitative methods. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would look only at one governing body; the small number of governors selected were five governors in total; these five governors provided a good cross-section with regard to age, governor role, religious affiliation, church attendance, prior governor experience, and length of governance; and the need for respondents to put their viewpoints forward in a manner which would provide depth rather than breadth.

Table 3.1.

Research Design Diagram

Title: How governors perceive their role within a church school		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Semi-structured interviews	5 governors	Qualitative
Title: Investigating pupils' religious experience through a labyrinth		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Focus group interviews	Three focus groups (each of 6 pupils)	Qualitative
Title: Applying the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer among primary school pupils		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Written prayers (apSAFIP framework - ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer)	352 prayers: 78 infant 274 Junior	Qualitative
Title: Applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Questionnaire -Francis scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC)	1091 pupils	Quantitative
Title: Applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Questionnaire - Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS)	1091 pupils	Quantitative
Title: Applying the Fisher model of spiritual health among 7- to 11-year-old pupils		
Research method	Sample	Qualitative/Quantitative
Questionnaire - Fisher's model of spiritual health (FGLL)	1091 pupils	Quantitative

The qualitative method employed semi-structured interviews which allowed the researcher to pre-plan a set of open-ended questions for the interviewees. By providing open-ended questions this gave the interviewees the opportunity to develop their discussions if they so wished. These interviews were recorded and then later transcribed. The researcher was able to interpret the results. Data was then analysed using a qualitative method. The qualitative approach on this small-scale study enabled answers to focus specifically on the school in question.

Religious experience through a labyrinth

The title for the second research chapter is “Investigating pupils’ religious experience through a labyrinth”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Do church schools provide creative opportunities for religious and spiritual experience, as implied by the SIAMS inspection criteria?’ exploring pupils’ religious experience following a labyrinth experience using a phenomenological approach to exploring religion, and how pupils from one primary school responded to a Labyrinth Experience. The researcher decided this research question was best addressed by applying qualitative methods. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would look only at one school; there was a cross-section of pupils with regard to age and sex; the method chosen would be accessible to pupils, and this could be tailored to the needs of the pupils; and the need for respondents to express their experiences in a manner which would provide depth rather than breadth. The qualitative method employed three focus groups comprising six pupils in each group. These focus groups gave the pupils opportunities to respond to the labyrinth experience using pictures and words, as well as having support from their

peers to bounce ideas off to provide support and clarification. These focus groups were observed and audio recorded. The researcher then interpreted the results by analysing the pupils' responses within the audio recording and the responses the pupils made using pictures, words, and actions. The method employed was as a participant observer. Again, the qualitative approach is small-scale focussing on one school, and three groups, comprising eighteen pupils in total.

Prayer requests generated by primary school pupils

The title for the third research chapter is “Applying the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer among primary school pupils”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Do church schools provide creative opportunities for pupils to engage with prayer as a core component of the school’s Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?’ at whether applying a framework to prayer requests is sustainable with primary school aged pupils, and if it is, to investigate what it reveals, based on the analysis of prayer requests written by pupils. The research question was best addressed by applying qualitative methods. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would only look at one school; prayers needed to be written; providing space, time, and freedom for pupils to generate their own prayers; and by applying a prayer analytic framework would provide depth rather than breadth. The qualitative method employed the apSAFIP framework (ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer). The framework requires the researcher to interpret the prayers according to the types of prayers written; sort the prayers according to the age of pupils; and the context of the prayers; and decide if the location has an impact on the prayers written, as well

as comparing and analysing the findings with previous studies. The qualitative approach is small-scale as it focusses on prayers from one school.

The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity

The title for the fourth research chapter is “Applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Are church school communities within which the school’s Christian vision is reflected in a positive attitude toward Christianity?’ what can be learned about pupils’ attitude toward Christianity by applying a standardised research instrument. The researcher recognised that this research needed to be addressed by applying a quantitative method. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would look at pupils’ responses to Christianity from five primary schools; responses would be from all pupils across four year groups; and applying a standardised research instrument would provide breadth rather than depth. The quantitative method employed the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC). This method involved administering a survey to all pupils across a four year age range (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) in five primary schools across a three-year period. The data from these surveys were analysed using a data analysis package (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)) and used the frequency, reliability, factor, and correlation routines. The quantitative approach provided the researcher with an overview of attitude toward Christianity of pupils over a three-year period, in breadth rather than depth, and this was then compared with data from other studies.

The Lankshear Student Voice Scales

The title for the fifth research chapter is “Applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Are church school communities in which the pupils recognise the characteristics promoted by the SIAMS inspection system as reflecting the church school ethos?’ what can be learned about the ethos of church schools by applying a standardised pupil voice instrument. The researcher recognised that this research question needed to be addressed by applying a quantitative method. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would look at pupils’ responses to the pupil voice instrument from five primary schools; responses would be from all pupils across four year groups; and applying a pupil voice instrument would provide breadth rather than depth. The quantitative method employed the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS). This method involved administering a survey to all pupils across a four year age range (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) in five primary schools across a three-year period. The data from these surveys were analysed using a data analysis package (SPSS) and the frequency, reliability, factor, and correlation routines. The quantitative approach used provided the researcher with an overview of pupils’ views regarding their school’s ethos over a three-year period, breadth rather than depth, and this was then compared to findings in other earlier studies.

Fisher’s instrument of spiritual health

The title for the sixth research chapter is “Applying the Fisher model of spiritual health among 7- to 11-year-old pupils”. The research question raised in this chapter looks at ‘Are church school communities in which pupils experience a good level of spiritual wellbeing as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?’ what can be

discovered about the spiritual health of pupils by applying a standardised spiritual health measure. The researcher recognised that this research question needed to be addressed by applying a quantitative method. The reason for this was based on the following: the focus would look at pupils' responses to a survey concerning spiritual health from five primary schools; responses would be from all pupils across four year groups; and applying a spiritual health instrument would provide breadth rather than depth. The quantitative method employed Fisher's instrument of spiritual health for primary aged pupils. This method involved administering a survey to all pupils across a four year age range (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) in five primary schools across a three-year period. The data from these surveys were analysed using a data analysis package (SPSS) and the frequency, reliability, factor and correlation routines. The quantitative approach used provided the researcher with an overview of pupils' responses regarding spiritual health over a three-year period, breadth rather than depth, and this was then compared to findings in other earlier studies.

Conclusion

Several methodologies have been raised in this chapter: methodologies in both school and church school studies and methodologies employed by the researcher in this thesis. The reflective teacher practitioner approach is used by teachers in schools to reflect on their teaching practice with the intention of developing the learning experience of their pupils. Teachers either reflect on their teaching using their own methods or can choose from a number of tried and tested models which have been put forward by theorists. The need for teachers to reflect on their practice

is also required to meet the National Teaching Standards requirement (The Department for Education, 2021).

There has been debate about how valid teachers' contributions are to the research field compared to educational researchers. Teachers have attachments to educational establishments due to places where they work compared to educational researchers who are detached and usually university based. Though there are positives as well as negatives with regard to the validity of teachers as researchers, the main argument for teachers carrying out classroom-based research is to support the strategic development and improvement of their educational establishments, and to improve their own practice.

For the researcher, choosing an appropriate methodology was paramount in addressing the key research question for this thesis concerning what makes a church school distinctive and effective. The researcher engaged as a research-based reflective practitioner, according to van der Ven, must go beyond their own practice to drawing conclusions within research-based literatures which is presented by the following educational research approach. The educational research approach employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods enabled the researcher to interpret the results subjectively, which could be applied to a small project when focussing on one school. Quantitative methods which applied standardised research instruments enabled the researcher to analyse objectively surveys administered to several schools using a data analysis package. The usefulness of this quantitative method was that the results could be compared with earlier studies which had used the same research instruments.

The decision to use both qualitative and quantitative methods was made in order to build a richer and deeper understanding of what was happening in each of the schools in the study. Together the findings from each of these school-based studies allow conclusions to be made about the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church schools. The empirical component of this thesis has been constructed around six distinct studies, each of which is grounded in a defined body of literature and draws on an appropriate research method. These six empirical studies will now be presented and discussed in the following six chapters.

Part two: Six empirical studies

Chapter 4

How governors perceive their role within a church school

Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to find out governors' perceptions with regard to their role within a church school. Studies carried out in the Diocese of Oxford, the Diocese of London, and the Diocese of Chichester in the 1980s looked at a cross-section of church school governors, and concluded that foundation governors were more committed to maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of voluntary aided schools, but raised the question of whether the next generation of governors put at risk the identity of the future of Church of England schools due to the decline in their church attendance. The present study looks at how governor perceptions in the 2010s compare to these conclusions drawn from research conducted in the 1980s. This is a qualitative study that employed semi-structured interviews in 2017 with five governors from one local church school governing body. These interviews were analysed to evaluate the governors' perceptions of a church school environment, and to examine contributions they made to maintain the Christian character of a church school. What is described as measurable and immeasurable responses are evaluated, and the findings suggest that foundation governors, who were regular church attenders, responded with more immeasurable responses compared to non-regular church attenders. Each governor held a different role, whether foundation, parent, head of school, or staff representative. In the light of these governors' differing roles, the findings suggest the church school's distinctiveness is not compromised.

Introduction

This paper focuses on governors' understanding of their role within a church school environment. As part of the Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), governors, one of the stakeholders in schools, are required to provide evidence of a school's Christian distinctiveness. Therefore, governors need to have a clear understanding of this role. According to the Department for Education (2014, p. 6), governors are primarily responsible for the leadership of a school, including

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

This is further supported by the National Society with the addition of the word 'Christian' in reference to a school's ethos. However, it is the foundation governors (those appointed by the church authorities) who are responsible for the Christian character of the school (National Society, 2013b): standards in religious education and collective worship; and the school's partnership with the Church as well as providing support.

Previous investigations carried out into how governors perceived their role in church school settings include those in the Dioceses of Oxford, London and Chichester. Kay, Piper, and Gay (1988) looked at a cross-section of governors in Church of England schools in the Diocese of Oxford. Gay, Kay, Newdick, and

Perry (1991) looked at the views of head teachers and chairs of governors in Anglican schools in the Diocese of London. In both studies different governors gave their opinions as to which governing types should be practising Christians. Kay, Piper, and Gay (1988) concluded that: foundation governors were more committed to maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of a voluntary aided school compared to other governors; the ethos of the school was valued less by parent governors; and in recent governor appointments, fewer were committed Christians. These findings raised the concern as to whether governors' views were weakening in regard to what church schools should be and do in respect of their Christian foundations. According to Francis and Stone (1995), these findings from these studies suggest there could be implications for the future Christian character of Anglican voluntary aided schools.

A more detailed study into governors' attitudes was conducted by Stone (1991). This research explored, through responses to questionnaires, how governors perceived their role within a church school environment by analysing the attitudes of a cross-section of governors in fifty-five Church of England primary schools in the Diocese of Chichester. The research, though supporting the findings of Kay, Piper, and Gay (1988), focussed in more detail on governors' attitudes towards a church school ethos, and was analysed according to their role by sex, age and church attendance. These findings also raised the question as to whether, as governors are replaced with a younger generation who are not regular church attenders, the future of the identity of Church of England schools may be eroded.

Using Stone's research as a basis, the present study aims to elicit governors' perceptions with regard to their role. This resulted in a series of questions being asked which shaped how this study would be carried out.

- What aspects of a church school should be the focus?
- Which governors would be involved in expressing their views?
- How would these views be of value?
- How does this relate to the legal requirements set down by SIAMS?

By analysing the governors' interview responses, the research aims to explore how governors perceive their role within a Church of England primary school environment. This study involved interviewing a cross-section of governors from one local governing body (LGB) serving two small village rural Church of England primary schools, St Jude and St Sebastian.

Literature review

Today, church schools educate about a quarter of the nation's primary aged pupils, Loudon (2012). They are responsible, not only for providing for pupils academically, but doing this in the context of an environment which is distinctively Christian. SIAMS ensures the Christian distinctiveness of a school is maintained together with standards in religious education (RE), using schools statistical and performance information as indicators, through its inspections. But what is the purpose of a church school and what is a church school environment?

Church schools

The purpose of church schools is to provide excellent education within a Christian context, on advice put forward by *The church school of the future review, March 2012* (National Society, 2012) and *Guidance: Ethos statements* (National Society, 2013a), supported by Lankshear (1992b) who claimed that the best education and Christian foundations go hand in hand. This is further supported by the insistence of the Dearing Report (2001) not all schools will be interested in developing “the whole human being through the practice of the Christian faith” (p. 33). To check whether schools are promoting this, inspections are carried out which evaluate the “distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school...to ensure that learners’ academic, personal and spiritual needs are being met” (SIAMS, 2013, p. 6), and whether the schools “offer a spiritual dimension to the lives of young people, within the traditions of the Church of England, in an increasingly secular world” (Dearing Report, 2001, p. 3).

A church school environment

A church school’s environment, according to Brown (1992), should display a distinct, self-assured Christian ethos. The ethos of a school, expressed in *Guidance: Ethos statements* (National Society, 2013a), is specified through the values put forward by the school’s stakeholders. Lankshear (1992a) explains ethos as a combination of many parts: “the worship, the taught curriculum, the extra-curricular activities and the hidden curriculum” (p. 61). He proposes the need for the individual to be valued stating that “everyone is a uniquely valuable human being, whom God loves” and that all are “entitled to love and respect which that fact demands” (p. 61). However, these features can also be present in community

schools; the only difference in church schools being that the ethos is grounded in the Christian faith provided by the gospel. This is otherwise known as the school's Christian character which is inspected by SIAMS looking at "learners' achievements.... Christian values...spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)... relationships... understanding of and respect for diverse communities... and Religious Education" (SIAMS, 2013, pp. 5-6).

Staff

To preserve a school's Christian distinctiveness staff need to adhere to its ethos or mission statement. The *Guidance: Selecting, appointing and developing staff in church schools* (National Society, 2009) gives guidance when selecting staff for voluntary aided church school appointments. Schools should be able to appoint Christian teachers, or those willing to commit to the mission statement. Lankshear (1992a) suggests having a higher proportion of committed Christian staff compared to non-committed Christian staff, where all the staff employed should be at ease working within a Christian ethos. Further, Lankshear (1992b) states that a church school without any committed Christians "would compromise the school's integrity" (p. 23). *The way ahead* (Dearing, 2001) looks ahead to the next thirty years for church schools, and the need to employ and maintain Christian teachers across the profession.

Also, in a church school, staff have the opportunity, according to Lankshear (1992a, 1992c), to work with the Church in partnership, connecting with the Church's community. Cox (2011) supports this, mentioning a "mutual relationship"

(p. 162) between the Church and school which complements one another. To enable this partnership to happen, staff should support the Christian ethos.

Collective Worship

This connection with the church needs to be reflected in the school's collective worship (Lankshear, 1992b). Cox (2011) states that acts of worship should have a liturgical shape - use can be made of the lectionary, following the Church's year, and incorporating the Eucharist. Holding a Eucharist, mentioned in the Dearing Report (2001), clearly exhibits the Christian distinctiveness of a church school. SIAMS (2013) evaluates a school's collective worship by looking at the effect it has on its community; whether it is an integral part of the school where there is a deepening of Anglican traditions and practices; and if it supports the whole of the school communities' spiritual development.

Religious Education

The 1944 Education Act (HMSO, 1944) made religious education (RE) a legal requirement. In the *Education Reform Act* (HMSO, 1988), RE together with the national curriculum formed part of the basic curriculum which all pupils were expected to follow dependent upon the school's trust deeds (Lankshear, 1992a). Lankshear (1992c) stipulates that RE teaching in church schools should be good. This view is also supported by Brown (1992) who adds that a good school ethos provides a basis for excellent RE teaching, two thirds of whose curriculum time should focus on Christianity (SIAMS, 2013).

Governors

Governors have multiple roles. According to Lankshear and Hall (2003), governors should ensure the school is well managed and run, as well as checking on the provision for RE and its centrality to the curriculum (Lankshear, 1992b; Brown, 1992). Lankshear (1992a) differentiates between foundation governors and the rest of the governors: foundation governors should be more aware of the school and its partnership with the local church, standards in RE teaching and collective worship, and have a greater understanding of the school's ethos. Governors are also important as they provide important information for SIAMS. The incumbent or parish priest, according to Duncan (1990), needs to be as a "pastor, friend and theologian" (p. 11). With this there is a requirement for trust on all sides in both difficult and celebratory times. In this way, governors provide both encouragement and critical support.

Based on the requirement that a church school's environment needs to be distinctly Christian, the research question looks at 'Do governors in church schools regard their role as impacted by the school's Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?' Three sub-questions arise. The first sub-question looks at governors' perceptions of the school's Christian character, and explores whether the type of governor they are determines how they view their role within the school. The second sub-question looks at how governors rate the importance of different aspects of the school's identity for upholding the school's Christian distinctiveness. The third sub-question looks at whether governors who are committed Christians have a distinctive view on the Christian character of a church school.

Methodology

Interviews

Governors were invited by letter to take part in this project to determine how they saw their role as a governor in one church school environment. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted using the same pre-planned open-ended questions (see Table 4.1) as a basis for the interviews; however, there were opportunities for respondents to develop the discussion if they wished. The interviews were audio recorded then later transcribed; they took place in a separate room so as not to be interrupted. Each interview lasted for approximately twenty minutes. The interviewer was a permanent teaching member of staff.

Sample

Five different governors were interviewed: head teacher, staff, incumbent, foundation and parent. The following gives a brief outline of each governor: age, type of governor, religious affiliation, church attendance, prior governor experience, and length of present governance.

Ann (50 – 59) is the head teacher with Methodist/ Church of England affiliation. She is not a regular church attender but when she does attend church goes to Church of England/ Methodist churches. She has been a governor before in Church of England voluntary controlled schools. She has been governor in the present context for 8 years 11 months.

Mary (40 – 49) is the head of school with Roman Catholic affiliation. She is not a regular church attender but when she does attend church goes to Church of

England/ Catholic churches. She has been a governor before in a community school and a Church of England voluntarily aided school. She has been governor in the present context for 6 months.

Table 4.1

Interview Questions

<p><u>A church school</u> What do you think is the purpose of a church school? Should a church school be different from a community school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways? <p><u>Staffing</u> What are your views on whether there should be or should not be some committed Christian staff in the school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the staff are not Christians, should they be expected to support the Christian ethos of the school? • In what ways? <p><u>Church school/ community school</u> In what ways should a church school be different from a community school? What should be distinctively Christian about/ for a church school? What should be distinctively Anglican for a church school? How should a church school be different from a community school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should be in the mission statement? • What values should be emphasised? • What physical signs should there be that this is a church school? • What place should there be for the Eucharist? • What connections should there be between the school and the church? • What are your views about the Liturgical year? <p><u>Worship</u> How do you see the role of collective worship in a church school? Do you think collective worship is different than in a community school?</p> <p><u>RE curriculum</u> How do you see the role of RE in a church school? How is RE different in a church school when compared to a community school?</p> <p>How do you see the role of a vicar in a church school?</p> <p><u>The role of a governor</u> How involved should a governor be in a church school? How do you see your contribution as a governor to this church school? Would you like to make additional or different contributions? Has anyone explained to you the role of governors? Do you feel you have a clear understanding of your role in regards to RE and collective worship in school? How informed or aware do you feel about what happens in school?</p>

Peter (60 – 69) is the incumbent with Church of England affiliation. He has been a governor before, but not in a church school. He has been governor in the present context for 2 years.

Sue (80 – 89) is a foundation governor with Church of England affiliation. She attends a Church of England church regularly. She has been governor in the present context for 3 years 4 months.

Jane (30 – 39) is a parent governor with Christian affiliation. She is not a regular church attender but when she does attend church goes to Church of Scotland churches. She has never been a governor before. She has been governor in the present context for 5 months.

Analysis

Using content analysis of the data from the interviews identified seven key areas: church school, staffing, church school compared to community school, worship, the role of the vicar, RE curriculum, and the role of a governor.

Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines put forward by Simons (1989) were followed: the need to keep the interviews confidential, participants' consent to the use of the data provided, availability of reports to the participant, "department", then the school, and participants having the opportunity to make changes to their accounts and improve them if they

wish. To keep governors' identities completely anonymous this resulted in each governor being given a pseudonym.

Results

From the results there were a range of responses to each of the seven categories – church school, staffing, church school compared to community school, worship, the role of the vicar, RE curriculum, and the role of a governor – showing how governors within one church school environment perceived their role.

Church school

What is the purpose of a church school?

Responses to the church school category and its purpose varied depending on the type of governor, previous experience as a governor and prior knowledge.

For Ann (Appendix D) a church school's trust deeds were important; its wording and how it linked the school to the church. Peter saw a church school's remit was to provide "excellent education in the context of church involvement." Mary regarded it more as teaching the Christian faith to those wanting to attend a church school. Sue understood it as ensuring "children learn about God and develop themselves through learning about God" that "God cares for them, God loves them, and he values them," and Jane believed it was "setting out a good Christian foundation for my children and letting them ask very open ended questions about religion, not just Christianity," summing it by saying "giving my children the ability to question their morals and to be educated in what Christians believe, what the Church of England believes."

Peter felt the presence of a good atmosphere was necessary, which could be a reference to the school's ethos; this was supported by Sue who believed that by church and school working together with lay people and clergy would "enhance the Christian ethos of the school."

Should a church school be different from a community school?

Most governors said there should be some differences to differentiate a church school from a community school. One difference put forward by Ann was the physical outward signs; this was backed up by Mary making reference to crosses on walls.

A second difference was collective worship: a need for similarities and links between school and church worship (Ann), having "a more church aspect" (Mary); being a more "key part of the life of a school" (Peter); having a more "Christian distinctiveness" about it thus making it "an essential part of a church school" (Sue); and "the worship and prayers being daily" (Jane).

A third difference, suggested by Mary and Sue, was the role of religious education (RE). Mary saw the difference in terms of the greater links that RE had in church schools to Bible stories and children's moral learning through hidden messages "like a code for life." Sue suggested that the difference was in the allocation of more curriculum time to RE in church schools.

Christian values were a fourth difference. According to Ann, “within a church school you would definitely expect the children and parents and staff to adhere to Christian values”, this was also put forward by Mary, “they should be teaching the Christian values of the school”. Peter, on the other hand questioned the difference between Christian values and civil values, “What’s a Christian value that’s not a civil value – be nice to people that’s not a Christian value, love your neighbour that’s not a Christian value, they are Christian values but they are other values as well”.

A fifth difference put forward by Ann referred to the liturgical year and Christian festivals, “children’s understanding of the church year, understanding the key reasons behind some of the key festivals, the key times within the church year and the children having a good knowledge of what it means”.

Peter suggested that the difference was in terms of atmosphere and recognising the spiritual side of things. A church school “will hopefully have an atmosphere that recognises the spiritual side of things that’s not to say that community schools don’t do that but that’s what the church school should certainly do”. For Peter this included philosophy, as a “good part of children’s spiritual development... to engage with these big questions... to engage with an open mind so there is a possibility of a God. There are some people who rule that out I would never rule out there is a possibility there is a God on an education point of view you’ve got to keep those questions open for good education to take place”.

Lastly, Jane was adamant that a church school needs to accept its distinctiveness, and be “brave and say this is our community and this as a family is what we believe in...this is why we’re a church school.” Today, she states, there was “a fear in educating children with one religion at its core compared to community schools where in Religious education and assemblies there has to be balance.”

Staffing

All the governors interviewed agreed that staff employed in a church school, knowing it is a church school, should abide by its terms and conditions whilst supporting the Christian ethos.

In response to the question, “What are your views on whether there should be or should not be some committed Christian staff in the school?” Ann, Peter, Sue and Jane expressed the need for staff to participate in and to be present at collective worship. Peter likened this to any religious affiliation “I think that in any school any teacher ought to be at collective acts of worship of whatever sort, if it’s Muslim acts of worship or Christian, because it’s part of the school community and it’s modelling for the children. You can believe different things but together you engage in certain things.”

When choosing between the religiously affiliated person and the best teacher, it is the responsibility of a church school “to give the best education we can”, thereby Peter would choose the best teacher. Ann and Jane added the need for all staff employed to deliver the RE curriculum, and when appointing new staff job

advertisements needed to make mention of the “Christian ethos,” particularly according to Ann for headship and deputy headship. Ann stipulated that “anyone not prepared to do that should not have taken a job on in a church school.”

Church school compared to community school

What should be distinctively Christian about/ for a church school?

The responses for a church school being distinctively Christian differed among the governors. It was RE that made a church school distinctively Christian, according to Ann, with “The amount of RE that would be taught... should be given slightly higher status and therefore higher amount of curriculum time”. According to Mary, the difference is “the way RE is taught”.

Celebrating major festivals including Easter was another view put forward by Ann as differentiating between a church school and a community school, “as a church school we would be celebrating along with the community and parents all the different main festivals”. Collective worship and its presentation predominated in the governors’ opinions about what made a church school distinctively Christian, a view supported by Mary, Peter and Jane: “different aspects of collective worship the responses and the gatherings are slightly different slightly, very different” (Mary), “the collective worship should be predominately Christian” (Peter) and “I like the idea of going into church and being more an active part of the service, I’d quite like to see them going up to the altar a little bit more and being more involved in the service taking an active part in the service” (Jane).

Children's behaviour towards one another was suggested by Sue, learning respect for other people and confidence, knowing that "God values them and therefore they learn not only to love each other but they learn to love themselves and how they behave."

The visual elements displayed of the mission statement and values were seen as important factors in making a church school distinctively Christian, as too were physical symbols, a view put forward by Mary.

What should be distinctively Anglican for a church school?

Only two of the governors believed they were able to respond to this question. Ann referred to the collective worship format following the Anglican year for a Church of England school with elements of the liturgy, thus creating links between church and school. In response to the same question, Sue made reference to physical signs: a cross, candle, prayers and displaying children's creative work.

As to the other governors, Peter did say that there should be some form of Anglican worship, but this did not necessarily need to be traditionally Anglican, saying "for me Anglican, Catholic, Methodist it's flavouring, I don't see God sees a difference." Both Mary and Jane did not see any difference and were unable to answer because of their inexperience of Anglican tradition.

The mission statement, and Christian values

The mission statement and values are paramount in a church school. Governors' opinions depended on previous experience, and whether they had been involved in

developing a church school's mission statement and statement of Christian values. Ann, Mary and Sue had had such prior experience.

Peter stated that, in a mission statement, spiritual development needed acknowledgement and a possible way could be to engage in big questions. Jane's thoughts included equipping children with "a solid education about what it is to be in the Church of England...and give them a very good foundation in Christian education."

Peter thought values in a church school should comprise "cooperation, living together, caring for each other, being part of a school community, so not selfish." Jane regarded "being part of the community, being part of God's community within the church, sharing the values we have learnt at church and through Christianity and others and being compassionate to other beliefs as well." Sue did her best to remember the school's values – love, justice, peace... – but would have liked to have seen forgiveness as a value too. Both Ann and Mary expanded on the school values, linking them to the Bible and Jesus' teachings.

What place should there be for the Eucharist?

All governors believed the Eucharist was important for a church school, though they differed in their views on the frequency with which the Eucharist should be offered. Both Ann and Peter felt it should not be so frequent as to dominate, Ann mentioned being "wary about the amount of times that was offered as a service for the children" and Peter said "I'm not in favour of a Eucharist every week that they do in some schools. I think that is over kill". Ann drew attention to the fact that "the

majority of them have not been confirmed”. Peter believed “children should be able to experience Eucharistic worship and be able to understand Eucharistic worship, so they can make their own decisions and thoughts as they go through”. Sue was in agreement with Peter in a need for the Eucharist to be explained “I think they should go to a Eucharist and see and have it explained what it is all about”, whilst recognising with Ann that children were unable to take the bread and wine which is fundamental to the service. Mary, on the other hand, believed the Eucharist “should be part of the church school in the church calendar and we should do it regularly because it’s really important”, not just at celebratory times – which could be because of her Roman Catholic upbringing. Jane believed it important for everyone to say the set Eucharistic responses in unison, attending church with her child has enabled him to say “what’s in bold and he’s done it”.

What connections should there be between the school and the church?

Connections between the school and the church were seen as important by all the governors. Ann viewed connections between school and church as working both ways. Mary interpreted good links with the church to involve visits from different denominational ministers, and using the church building at festival times. For Peter connections between the school and the church should be complete, saying “I would hope that the local church if it’s got a church school should be seeking to be offering to be part of school life, governors, friends of the church. I think the church as part of its own outreach and discipleship should be offering to serve the local school.” Sue saw connections to be related to the building, where children could learn that it is “a place of peace and quiet where they can reflect, they can pray, where they can worship, where they can praise,” and where children “see church

people and that church people come into school to talk to them and they learn that it's all part of the community.” Jane looked at connections between the school and church in terms of hierarchical governance within a multi-academy trust, involving directors who work within the church and church representatives who “have to be the core of the body of the multi-academy trust as well.”

Worship

All the governors felt collective worship was vital in a church school: it was “based around Christianity” (Ann), “the little glue during the day, that holds us together” (Mary), “key part of the life of a church school and it should be predominately Christian” (Peter), “a joyful and enjoyable time for children while they’re learning their participation gives them a kind of feeling of joy and wonder and happiness...it is giving them a great feeling of warmth and love” (Sue), “the foundation of a church school” (Jane).

How do you see the role of collective worship in a church school?

Governors gave various responses to the role worship played in a church school: the religious and Anglican content, the different elements making up a collective worship, and following the liturgical year.

In terms of the religious and Anglican context, Ann said it was that “typical parts of an Anglican service could be replicated...like being in the church” and it was a place for children to “see what things could be like within a church and to understand the way the Church of England actually works.” Sue also thought that there was more religious and Anglican content in a church school.

In terms of the elements making up collective worship, Ann, Sue and Jane mentioned prayers, Ann and Sue referred to singing, and Sue and Jane saw children taking part as important for acts of collective worship. Mary made reference to collective worship being a time where “we all meet up...chat, listen to a story...have a reflection, we think about things, we think about values.”

In terms of following the liturgical year, all governors saw the liturgical year as important except Peter, who would rather make “worship fit in with curriculum themes thus giving more flexibility.” Jane wanted to see more of an emphasis on “Lent and its progression from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, it’s a great time for the children to practise all the values of the school to really look at sharing and to making sacrifices and reflecting on the sacrifices made for us.” Sue viewed the church’s year as an “opportunity for children to see where the outside world is influenced by or contains God.”

RE Curriculum

How do you see the role of RE in a church school?

RE in a church school was seen by governors as an important subject, with a legal time allocation requirement towards Christianity and the subject in general, and learning about other faiths.

Interestingly, Jane thought RE shared equal status alongside English and Mathematics as full curriculum subjects compared to a community school where English and Maths predominates, stating “when you’re in a church school you think

English, maths and RE as full curricular subjects you certainly get the feeling. I'm talking as a parent but my children come back and see RE as important as their writing, reading, maths".

Both Ann and Sue referred to the amount of curriculum time allocated to RE. Ann made reference to the time assigned to Christianity and special festivals "it would just be the amount of time being expected to be covered for Christianity and for also in the curriculum there would be a far greater emphasis on special festivals, and an expected extra allocation of time to these things and that would be part of the RE curriculum". Whereas Sue specified the legal 10% of RE curriculum time, "it should have a large proportion of the curriculum, is it now 10%", referring to time allocated on the timetable for RE. Multiculturalism, for Ann, was important in a church school because "central values run through all religions", which would lead children, through RE, to make educated choices about religion in later years. Sue thought RE needed to be based on Christian beliefs, but agreed with Ann with teaching other religions for children to learn to respect other people and for living in a multicultural community, "otherwise how can they respect other people and learn to live in a multicultural community". But Sue went further, saying that RE came into everything: "cooperation when measuring the floor for a mathematical activity; sharing, forgiveness when someone has trodden on their work and trying to teach them all this from a religious point of view."

Both Mary and Peter did not see a difference in the role of RE, whether in a church school or a community school. Mary did think RE should be purposeful with time for children to reflect and develop their own thoughts. Peter viewed RE

as a subject needing to be taught well exploring faith, adding “I do think there is a place for some Bible stories because I think they are the core of not only Christianity but also Judaism, and some of those early stories are also shared with Islam”. This supported Ann’s and Sue’s thoughts on teaching other faiths.

How do you see the role of a vicar in a church school?

The governors saw the role of a vicar in a church school as important; someone who should form part of the school community on a regular basis not just in church, but within the school itself.

Ann would like to view the vicar as another member of staff knowing children by name, thereby becoming an integral part of the school. Jane thought similarly, with the addition of the vicar’s ability to link the Christian values to children’s projects. She saw the vicar as part of the school family. All three – Mary, Peter and Sue – would like to see the vicar readily accessible, providing a counsellor service and able to give guidance. Peter likened this to “the vicar should be like the church,” dependent on the vicar’s communication skills, otherwise it should fall to someone in the Christian community who would have those skills, not necessarily someone ordained. Only Ann and Sue appreciated that a vicar’s involvement on this level might not be possible due to the vicar’s changing role as the Church of England proceeds with the amalgamation of rural parishes and clergy assuming oversight of a greater number of churches and communities.

The role of a governor

All governors interviewed thought a governor should be involved as was necessary, in appropriate ways. Ann believed governors should be involved in understanding what they need to do. Mary believed it depended on the type of governor: she believed parent and staff governors were a lot more involved, whereas foundation governors might not be so involved. They might not know what education is like these days. Sue added that a governor should be “helpful and supportive.”

The governors felt they made valid contributions to the school. Mary and Jane viewed their contribution to be on the academic side in the form of progress, attainment and assessment, as this was their interest and focus. Being supportive was Peter and Sue’s contribution: Peter was supportive in the welfare of staff and pupils in the form of a chaplaincy role and Sue was supportive in monitoring and preparing the school for Ofsted and SIAMS. Ann, as the head teacher, saw her role very differently to the other governors, as she was the one who gave out information and answered questions on the leadership of the school.

In terms of making additional contributions, Peter would, if time allowed, like to be more involved in school life as a volunteer. He also believed his job as the incumbent was to support staff in their work and personal life; looking after the staff. Sue felt she was contributing fully through links between the church and the school; for example, being involved in the educational programme, *Open the Book*. Jane, being so recently appointed, still believed she just had to learn about being a governor. Both Ann and Mary were fully involved in the school as members of staff.

Whether the role of governors had been explained to them varied from governor to governor. Ann had only had the role of governor explained to her in her capacity of being the head teacher of a church school and it was part of the interview process. Mary had the role explained when attending training. Peter had not had the role explained as it was assumed that he should already have known about it. Sue believed it had been explained to her: a governor was committed, abided by the rules and acted confidentially. Jane had not had it explained; she had only been given documents to read but hoped that the planned training would help.

Mary, Peter and Sue felt that they did have a clear understanding of RE and collective worship in school, but Jane on the other hand did not. Ann believed she had an overall knowledge of RE and collective worship rather than a good working knowledge due to the fact that she is not involved in implementing it in the classroom.

Peter felt he was well informed about what happens in school through the local governing body (LGB), the head teacher, newsletters and the website. Sue believed she was more informed because of her frequency of coming into school, being involved in monitoring and evaluating, resulting in meeting the children; now she felt part of the school. Jane was well informed from looking at the school development plan. She believed she learnt more as a governor, but reflecting that, as a parent, she would have liked to have known these things too.

To summarise, the interviews showed that governors brought both similar and different perceptions as to how they view their role within a church school environment. Clearly Ann and Mary, who work in school on a daily basis, brought ‘in house’ knowledge to their governance roles. The length of service held by the other governors, and the previous experience they may have had in a church school, influenced them in how they perceived their role.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study sets out to look at how governors perceive their role within a church school environment. It looks at whether governors in church schools regard their role as impacted by the school’s Christian vision/ distinctiveness, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system. Previous literature from the 1980s suggests that governors who are not committed Christians tend to have different perceptions from those who are committed Christians as to what should be distinctively Christian in a church school (Kay, Piper, & Gay, 1988; Gay, Kay, Newdick, & Perry, 1991; Stone, 1991). Such differing views could be detrimental to the future of church schools. How does evidence from this recent research compare with the studies carried out during the 1980s in the three different Dioceses of Oxford, London, and Chichester? Of the five governors interviewed all had a religious affiliation, but only two of them, the foundation governor and incumbent, regularly attended church.

First, five different governors were represented— head teacher, head of school (staff governor), incumbent, another foundation governor and parent governor – it is necessary to reflect on how each of these governors view their role.

Ann, the head teacher, looked upon her role as leading the school, which required in part distributing information and responding to questions. Mary, the head of school serving as staff governor, and Jane, the parent governor, focussed on academic progress in terms of attainment and progress. Both Peter, the incumbent, and Sue, the foundation governor, saw their roles as supportive, with Sue supporting through monitoring in readiness for Ofsted and SIAMS inspections. Do these governors' perceptions, dependent on their role within the school, determine which type of governor is more committed in maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of the school environment. Looking at these governors' roles, the head teacher, head of school and parent governors believe their responsibilities are to impart information and focus on academic standards, compared to the incumbent and foundation governors who believe they are responsible for providing support.

Second, by taking each of the question areas in turn, do these governors' perceptions assigned previously correlate with how these governors view their role: imparting information, academic standards and providing support?

The purpose of a church school, according to all governors, required church involvement, God and education in the Christian faith, aspects that pertain to a Christian distinctiveness. These ideas are not extended except by Jane, the parent governor, who clearly understands that the Christian ethos gives a strong Christian foundation where children learn about Christian beliefs in the context of the Church of England; she is attempting to explain what it is unique to a church school by referring to it in isolation. It is the incumbent and foundation governors who combine both ethos and learning as important for a church school, which shows that

they have a better understanding of how the Christian element is embedded within a church school.

Again, when comparing the differences between a church and a community school, the head teacher and head of school referred to the ethos within a school environment, which is clearly visible: outward signs of crosses on walls, the frequency of worship and daily prayers, its community adhering to Christian values, knowing about the Church's year and understanding the key festivals. The parent governor was able to attempt at expressing the need for church schools to stand up for their distinctiveness and be "brave and say this is our community and this as a family is what we believe in...this is why we're a church school." Those who regularly attend church looked at how the ethos is embedded: referring to the Christian distinctiveness of worship and its integral part in the daily life of the school.

It is clear that all governors believe that the Christian ethos needs to be respected and adhered to by anyone who decides to work within a church school. It is only the incumbent who made a statement that in order for children to receive the best education, church schools need to employ the best teachers. Although this could result in employment of a non-Christian teacher, that teacher would have to conform to the Christian ethos of the school.

For a church school to be distinctively Christian all governors mainly referred to clear evidence which makes a church school different: time allocated to RE, how RE was taught, celebrating major festivals and the way collective worship

was delivered, and visual displays of Christian values, the mission statement and physical symbols. However, Sue, the foundation governor, was able to explain how the church school's distinctiveness could be embedded by giving an example of how through God's love children learn respect for one another in the way they behave.

The mission statement and Christian values are important in that they define a church school. Of the two governors who were newly appointed governors and had not been involved in developing the school's mission statement and statement of Christian values, both the incumbent and parent governor responses spoke about integrating the church school distinctive element within the school curriculum: being part of the school and God's community, sharing, linking learning from church and in Christianity and being sympathetic with others' beliefs.

All governors valued holding a Eucharist in a church school which supports Cox (2011) and the Dearing Report (2001) as exhibiting Christian distinctiveness.

Embedding the church school distinctiveness within the school is once more exemplified by the incumbent and foundation governor, who view the school and the church as a partnership: "I would hope that the local church if it's got a church school should be seeking to be offering to be part of school life, governors, friends of the church and I think the church as part of its own outreach and discipleship should be offering to serve the local school" (Peter) and where the church is viewed as "a place of peace and quiet where they can reflect, they can pray, where they can worship, where they can praise" and where children "see church people and that

church people come into school to talk to them and they learn that it's all part of the community" (Sue).

All governors valued collective worship, but only four of the governors referred to its centrality within a church school; Mary, Peter, Sue and Jane (head of school, incumbent, foundation and parent governors) look upon collective worship as a time which unifies the school, and view it as the foundation of the school which supports evidence required by SIAMS (2013) when evaluating a school's collective worship. All of the school governors knew what was expected from worship in a church school. It is the parent and foundation governors who go on to make further observations that worship needs to include the Church's year which supports Cox (2011) and is a place where children are able to develop spiritually which supports the SIAMS framework: Lent and Easter as a time where children can learn, through reflection, about sharing by the sacrifices they can make and the sacrifices made for them, and as an opportunity that "children to see where the outside world is influenced by or contains God."

As to the RE curriculum, all governors saw the importance of RE in a church school. The parent governor (Jane) believed RE as being on an equal level with English and Maths. The head teacher (Ann) and foundation governor (Sue) referred to the 10% of curriculum time allocated to RE in a church school which supports evidence required by SIAMS (2013). The head teacher (Ann), viewed RE teaching as a way to learn about and respecting other faiths, as the values ran through all religions, which would enable them to make choices later in life. This viewpoint, however, is not specific to a church school. Mary, the head of school,

and Peter, the incumbent, saw the teaching of RE to be the same whether in community schools or church schools, so implying that RE teaching was not relevant solely to church schools.

Governors unanimously believed that the incumbent's role was essential: providing spiritual and theological support as well as providing the church link to the school through a regular presence in school. This shows governors understand the valuable role of an incumbent or parish priest which supports Duncan (1990) who mentioned the incumbent of parish priest needs to be a "pastor, friend and theologian" (p. 11).

Different governors had different experiences in their initial induction as a governor. As a result, Jane, the parent governor, did not have a clear understanding of collective worship as an important part of a church school. Looking at the three non-staff governors, though all believed they were well informed, it was Sue, the foundation governor, who felt an integral part of the school. Was this because of the length of time she had been a governor at the school, and therefore had had more contact with the school through being a member of the church?

Thirdly, by looking at the cross-section of governors interviewed, all of them made valuable responses. However, more integrated responses, embedding the Christian distinctiveness of a church school within the everyday life of the school and the school curriculum were made by those governors who regularly attend church – the incumbent and foundation governor. The research seems to suggest that all the governors in this study uphold the church school's Christian

distinctiveness, even though some, though having a religious affiliation, do not regularly attend church. These governors have different roles or duties to fulfil, hence the governing body comprise different governing roles. It could be said that all these governors bring a unifying understanding of what constitutes the Christian character of a church school, constituting evidence for the school's Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection. Previous investigations looking at how governors perceive their role in church school settings (Kay, Piper, and Gay, 1988; Gay, Kay, Newdick, and Perry, 1991; and Stone, 1991) showed there could be implications for the future Christian character of Anglican voluntary aided schools due to fewer governors who are committed Christians. However, based on this study in the 2010s these governors would not compromise a church school's Christian distinctiveness.

For the purposes of this small-scale study, only five governors were interviewed which may not be a fully representative sample with regard to age, sex and background. Nevertheless, the findings did offer an interesting insight into how these governors perceived their role in the context of a church school environment.

In the light of these limitations, further investigation would be valuable, drawing on a much wider sample of governors across a variety of church schools in order to explore the effect of different levels of church attendance on the views not only of foundation governors, but also on the views of parent governors and staff governors.

Chapter 5

Investigating pupils' religious experience through a labyrinth

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the religious or spiritual experiences pupils encounter when they take part in a spiritual activity, in this case a labyrinth experience. Ap Siôn and Windsor (2012) and Francis and ap Siôn (2013) employed Ninian Smart's seven dimensional phenomenological approach to religion as an analytical framework to show how people experienced religion. This present study uses this approach to explore whether pupils can encounter a religious experience through an activity such as a labyrinth. It is a qualitative study which involves analysing pupils' experiences via three focus groups from one school, St Jude, comprising six pupils in each of the three age classes: 4- to 6-year-old pupils, 6- to 9-year-old pupils, and 9- to 11-year-old pupils. The findings suggest that Ninian Smart's seven dimensional approach could be applied to the labyrinth experience. Even though all of the seven dimensions could be included in the labyrinth activity, it is the ritual, experiential, ethical, and material dimensions which appear more evident. Using Smart's seven dimensional approach proved a useful tool to provide evidence of pupils' spiritual development through a religious or spiritual experience.

Introduction

Religious experience

Religious experience can be defined as that which “involves some kind of ‘perception’ of the invisible world, or involves a perception that some visible person or thing is a manifestation of the invisible world” (Smart, 1986, p. 28) such as that

encountered by Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9 of the New Testament.

Another term for this kind of experience is spiritual experience.

This form of experience from an educational perspective can be regarded as promoting pupils' spiritual development. Spiritual development is part of a national legislative requirement for all schools in the United Kingdom (UK) monitored by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), and for church schools is additionally monitored by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). Developing pupils spiritually dates back to the Education Act of 1944 (HMSO, 1944) and mention of it is made in subsequent legislative documents: The Education Act 2002 (HMSO, 2002), and the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (2013).

The focus for this study is the religious or spiritual experience pupils encountered when they participated in a labyrinth experience. But what is a labyrinth?

What is a labyrinth?

Welch (2010) suggests, when describing labyrinths in the Christian tradition, that the labyrinth "can be said to promote religious pluralism" (p. 16), indicating further that it might be argued a labyrinth is "a spiritual device where individuals can engage on their own terms with their own concept of the divine, where every choice is a valid one" (p. 16). However, this rests uneasily with John 14:6 "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me". Welch, through her historical summary about labyrinths in the Christian tradition, makes a point that a

labyrinth can be a useful tool to engage people on the different stages of their spiritual journey and it has proved useful in developing congregational spirituality.

First to define a labyrinth, a labyrinth is a spiral path marked on the ground: there is only one entrance with a single path leading to the centre, and by retracing one's steps this very same path is also a means by which to leave the labyrinth and exit. As long as one remains on the path it is impossible to get lost. Walking a labyrinth is one way of following this path. A labyrinth experience comprises not only walking a labyrinth but a range of activities which make the experience more meaningful (Norton, 2014), also mentioned through the activities suggested by Tarrant and Dakin (2014) and Wallace (2009). But how has the labyrinth been linked to a spiritual experience? Historically, whether looking at the Ancient Egyptian Labyrinth some 2000 years before Christianity, the legend of Theseus and the Minotaur, or the oldest Christian labyrinth (Matthews, 1970), there is a suggestion that labyrinths of this time might have been symbolic of the journey of one's soul through life with salvation being the goal on reaching the centre (Welch, 2010). The expansion of labyrinths within cathedrals during the Middle Ages enabled Christians to embark on their penitent spiritual journey in lieu of undertaking a pilgrimage due to the frequent wars which made it a dangerous pursuit. A resurgence of labyrinth activity from the middle of the twentieth century gave people an opportunity to experience and to understand their own form of spiritual experience or spirituality as an alternative to traditional religion (Welch, 2010).

According to Tarrant and Dakin (2014), a labyrinth experience might be one means of developing the individual spiritually where the participant will be affected

by the different elements of “calm, obedience, repetition, integration and isolation” (p. 6). Labyrinths today can create a sense of community and bring spirit to people’s own life journey (Williams, 2014). Norton (2014) uses the labyrinth with young people as a means of supporting their spiritual development as well as their faith journey. Clearly the literature places the labyrinth within the spiritual domain as a gateway to encountering a spiritual experience whether it is religious or non-religious.

Smart’s theoretical framework

What would make a labyrinth experience count as a religious experience? There are different ways of looking at and experiencing religion. One analytical framework applied in previous research carried out by ap Siôn and Windsor (2012) and Francis and ap Siôn (2013) has been the seven dimensional approach developed by Ninian Smart. Francis and ap Siôn use Smart’s approach to illustrate observations from a meeting of people engaged in a special interest group: their behaviours, beliefs, experiences, communal reactions and how the place plays an important part. Ap Siôn and Windsor use Smart’s approach because it can be applied both to the religious and non-religious world as it is associated with human experience and in the research some of Smart’s dimensions were more prominent than others to people engaged in another special interest group. Using the Ninian Smart model it would be interesting to see the human experiences among a group of school pupils and if there are any dimensions that are more prominent. Therefore, it is with this research in mind that the theoretical framework used will be Ninian Smart’s seven dimensional approach.

Ninian Smart developed a phenomenological approach to religion where “phenomenology is the attitude of informed empathy” (Smart, 1999, p. 2), or compassion. He was concerned with primary human belief and practice. Smart’s phenomenological approach could be applied to all movements, whether religious or non-religious. Smart’s approach involved a seven dimensional model to religion whereby religion could be looked at objectively without the subjective constraints of a faith or tradition.

Smart’s seven dimensions are categorised as follows: the ritual dimension looks at ceremony both private and public, worship and prayer; the mythological dimension refers to story and history of interactions between the divine and its people; the experiential dimension, through ritual and involvement in the invisible world, evokes an individual set of feelings and experiences; the social dimension involves sharing a set of communal beliefs; the ethical dimension is concerned with a moral code which guides a community; the doctrinal dimension builds on the narrative dimension through a rational structure of dogmas (Smart, 1986); and the material dimension looks at the religion’s concrete expressions such as buildings and objects (Smart, 1999).

Research question

The aim of this study is to explore pupils’ religious experience based on responses to and observations of a series of activities in a labyrinth experience, using one phenomenological approach to religion, that of Ninian Smart’s seven dimensions model. Smart’s model details this religious experience, whether the religion is based in a religious or non-religious framework. The aim of this research question is to

ascertain whether the educational experience being developed through a labyrinth facilitated the pupils to enter into something one would define as 'a religious experience'.

Method

Designing an educational experience

The first step involved designing an educational experience intended to promote religious experience through engaging with the labyrinth. This design involved creating a preliminary activity followed by a series of five activities prior to and following walking the labyrinth.

The preliminary activity, called 'Beginnings', prepared pupils for the labyrinth experience. Gathered around the font of the local church pupils were asked a series of questions on which to reflect regarding their own positive attributes and the positive attributes of others. Pupils were then asked to reflect on their negative attributes and the negative attributes of others which hinder them from living, learning, helping others and enjoying life. Pupils were guided to reflect on the start of a new life by physically holding an apple and through using their senses to reflect on the beauty of the apple as being part of God's creation and how this reminds them of the good things in their lives. Following the preliminary activity five stations subsequently followed.

One of the stations looked at 'Burdens'. Pupils were asked to reflect on their worries in the form of burdens they had which they felt were weighing them down and which burdens they would wish to leave behind. To leave their burden behind

involved the physical activity of pupils writing their burden on a piece of paper, wrapping the paper in tin foil and throwing it into a bin.

Another station looked at 'Seeds of Hope'. Pupils were asked to reflect on something new they would like to start for the benefit of others and themselves. Pupils shared this hope by writing it on a tag and hanging their tag on a tree.

Another station focussed on 'Prayer'. Pupils were provided with a set of prayer beads of different colours, to use as an aid to intercessory prayer: different coloured beads were selected to pray for those in trouble around the world, the village and the community, family and friends and the sick. To focus the mind, pupils were encouraged to breathe slowly and were invited to kneel. This took place by the altar rail. Pupils were invited to say their prayers to themselves and to God.

On another station, pupils had the opportunity to walk the labyrinth. Pupils were invited to take a stone, feel the warmth in the stone and remember the seeds of hope they had 'planted' on the tree. They were then invited to step onto the labyrinth path and walk slowly.

Another station involved pupils reflecting on the labyrinth activities as a whole: what they would take away as a memory of the visit, and what came into their minds when they walked the labyrinth. At this station pupils had a choice of three different activities: recording their memories in pictorial or written form on a large roll of paper, looking at the map of the world and selecting and marking with

sticker a country or place they would like to think about or pray for, writing a seed word such as hope and love on, and decorating, a clay footprint.

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted from across the primary school age range with 4- to 11-year-old pupils. There were three focus groups, each comprising six pupils from one of the three age classes: 4- to 6-year-old pupils, 6- to 9-year-old pupils, and 9- to 11-year-old pupils (Appendix E) . In these focus groups pupils were invited to reflect on their experiences from taking part in the labyrinth experience: ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, ‘Prayer’, ‘Walking a Labyrinth’ and ‘Reflections’. The focus groups explored the participants’ reported experiences of the labyrinth walk (with reference to the experience prior to and during the walk itself as well as the post-walk reflection). Using Ninian Smart’s phenomenological approach to religion, four dimensions were explored: the ritual, experiential, ethical and material. The interviews commenced with a starter activity where the pupils were presented with a picture of a labyrinth, the intention being this would encourage the pupils in their further conversations. The main activity comprised key focus areas: recalling a key memory; what pupils most and least enjoyed, and how this made them feel; concluding with a single key word response where pupils could review their actions and experiences. Throughout, the pupils were given the opportunity to draw, write and/or describe their experiences. Their conversations were recorded then later transcribed and they took place in a separate room so as not to be interrupted. The interviewer was a permanent member of the teaching staff.

Analysis

Content analysis from the focus groups identified four of the dimensions from Ninian Smart's phenomenology of religion: ritual (what the pupils did), experiential (how the pupils felt), ethical (pupils' moral concerns), and material (structures and ritual objects).

Sample

Pupils were randomly chosen to form three focus groups, with equal numbers of boys and girls and a maximum of six pupils. The focus groups reflected the three-class structure of the school: 4- to 6-year-old pupils, 6- to 9-year-old pupils, and 9- to 11-year-old pupils.

Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines put forward by Simons (1989) were followed: the need to keep the interviews confidential, participants' and parents' consent to the use of the data provided. Ethical approval was granted (Appendix A).

Results

There was a range of comments relevant to each of the key focus areas: recalling a key memory; what pupils most and least enjoyed, and how this made them feel; and recalling a single key word. These responses were categorised by the researcher according to one or more of Ninian Smart's four dimensions of religion – ritual, experiential, ethical, and material – showing how a cross-section of pupils from one primary school responded to a labyrinth experience.

Ritual

Responses which could be equated with the ritual dimension category were found in each of the following labyrinth experience activities: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, and ‘Reflections’.

Pupils from reception to year 1 (4- to 5-year-old pupils) spoke about three of the activities in relation to ritual: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Burdens’ and ‘Reflections’. The labyrinth they referred to as a maze, and recounted walking around the maze and getting to the middle, the ‘Burdens’ activity was described as a physical act of throwing away rubbish, and ‘Reflections’ was remembering, making the foot which was soft and decorating it.

Pupils from year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) referred to four activities in connection with the ritual dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Prayer’, ‘Seeds of Hope’ and ‘Reflections’. Again, these pupils referred to the labyrinth as a maze. They spoke of walking round the maze and finding lots of different places to go, recalled the Prayer activity as a means of praying for other people, described the ‘Seeds of Hope’ as thinking about the future and that the seeds were one’s own thoughts, and that Reflections involved decorating a foot and writing a word on it.

Pupils from year 5 and 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils) made reference to only two of the activities in respect to the ritual dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’ and ‘Burdens’. Once more, when referring to the labyrinth, these pupils tended to use the terminology “the maze”, when recalling Walking the Labyrinth. They remembered the physical aspect of walking around in a circle, in spirals; seeing other people as

they passed and then turning in the opposite direction just when they thought they were about to bump into someone (this being conducive to following the pathway when walking a labyrinth); and hearing the music as they walked. When speaking of the 'Burdens' activity, pupils articulated it as a time to unload burdens.

Experiential

General remarks relating to the experiential dimension were made initially.

Expanded responses which could be associated with the experiential dimension category were found in each of the following labyrinth experience activities:

'Walking the Labyrinth', 'Beginnings', 'Burdens', 'Seeds of Hope', 'Prayer' and 'Reflections'.

The initial responses from Reception aged pupils to year 1 (4- to 5-year-old pupils) referred to words the pupils associated with the overall labyrinth experience, it made them "happy" and it was "fun". When describing the activities, three could be associated with the experiential dimension: 'Walking the Labyrinth', 'Burdens' and 'Reflections'. When 'Walking the Labyrinth' the pupils alluded to the fact that the maze was "soft and easy", and "nice, soft and comfortable". Though the pupils referred to 'Burdens' as the physical aspect of throwing away rubbish they elaborated on this as it was a way to get rid of the "mean stuff because brothers and sisters can hurt you – bite you". For Reflections they enjoyed making the foot because of its physical aspects, the clay feeling soft and it had a smell.

The opening responses from year 2 to year 4 pupils (6- to 9-year-old pupils) mentioned emotional words to describe the general labyrinth experience. Two

activities were referred to in connection with the experiential dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, and ‘Prayer’. They described the labyrinth experience as “exciting”; they could go to “lots of different places”, and it made them feel “relaxed”. When ‘Walking the Labyrinth’ it made them feel “happy”, “peaceful” because it was really quiet, “excited” and “relaxed” because of walking around and having lots of places to go, “amazing” and “really good”. The ‘Prayer’ activity made some pupils feel happy because they were praying for other people.

There were an abundance of responses from year 5 and year 6 pupils (9- to 11-year-old pupils) to describe the general labyrinth experience: it made the pupils “thoughtful”; “silent”; enabled them to “find inner peace”; made them “calm”, and it was “calming” because listening to the music in the background let them block everything that’s bad out, the music in the background was additionally described as really “calm”, and by closing one’s eyes resulted in being in one’s own labyrinth. Other comments mentioned by the pupils included the labyrinth experience being “relaxing”; “spiritual”; “unharnessing”; “collective”; “a queer experience”; they could hear themselves think; “forget about the bad things”, it brought “peaceful dreams”; made them “hopeful”, “kind”; it felt “special”; “peaceful”; and “exciting”. Five activities made reference to the experiential dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’ and ‘Reflections’.

When ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, a pupil described walking in a circle and going round and round giving them a feeling of becoming hypnotised. It was a “happy” experience because the path was followed to the very end. However, one boy did remark that the labyrinth made him feel “weird” – “It made me feel weird it

did, it's like when you lie down and feel really tired, like falling asleep and I felt like that. I felt that someone was holding the rock. It felt like someone else". 'Walking the Labyrinth' enabled pupils to experience what it was like to be "peaceful", it gave them the feeling that no one else was around except for themselves and the music. "Relaxing and calm" were other words which characterised the walk as they held the stone in their hand and listened to the music. The "silence" gave pupils opportunity to think of anything they wanted. One girl, however, did feel self-conscious that other people were looking at her. Overall 'Walking the Labyrinth' was deemed to be "special".

Some pupils experienced what it was like to be tempted, and it was a great temptation to want to eat the apple at the 'Beginnings' stage of the labyrinth experience.

The 'Burdens' activity gave pupils "relief" as they were able to throw away bad feelings, this activity also gave them "self-assurance" because by throwing away the burdens they were able to let go not only mentally but also physically too, plus they did regard it as a fun activity. When it came to the 'Seeds of Hope' activity this gave pupils an opportunity to "dream" of things they could be.

The 'Reflections' activity enabled pupils to reflect, they were able to write down things which normally they would not be able to write down, namely their feelings, and they valued the five minutes of peace it gave them. Some pupils, though, were frustrated with this 'Reflections' activity describing it as a useless exercise as writing one word on a foot was not going to change the world.

Ethical

Responses which could be linked with the ethical dimension category were found in each of the following labyrinth experience activities: ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, ‘Prayer and Reflections’.

Pupils from reception to year 1 (4- to 5-year-old pupils) spoke of only one activity in relation to the ethical dimension: ‘Burdens’, saying they were able to throw away “the rubbish that stops you being good”. Two pupils viewed the physical aspect of rubbish as it being “yucky and dirty”, and that to throw away rubbish was “wasteful”. All the pupils were in unison they did not like the “mean stuff” by describing this as “brothers and sisters can hurt you – bite you”.

Pupils from year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) referred to two activities in connection with the ethical dimension: ‘Prayer’, and ‘Seeds of Hope’. Pupils mentioned the ‘Prayer’ activity as a time where they were able to pray for “people and stuff”, as well as explaining that prayer “helps people who might be hurting”. The ‘Seeds of Hope’ activity gave pupils opportunity to look at their future and see how they were going to get there.

Pupils from year 5 and 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils) made reference to three of the activities in respect to the ethical dimension: ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, and ‘Reflections’. Some pupils felt tempted to eat the apple whilst at the ‘Beginnings’ activity, seeing it as a great temptation. The ‘Burdens’ activity gave pupils the opportunity to throw away their bad feelings, it was a time to unload burdens, and by

throwing away the burdens gave one girl “self-assurance” - it felt good to let go – as this could be done not only mentally but physically as well. This helped pupils to “forget about the bad things” and could result in “peaceful dreams”. When it came to the ‘Reflections’ activity one girl became worried as she did not know what to do in the activity.

Material

Only two age groups, pupils from year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) and year 5 and year 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils), made responses which could be associated with the material dimension category. The results for this dimension differed when compared to the other dimensional areas already mentioned (ritual, experiential, and ethical) as reference was only made to one activity: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’. But participants also referred to the silence, the music, and the church building.

Pupils from year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) referred to one activity which could be connected to the material dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’.

Pupils mentioned the labyrinth as a place which involved walking around. “Silence” was mentioned several times together with the word “quiet”. The church building was described as “the church is like peaceful”.

Pupils from year 5 and 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils) also made reference to the same activity in respect to the material dimension: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’. These pupils described ‘Walking the Labyrinth’ activity more fully: “walking round in the circle...turning in the opposite direction when you are about to bump into someone on the labyrinth” and “going round and round the spirals on the floor” (conductive to

following the labyrinth path). For these pupils the silence was important, the “utter silence” and the “quiet”, together with listening to the music which helped them to “concentrate on the patterns”; and one pupil reported “you can just look down at the floor you don’t have to look anywhere else”, while another mentioned “you could concentrate on the spirals”. The music also gave a sense of “calm”, and was described thus, “with music in the background it’s really calm, you close your eyes and you’re in your own labyrinth”.

Mythological, social and doctrinal

When analysing the pupils’ responses, whether spoken, written or drawn, only four dimensions revealed themselves. But what about the other three dimensions of Ninian Smart’s model: the mythological dimension, the social dimension and the doctrinal dimension? Looking at this from another direction, as a participant observer, there did appear to be evidence to show that the labyrinth experience did in fact encompass all of Ninian Smart’s other three remaining dimensions of religion.

Observations which could be linked with the mythological dimension category were found in each of the following labyrinth experience activity: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’. The pupils’ excitement at being given the opportunity to walk a labyrinth revealed they already knew what was expected of them. All pupils had no difficulty in walking the labyrinth.

Observations which could be linked with the social dimension category were found in each of the following labyrinth experience activities: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Beginnings, Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, ‘Prayer’ and ‘Reflections’, as

the children were in groups and they moved from activity to the next as a group. At each of the stations ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, ‘Prayer’ and ‘Reflections’ there was an opportunity for children to share their responses within the group, where some were in agreement with their peers.

Observations which could be linked with the obvious expressions of the doctrinal dimension category in each of the following labyrinth experience activities: ‘Walking the Labyrinth’, ‘Beginnings’, ‘Burdens’, ‘Seeds of Hope’, ‘Prayer’. In each of these activities the children followed a set format or structure, moving in unison as a group to a station, sitting down, carrying out the activity, standing up and then moving onto the next station until all the activities had been completed.

Summary

To summarise, the focus group revealed that pupils from the various age ranges expressed some similar as well as differing responses when understanding and experiencing the labyrinth experience. The youngest pupils, reception to year 1, were able to discuss the physical aspects of the experience: “the maze is nice, soft and comfortable”, and rubbish “is yucky”, though they were also able to associate burdens as “mean stuff” and “the rubbish that stops you being good”. Pupils in year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) also spoke of the physical aspects but were starting to relate to a few more abstract ideas, “praying for people”, “thinking about the future”, “peace”, and “quiet”. However, it was the older pupils, year 5 and year 6 (9- to 11-year-old pupils) who, though they referred to some physical aspects, such as “walking round in a circle”, “going round and round the spirals on the floor”, mainly spoke more of the abstract aspects of the labyrinth experience such as

“temptation”, “unloading burdens”, “inner peace”, and “frustration”. These responses provide evidence of pupils’ understanding and experiences of the labyrinth experience.

Discussion

The literature suggested that taking part in a labyrinth experience can provide spiritual development for participants. Using Ninian Smart’s systematic approach to religion illustrates the different experiences pupils encountered. The pupils were able to encounter all seven of Ninian Smart’s dimensions of religion: ritual, experiential, ethical, material, mythological, social, and doctrinal. This provided evidence of a more encompassing experience.

Rituals are an important part of daily life – the order of the day at home or school, what happens at Christmas and birthdays being but examples. Ritual tends to be a physical activity. This physical activity was illustrated in the pupils’ responses to the labyrinth experience. When it came to ‘Walking the Labyrinth’ all age groups made reference to the physical aspect of walking, though the vocabulary used to describe this activity became more clearly defined the older the pupil, from just walking around to walking in spirals. Everyone literally throws away rubbish – empty crisp packets, potato peelings, a rotten apple. This rubbish cannot be re-used, it has to be got rid of, it has to be thrown away. In the same way bad things that create burdens and anxieties need to be got rid of. The ‘Burdens’ activity enabled pupils to take the abstractness of an anxiety, write that anxiety down and physically throw that anxiety away. This provided a very powerful experience for the pupils, though it was only expressed by the younger and older pupils. Although the younger

pupils just focussed on the concreteness of throwing away rubbish, the older pupils saw it as a time to unload their abstract burdens in concrete form and discard them to a rubbish bin. Praying usually involves saying thank you, asking for help or praising God. Only year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old) pupils referred to the 'Prayer' activity as a means to pray for other people, showing that they regarded this aspect as an important part of prayer. Likewise, the same group saw the importance of thinking about one's future through the 'Seeds of Hope' activity. A time to reflect provides fruitful opportunity to sum up remembered experiences. The two age groups to recall the 'Reflections' activity made reference to the foot exercise, the younger pupils to the physical aspect of making the foot, and the year 2 and year 4 pupils (6- to 9-year-old pupils) remembering writing a word on the foot, a more abstract concept.

The experiential dimension includes those aspects which affect one's emotions, such as happiness and sadness, and feelings, such as being calm or worrying. Interestingly the experiential dimension appeared the most dominant of all the categories. Again, the younger pupils' initial responses to the labyrinth experience referred to the concrete as it made them "happy" and it was "fun". The year 2 to year 4 pupils (6- to 9-year-old pupils) could only make one abstract comment, that it made them feel "relaxed". It was the older pupils who seemed to pour out abstract words associated with the experience. Why did the labyrinth experience enable these pupils to experience calmness? How, with closed eyes, were they able to experience being on their own within the labyrinth? What was it that triggered the response that it gave them time to "forget the bad things", thereby bringing "peaceful dreams"? Why was it that one boy remarked that it made him feel "weird" – "It made me feel weird it did, it's like when you lie down and feel really

tired, like falling asleep and I felt like that. I felt that someone was holding the rock. It felt like someone else”. Who was “that someone”, what understanding can we bring to this? In Christian terms this might be described as an encounter with “the other”.

Looking at the activities from an experiential perspective the younger pupils were only able to focus on the material dimension in reference to ‘Walking the Labyrinth’ and ‘Reflections’ activities. But when it came to the ‘Burdens’ activity these pupils were able to refer to “mean stuff” in the shape of their brothers and sisters, a memory brought from past experiences, but only from the point of view of being physically hurt by them, being bitten. This is all reflected of the typical behaviour associated with this age of child.

Pupils in year 2 to year 4 (6- to 9-year-old pupils) were able to refer to the abstract ideas of the labyrinth being “peaceful” and feeling “relaxed” when ‘Walking the Labyrinth’. They were also able to think more abstractly in the ‘Prayer’ activity as prayer gave them the opportunity to pray for others. This shows that this age range of pupil is starting to have empathy with others.

The older pupils mainly expressed their experience in abstract ideas. The ‘Beginnings’ activity made them feel what it was like to be tempted. They had to overcome this temptation, for as one gets older there is an expectation of having more control over one’s vices. In the ‘Burdens’ activity these pupils felt a satisfaction that mental negative thoughts could be physically discarded. This gave

them a more satisfying solution to getting rid of mental rubbish, maybe suggesting this as a useful activity to apply in their everyday lives.

Pupils being given the opportunity or time to dream when it came to ‘Seeds of Hope’ can be positive, whether this is to think about how they would like to make themselves a better person, about formulating an idea, or about planning for their future. Though ‘Reflections’ gave pupils space to “have five minutes peace” and think about what they had done, this was not appreciated by everyone.

The ethical dimension is concerned with being able to make moral choices; differentiating between right and wrong. Usually as people become older, they should be more capable of making the correct choices. Again, the younger pupils were only able to view the activities from a concrete perspective. The ‘Burdens’ activity let them physically throw away anything that was “yucky and dirty”. They wanted to throw away anything associated with their siblings hurting them, they saw this as wrong but were unable to relate any wrong to themselves. This is reflective of what is expected for that age of child. Though they may have been taught what is right and wrong, they are unable in this study to associate this with themselves.

Year 2 to year 4 pupils (6- to 9-year-old pupils) were able to think of ‘Prayer’ as helping “people who might be hurting”, they are empathising with people less fortunate than themselves, people who may need help and help comes in the form of prayer. By empathising and based on their own set of rules whether these stem from the religious or non-religious realms, they see this as a right way to act. The ‘Seeds

of Hope' gave pupils the opportunity to think about themselves and about their future. This gives pupils control to speculate about their own personal choices.

Temptation was expressed by the older pupils for the 'Beginnings' activity. An ethical or moral choice results when temptation is involved. These pupils know they are being tempted but have the ability to remain in control and not be tempted to eat the apple. 'Burdens' let the pupils throw away their bad feelings. They know what bad feelings are and this can be seen as an ethical opportunity for them to rid themselves of those bad feelings. Through this activity the pupils are invited to take this path of getting rid of that which is wrong. These pupils choose to take this path. However, the 'Reflections' activity did give rise to an ethical issue in that one pupil became worried and did not know what to do. Was this because the activity was not structured and the pupil was unable to reflect on the experience through lack of personal direction?

The material dimension refers to the physical features of the labyrinth experience. Physical features in the form of objects or buildings help to focus the participant on the task in hand. In this study the material category applies to the silence, music, labyrinth and the church building. Only two age groups made reference to the material dimension.

For the younger pupils 'Walking the Labyrinth' activity provided a focal point to aid concentration as they used this to map their walk. The silence also helped the pupils to focus on the activities, especially 'Walking the Labyrinth', as the word "quiet" was uttered several times. For the pupils the church building

evoked a peaceful presence. Did the very building help the pupils to focus on the activities in which they participated?

The older age group likewise used the labyrinth as an object which helped them to focus on the task in hand 'Walking the Labyrinth', the spirals enabled pupils to concentrate on the path and remain focused. The silence and the music were in addition useful factors in remaining on the labyrinth path aiding concentration and thought due to the calmness it brought.

The mythological dimension refers to the story and history of the labyrinth. Stories, as part of a child's education, are part of their inherent culture: fairy tales, fables, and historical stories up to the modern day. Pupils would have encountered the telling of many stories; they also would have experienced drawing and puzzle activities such as mazes. The fact that the pupils were able to complete 'Walking the Labyrinth' without a problem provided evidence that they were used to this kind of activity, though previously they might only have experienced it via a paper and pencil task. This applied to both the youngest and oldest pupil.

The social dimension refers to a communal sharing of the labyrinth experience. Pupils having the opportunity to share their responses at each of the stations, except 'Walking the Labyrinth', revealed that some shared a set of communal beliefs. Though the children did not communicate when 'Walking the Labyrinth' they observed the actions of their peers which made the activity communal.

The doctrinal dimension makes reference to the way in which pupils gave expression to their experience of feeling a supreme power with comments such as “I felt that someone was holding the rock...it felt like someone else”, “It was very spiritual and calming”, “When you’re walking round it you feel you are at peace”, “enhance your emotions, you can find your faults in life and you could correct them”, “with music in the background it’s really calm, you close your eyes and you’re in your own labyrinth”.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate pupils’ religious experience through participating in a labyrinth experience using a phenomenological approach to religion. Using Smart’s seven dimensional approach proved a useful tool as it enabled a view of religious experience both from the non-religious and the religious. Three conclusions can be drawn based on responses and observations of pupils’ religious experiences.

First, all of Smart’s seven dimensional model of religion could be applied to the labyrinth experience. Understanding of life, meaningful relationships, love and knowledge of the transcendent appeared to be inherent based in human experience.

Secondly, though the labyrinth experience encompassed all of Ninian Smart’s seven dimensions, four were more prominent: ritual, experiential, ethical, and material. These dimensions featured in the focus groups whether verbal, written or drawn. Only as participant observer evidence pointed towards the mythological, social and doctrinal.

Thirdly, Smart's seven dimensional model could be a practical model to use in educational contexts to provide evidence of a pupil's spiritual development for that of Ofsted and SIAMS, as distinct development can be seen across each of the three age range classes, the younger pupils portraying concrete ideas and thoughts compared to the older pupils who portray more abstract ideas and thoughts. In addition, Smart's seven dimensional model of religion could be used to recognise the religious experience of pupils in a non-Christian school context.

However, there are limitations with this study. As this was a small-scale study, only six pupils from each age category were interviewed. This may not be a fully representative sample with regard to age, sex and background. Nevertheless, the findings did offer an interesting insight into pupils' reflections based on their experiences of walking the labyrinth.

In terms of directions for future research, a larger cohort of pupils involving multiple groups would have provided more responses which could have been analysed and interpreted. This could then have provided more evidence of pupils' spiritual development for school inspection purposes whether for SIAMS or Ofsted.

Chapter 6

Applying the ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer among primary school pupils

Abstract

Tania ap Siôn developed a framework to analyse prayer requests, known as the ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP framework). This framework has been applied across a range of ages and places. The purpose of this chapter is to find out if this framework can be applied to prayer requests written by primary school pupils. This framework was employed to analyse 352 prayers from one small school comprising 62 pupils, collected during 2019. There were 78 infant pupil prayers and 274 junior pupil prayers. Findings suggest that the context of location, timing and purpose of prayers are important factors in enabling pupils to write a range of prayers. Prayers written by infants are comparable with the majority of previous studies where prayer requests related to other people, whereas prayers written by juniors differ from previous studies where prayer requests related to global issues rather than to other people. Using the framework enables comparisons to be made between prayers generated by these pupils and previous studies. The apSAFIP framework was shown to be applicable within a primary school setting and a useful tool in categorising prayer requests.

Introduction

Empirical studies have viewed prayers from a number of perspectives. Previous empirical research into the psychology of prayer has focused on the effects of prayer

(distinguishing between the subjective effects of prayer and the objective effects of prayer) and on the content of ordinary prayer.

Subjective prayer

The first area looks at the subjective effects of prayer. Galton (1869, 1872) first carried out studies of the effects of leading a prayerful life. Subsequent studies into the subjective effects of prayer comprise three strands. The first strand looks at a number of statistical variables from a variety of cross-sectional surveys. This form of investigation was employed by a number of scholars such as Morgan (1983), Gruner (1985), Poloma and Pendleton (1989, 1991a, 1991b), Poloma (1993), Richards (1991), Francis (1992), Carroll (1993), Carson (1993), Long and Boik (1993), Francis and Burton (1994), Francis and Evans (1996), Butler, Stout, and Gardner (2002), and more recently Whittington and Scher (2010), and Lazar (2015). These studies looked at the subjective effects of praying and how quality of life was viewed.

A good example from this group of studies is provided by Francis (1992) whose findings suggest that pupils who prayed more had a more positive attitude towards school. This was further supported by a study carried out by Francis and Evans (1996) on adolescents who found there was a more positive correlation between those who regularly prayed and how they viewed life, irrespective of whether they are regular church attenders. In more recent studies, Whittington and Scher (2010) suggest that prayer of a positive nature was conducive to a person's wellbeing but negative prayers had an opposite effect. As well, Lazar (2015), whilst investigating "prayer duration and belief in prayer" (p. 227) found that those who

prayed had a better life satisfaction. However, this research in addition showed that life satisfaction was dependent on the sincerity of the pray-er.

The second strand relates to investigating the effects on the subject and changes incurred due to the effect of prayer. Such studies were carried out by Parker and Johns (1957), Elkins, Anchor, and Sandler (1979), Carson and Huss (1979), Griffith, English, and Mayfield (1980), Finney and Malony (1985), Calson, Bacaseta, and Simanton (1988), Ai, Dunkle, Peterson, and Bolling (1998), Black (1999), Ai, Bolling, and Peterson (2000), Helm, Hays, Flint, Koenig, et al. (2000), Meisenhelder and Chandler (2000, 2001), Krause (2003), and more recently Mountain (2004, 2005), Grossoehme, Jacobson, Cotton, Ragsdale, et al. (2011), Carvalho, Chaves, Iunes, Simão, et al. (2014), Jors, Büssing, Hvid, and Baumann (2015), Anderson and Nunnelley (2016), and Ahmadi, Zaree, Leily, and Hoseini (2019). Findings from these studies in relation to the subjective effects of prayer showed that in the majority of cases more positive outcomes resulted from those who were involved in the practice of prayer.

A good example from this group of studies is provided by Parker and Johns (1957) whose findings based, on 45 subjects suffering “psychosomatic symptoms or experiencing considerable subjective emotional stress” (p. 10), suggested that prayer provided a successful relief instrument with regard to a person’s personality. This was further supported by Elkins, Anchor, and Sandler (1979) who found from a 10-day study that subjects who prayed had reduced stress levels. In more recent studies Mountain (2004, 2005) showed that prayer, during specific times in life, was used as a means to cope with difficult situations in life. This is further supported by

Grossoehme, Jacobson, Cotton, Ragsdale, et al. (2011) where patients use prayer as a coping strategy to gain control of their hospitalized situation,

The prayers in this study suggest that writing prayers serves as a means of religious coping to gain control...most frequently religious coping styles of Deferral and Pleading.... This form of coping has, with one exception noted by Pargament, been associated with positive health outcomes. (Grossoehme, Jacobson, Cotton, Ragsdale, et al., 2011, p. 429)

Carvalho, Chaves, Iunes, Simão, et al. (2014) showed that prayer helped the wellbeing of patients who were receiving chemotherapy, as it made them less anxious as evidenced through measuring their life line signs. Jors, Büssing, Hvid, and Baumann (2015) suggest that in the clinical situation where people who pray with a chronic illness use prayer as a means of coping, “praying can be regarded as a strategy to cope and to connect with a higher source providing meaning and hope. Our results have shown that many patients turn to prayer for guidance regarding treatment decisions and disease management” (p. 10). The findings of Anderson and Nunnelley (2016) suggest that prayer provided a means of coping with depression. Ahmadi, Zaree, Leily, and Hoseini (2019) in a more recent study revealed that mothers who had children with cancer, appeared less anxious when writing prayers over a three-day period.

The third strand, researched by Griffith, English, and Mayfield (1980), Black (1999), and more recently Jegindø, Vase, Skewes, Terkelsen, et al. (2013), Pace, Greene, Deweese, Brown, et al. (2017) and Bradshaw and Kent (2018), concerning the subjective effects of prayer focusses on case studies to illustrate the benefits of

participating in prayer. Griffith, English, and Mayfield (1980) and Black (1999) provided evidence to suggest that the subjects in the studies who attended prayer meetings, or through analysis of prayers used by older African women, respectively, have a more positive mental attitude and more positive behaviour because of the subjects leading a prayerful life. In more recent studies this is further illustrated by Jegindø, Vase, Skewes, Terkelsen, et al. (2013), whose findings suggest that people who are protestant Christians and pray to God had a reduction in pain due to their belief, their faith enabled them to use prayer as a method of coping with pain. Faith is also an important aspect in the work of Pace, Greene, Dewese, Brown, et al. (2017) who found that most Christian university students believed God listens to their prayers and most students believe that praying is paramount for succeeding academically. This is supported by Bradshaw and Kent (2018) who found that prayer and wellbeing in later life was dependent on how attached to God was the participant, the more attached the greater the psychological wellbeing.

Objective prayer

The second area looks at the objective effects of prayer, where objects or people are prayed for by others through intercessory prayer. Such studies were carried out by Galton (1872), Loehr (1959), Joyce and Welldon (1965), Collipp (1969), Miller (1972), Lenington (1979), Byrd (1988), Sprindrift Inc (1993), Walker, Tonigan, Miller, Corner, and Kajlich (1997), Harris, Gowda, Kolb, Strychacz, et al. (1999), Harris, Thoresen, McCullough, and Larson (1999), Matthews, Marlowe and MacNutt (2000), Aviles, Whelan, Hernke, Williams, et al. (2001), Cha, Wirth, and Lobo (2001), Leibovici (2001), Krucoff, Crater, Green, Maas, et al. (2001), Matthews, Conti, and Sireci (2002), Furrow and O'Quinn (2002), Mathai and

Bourne (2004), Krucoff, Crater, Gallup, Blankenship, et al. (2005), Benson, Dusek, Sherwood, Lam, et al. (2006). Findings from fifteen of these studies in relation to the objective effects of prayer demonstrated more positive outcomes for the people or objects for whom prayer was offered.

A good example from this group of studies is provided by Byrd (1988) whose study involved two groups of patients admitted to a coronary unit, one group was prayed for through intercessory prayer and one was a control group. The results showed patients receiving prayer had a more positive quality outcome. This is supported by Leibovici (2001) whose findings show that patients with blood infections who received intercessory prayer had a shortened hospital stay. Though there are a range of studies to illustrate the positive benefits of intercessory prayer, there are also examples which claim intercessory prayer did not lead to any benefits. An example of this is provided by Walker, Tonigan, Miller, Corner, and Kajlich (1997) whose study on patients receiving treatment for alcohol abuse and dependency did not benefit from intercessory prayer.

Prayer content

The third area looks at the content of ordinary prayer, and “the religion and spirituality of ordinary people” (ap Siôn and Francis, 2009, p. 6). Research into this area was carried out by a number of people. Janssen, de Hart, and den Draak (1989, 1990) analysed the content of prayers based on pupils’ responses to three open-ended questions. A later study carried out by Janssen, Prins, van der Lans, and Baerveldt (2000) involved pupils describing how they prayed. McKinney and McKinney (1999) investigated the praying practices of undergraduate students through a

questionnaire and comments from diary entries. Mountain (2005) used the collection and analysis of data from video-taped interviews, illustrations and written tasks. Schmied (2002) analysed content of ordinary people's prayers left in a number of Christian contexts where the prayer requests were assigned into seven groups: health issues, protection, religious concerns, specific matters, peace, faith, and spiritual growth. Brown and Burton (2007) looked at the categories into which the prayers could be grouped, comprising general thanksgiving, those ill, in hospital, those recovering from illness or operations, the deceased, world situations, strength to cope, new personal situations (such as work, and residence), other themes (such as family life).

Within this third area of the content of ordinary prayer a distinctive approach was advanced by Tania ap Siôn, known as ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP). Ap Siôn (2007) employed this framework to analyse petitionary prayer requests. This framework consists of three elements which are essential to all examples of prayer of this type and are identified through prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective.

Prayer intention looks at the concern of the prayer-creator and focuses on eleven areas: health and illness, death, growth (affective), work, relationships, disaster and conflict, sport, travel, housing, open intention, and general. Prayer reference looks at those for whom the prayer is being offered, and recognises four foci: the prayer-creators themselves; other people personally known to the prayer-author (friends and family); animals known to the prayer-author (pets); and the world or global context. Prayer objective looks at the effects of prayer expected by the

prayer-creators, distinguishing primary control and secondary control. Prayer-creators using primary control are clear about the preferred outcome of the prayer request, while prayer-creators using secondary control do not suggest a preferred outcome. The primary control element of the prayer objective was further characterised between prayer-creators who requested material changes to the physical world and those who requested affective changes, such as feelings and attitudes to humans. The former is labelled primary control one (PC1) and the latter is labelled primary control two (PC2). Secondary control is referred to as SC.

This framework was developed so that disparate studies could be discussed with regard to the content of ordinary prayer in different contexts. The apSAFIP framework was used to carry out a range of studies with different populations: hospices, hospitals, churches, cathedrals, secondary school students, virtual prayers, and prayers collected from people on the street (ap Siôn, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; ap Siôn, and Edwards, 2012; ap Siôn, 2013; ap Siôn and Edwards, 2013; ap Siôn, and Nash, 2013; ap Siôn 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2017).

This framework was first used to analyse 893 supplicatory prayers from a rural village church somewhere in the middle of England (ap Siôn, 2007). In relation to prayer reference a minority of prayers referred to the prayer-author themselves (4%). With regard to prayer intention there were most prayer requests for open intention, followed by illness, death, and sport/ recreation in declining order. With regard to prayer objective there were more prayers relating to secondary control (57%) than to primary control (43%).

Part of this framework was next used to analyse the content of 917 supplicatory prayers from a rural church in England (ap Siôn, 2008). In relation to prayer intention, the focus of the study was concerned with an analysis of health and wellbeing. In relation to prayer reference only 5% of prayer-authors prayed for themselves compared to praying for family and friends (81%) or global issues (11%). With regard to prayer objective there were more prayers relating to primary control (69%) than to secondary control (31%).

Ap Siôn (2009) then analysed ordinary prayer from 1067 prayer cards left in a rural village church in England. In relation to prayer reference, only 5% of the prayers referred to the prayer-author themselves. With regard to prayer intention, most prayer requests were for illness and death. With regard to prayer objective there were more prayers relating to primary control than to secondary control.

Part of this framework was used to analyse 1140 intercessory and supplicatory prayers from a rural Anglican church in England (ap Siôn, 2011). The main purpose, prayer intention, of this study was an analysis to explore how ordinary prayer-authors saw God influencing the world and people's lives. In relation to prayer reference more prayers referred to other people (77%), compared to the prayer-authors themselves (7%); with regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (87%) than to secondary control (13%).

This framework was then used to analyse 290 online supplicatory prayers (ap Siôn, and Edwards, 2012). In relation to prayer reference, more prayer requests referred to other people (57%) compared to the prayer-authors themselves (34%).

With regard to prayer intention, there were more prayer requests for illness (26%), followed by relationships (24%), work (19%), and growth (18%). With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (84%) than to secondary control (16%).

Following this, the framework was used to analyse 1234 supplicatory prayer requests from Bangor Cathedral (ap Siôn, 2013). The main purpose, prayer intention, of this study was an analysis to explore how ordinary people saw the purpose of God in the world. In relation to prayer reference, more prayer requests referred to other people (69%) compared to the prayer-authors themselves (17%). With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (94%) than to secondary control (6%).

This framework was also used to analyse 411 prayers collected from people on the streets by bishops from the Church of England during Lent (ap Siôn, and Edwards, 2013). In relation to prayer reference more prayers referred to praying for other people (84%) compared to the prayer-authors themselves (5%). With regard to prayer intention, there were more prayer requests for illness (31%), followed by open intention (23%), death (14%), growth (8%), relationships (7%), disaster (7%), work (5%), in that order. With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to secondary control (74%) than to primary control (26%).

This framework was also used to analyse 525 prayers drawn from 583 written prayers from a children's hospital (ap Siôn, and Nash, 2013). The main purpose, prayer intention, of this study was an analysis to explore health and wellbeing,

prayer used in relation to coping in a health-related context from the view of the psychology of prayer. In relation to prayer reference, more prayers referred to praying for other people (81%) compared to the prayer-authors themselves (10%). With regard to the prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (91%) than to secondary control (9%).

To test the framework further 1658 prayers from Lichfield Cathedral were analysed (ap Siôn, 2015a). In relation to prayer reference more prayers referred to praying for the prayer-author (86%) compared to praying for other people (5%). With regard to prayer intention, there were more prayer requests for health/ illness (28%), followed by death (27%), open intention (19%), general (9%). With regard to prayer objective, there were slightly more prayers relating to primary control (51%) than to secondary control (49%).

Another investigation using the framework looked at 958 prayers from Southwark Cathedral (ap Siôn, 2015b). In relation to prayer reference more prayers referred to praying for other people (82%) compared to the prayer-author (9%). With regard to prayer intention, there were more prayer requests for open intention (46%), followed by health and sickness (15%), death (15%), general (7%), relationships (6%). With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to secondary control (65%) than to primary control (35%).

The framework was used to look at 1000 prayers from Bangor Cathedral (ap Siôn, 2015c). In relation to prayer reference more prayers referred to praying for other people (73%) compared to the prayer-author (14%). With regard to prayer

intention, there were more prayer requests for illness (29%), followed by general (17%), growth (14%), death (13%). With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (75%) than to secondary control (25%).

The framework was used to look at 500 prayers from a virtual prayer site (ap Siôn, 2016). In relation to prayer reference slightly more prayers referred to the prayer-author (45%), compared to praying for other people (42%). With regard to prayer intention, there were more prayer requests for health and illness (33%), followed by growth (19%), work (19%), and relationships (13%). With regard to prayer objective, there were more prayers relating to primary control (84%) than to secondary control (16%).

The following findings from these twelve prayer studies using the apSAFIP framework can be inferred. In relation to prayer reference ten out of the twelve prayer studies found higher proportions of prayers referred to praying for other people. With regard to prayer intention, where applicable, six out of the eight prayer studies found that most prayer requests were for health and illness, whereas the other two prayer studies had more open prayer requests. As for prayer objective, ten out of the twelve prayer requests related to primary control (PC).

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to apply the apSAFIP framework to prayer requests generated by primary school pupils to see if the method is sustainable among this age group, and if it is, to investigate what it reveals. It will focus on two strands. The first strand will focus on the types of prayers generated, the age of the pupils and the

context of prayer requests generated by primary school pupils in this study. This will include the prayer location and ask if this has an impact on the prayers written. It will include to whom the prayer is addressed, and to what or to whom the prayer relates. The second strand will focus on the similarities and differences between previous studies applying the apSAFIP framework and prayer requests generated by primary school pupils in this study.

Method

Procedure

St Jude is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school, which is situated in a rural village in North Cornwall. At the time of the study there were 62 pupils on roll when the research was conducted: 20 infant (4- to 7-year-old) pupils and 42 junior (7- to 11-year-old) pupils. The school followed the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for religious education and provided denominationally linked statutory collective worship, which was based around the Christian year. In the spring term a prayer tree was placed in the dining hall of the school, where whole school collective worship was conducted. Both infant pupils and junior pupils were invited to compose their own individual prayers on paper leaves and to place them on the prayer tree. Junior pupils wrote their own prayers on the leaves, while a teacher served as an amanuensis for infant pupils. A selection of the prayers was also used in collective worship contexts. A total of 352 prayers had been placed on the tree, 78 by infant pupils and 274 by junior pupils. A letter was circulated to the parents of all pupils to explain the project, to describe the measures taken to ensure appropriate confidentiality and anonymity of the data, and to offer the opportunity to withdraw pupils by request.

Analysis

The ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP), developed by ap Siôn (2007), was employed to analyse the petitionary prayer requests. This framework comprises three elements which are essential to all examples of prayer of this type and are identified through prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective. *Prayer intention* looks at the concern of the prayer-creator and focuses on eleven areas: health and illness, death, growth (affective), work, relationships, disaster and conflict, sport, travel, housing, open intention, and general. *Prayer reference* looks at for whom the prayer is being offered, and recognises four foci: the prayer-creators themselves; other people personally known to the prayer-author (friends and family); animals known to the prayer-author (pets); and the world or global context. *Prayer objective* looks at the effects of prayer expected by the prayer-creators, and this is described as primary control and secondary control. Prayer-creators using primary control are clear about the preferred outcome of the prayer request, while prayer-creators using secondary control do not suggest a preferred outcome. The primary control element of prayer *objective* was further characterised between prayer-creators who requested material changes to the physical world and those who requested affective changes, such as feelings and attitudes. The former is labelled primary control one (PC1) and the latter is labelled primary control two (PC2). Secondary control is referred to as SC.

Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines put forward by Simons (1989) were followed: the need to keep the names confidential, participants' and parents' consent to the use of the data provided.

Ethical approval was granted (Appendix B).

Results

Exemplification

The qualitative results relating to the analysis of 78 prayer requests written by infant pupils, applying the three constructs of the analytical framework: prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective, are presented in Table 6.1. Likewise, the qualitative results relating to the analysis of 274 prayer requests written by junior pupils, applying the three constructs of the analytical framework: prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective, are presented in Table 6.2.

In terms of these prayer intentions, the 78 prayer requests written by infants reflected the following concerns: in terms of *prayer intention* among infants 16 (20.5%) were about relationships, 14 (17.9%) general, 10 (12.8%) health and illness, 9 (11.5%) death, 9 (11.5%) disaster and conflict, 7 (9.0%) work, 3 (3.8%) open intention, 3 (3.8%) growth, 3 (3.8%) housing, 3 (3.8%) sport and 1 (1.3%) miscellaneous. Compare this to 274 prayer requests written by junior pupils presented in Table 6.2. In terms of prayer intention among juniors 67 (24.5%) were about disaster and conflict, 52 (19.0%) health and illness, 35 (12.8%) general, 32 (11.7%) growth, 26 (9.5%) relationships, 26 (9.5%) work, 17 (6.2%) sport, 14 (5.1%) death, 2 (0.7%) housing, 1 (0.4%) travel and 2 (0.7%) miscellaneous.

With regard to *prayer reference* among infants 26 (33.3%) were for other people, 20 (25.6%) for global concerns, 24 (30.8%) for self, and 8 (10.3%) for animals. With regard to *prayer reference* among juniors 102 (37.2%) were for global concerns, 73 (26.6%) for other people, 64 (23.4%) for self, and 35 (12.8%) for animals.

With regard to the *prayer objective* of the infant prayer requests 73 (93.6%) related to the primary control and 5 (6.4%) related to the secondary control. From the 73 primary control prayer requests, 66 (90.4%) were identified as PC2 (which asked for affective prayer results) and 7 (9.6%) were identified as PC1 (where God is asked to intervene in the natural world).

Likewise, the *prayer objective* of the junior prayer requests 259 (94.5%) related to the primary control and 15 (5.5%) related to the secondary control. From the 259 primary control prayer requests, 224 (86.5%) were identified as PC2 (which asked for affective prayer results) and 35 (13.5%) were as identified as PC1 (where God is asked to intervene in the natural world).

A summary of the number of prayers written with their percentage results employing the three constructs of the analytical framework: prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective, are presented in Table 6.3.

The analysis of these prayer requests focuses on the eleven prayer intention categories: health and illness, death, open intention, general, growth, relationships, disaster and conflict, work, housing, travel and sport.

Table 6.1

Content of Infant intercessory and supplicatory prayer by intention, reference, and objective

Intention	Other people			Global			Self			Animals			Total			
	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	TOTAL
Health/ illness	0	6	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	9	0	10
Death	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	6	0	9
Open intention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
General	1	5	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	14
Growth	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Relationship	0	7	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	0	1	0	0	16	0	16
Disaster/ conflict	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	9
Work	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	7
Housing	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sport	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Misc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	4	22	0	2	18	0	0	19	5	1	6	1	7	66	5	78
TOTAL	26			20			24			8			78			78

Table 6.2

Content of Junior intercessory and supplicatory prayer by intention, reference, and objective

Intention	Other people			Global			Self			Animals			Total			
	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	PC1	PC2	SC	TOTAL
Health/illness	9	23	0	0	7	0	0	4	1	1	7	0	10	41	1	52
Death	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	2	12	0	14
Open intention	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General	0	7	0	1	13	2	0	3	0	0	9	0	1	32	2	35
Growth	1	5	0	0	5	1	0	8	8	0	4	0	1	22	9	32
Relationships	0	13	0	0	2	0	0	7	0	0	4	0	0	26	0	26
Disaster/ conflict	0	0	0	12	51	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	12	53	2	67
Work	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	18	1	0	0	0	0	25	1	26
Housing	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Travel	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sport	0	2	0	2	1	0	7	5	0	0	0	0	9	8	0	17
Misc	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total	11	62	0	15	82	5	8	46	10	10	34	0	35	224	15	274
TOTAL	73			102			64			35			274			

Table 6.3

Summary of Infant and Junior intercessory and supplicatory prayer by intention, reference, and objective

Prayer intention	Infant	Junior
Health/illness	10 (12.8%)	52 (19.0%)
Death	9 (11.5%)	14 (5.1%)
Open intention	3 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)
General	14 (17.9%)	35 (12.8%)
Growth	3 (3.8%)	32 (11.7%)
Relationships	16 (20.5%)	26 (9.5%)
Disaster/conflict	9 (11.5%)	67 (24.5%)
Work	7 (9.0%)	26 (9.5%)
Housing	3 (3.8%)	2 (0.7%)
Travel	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)
Sport	3 (3.8%)	17 (6.2%)
Misc	1 (1.3%)	2 (0.7%)
Total	78	274

Prayer reference	Infant	Junior
Other people	26 (33.3%)	73 (26.6%)
Global	20 (25.6%)	102 (37.2%)
Self	24 (30.8%)	64 (23.4%)
Animals	8 (10.3%)	35 (12.8%)
Total	78	274

Prayer objective	Infant (78)	Junior (274)
primary control (PC)	73 (93.6%)	259 (94.5%)
PC1	7 (9.6%)	35 (13.5%)
PC2	66 (90.4%)	224 (86.5%)
secondary control (PC2)	5 (6.4%)	15 (5.5%)

Health and illness (infant)

From the 10 infant prayer requests focusing on health and illness, 6 (60%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 2 (20%) for global concerns, 1 (10%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 1 (10%) for animals such as pets. From these, 9 (90%) were primary control 2, and 1 (10%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to family and friends without being specific to the illness:

“Dear God Pleas let my friend get better and my Dad” [PC2]

“Please help my brother get better.” [PC2]

Two of the prayer requests focus the prayer-creator praying for the global concerns of other people in general without being specific:

“Please God will you help the people who aren’t very well. Please make them better.” [PC2]

Some prayer requests focus on the prayer-creator praying for themselves thereby being a help to someone else:

“Please help me to help mum be on a diet. Amen.” [PC2]

There was only one example of primary control 1 in relation to the reference of animals where there was a request for divine intervention:

“Please can you get my cats ear better.” [PC1]

Health and illness (junior)

From the 52 junior prayer requests focusing on health and illness, 32 (61.5%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 7 (13.5%) for global concerns, 5 (9.6%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 8 (15.4%) for animals such as pets.

From these, 41 (78.8%) were primary control 2, 10 (19.2%) were primary control 1, and 1 (1.9%) secondary control.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the health and illness of family and friends staying fit and healthy:

“Dear God, Please keep my family and friends safe, healthy and happy.”
[PC2]

“Dear God Please look after my mum and dad and keep them safe and healthy Amen.” [PC2]

When the illness is specified these include fits, burns, and breathing difficulties and are categorised as primary control 1 which request divine intervention from the prayer-creator:

“Please can you make my baby sister stop having big fits and small fits.”

[PC1]

“Dear god Please help my nans burn go away because it is really hurting.

Amen.” [PC1]

“Dear God, Please help my Grandpa be fine and get his breath back.” [PC1]

Some of the prayer requests categorised as primary control 2 display the prayer-creator praying for the global concerns which include people both in this country and those in other countries. Where the illness is specified these included those with disabilities, the poor and homeless, the sick and unwell, and better technology to save lives:

“God, Please make the world a better place and help the poor and homeless.”

[PC2]

“Help the people in Kibera.” [PC2]

“Please help people who have disabilities.” [PC2]

“Dear god please help technology spread around the world especially for saving lives again. Amen” [PC2]

Some prayer requests focus on the prayer-creator praying for themselves in both body and mind without specifying a desired outcome including being more optimistic in life illustrating primary control 2:

“Please help my leg heal, so I can do gym again.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please protect me whatever happens and help me cope. Amen.”

[PC2]

“Dear God please help me when I am having a bad time” [PC2]

“Dear God Please help me be more optimistic about life.” [PC2]

There is one prayer in this category which is categorised as secondary control stating a fact:

“Please look after people with illnesses” [SC]

Some of the prayer requests categorized as primary control 2 focus on animals including pets and small-holding animals such as chickens and referred to the animal’s health and wellbeing. Where the illness is specified this included health, eating, diseases, arthritis:

“Dear God Please can you make my chickens digest there corn properly.”

[PC2]

“Dear God Please could you let my rabbit stop having myxymotosis. Amen.”

[PC2]

“Dear god Pleas can you make my pony NAME better as he has a cold.”

Amen [PC2]

“Dear God Please help my dog to recover from her arthritis so she can come on long walks again. Amen.” [PC2]

There was only one prayer request illustrating primary control 1:

“Dear God Please make my horses leg better. Amen” [PC1]

Death (infant)

From the 9 infant prayer requests focusing on death, 4 (44.4%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), and 5 (55.6%) for animals such as pets. From these, 6 (66.7%) were primary control 2, and 3 (33.3%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the wellbeing of an animal either after death or wishing for the animal's longevity:

“Dear God, please make sure my cat is ok in its grave. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God, I wish my dog could live for a long time.” [PC2]

Some prayer requests focus on other people, family and relatives such as grandparents and brothers with specific reference to a pleasant afterlife and thankfulness for people living:

“Dear God, Please make sure granny has a nice time in heaven. Amen.”

[PC2]

“Dear God thank you for letting people live.” [PC2]

There was only one example of primary control 1 in relation to the reference of death where there was a request for divine intervention:

“Dear God, Please help my brother come back to life. Amen.” [PC1]

Death (junior)

From the 14 junior prayer requests focusing on death, 5 (35.7%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 1 (7.1%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 8 (57.1%) for animals such as pets. From these, 12 (85.7%) were primary control 2, and 2 (14.3%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and referring to the death category include pets such as dogs, cats, guinea pigs, and goldfish. Where the death category is specified, this is with reference to remembrance, being cared for in heaven and an animal's long life:

“Dear God, Help me to remember my long loved dog Holly. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear god please may my gold fish survive the winter. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God please can you make sure my Guinea-pigs live for a long time.”
[PC2]

“Dear god Please look after my dog up in hevin Amen” [PC2]

Some prayer requests in the death category refer to other people, family such as grandparents and siblings. Where the death category is specified reference is made to security in heaven:

“Dear God Please look after my grandmar in Heaven. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear god I hope Peter is safe in hevan amen.” [PC2]

Open Intention (infant)

From the 3 infant prayer requests focusing on open intention, 3 (100%) prayer requests were for themselves as prayer-creators. From this, 3 (100%) were secondary control.

These prayers are the only examples of prayer request in the open category that are of secondary control:

“Dear God” [SC]

“Dear god thank fool” [SC]

“I love the whole world” [SC]

Open Intention (junior)

From the junior prayer requests there were not any open intention prayers written.

General (infant)

From the 14 infant prayer requests focusing on the general area, 6 (42.9%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 4 (28.6%) for global concerns, and 4 (28.6%) for themselves as prayer-creators. Of these, 13 (92.9%) were primary control 2, and 1 (7.1%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and referring to the general category include other people, family and friends, where the prayers specifically ask for help, and staying safe:

“Dear God, Can you please help my family and my friends.” [PC2]

“Please let my family be safe” [PC2]

One prayer request in the general category refers to other people and asks for divine intervention illustrating primary control 1:

“Juses help my famoollee to be courageous.” [PC1]

Some prayer requests in the general category refer to global concerns where support and happiness are specified illustrating primary control 2:

“Dear God, Please let everyone have a happy life. Amen” [PC2]

“Dea Good Plies help all the people in the world aremen” [PC2]

Some prayer requests in the general category refer to self with specific reference to emotions and safety:

“Please help me not get upset. Thank you” [PC2]

“God keep us safe this night secure from all are fears may angels keep looking after us.” [PC2]

General (junior)

From the 35 junior prayer requests focusing on the general area, 7 (20.0%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 16 (45.7%) for global concerns, 3 (8.6%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 9 (25.7%) for animals such as pets. From these, 32 (91.4%) were primary control 2, 1 (2.9%) was primary control 1, and 2 (5.7%) were secondary control.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and referring to the general category most of the prayer requests are to do with global concerns where the prayers ask for wellbeing, protection, help and the environment:

“Dear God Please look after everyone and help us to discover who we are. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God, may you look after everyone and everything and keep them safe. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God Please can we have a hot summer. Amen” [PC2]

One prayer request in the general category refers to global concerns and asks for divine intervention:

“Dear God Please make the new year a great year thank you. Amen” [PC1]

Two prayer requests in the general category referring to global concerns are categorised as secondary control.

“Dear God Please help everyone have a good new year.” [SC]

“Dear God I hope this year is a good year” [SC]

One prayer request in the general category refers to global concerns and asks for divine intervention illustrating primary control 1:

“Dear God Please give all the orphans in the world a happy life, and please help them get adopted soon Amen” [PC1]

Some prayer requests in the general category refer to animals with specific reference to behaviour and safety illustrating primary control 2:

“Dear god/ Mother Nature Please can you make my rabbits stop kicking and biting me. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God Please make sure my rabbit is always safe. Amen.” [PC2]

Some prayer requests in the general category refer to other people, family and friends, where the prayers specified ask for help, staying safe, and support in good and bad times:

“Dear god, Please help protect everything and everyone I care for all my friends and family, pets and personal belongings. Thank you Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God, keep everyone in my family safe and my pets and friends safe to. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please help my family through good and bad times and help them understand. Amen.” [PC2]

Some prayer requests in the general category were for themselves as prayer-creators with specific reference to emotional concerns, and hope for a prosperous new year:

“Dear God Please make this year a really good year.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please make 2020 a happy year. Amen” [PC2]

Growth (infant)

From the 3 infant prayer requests focusing on growth, 2 (66.7%) prayer requests were for global concerns, and 1 (33.3%) for themselves as prayer-creators. From these, 3 (100%) were primary control 2.

Some of the prayer requests make reference to global concerns where the prayers ask for support with educational studies and a higher quality of life:

“Dear God, Please help people do their studies and believe in God and Christ.” [PC2]

“Dear God pretty please can you make people’s lives even better” [PC2]

One prayer request refers to themselves as a prayer-creator:

“God Help me to get strong” [PC2]

Growth (junior)

From the 32 junior prayer requests focusing on growth, 6 (18.8%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 6 (18.8%) for global concerns, 16 (50.0%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 4 (12.5%) for animals such as pets. From these, 22 (68.8%) were primary control 2, 1 (3.2%) was primary control 1, and 9 (28.1%) were secondary control.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the growth category; most of the prayer requests are to do with praying for oneself where the prayers ask for support and help:

“This year I am moving up to secondary school, and am going to be in year 7. I hope I will have the right encouragement to enjoy my time there.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please may Ibe more sensible and ... not proud.” [PC2]

“Dear God for the period of lent I want to stop buttin in at school And be quiet.” [PC2]

There were some prayers in this category which are categorised as secondary control stating a fact with reference to Lent:

“Dear God For Lent I’m going to be vegetarian.” [SC]

“Dear God, For Lent I going to tidy my room” [SC]

Some of the prayer requests make reference to other people, and refer to family and friends illustrating primary control 2:

“Dear God Please help my family and friends every step of the way.” [PC2]

“Dear God, Please help my familie and friends through Good and bad time.”
[PC2]

One of the prayer requests making reference to other people can be categorised as primary control 1:

“Dear God Thank you for my family and very good friends. Amen” [PC1]

Some of the prayer requests make reference to global concerns illustrating primary control 2:

“Dear Lord Please let the world be a safe and loved planet... only take what we need. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God Please care for all the innocent people who die because of someone else’s hate. and in heaven make all the selfish rich people poor, and the poor people happy and rich.” [PC2]

One of the prayer requests making reference to global concerns can be categorised as secondary control:

“Dear God Please let nobody fight and never ever send a flood. Amen” [SC]

Some of the prayer requests make reference to animals specifying protection:

“Dear God please can you take care of my guinea pig. [PC2] dear God please can you help the world look after animals in dangerous places. Amen.” [PC2]

Relationships (infant)

From the 16 infant prayer requests focusing on relationships, 7 (43.8%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 1 (6.3%) for global concerns, 7 (43.8%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 1 (6.3%) for animals such as pets.

From these, 16 (100%) were primary control 2.

All prayers are categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the relationships category. Most of the prayer requests are to do with praying for other people and oneself where the prayers are specific to family and friends, protection for oneself and being able to support others:

“Dear God could you help me to be nice to my family” [PC2]

“Please help me to help mummy, Thank you” [PC2]

Some of the prayer requests refer to global concerns and animals:

“Dear God, Please make sure everybody has 2 friends.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please may we help our Scruff Puff because he gets bitten.” [PC2]

Relationships (junior)

From the 26 junior prayer requests focusing on relationships, 13 (50.0%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 2 (7.7%) for global concerns, 7 (26.9%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 4 (15.4%) for animals such as pets. From these, 26 (100%) were primary control 2.

All prayers are categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the relationships category. Most of the prayer requests are to do with praying for other people where the prayers are specific to family and friends and disagreements:

“Dear God please help me stop fighting with my sister. It would make mum so happy. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God please make my family get on with each other. Amen.” [PC2]

Some of the prayer requests refer to self, animals and global concerns:

“Dear God, My dog Pepper is always there to comfort me. Don’t let that change!” [PC2]

“Dear God please keep our guinea pigs safe from our dog Leo so they are happy and healthy. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear lord please guide the lost back to their family. Amen” [PC2]

Disaster and Conflict (infant)

From the 9 infant prayer requests focusing on disaster and conflict, 9 (100%) prayer requests were for global concerns. From these, 7 (77.8%) were primary control 2, and 2 (22.2%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the disaster and conflict category. All of the prayer requests are to do with global concerns relating to a securely happy life both in mind and body, and a halt to physical conflict:

“Dear God, Please let all the people in Africa have a happy life. Amen.”

[PC2]

“Dear God, Please make sure everybody has enough to eat and drink.” [PC2]

“Please help the world be filled with love and peace.” [PC2]

Two of the prayer requests making reference to disaster and conflicts can be categorised as primary control 1:

“Dear God thank you for the food that you love.” [PC1]

“Dear God, I wish all the people in other countries had enough food and water to survive.” [PC1]

Disaster and Conflict (junior)

Of the 67 junior prayer requests focusing on disaster and conflict, 65 (97.0%) prayer requests were for global concerns, and 2 (3.0%) for animals such as pets. Of these, 53 (79.1%) were primary control 2, 12 (17.9%) were primary control 1, and 2 (3.0) were secondary control.

Of the prayers mainly categorised as primary control 2 the majority are to do with global concerns relating to a securely happy life both in mind and body, the environment, and a halt to physical conflict:

“Dear God please can you help the people who do not have water and food. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please stop people cutting down the rainforest and destroying animals home. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God please stop the fights and wars going on around the world. Amen.” [PC2]

Some of the prayer requests make reference to disaster and conflicts can be categorised as primary control 1.

There were some prayers in this category which are categorised as secondary control making a statement:

“God please stop the war Amen” [SC]

Some of the prayer requests refer to animals and can be categorised as primary control 2:

“dear God Please help all the endangered animals survive. Amen.” [PC2]

Work (infant)

From the 7 infant prayer requests focusing on work, 1 (14.3%) prayer request was for other people (family and friends), 1 (14.3%) for global concerns, 4 (57.1%) for themselves as prayer-creators, and 1 (14.3%) for animals such as pets. From these, 7 (100%) were primary control 2.

The prayers are only categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the work category where the majority of the prayer requests are to do with themselves as prayer-creators in reference to improving upon a discipline: reading, writing, and drawing.

“please help me to write Thank you” [PC2]

Some of the prayer requests refer to other people, global and animals:

“Dear God, Please help people to do their studies and believe in God and Christ.” [PC2]

“Dear God please look after my class.” [PC2]

“Please let my dog be better at doing things” [PC2]

Work (junior)

From the 26 junior prayer requests focusing on work, 6 (23.1%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 1 (3.8%) for global concerns, and 19 (73.1%) for themselves as prayer-creators. From these, 25 (96.2%) were primary control 2, and 1 (3.8%) was secondary control.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 2 and refer to the work category where the majority of the prayer requests are to do self with reference to specific learning, support in starting a new school, success in tests and exams, future careers, and resisting temptation:

“dear god Please help me learn my division and Timetables amen.” [PC2]

“Please help me be ok at secondary, my new school. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear God Can you help me do ok in the tests and exams I do?” [PC2]

“Dear God Please make me a string farmer. Amen” [PC2]

“Dear Lord please help me stop biting my nails for leant Amen” [PC2]

There was one prayer in this category which is categorised as secondary control stating:

“Dear God Please make me a archaeologist. Amen” [SC]

Some of the prayers refer to other people in relation to family and friends illustrating primary control 2:

“Dear God Please bless my mum and guide her thru her life and help her with the business.” [PC2]

“Dear God, Please let my family and friends be happy, warm and safe. Please also let me and my friends and family have a good joyful future ahead of us! Amen” [PC2]

One prayer refers to global concerns:

“Dear God Please give farmer a fair price Amen” [PC2]

Housing (infant)

From the 3 infant prayer requests focusing on housing, 2 (66.7%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), and 1 (33.3%) for global concerns. From these, 3 (100%) were primary control 2.

The prayers are categorised as primary control 2, referring to the housing category where the prayer requests are to do with other people in relation to family and friends and global issues:

“Dear God, Please help my friends to live where they are supposed to live.”

[PC2]

“Dear God, please help us to stay in our homes.” [PC2]

One prayer refers to global issues:

“Dear God please help everyone in the world have a nice home. Amen”

[PC2]

Housing (junior)

From the 2 junior prayer requests focusing on housing, 2 (100%) prayer requests were for global concerns. From these, 2 (100%) were primary control 2.

The prayers are categorised as primary control 2 and referring to the housing category the prayer requests are to do with global issues:

“God, Please make the world a better place and help the poor and homeless.

P.S. Please let my Grandpa be ok. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please can all people in the UK have a house to live in. Amen”

[PC2]

Travel (infant)

From the infant prayer requests there were not any travel prayers written.

Travel (junior)

The 1 junior prayer request focusing on travel was for other people (family and friends) and was primary control 2:

“Dear god, Please make my Aunties back get better and for her car to come back.” [PC2]

Sport (infant)

From the 3 infant prayer requests focusing on sport, 3 (100%) prayer requests were for themselves as prayer-creators. From these, 1 (33.3%) was primary control 2, and 2 (66.7%) were secondary control.

The prayers mainly categorised as secondary control are related to self:

“I like to pack toys” [SC]

“I like going on the computer” [SC]

Only one prayer shows primary control 2:

“Please can you help me to ride my bike thank you” [PC2]

Sport (junior)

From the 17 junior prayer requests focusing on sport, 2 (11.8%) prayer requests were for other people (family and friends), 3 (17.6%) for global concerns, and 12 (70.6%) for themselves as prayer-creators. From these, 8 (47.1%) were primary control 2, and 9 (52.9%) were primary control 1.

The prayers are mainly categorised as primary control 1 are to do with self in relation to receiving presents, and having luck and winning in relation to sporting success:

“Oh, Lord Please get me a clAAs lexion 770 combine for my birthday.”

[PC1]

“Dear God Please may I have luck in my Gymnastics competition on Sunday.” [PC1]

Some of the prayers are primary control 2 and are to do with God being there to help aid sporting success:

“Please help me not to make a mistake in the hall for Cornwall this year. Amen.” [PC2]

“Dear god please help me improve my flute. Amen” [PC2]

Some of the prayers are primary control 1 and refer to global issues in relation to the weather:

“So far this year the weather has been rubbish, please make it warm up in time for SUMMER!” [PC1]

“Dear God please let it be a bit more sunny during summer Amen” [PC1]

One prayer is primary control 2 and refer to global issues in relation to competition success:

“Please lord let Chelsea beat Bayern-munich in the champions league. Amen” [PC2]

Some of the prayers are primary control 2 refer to other people:

“Dear God, I am going on holiday this year. Please help and protect me and my family. Also help friends and other family members.” [PC2]

“Dear God Please make me and my sister do our best riding our bike. Amen” [PC2]

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to apply the apSAFIP framework to prayer requests generated by primary school pupils to see if the method was sustainable among this age group, and if it was, to investigate what it revealed. It focused on two strands. The first strand focussed on the types of prayers generated, the age of the pupils and the context of prayer requests generated by primary school pupils in this study. This included the prayer location and asked if this had an impact on the prayers written. It included to whom the prayer was addressed, and to what or to whom the prayer related. The second strand focussed on the similarities and differences between previous studies applying the apSAFIP framework and prayer requests generated by primary school pupils in this study.

Looking at the first strand, there were a variety of prayers generated, known as prayer intentions, written by infant (5- to 7-year-old) pupils and junior (7- to 11-year-old) pupils. The context is important, as with all the literature reviewed in the introduction of this study there was an invitation for people to pray, in a hospice, a cathedral, a hospital, a church, or on the street on Ash Wednesday. For the primary pupils in this study the church school environment gave pupils the opportunity to write prayers for a prayer tree situated in the dining hall. This happened during 2019 and included prayers for specific times in the Christian year. Pupils were then asked, having produced their written prayers, if they would like to share their prayers in the context of collective worship, either reading their prayer or within a blessing of prayer service. This additional sharing of their prayers gave pupils a reason to write their prayers if they thought some action would result from their prayer writing. Both aspects of the context, the Christian year and what happened to their prayers, had an

impact on the prayer intentions written: Lent and moving on, whether to another class in school or to secondary school, resulted in growth prayers; charity work resulted in disaster and conflict prayers; and the testing month, resulted in work prayers. It was noted that the majority of prayers written were addressed to God: “Dear God” with the occasional “Dear Lord”, this could be explained by the sorts of prayers used in collective worship which refer to “God”, such as the school prayer, and “Lord”, such as the grace and the lunchtime prayer which are regular school daily features. When looking at whether the pupils are praying for themselves or others, both in the infant (33%) and junior (21%) categories praying for other people was more dominant. However, the fact that the junior pupils’ prayers were dominated by praying for global issues (39%) might be explained because of annual charity or remembrance events, and studying another country as part of the curriculum, such as Africa and India.

Looking at the second strand, comparisons were able to be made with the apSAFIP framework of health/illness, death, open intention, general, growth, relationships, disaster/conflict, work, housing, travel, sport, miscellaneous in relation to their primary pupil school prayer intentions: infant (5- to 7-year-old) pupils and junior (7- to 11-year-old) pupils.

In respect of the prayer reference, the largest proportion of the infant prayer requests referred to praying for other people (33%). This is comparable with previous studies, where the majority of studies showed more prayer requests for other people. The junior prayer requests differ from this in that the prayer requests mainly referred to global concerns (39%). With regard to prayer intention the infant

prayer requests were for relationships (21%) compared to the junior prayer requests which were for disaster and conflict (24%). This differs from previous studies where the majority of prayer requests were for health and illness. However, health and illness did feature third and second for each of these age groups, infant (13%) and junior (19%), respectively. As for the prayer objective, both infant and junior prayers related to primary control (PC). This is comparable with previous prayer studies. The prayers fitted into the prayer categories allocated with only a few prayers being allocated to a miscellaneous category for infant pupil (1%) and junior pupils (0.7%). This is in line with findings from previous studies using the apSAFIP framework.

This study looks at the content of primary school pupils' prayer requests and the results of this study point to the following conclusions: defining the content and time of writing prayers explained how the prayers had resulted; using a framework enabled prayers produced by primary pupils to be categorised; the apSAFIP framework proved to be sustainable with younger students, and comparisons could be made with a variety of other studies carried out by ap Siôn. Further studies using the apSAFIP framework into young people's prayers should be carried out to test and extend the contributions made by the present study.

Chapter 7

Applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how a church school's ethos is reflected in the pupils' attitudes in relation to Christianity. Leslie Francis developed an affective instrument to measure religion and spirituality by means of a questionnaire, known as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC). This instrument has been used across a range of ages in studies among primary pupils, secondary pupils and adults, both in denominational and non-denominational contexts. The present study uses this instrument to explore pupils' attitude toward Christianity from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of whom 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four age groups across the junior years (7- to 11-year-old pupils), over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show similarities with previous research studies: personal prayer is a clear indicator of attitude toward Christianity; female pupils have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than male pupils; attitude toward Christianity declines with pupil age; and attitude toward Christianity reduces over time. The FSAC proved to be useful for exploring the ethos of a church school.

Introduction

A number of studies have shown that pupil voice is fundamental in providing directional growth for a school, as well as determining the current school's character, otherwise known as a school's ethos. One way to determine a church school's ethos has been to observe pupils' attitudes toward Christianity which has been the focus for some recent empirical studies. To understand these recent studies, it is important to look at how a school's ethos is determined: the context of church schools; the character of a school; and the theory and evaluation of recent research in observing pupils' attitudes toward Christianity.

The context of church schools

Today's state-supported education system stems from provision made by the Church in the nineteenth century. The Church of England in 1811, by establishing the National Society, a voluntary initiative, was a main instrumental provider in educating the nation's children. Later, this gave rise to the state-led education system we know today, as chronicled by Cruickshank (1963), Murphy (1971) and Francis (1993a). The Education Act of 1944 (Butler, 1944) gave opportunity for schools provided by the Church of England to decide their status: voluntary aided where the churches kept principal control over the main important aspects of the management of the school including the delivery of religious education (RE), as well as being legally and financially responsible for the schools buildings; or voluntary controlled, which kept the denominational character of school worship but not the delivery of denominational religious education, and where all monetary costs were accounted for by the state. Though

the churches still owned the buildings, in controlled schools the churches had less control over the management of the school (Butler & Butler, 1971).

The Church of England's vision for education (Church of England, 2016) reaffirms the Church's aims from the Durham Report of 1970 (Ramsay, 1970): the general aim (the provision of schools to serve the nation) and the domestic aim (the provision of schools to serve the church):

In Church schools the deeply Christian foundation for this vision will be seen explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum and also in the authentically Christian worship and ethos of those schools. (Church of England, 2016, p. 2)

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way which enhances their lives. (Church of England, 2016, p. 13)

According to Francis (2019) declarations of this kind have revived interest in researching pupils' attitudes toward Christianity in church schools, both in England and Wales.

The character of a school

Though the Durham Report (1970) made clear that the primary purpose of church schools was not to advance religion or Christianity, some researchers (Carey, Hope, & Hall, 1998; Lankshear, 2003; Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles, 2018)

suggested that this was what made church schools distinctively Christian. The more recent articulation of the Church's vision for education does suggest that schools might wish to share the Christian gospel both explicitly (the domestic aim) and implicitly (the general aim), (Church of England, 2016). A research culture within England and Wales has since resulted in monitoring religion and spirituality of church school students as part of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (Church of England, 2018b).

Looking at how the more extensive interpretations of spirituality might be best researched, Francis (2009) analysed the dimensions of religion: affiliation; belief; practice; and attitude. He suggested next it is the attitudinal dimension which provides the strongest basis for empirical studies as it measures the affective factor of religion which focusses on individual's positive and negative feelings towards religion.

Attitude toward Christianity

Francis' reasoning led him in the 1970s to devise an affective instrument in the form of a questionnaire to measure a specific and well-defined component of religion and spirituality (Francis, 1978a, 1978b). This instrument became known as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity has been used with primary pupils, secondary pupils, and adults.

The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity comprises 24 items, measuring affective responses within five areas of Christian belief:

God, Jesus, Bible, church, prayer. This instrument has been rigorously tested across a variety of different languages and religious traditions. In terms of languages, the Francis Scale of attitude toward Christianity has been tested in Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh. In terms of religious traditions, alongside Christianity, comparable measures were constructed for Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism. The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity uses a 5-point Likert scale system for scoring responses to the 24 items – agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, disagree strongly. For the other religious traditions, different Likert items were adapted: 23 for Islam, 24 for Judaism, 19 for Hinduism. Disparate studies could be discussed side-by-side with regard to a person's spirituality, since they were grounded in comparable measures.

Using the Francis scale of Attitude toward Christianity with primary pupils

One of the first investigations compared pupils in Church of England schools with those in non-denominational state-run primary schools (Francis 1979, 1986b, 1987). The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was first trialled with primary pupils in 1974. This involved 2272 year 5 and 6 pupils from 15 county schools, 10 Church of England aided schools and 5 Roman Catholic aided schools, all located within three counties in the South East of England. The study was replicated with the same schools in 1978 and 1982 with 2388 pupils and 2295 pupils respectively (Francis, 1986b). The findings from these studies suggested that pupils educated in the state sector in Roman Catholic schools had a more favourable attitude toward Christianity (God, Jesus, church, Bible, prayer) than comparable pupils in non-denominational county schools, whereas Church

of England primary pupils educated in the state sector had a less favourable attitude toward Christianity (God, Jesus, church, Bible, prayer) than pupils educated in non-denominational county schools.

Another investigation compared pupils attending church aided schools and church controlled schools (Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2020). The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was used with 4581 year 4, year 5 and year 6 pupils from 87 schools from five Welsh dioceses. 1678 pupils were from controlled schools and 2903 pupils were from aided schools. The study made three findings from these data.

The first finding suggested pupils at aided schools had a more positive attitude toward Christianity compared to pupils at controlled schools. One reason for this could be that at the aided schools more of these pupils attended church more regularly, and there may have been more of these pupils in the schools due to the school's admissions policy favouring churchgoing families. Questions raised based on these findings included whether the pupils' frequent church attendance or school effectiveness was the result of pupils having a more positive attitude toward Christianity? The second finding suggested that pupils whose church attendance was more frequent had a more positive attitude toward Christianity if they attended an aided school. The third finding looked at whether diocesan the policy resulted in any additional impact on pupil attitude toward Christianity. Results from this shows, however, show that from the dioceses taking part

in this study only one diocese showed an additional impact on pupils' attitude toward Christianity.

To sum up this investigation, pupils attending aided schools have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than pupils attending controlled schools. This can be further explained as a consequence of the Church in Wales providing more governors in aided schools who have a more positive involvement in the schools.

Francis (1989) reports on his findings on the Francis Scale of Attitude with 3600 church and state school pupils from year 3 through to year 11, primary through to secondary school. This study suggests that attitude toward Christianity lessened among 8- to 16-year-old male and female pupils as they progressed further through the education system.

Using the Francis scale of Attitude toward Christianity with secondary pupils

Another investigation initiated in 1974 was designed to compare pupils in Church of England secondary schools with those in non-denominational state-run secondary schools (Francis & Carter, 1980; Francis, 1992; Francis & Jewell, 1992). The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity was trialled with secondary pupils from two secondary schools in East Anglia, 50 boys and 50 girls from year 7 to through to year 11. This 1974 investigation acted as a baseline for further studies. In 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1990 the questionnaire was administered to pupils from the same two East Anglican schools. The findings

show that by 1978 attitude toward Christianity was less positive than in 1974. This trend continued in 1982 and 1986. Based on results from the questionnaire at four-year intervals covering sixteen years Francis then suggested that attitudes toward Christianity had lessened. However, by 1990, three findings appeared to be emerging (Francis, 1992). The first showed something of a reversal of attitudes towards a slightly more positive attitude toward Christianity, as such as the pupils' belief in God and the Bible. Francis suggests the reason for this might be more transparency and opportunities toward learning about religions in today's world. The second finding focusses on 1986 to 1990, where there is hardly any change in pupils' attitude toward saying prayers and the church services. Francis suggested that increased transparency and opportunities toward learning about religions in today's world do not include individual religious involvement such as prayer and going to church. The third finding suggests that there appears to be a downward trend in the 1990s study in pupils' attitude toward Jesus and the schools' teaching of religious education, in wanting to love Jesus, the centrality of Christianity and liking school lessons about God. Francis suggests that, despite there being more transparency and opportunities toward learning about religions in today's world, there is no increase in pupils' interest in Christian heritage or the religious side of a school's religious education curriculum.

Another investigation involving secondary school pupils took place with pupils from two age groups, 11- to 12-year-old pupils and 15- to 16-year-old pupils from secondary schools in the city of Dundee, Scotland (Francis & Gibson, 1993). By looking at pupils' individual

religious practices and attitudes the findings suggested that parents have an influence, especially mothers. However, this parental influence decreased as pupils progressed up the school.

Another investigation (Swindells, Francis, & Robbins, 2010) looked at 492 year 7 pupils from the Diocese of Blackburn attending three Church of England voluntary aided secondary schools who had previously attended Anglican voluntary aided primary schools and non-denominational state schools, 288 pupils and 164 pupils respectively, to investigate if attending a voluntary aided church school resulted in pupils having a more positive attitude toward Christianity compared to those pupils who had attended a non-denominational state school. There were four findings from this study.

The first finding suggests pupils who attended church held a more positive attitude toward Christianity than pupils who do not attend church. The second finding suggests that family attendance at church resulted in pupils from these families having a more positive attitude toward Christianity, more so in the case of the attendance of the pupil's mother at church rather the pupil's mother who does not attend church. The third finding suggests that both family and church attendance had more influence on pupils' attitude towards Christianity than the sex of a pupil. The fourth finding suggests that pupils' attendance at church schools had neither a positive nor a negative effect on pupils' attitude towards Christianity. Based on this fourth finding, the question is raised as to the purpose and status of voluntary aided schools in England and Wales.

Extending the research to university students

Francis, Lewis, Philipchalk, Brown et. al. (1995) extended research using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity to include university students from four countries: 378 undergraduates from the UK (106 men and 272 women), 212 undergraduates from the U.S.A (79 men and 133 women), 255 graduates from Australia the (66 men and 189 women), and 231 undergraduates from Canada (70 men and 161 women). The data supported both the internal consistency reliability and the construct validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity.

Research questions

This chapter explores what we can learn about the attitude toward Christianity of pupils within five church schools in the Diocese of Truro by applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, how the findings in these schools relate to the findings in other earlier studies, and how these data could provide useful evidence for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), a separate inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness of a school as a church school.

Method

Procedure

Five Church of England schools in Cornwall, forming part of a multi-academy trust, were invited to administer the survey to all pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 as part of a programme evaluating each school's ethos. Before administering the survey, pupils were made aware that it was voluntary, anonymous and

confidential. From the five schools a total of 1091 pupil responses were received over three years (2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018).

Participants

Of the 1091 pupil responses received over three years, 571 responses were from male pupils and 520 responses were from female pupils. Over the different year groups 320 responses were from year 3 pupils, 268 responses were from year 4 pupils, 265 responses were from year 5 pupils and 238 responses were from year 6 pupils.

Instrument

The survey employed the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis, 2009) which comprises 24 items, evaluating affective responses to God, Jesus, Bible, prayer and church. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale – agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), disagree strongly (1).

Data analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS data analysis package using the frequency reliability, factor and correlation routines.

Results

Table 7.1 examines data provided by all year groups over the three-year period of the administration of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity in relation to the item rest of test correlations. This table looks at the correlation coefficients between each item and the total of the other 23 items in relation to the entire 24

items, including the alpha coefficient. In this table the alpha coefficient is .97 which supports the reliability of the Francis Attitude towards Christianity used in this study. The correlations with each individual item confirm that each item is contributing well to the total scale.

Table 7.2 shows a higher correlation between attitude to Christianity and personal prayer than church attendance (.51 compared to .35). This finding is consistent with earlier research (Francis, 2009) that demonstrates a closer link between the attitudinal dimension of religion and personal religious practice (of personal prayer) than with public religious practice (of church attendance). These correlations also demonstrate a decline in attitude toward Christianity, personal prayer, and church attendance as pupils progress through the primary school.

Table 7.3 shows the overview of the whole sample by examining each of the 24 items within the five areas of God, Jesus, prayer, church and Bible.

Table 7.1

Item rest of test correlations

	<i>R</i>
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	.51
I know that Jesus helps me	.79
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	.76
The church is very important to me	.77
I think going to church is a waste of my time	.59
I want to love Jesus	.77
I think church services are boring	.52
I think people who pray are stupid	.41
God helps me to lead a better life	.82
I like to learn about God very much	.85
God means a lot to me	.87
I believe that God helps people	.82
Prayer helps me a lot	.82
I know that Jesus is very close to me	.84
I think praying is a good thing	.80
I think the Bible is out of date	.43
I believe that God listens to prayers	.79
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	.66
God is very real to me	.82
I think saying prayers does no good	.61
The idea of God means much to me	.84
I believe that Jesus still helps people	.82
I know that God helps me	.84
I find it hard to believe in God	.50
Alpha coefficient	.97

Table 7.2

Correlations matrix

	FSAC	School year	Prayer
Church attendance	.35***	-.14***	.36***
Personal prayer	.51***	-.29***	
School year	-.40***		

Note: *** = $p < .001$

The items looking at attitude toward God show that about two thirds of pupils believe God helps people (63%). More than half of pupils believe God helps people to lead a better life (57%), God helps them (55%), and the idea of God means much to them (55%). Half of pupils believe God is very real to them (53%), God means much to them (52%), and they like to learn about God very much (52%). Two fifths of pupils find it hard to believe in God (41%).

The items looking at attitude toward Jesus show that more than half of pupils believe that Jesus still helps people (58%), and know that Jesus helps them (57%). About half of pupils believe Jesus is very close to them (51%) and want to love Jesus (49%). About a quarter of pupils believe Jesus doesn't mean anything to them (24%).

The items looking at attitude toward prayer show that more than half of pupils think praying is a good thing (59%), and that God listens to prayers (58%). Just under half of pupils believe saying prayers helps them

Table 7.3

Overview of whole sample

	Yes %	? %	No %
<i>Attitude toward God</i>			
God helps me to lead a better life	57	21	22
I like to learn about God very much	52	21	27
God means a lot to me	52	22	26
I believe that God helps people	63	19	19
God is very real to me	53	21	26
The idea of God means much to me	55	22	23
I know that God helps me	55	20	24
I find it hard to believe in God	41	18	41
<i>Attitude toward Jesus</i>			
I know that Jesus helps me	57	22	21
I want to love Jesus	49	24	27
I know that Jesus is very close to me	51	22	27
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	24	17	59
I believe that Jesus still helps people	58	20	22
<i>Attitude toward prayer</i>			
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	45	25	30
I think people who pray are stupid	12	14	75
Prayer helps me a lot	45	25	30
I think praying is a good thing	59	23	18
I believe that God listens to prayers	58	21	21
I think saying prayers does no good	24	20	56
<i>Attitude toward church</i>			
The Church is very important to me	47	26	27
I think going to church is a waste of time	29	23	49
I think church services are boring	29	24	47
<i>Attitude toward Bible</i>			
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	38	18	45
I think the Bible is out of date	30	24	47

(45%), and that prayer helps them a lot (45%). Just a quarter of pupils believe saying prayers does no good (24%). Just over a tenth of pupils think people who pray are stupid (12%).

The items looking at attitude toward church show that just under half of pupils believe church is important to them (47%). Just over a quarter of pupils think that going to church is a waste of time (29%) and likewise think church services are boring (29%). With regard to pupils' attitude toward the Bible about four tenths find it boring to listen to the Bible (38%), and about a third of pupils think the Bible is out of date (30%).

Table 7.4 looks at the mean scale scores recorded on the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity by three areas: by sex for males and females, by school year (year 3, 4, 5, 6) and by year of survey (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18).

Mean scores for males and females show that girls have a higher mean score (85.3) than boys (82.0) in their attitude toward Christianity ($F = 2.2, p < .05$).

Mean scores for each school show that as pupils progress up the school their attitude toward Christianity declines: year 3 mean score of 93.8, year 4 mean score of 91.6, year 5 mean score of 77.0, year 6 mean score of 68.0 ($F = 72.7, p < .001$).

Mean scores for each year of the survey suggest that mean scores over the three years remain close showing marginal decline (2015/2016 is 85.73, 2016/2017 is 83.89, 2017/2018 is 81.45). This decline is not statistically significant ($F = 2.5$, ns).

Table 7.4

Mean scale scores by sex, school year, and year of survey

	N	Mean	SD	
<i>By sex</i>				
Male	571	82.0	26.3	
Female	520	85.3	24.7	$F = 2.17^*$
<i>By school year</i>				
Year 3	320	93.8	19.9	
Year 4	268	91.6	22.7	
Year 5	265	77.0	25.7	
Year 6	238	68.0	25.8	$F = 72.7^{***}$
<i>By year of survey</i>				
2015/16	321	85.73	24.87	
2016/17	383	83.89	24.66	
2017/18	387	81.45	27.04	$F = 2.5$, ns

Note: $* = p < .05$, $*** = p < .001$

Sex differences

Table 7.5 shows the sex differences in responses to the individual items of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. From previous studies, and as shown earlier in table 7.4, females record a more positive attitude toward Christianity than males. The purpose of table 7.5 is not to test the statistical

Table 7.5

<i>Sex differences (yes responses)</i>		
	Male %	Female %
<i>Attitude toward God</i>		
God helps me to lead a better life	57	57
I like to learn about God very much	51	52
God means a lot to me	53	52
I believe that God helps people	61	65
God is very real to me	52	54
The idea of God means much to me	56	54
I know that God helps me	54	57
I find it hard to believe in God	43	40
<i>Attitude toward Jesus</i>		
I know that Jesus helps me	58	56
I want to love Jesus	50	48
I know that Jesus is very close to me	52	49
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	28	19
I believe that Jesus still helps people	57	59
<i>Attitude toward prayer</i>		
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	44	47
I think people who pray are stupid	13	16
Prayer helps me a lot	45	46
I think praying is a good thing	57	61
I believe that God listens to prayers	56	60
I think saying prayers does no good	28	19
<i>Attitude toward church</i>		
The Church is very important to me	47	48
I think going to church is a waste of time	33	23
I think church services are boring	32	26
<i>Attitude toward Bible</i>		
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	40	35
I think the Bible is out of date	35	24

significance of the difference between males and females on each individual item but rather to illustrate how within the overall scale there are fluctuations among them. Table 7.4 has demonstrated that females record a significantly higher score than males on the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity, but this does not mean that females endorse each of the 24 items more highly than males.

In terms of attitude toward God females have a more positive attitude toward Christianity receiving five out of seven more positive item responses. 65% of females believe that God helps people compared to 61% males, 57% of females believe God helps them compared to 54% of males, 54% of females believe God is real to them compared to 52% of males, 52% of females like to learn about God compared to 51% of males, and 40% of females find it hard to believe in God compared to 43% of males. Equally both males and females believe God helps them to lead a better life (57%). However, 56% of males believe the idea of God means much to them compared to 54% of females, and 53% of males believe God means a lot to them compared to 52% of females.

In terms of attitude toward Jesus, recorded three out of five more positive responses with regard to attitude toward Christianity. 58% of males know that Jesus helps them compared to 56% of females, 52 % of males know that Jesus is very close to them compared to 49% of females, and 50% of males want to love Jesus compared to 48% of females. However, 59% of females believe Jesus still helps people compared to 57% of males, and 19% of females believe Jesus doesn't mean anything to them compared to 28% of males.

In terms of attitude toward prayer, females had a more positive attitude toward Christianity based on five out of the six items. 61% of females think praying is a good thing compared to 57% of males, 60% of females believe God listens to prayers compared to 56% of males, 47% of females believe saying prayers helps them compared to 44% of males, 46% of females believe prayer helps them compared to 45% of males, and 19% of females think saying prayers does no good compared to 28% of males. At the same time, 13% of males think people who pray are stupid compared to 16% of females.

In terms of attitude toward church, females have a more positive attitude. 48% of females believe Church is important to them compared to 47% of males, 23% of females think going to church is a waste of time compared to 33% of males, and 26% of females think church services are boring compared to 32% of males.

In terms of attitude toward the Bible, females again have a more positive attitude. 35% of females find listening to the Bible is boring compared to 40% of males, and 24% of females think the Bible is out of date compared to 35% of males.

Analysing the sex responses of each of the 24 items within each of the 5 main areas found that there were more positive responses from females with regard to Christianity than from males.

Age group differences

Table 7.6 shows the age group differences in responses to the individual items of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. Table 7.4 has demonstrated that there is a significant downturn in attitude toward Christianity as pupils progress through the school years. This was generally supported by looking at the 24 individual items within the 5 main areas of attitude toward: God, Jesus, prayer, church and the Bible.

In terms of attitude toward God, 81% of pupils in year 3 believed God means a lot to them, 65% of pupils in year 4, 39% of pupils in year 5 and 26% of year 6 pupils. 74% of pupils in year 3 believe God helps them to lead a better life, 69% of pupils in year 4, 46% of pupils in year 5 and 32% of pupils in year 6. This pattern is followed for each of the other six items within the attitude toward God area.

In terms of attitude toward Jesus, 76% of pupils in year 3 know that Jesus helps them, 65% of pupils in year 4, 48% in year 5 and 32% in year 6. 74% of pupils in year 3 believe that Jesus still helps them, 71% of pupils in year 4, 47% in year 5 and 35% in year 6. The pattern was the same with three out of the other four items within this attitude to Jesus area. The only slight difference in the

Table 7.6
Age group differences (yes responses)

	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 %	Year 6 %
<i>Attitude toward God</i>				
God helps me to lead a better life	74	69	46	32
I like to learn about God very much	70	63	40	28
God means a lot to me	73	65	39	26
I believe that God helps people	81	70	52	43
God is very real to me	71	66	40	28
The idea of God means much to me	74	70	42	29
I know that God helps me	73	68	42	32
I find it hard to believe in God	38	35	41	53
<i>Attitude toward Jesus</i>				
I know that Jesus helps me	76	65	48	32
I want to love Jesus	66	62	34	28
I know that Jesus is very close to me	68	63	39	27
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	20	17	23	36
I believe that Jesus still helps people	74	71	47	35
<i>Attitude toward prayer</i>				
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	60	58	36	24
I think people who pray are stupid	16	8	13	8
Prayer helps me a lot	61	55	35	24
I think praying is a good thing	77	68	50	34
I believe that God listens to prayers	75	69	48	34
I think saying prayers does no good	21	17	26	33
<i>Attitude toward church</i>				
The Church is very important to me	65	59	35	23
I think going to church is a waste of time	29	21	30	36
I think church services are boring	29	24	27	36
<i>Attitude toward Bible</i>				
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	31	27	41	53
I think the Bible is out of date	32	23	29	34

results was with the item that Jesus doesn't mean anything to them: 20% of pupils in year 3 believed this compared to 17% in year 4. The trend, however in year 5 and 6 followed with the pattern 23% for year 5 pupils and 36% for year 6 pupils.

In terms of attitude toward prayer, four out of the six items within this area followed the pattern, for example 77% of pupils in year 3 think praying is a good thing compared to 68% of year 4 pupils, 50% of year 5 pupils and 34% of year 6 pupils. The two items where the pattern was not followed were with the items relating to people who pray are stupid: 16% of year 3 pupils agreed with this item, 8% of year 4 pupils, 13% of year 5 pupils and 8% of year 6 pupils. The other item which did not follow the pattern related to saying prayers does no good where 21% of year 3 pupils agreed with this statement, 17% of year 4 pupils, 26% of year 5 pupils and 33% of year 6 pupils.

In terms of attitude toward church the pattern was adhered to in only one of the items relating to the Church being important to them 65% for year 3 pupils, 59% for year 4 pupils, 35% for year 5 pupils and 23% for year 6 pupils. The other two items the pattern followed from year 4 through to year 6 but not for year 3 pupils relating to whether they think going to church is a waste of time and whether church services are boring. Year 3 pupils had a more negative attitude compared to year 4 pupils.

Attitude toward the Bible followed the pattern on decline from year 4 though to year 6. Year 3 results, however, had a more negative response when compared to year 4 responses to the items relating to listening to the Bible being boring and thinking the Bible is out of date.

Year of study differences

Table 7.7 looks at differences in responses to the individual items of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity over the three school years in which this survey was completed (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18). The F ratio, in table 7.4, indicates there is no significant difference in the overall attitude scores across the three years. Nevertheless, detailed examination of the individual items suggests that there is some tendency for responses to have declined over the three years. This is illustrated by the following trends.

In terms of attitude toward God, positive responses tend to decline in seven out of the eight responses over the three-year period (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18).

In terms of attitude toward Jesus, there is decline in positive responses for all the items over the three-year period.

In terms of attitude toward prayer there is a decline in positive responses in five out of the six items, the only item to remain static is pupils thinking that prayers do no good.

Table 7.7

Year of study differences (yes responses)

	2015/16 %	2016/17 %	2017/18 %
<i>Attitude toward God</i>			
God helps me to lead a better life	60	58	53
I like to learn about God very much	55	54	47
God means a lot to me	58	55	45
I believe that God helps people	67	62	60
God is very real to me	57	53	49
The idea of God means much to me	57	58	51
I know that God helps me	59	56	51
I find it hard to believe in God	39	43	41
<i>Attitude toward Jesus</i>			
I know that Jesus helps me	61	59	52
I want to love Jesus	53	50	44
I know that Jesus is very close to me	55	50	49
Jesus doesn't mean anything to me	22	22	27
I believe that Jesus still helps people	63	59	53
<i>Attitude toward prayer</i>			
Saying my prayers helps me a lot	53	44	41
I think people who pray are stupid	12	12	11
Prayer helps me a lot	51	45	41
I think praying is a good thing	62	59	57
I believe that God listens to prayers	60	60	54
I think saying prayers does no good	25	22	25
<i>Attitude toward church</i>			
The Church is very important to me	54	44	45
I think going to church is a waste of time	31	28	27
I think church services are boring	31	28	29
<i>Attitude toward Bible</i>			
I find it boring to listen to the Bible	37	36	40
I think the Bible is out of date	33	28	28

In terms of attitude toward church, there is a decline in positive responses for all items over the three-year period.

In terms of attitude toward the Bible, there is a decline in pupils' responses to finding it boring to listen to the Bible, but there is a slightly more positive (which is marginal) response to pupils' responses to thinking the Bible is out of date.

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to look at what we can learn about the attitude toward Christianity of pupils within five church schools in the Diocese of Truro by applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils from five church schools in the Diocese of Truro and to examine how the findings in this study relate to other findings in earlier studies. The data in this study adds to the findings from earlier studies in the following ways.

In this study, table 7.1 (item of rest of test correlations) shows an alpha coefficient of .97, this is comparable with similar results in Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2017) where year 4, 5, 6 pupils participated in the Francis Attitude towards Christianity survey (where the alpha coefficient ranges from .95 to .97). This finding supports the reliability of the Francis Attitude toward Christianity used in the five schools.

In this study, table 7.2 (correlations matrix) shows a higher correlation between attitude and personal prayer than church attendance (.51 compared to .35). This finding is consistent with other studies examining the correlations between scores of attitude toward Christianity and both frequency of church attendance and frequency of personal prayer. As in previous studies this new data supports the hypothesis that intrinsic religious practice (prayer) is a stronger predictor of attitude toward Christianity than extrinsic religious practices (church attendances), as demonstrated by Francis (1989), Greer and Francis (1992) and Francis, Lewis, Philipchalk, Brown, and Lester (1995). This finding supports the construct validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity.

In this study, table 7.4 (mean scale scores by sex, school year, and year of survey) revealed the following three findings: girls have a higher mean score (85.3) than boys (82.0) with regard towards their attitude towards Christianity which supports previous research findings by Francis and Wilcox (1998). As pupils progress up the school attitude toward Christianity declines, which supports previous research findings reported by Kay and Francis (1996) and Francis (1989). Also, in this study, over the three years, there is some marginal decline in attitude towards Christianity. There has been no recent comparable work that has monitored year-on-year shift in scores on the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity.

In this study, table 7.5 (sex differences, yes responses) shows that there were more positive responses from females with regard to attitude toward Christianity than from males. From previous studies and as demonstrated earlier

in table 7.4 (mean scale scores by sex, school year, and year of survey), female pupils tend to have a more positive attitude toward Christianity as illustrated by a higher mean score than males with regard to attitude toward Christianity. Francis and Wilcox (1998) investigated religiosity among adolescents, 13- and 15-year-olds and 16- and 18-year-olds, and found that females do have a more positive attitude toward Christianity; but they also looked at femininity (as defined by the Bern Sex Role Inventory) of males and females and those who had higher levels of femininity held a more positive attitude toward Christianity. (The study in this chapter does not look at femininity).

In this study, table 7.6 (age group differences) shows that as pupils advance up the school their attitude toward Christianity declines. As shown earlier as in table 7.4 previous studies demonstrate a downturn in scores of attitude toward Christianity as pupils progress through the school years. This was supported by looking at some of the 24 individual items within the 5 main areas of attitude toward: God, Jesus, prayer, church and the Bible. Table 7.4 (mean scale scores by sex, school year, and year of survey) demonstrates the statistical significance of this decline. This matches previous research as summed up in Kay and Francis (1996) and Francis (1989), that as pupils progress from the age of 8 to the age of 16, scores of attitude toward Christianity decrease.

In this study, table 7.7 does show decline in attitude toward Christianity over the three-year period. But table 7.4 (mean scale scores by

sex, school year, and year of survey) indicates that the decline in attitude toward Christianity is marginal over the three years (2015/2016 is 85.73, 2016/2017 is 83.89, 2017/2018 is 81.45) and this decline does not reach statistical significance. Francis (1989) and Francis (1992) reported a decline in attitude toward Christianity in studies carried out with year 7 to year 11 secondary school pupils in 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986 and 1990. However, that was over a gap of four years. It is likely that if the trend in the present study over three years had been monitored during a fourth year, this may have reached statistical significance.

To sum up, this study shows what is going on in five church schools in Cornwall with regard to pupils' attitude toward Christianity using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. In this study the following conclusions might be drawn.

The Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity worked well in the context of this study to find out pupils' attitude toward Christianity and as a basis to compare its data with previous research studies. This study did show that comparisons with previous research data could be made: personal prayer was a stronger indicator of attitude toward Christianity than church attendance; female pupils have a more positive attitude toward Christianity than male pupils; as pupils journey up the school from year 3 to year 6 attitude toward Christianity declines; and there is marginal decline in attitude toward Christianity over the three-year consecutive academic period.

Using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity did provide a snapshot of five schools belonging to the same Church of England Trust of schools. It also is useful in providing data for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

However, there are limitations to this study. The pupils would not necessarily have been the same from one year to the next, also there were fewer pupils compared to previous studies. This study involved administering a questionnaire over three consecutive academic years. Leaving a longer timescale between the administering of the questionnaires could have shown greater discrepancies for attitude toward Christianity instead of a marginal decline.

In terms of directions for future research from a church school perspective, future research could look at using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity to provide evidence for SIAMS inspections. From a community school perspective using the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity could provide evidence for Ofsted inspections. In both instances it would be interesting to investigate how these data could provide useful evidence both for church schools and community schools and for SIAMS and for Ofsted.

Chapter 8

Applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how a school's ethos is reflected in listening to the voice of pupils. David Lankshear developed a set of scales to measure pupil voice, known as the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS). This set of scales was developed with pupils from year 5 and year 6, 9- to 11-year-old pupils completing a questionnaire in Welsh primary schools with the intention to help school governors in determining the ethos of the school to which they are affiliated. The present study employs this scale to find out what can be learned about a school's ethos from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of which 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four age groups across the junior years with 7- to 11-year-old pupils, over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show: female pupils have a more positive attitude toward school than male pupils; attitude toward school declines with pupil age; and attitude toward school declines over time. Using the LSVS scales provides a useful tool for revealing a church school's ethos in a way that can provide evidence for external agencies.

Introduction

A number of studies have shown that listening to pupils can provide a useful tool in determining a school's ethos. Research on listening to pupils became popular from the 1990s and various empirical studies have looked at how listening to pupils' views can be helpful in determining the ethos of a school. Listening to pupils'

views became known as attending to the ‘pupil voice’. Several researchers have attempted to employ a quantitative method to report this ‘pupil voice’. The focus of more recent empirical studies has been to access pupils’ views by applying pupil voice scales. To understand these more recent studies it is important to look at: what is understood by the term ‘ethos’; how ‘ethos’ is evaluated in schools; and the theory and evaluation of pupils’ attitudes toward school.

School ethos

The idea of school ethos is first introduced by Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, et al., (1979) in *Fifteen thousand hours: Secondary schools and their effects on children*, and subsequently explored by Allder (1993), Hargreaves (1995), Donnelly (2000), and Graham (2012). Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, et al. (1979) look at how some schools can provide a more positive school ethos experience irrespective of their pupils’ backgrounds and home living environments. In turn such schools help their pupils to develop well and exert a positive effect on them.

Allder (1993) looks at defining what ‘ethos’ means within a school setting. He looks at the language Van Buren (1972) uses in defining ‘ethos’ and its interpretations. In the educational setting, there are a variety of words associated with the key word ‘ethos’: ‘ambience’, the fabrication of the present school environment; ‘spirit’, human experiences within a school; ‘atmosphere’, socialisation and personal experiences; and ‘climate’, school practices (norms) and behaviours. Allder, therefore, concludes that the ethos of a school is:

the unique, pervasive atmosphere or mood of the organisation which is brought about by activities or behaviour, primarily in the realm of social interaction and to a lesser extent in matters to do with the environment, of members of the school, and recognised initially on an experiential rather than a cognitive level. (Allder, 1993, p. 69)

Hargreaves (1995) provides an overview of school culture (ethos), school effectiveness and school improvement. He concludes that investigation is needed into looking at school culture and school effectiveness to find out about improving poor performing and unthriving schools. He states that there needs to be a method for looking at and measuring school culture which links to school effectiveness and school improvement, as all three are interwoven. Therefore, empirical research needs to look at methods and paradigms to test hypotheses linking to school effectiveness and school improvement.

Donnelly (2000), drawing on her qualitative data research from one grant-maintained integrated primary school and one Catholic primary school, concludes that understanding of school ethos is “superficial and contradictory” (p. 135) describing ethos in various dimensions of “aspirational...outward attachment...inward attachment...thoughts, feeling and perceptions” (p. 151). This aspirational ethos is illustrated in legislative documents and school statements, the outward attachment can be found in a school’s organisation systems, physical environment, and behaviour, and the inward attachment through analysing people’s

personal thoughts. She states that looking at ethos alone can isolate it from school effectiveness.

Looking at ethos in terms of the experiences and responses of pupils, Rudduck and Flutter (2000) explore pupils' participation and responses with regard to school effectiveness and conclude that:

we cannot do much better than to urge readers to think about the two categories that Young offers us, Curriculum of the Past and Curriculum of the Future; Curriculum of the Future reflects the values of participation and perspective that feature so strongly in our own research on pupil voice. (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000, p. 87)

Young (1999) suggests that pupils will become active participants with the Curriculum of the Future which will enable pupils to feel empowered, open to creating new and able to impart existing knowledge, and able to apply this knowledge daily.

Flutter (2007) concludes that pupil voice and teacher voice have greater impact when working together. However, the problem with pupil voice is that it tends to be better heard from those pupils who are better at articulating responses, therefore this pupil voice is not a representation of the whole school community pupil population.

Graham (2012) states that a positive school ethos is key to continuing school improvement. However, even though this is recognised,

there is little research evidence within the school setting to support it. He states that some researchers (McLaren, 1986) have tried to link ethos to culture but this has not been satisfactory as in the McLaren study culture does not look at the experiences of the pupils within the school environment. Graham (2012) views Allder's (1993) explanation of ethos as unclear, because of difficulties with dealing with ethos as experiential rather than cognitive (learning). He also affirms Donnelly's view (Donnelly, 2000) that what a school says its ethos is, may not necessarily be the actual experiences of the individuals within the school, and Solvason's (2005) view that suggests that teacher and pupil experiences differ. Solvason (2005) explored school culture during the time of the development of the specialist school status, which in this article looked at a case study of a specialist sports college. This was a time when schools reconsidered their school ethos. However, the school's aspirations could be different from the daily lived experiences. Graham (2012) refers Smith (1998) who carried out a small-scale study looking at school ethos from the viewpoint of the pupils, otherwise known as student voice. Smith uses an instrument in the form of a questionnaire to elicit pupil responses, but does state that a more in-depth study should consider involving parents, and staff, as well as pupils. Graham (2012) says that "thinking about school ethos is to see ethos as a first-hand experience that is created by acts of solicitude which are in this study integral to the participants' experiences of their secondary school" (p. 352). This study supports the view that a positive school ethos is important for everyone involved in educating pupils.

It can be seen that defining and interpreting school ethos is not clear cut, and it is not clear how school ethos can be used to improve school effectiveness. A look at how school ethos is evaluated now needs to be reviewed.

Evaluating ethos in schools

Following the Education (Schools) Act 1992 (HMSO, 1992) came the introduction of Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education) inspections for every state-maintained school, and these became known as Section 9 inspections. Additional inspections were required for schools with a religious character, to be undertaken by the church providers, and these became known as Section 13 inspections. Within Church of England and Church in Wales schools they were also known as SIAS Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) inspections. School ethos then became part of the church school inspection system in determining a church school's character. Later, following the School Inspections Act 1996 (HMSO, 1996), the denominational inspection became known as Section 23; then, following the Education Act 2005 (HMSO, 2005), Section 23 became known as Section 48. For Anglican schools, this inspection was carried out at a national level by The National Society, whereas Roman Catholic schools had their schools inspected at Diocesan level. In 2013 the Anglican school inspection's name changed from SIAS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) to SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The Welsh version of SIAMS is known as Gwella.

Lankshear (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1993) produced useful material to assist church schools with their church school inspection, including what inspectors would be looking for with regard to a school's character, or so-called school ethos. The following studies all provide evidence to support a school's ethos: policy declarations, prospectuses, and school websites (Wilkinson, 2019); church governors' views (Francis and Stone, 1995); church school staff's views (Francis and Grindle, 2001); and inspection report views (Lankshear, 1997, Brown, 1997). With regard to school attainment, quantitative data can be used to interpret pupil development and school effectiveness, but what constitutes a school ethos can be open to interpretation if reviewing the constructs of the school environment, human experiences, communicating and personal experiences, and school practices (norms) and behaviours as proposed by Allder (1993).

Empirical studies (Theory and evaluation) of pupils' attitudes toward school

There have been a number of empirical studies investigating pupils' attitude toward school. The following are but a few. Smith (1998) devised a questionnaire to find out pupils' views. The premise of this questionnaire was based on the recommendation of Burden and Hornby (1989), which suggested schools develop an instrument to help measure school effectiveness. Smith, after analysing his results, shared the results with the schools with the intention that this would provide support to schools with regard to school ethos and effectiveness. Rudduck and Flutter (2000) refer to the interviews carried out in 1998 (Rudduck & Flutter, 1998) with underachieving year 8 pupils resulting in consideration of how pupils learn and the next steps to consider. Donnelly (2000) carried out a case study based on one grant-maintained primary school and one Catholic primary school, and argued

that “in-depth interviewing and non-participant observation over a period of eight months in each school presented the researcher with the opportunity of examining the ethos defined as that which emerges from social interaction” (p. 138). Flutter (2007) reviews two examples of pupil voice expanded in Flutter and Rudduck (2004). The first example uses a questionnaire to elicit pupil responses, and the second, “embedded the principles of pupil consultation and participation” (p. 348). Graham’s (2012) study looks at one Scottish non-denominational secondary school comprising 800 pupils and employs pupil interviews with four pupils in their final year of school to elicit a clearer and deeper picture of a school’s ethos. This study involved follow up interviews three months later.

Francis and Penny (2013) in their principal study propose that the best way to find out about a school’s ethos is through listening to the pupils’ perspective. They suggest that listening to pupils is important when reviewing a school’s ethos as well as a way to determine a school’s ethos.

All these studies revealed useful information to support a school’s ethos, and provided measures to elicit the pupil voice. However, in each of the examples the measure was unique to a particular setting, whether the instrument used was quantitative or qualitative, thus requiring interpretative response by the investigator.

Lankshear Student Voice Scales

In 2013 the Church in Wales supported the development of the Student Voice Project as a means to capture pupils’ school experiences and hopes, in order to

provide insight for Section 50 inspections as to what is distinctive about church schools (inspections for Church in Wales schools). Lankshear and associates devised a set of scales to assess the distinctiveness of church schools according to Section 50 specifications, looking at what characterises the ethos in a church school and school worship.

The pilot projects were reported by Lankshear, Francis and Eccles (2017) based on data collected during the two school years, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 from year 5 and year 6 pupils from church schools in Wales. The analysis employed a questionnaire using six scales (attitude toward school character, attitude toward school experience, attitude toward school teachers, attitude toward relationships in school, attitude toward school and the environment, and attitude toward school worship). The first five scales each comprised six items and the final scale (attitude toward school worship) comprised five items. To demonstrate the reliability of the scales (DeVellis, 2003) in the questionnaire, the alpha coefficients produced spanned .73 to .78 (Cronbach, 1951).

The second study (Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2018) tested the psychometric properties of the Lankshear Student Voice Scales put forward by Lankshear, Francis and Eccles (2017). Alpha coefficients in the 2018 study were comparable with the 2017 study. The third study (Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles, 2021) reported on data collected during three school years, 2014/15, 2015/16, and 2016/17 from year 5 and year 6 pupils from six Church in Wales dioceses. Again, alpha coefficients were comparable with the earlier studies.

The Student Voice Project required delivering a questionnaire comprising the Lankshear Student Voice Scales advanced by Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles (2017), the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2017) and a modified form of the Fisher spiritual health questionnaire (Francis, Fisher, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2018) for pupils in years 5 and years 6 in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/2017. The purpose of the questionnaire was to be an aid to school governors and staff in ascertaining pupils' insights as to their school ethos. This information could then be used to provide a useful tool for school self-evaluation, as well as an aid to support school inspection. The three years of data was to provide useful information about pupils at the schools, and look at differences between male and female pupils and year 5 and year 6 pupils.

Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021) drew the following conclusions concerning the Lankshear Student Voice Scales. First, the alpha coefficients were consistent across different age groups, and the scales enabled differences to be noted between male and female pupils, and between year 5 and year 6 pupils. Therefore, the Lankshear Student Voice Scales can be commended for use in further studies. Secondly, quantitative data about the ethos of a Church in Wales school, based on day-to-day pupil experiences and perceptions, has real value that goes beyond aspirational statements. Thirdly, the statements enable pupils to reflect on what is not so perceivable about their school but is required through the inspection process. This also raised questions concerning what is of most importance about the ethos of a Church in Wales school and also how schools might strengthen how pupils

view these areas. Fourthly, male and female pupils' perceptions about a school's ethos are different. Female pupils tend to have a more positive attitude to the specific religious visible features, and to school worship. Fifthly, there were different responses between year 5 and year 6 pupils, year 6 pupils showed a less positive attitude to religious areas and school worship than year 5 pupils. This supports Kay and Francis's (1996) work, which found that attitude toward Christianity decreased as pupils progressed through the school years. In conclusion, schools which reflected on the data from the Lankshear Student Voice Scales could use them to see their strengths and address weaknesses.

Research question

The research question looks at what we can learn about the ethos of schools within five church schools in the Diocese of Truro by applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS), how the findings in these schools relate to the findings in other, earlier studies, and now these data could provide useful evidence for Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections: the former to evaluate the education of pupils in all schools and the latter being a separate inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of a school as a church school.

Method

Procedure

Five Church of England schools in Cornwall, forming part of a multi-academy trust, were invited to administer the survey to all pupils in years 3, 4, 5, and 6 as part of a programme of evaluating each school's ethos. Before administering the

survey, pupils were made aware that it was voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

From the five schools a total of 1091 pupil responses were received to the Lankshear Student Voice Scales over three years (2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018).

Participants

Of the 1091 pupil responses received over three years, 571 responses were from male pupils and 520 responses were from female pupils. Over the different year groups, 320 responses were from year 3 pupils, 268 responses were from year 4 pupils, 265 responses were from year 5 pupils and 238 responses were from year 6 pupils.

Instrument

The survey employed the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (Lankshear, Francis, & Eccles, 2017) which used six scales. The first five scales (attitude toward school character, attitude toward school experience, attitude toward school teachers, attitude toward relationships, and attitude toward school and environment) comprised six items, and the final scale (attitude toward school worship) comprised five items. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale – agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), disagree strongly (1).

Data analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS data analysis package which used frequency, reliability, and t-test routines.

Results

Table 8.1

Scale properties

	N items	Alpha	Mean	SD
School character	6	.71	25.5	3.6
School experience	6	.77	23.6	4.7
School teachers	6	.77	25.7	3.9
Relationships in school	6	.76	27.0	3.1
School and environment	6	.75	26.1	3.5
School worship	5	.81	18.0	5.0

Note: N = 1091

Table 8.1 looks at the scale properties in terms of the means, standard deviations, and internal consistency reliability (alpha) data of the six scales (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school and environment, and school worship) from the sample of 1091 sample of year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6 pupils over a three-year period. In these data the alpha coefficients range between .71 and .81.

Table 8.2 examines the list of school-related attitudes for pupils within each of the six scales with key statistical data: correlations between each of the items with the other items within the scale showing the covariance of the items against the sum of the other items within each scale, and the use of percentages for each item expressed as 'yes' (agree

Table 8.2
School-related attitudes: Overview

	<i>R</i>	Yes %	? %	No %
<i>Attitude toward school character</i>				
My school is a really good school	.53	86	10	4
My school is a really caring school	.54	82	13	4
My school treats every child fairly	.38	60	20	20
Worship is very important in my school	.35	89	8	3
My school is a really friendly school	.47	78	16	6
Prayer is very important in my school	.38	89	8	3
<i>Attitude toward school experience</i>				
In my school the rules are fair	.43	82	12	7
In my school I can be myself	.48	64	17	19
My school is a peaceful place	.57	55	22	23
My school is a safe place	.56	83	12	6
My school looks good	.55	76	14	10
My school is a clean place	.54	68	19	13
<i>Attitude toward school teachers</i>				
The teachers in my school care a lot for all the children	.56	88	8	4
The teachers in my school care a lot for each other	.50	84	13	3
The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us	.51	86	12	2
The teachers in my school care a lot about the school	.48	90	8	2
When I do well in my school the teachers praise me	.57	71	16	12
When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me	.53	69	19	13
<i>Attitude toward relationships in school</i>				
My school teaches me to respect other people	.50	92	6	2
My school teaches me to respect other people's things	.46	91	7	2
My school teaches me to care for other people	.48	94	5	1
At my school we value each other	.53	80	15	5
In my school we care a lot for each other	.51	88	9	4
Caring for others is very important in my school	.53	95	4	1
<i>Attitude toward school and environment</i>				
My school teaches me to respect things that grow	.46	86	10	4
My school teaches me to respect wonderful things	.52	87	11	2
My school teaches me to care for the world around us	.48	90	8	2
At my school we are proud of our school grounds	.54	80	14	6
At my school we are proud of our school buildings	.53	83	13	4
Keeping the school tidy is important in my school	.44	86	9	4
<i>Attitude toward school worship</i>				
I enjoy being with the whole school	.59	73	17	10
I enjoy visits from the vicar	.65	53	27	20
Singing is important to me	.52	63	19	17
Being quiet and still is important to me	.53	47	25	28
Listening to the bible is important to me	.68	47	23	31

Note: Yes = sum of agree and agree strongly; ? = not certain; no = sum of disagree and disagree strongly

and agree strongly responses), ‘?’ (not certain), and ‘no’ (disagree and disagree strongly responses) from the four age ranges (sample of year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6 pupils over a three-year period).

Within the scale of *attitude toward school character*, at least eight out of ten pupils acknowledged that worship is very important in their school (89%), that prayer is very important in their school (89%), that their school is a really good school (86%), and that their school is a really caring school (82%). The percentages fell to 78% of pupils who acknowledged that their school is a really friendly school, and 60% that their school treats every child fairly.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school experience*, eight out of ten pupils acknowledged that their school is a safe place (83%), and that their school rules are fair (82%). The percentages then fell to 76% of pupils who acknowledged that their school looks good, 68% that their school is a clean place, 64% that in their school they can be themselves, and 55% that their school is a peaceful place.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school teachers*, nine out of ten pupils acknowledged that teachers in their school care a lot about the school (90%). The percentages then fell to eight out of ten pupils who acknowledged that teachers in their school care a lot for all the children (88%), that teachers in their school care a lot for the world around them (86%), and that teachers in their school care a lot for each other (84%). The percentages then fell again to 71% of pupils that

acknowledged that when they do well in their school the teachers praise them, and 69% that when they do well in school the grown-ups praise them.

Within the scale of *attitude toward relationships in school*, nine out of ten pupils acknowledged that caring for others is very important in their school (95%), that their school teaches them to care for other people (94%), that their school teaches them to respect other people (92%), and that their school teaches them to respect other people's things (91%). The percentages then fell to 88% of pupils who acknowledged that in their school they care a lot for each other, and to 80% that at their school they value each other.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school and environment*, nine out of ten pupils acknowledged that their school teaches them to care for the world around them (90%). This then fell to eight out of ten pupils who acknowledged that their school teaches them to respect wonderful things (87%), that their school teaches them to respect things that grow (86%), that keeping the school tidy is important in their school (86%), that at their school they are proud of their school buildings (83%), and that at their school they are proud of their school grounds (80%).

Within the scale of *attitude toward school worship*, seven out of ten pupils acknowledged that they enjoy being with the whole school (73%). The percentages then fell to 63% of pupils who acknowledged that singing is important to them, 53% that they enjoy visits from the vicar, 47% that being

quiet and still is important to them, and 47% that listening to the bible is important to them.

Table 8.3 presents the mean scores for female and male pupils for each of the six scales. For three of the scales female pupils had significantly higher mean scores than male pupils (school character, relationships in school, and school worship).

Table 8.3

Mean scale scores by sex

	Male		Female		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
School character	25.2	3.8	25.9	3.5	2.3	.01
School experience	23.5	4.9	23.8	4.4	1.0	NS
School teachers	25.6	4.0	25.8	3.9	0.7	NS
Relationships in school	26.8	3.3	27.2	2.9	2.0	.05
School and environment	26.1	3.5	26.1	3.5	0.2	NS
School worship	17.4	5.3	18.7	4.7	4.1	.001

Note: N = 1091

Table 8.4 examines the percentage endorsements for the list of school-related attitudes against the sex of pupils (male and female) within each of the six scales. The following examples illustrate female pupils' higher percentage scores in comparison to male pupils' percentage scores.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school character*, 93% of female pupils acknowledged that prayer is very important in their school in comparison to 88% of male pupils, and 93% of female pupils acknowledged that worship is very important in their school in comparison to 85% of male pupils. Within the scale of *attitude toward school experience*, 84% of female pupils acknowledged that their school is a safe place in comparison to 81% of male pupils, and 84% of female pupils acknowledged that in their school the rules are fair in comparison to 80% of male pupils. Within the scale of *attitude toward school teachers*, 92% of female pupils acknowledged that the teachers in their school care a lot about the school in comparison to 88% of male pupils, 89% of female pupils acknowledged that the teachers in their school care a lot for all the children in comparison to 87% of male pupils.

Within the *attitude toward relationships in school*, scale 97% of female pupils acknowledged that caring for others is very important in their school in comparison to 93% of male pupils, and 95% of female pupils acknowledged that their school teaches them to care for other people in comparison to 94% of male pupils.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school worship*, 75% of female pupils acknowledged that they enjoy being with the whole school in comparison to 71% of male pupils, and 74% of female pupils acknowledged that singing is important to them in comparison to 54% of male pupils.

Table 8.4

School-related attitudes: By sex

	Male %	Female %
<i>Attitude toward school character</i>		
My school is a really good school	85	87
My school is a really caring school	80	84
My school treats every child fairly	59	62
Worship is very important in my school	85	93
My school is a really friendly school	77	79
Prayer is very important in my school	88	93
<i>Attitude toward school experience</i>		
In my school the rules are fair	80	84
In my school I can be myself	63	65
My school is a peaceful place	57	53
My school is a safe place	81	84
My school looks good	73	80
My school is a clean place	67	69
<i>Attitude toward school teachers</i>		
The teachers in my school care a lot for all the children	87	89
The teachers in my school care a lot for each other	84	83
The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us	85	87
The teachers in my school care a lot about the school	88	92
When I do well in my school the teachers praise me	70	72
When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me	68	70
<i>Attitude toward relationships in school</i>		
My school teaches me to respect other people	91	94
My school teaches me to respect other people's things	89	93
My school teaches me to care for other people	94	95
At my school we value each other	79	81
In my school we care a lot for each other	86	89
Caring for others is very important in my school	93	97
<i>Attitude toward school and environment</i>		
My school teaches me to respect things that grow	85	87
My school teaches me to respect wonderful things	87	87
My school teaches me to care for the world around us	90	90
At my school we are proud of our school grounds	80	81
At my school we are proud of our school buildings	81	85
Keeping the school tidy is important in my school	88	85
<i>Attitude toward school worship</i>		
I enjoy being with the whole school	71	75
I enjoy visits from the vicar	52	54
Singing is important to me	54	74
Being quiet and still is important to me	45	50
Listening to the bible is important to me	46	48

However, when it came to the scale of *attitude toward school and environment*, the mean percentage scores were virtually the same between the two sexes. Except for where 87% of female pupils acknowledged that their school teaches them to respect things that grow in comparison to 85% of male pupils, 81% of female pupils acknowledged that at their school they are proud of their school grounds in comparison to 80% of male pupils, and 88% of male pupils acknowledged that keeping the school tidy is important in their school in comparison to 85% of female pupils.

Table 8.5 presents the mean attitude scores for year 3 and year 6 pupils for each of the scales. Year 3 pupils' mean scores were significantly higher in comparison to the year 6 pupils across all six scales.

Table 8.5

Mean attitude scores by school year

	Year 3		Year 6		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> <
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
School character	26.5	3.1	24.1	3.8	8.0	.001
School experience	24.8	4.2	22.5	4.6	6.0	.001
School teachers	26.8	3.2	24.6	4.2	6.8	.001
Relationships in school	27.5	2.9	26.3	3.2	4.4	.001
School and environment	26.7	3.1	25.3	3.8	4.7	.001
School worship	20.1	4.3	15.4	5.1	11.9	.001

Note: N = 1091

Table 8.6 examines the percentage endorsements for the list of school-related attitudes by school year (year 3, year 4, year 5, year 6) within each of the six scales. The following examples illustrate how pupils' school-related attitudes alter from year 3 through to year 6 resulting in lower mean scores at year 6.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school character*, the most significant fall in percentage from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'Worship is very important in my school': 93% for year 3 pupils, 92% for year 4 pupils, 83% for year 5 pupils, and 77% for year 6 pupils. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3, year 5 and year 6, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from year 3 to year 4 where the percentage endorsement increased.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school experience*, the most significant fall in percentage from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'My school is a peaceful place': 93% for year 3 pupils, 92% for year 4 pupils, 83% for year 5 pupils, and 77% for year 6 pupils. However, from year 3 to year 4 there was a slight increase in the percentage endorsement. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3, year 5, and year 6, except for 'My school is a clean place', where the mean percentage fell for each year group from year 3 through to year 6.

Table 8.6
School-related attitudes: By school year

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
	%	%	%	%
<i>Attitude toward school character</i>				
My school is a really good school	89	92	82	80
My school is a really caring school	86	88	79	75
My school treats every child fairly	64	69	53	53
Worship is very important in my school	93	92	83	77
My school is a really friendly school	80	82	76	74
Prayer is very important in my school	94	92	85	84
<i>Attitude toward school experience</i>				
In my school the rules are fair	85	88	77	76
In my school I can be myself	68	72	59	57
My school is a peaceful place	61	63	49	46
My school is a safe place	87	89	77	75
My school looks good	82	83	68	71
My school is a clean place	77	73	56	63
<i>Attitude toward school teachers</i>				
The teachers in my school care a lot for all the children	94	93	80	86
The teachers in my school care a lot for each other	85	93	80	76
The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us	91	91	80	81
The teachers in my school care a lot about the school	94	96	83	85
When I do well in my school the teachers praise me	78	72	64	70
When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me	76	67	61	70
<i>Attitude toward relationships in school</i>				
My school teaches me to respect other people	91	96	90	93
My school teaches me to respect other people's things	91	93	91	89
My school teaches me to care for other people	93	96	94	94
At my school we value each other	78	82	77	83
In my school we care a lot for each other	91	93	86	79
Caring for others is very important in my school	95	97	92	94
<i>Attitude toward school and environment</i>				
My school teaches me to respect things that grow	85	92	80	86
My school teaches me to respect wonderful things	88	94	82	83
My school teaches me to care for the world around us	90	94	89	86
At my school we are proud of our school grounds	83	88	75	73
At my school we are proud of our school buildings	85	90	77	81
Keeping the school tidy is important in my school	90	90	82	82
<i>Attitude toward school worship</i>				
I enjoy being with the whole school	82	75	69	63
I enjoy visits from the vicar	69	62	41	36
Singing is important to me	71	73	55	51
Being quiet and still is important to me	60	51	38	36
Listening to the bible is important to me	68	59	33	20

Within the scale of *attitude toward school teachers*, the most significant fall in percentage from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us': 91% for year 3 pupils, 91% for year 4 pupils, 80% for year 5 pupils, and 81% for year 6 pupils. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from year 3 to year 4 where the percentage endorsement increased for the items 'The teachers in my school care a lot for each other', and 'The teachers in my school care a lot about the school'.

Within the scale of *attitude toward relationships in school*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'In my school we care a lot for each other': 91% for year 3 pupils, 93% for year 4 pupils, 86% for year 5 pupils, and 79% for year 6 pupils. However, from year 3 to year 4 there was a slight increase in the percentage endorsement. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3 through to year 6, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from year 3 through to year 6 where the percentage endorsement increased for the items 'My school teaches me to respect other people', 'My school teaches me to care for other people', and 'At my school we value each other'.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school and environment*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'At my school we are proud of our school grounds': 83%

for year 3 pupils, 88% for year 4 pupils, 75% for year 5 pupils, and 73% for year 6 pupils. However, from year 3 to year 4 there was a slight increase in the percentage endorsement. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3 through to year 6, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from year 3 through to year 6 where the percentage endorsement increased for the item, 'My school teaches me to respect things that grow'.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school worship*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from year 3 pupils through to year 6 pupils related to the item, 'Listening to the bible is important to me',:68% for year 3 pupils, 59% for year 4 pupils, 33% for year 5 pupils, and 20% for year 6 pupils. The other items followed a similar pattern for year 3 through to year 6, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from year 3 to year 4 where the percentage endorsement increased for the item, 'Singing is important to me'.

Table 8.7 presents the mean attitude scores by year of survey (2015/16 and 2017/18). Five of the six scales (all apart from relationships in school) reported a significantly lower mean score in 2017/18 compared with the scores recorded in 2015/16.

Table 8.7

Mean attitude scores by year of survey

	2015/16		2017/18		<i>T</i>	<i>p</i> <
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
School character	26.1	3.3	25.1	3.9	3.3	.001
School experience	24.2	4.6	23.1	4.8	2.9	.01
School teachers	26.3	3.5	25.0	4.3	4.4	.001
Relationships in school	27.5	3.0	26.9	3.0	1.4	NS
School and environment	26.6	3.3	25.7	3.6	3.5	.001
School worship	18.4	4.9	17.5	5.2	2.5	.05

Note: N = 1091

Table 8.8 examines percentage endorsement for school-related attitudes for the three years of survey (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18) within each of the six scales. The following examples illustrate how pupils' school-related attitudes alter by year of survey from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 (including all pupils from year 3 through to year 6) resulting in lower mean score percentages for 2017/18.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school character*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the item, 'My school is a really good school': 91% for 2015/16, 85% for 2016/17, and 82% for 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from

Table 8.8

School-related attitudes: By year of survey

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	%	%	%
<i>Attitude toward school character</i>			
My school is a really good school	91	85	82
My school is a really caring school	85	82	80
My school treats every child fairly	63	62	56
Worship is very important in my school	90	88	89
My school is a really friendly school	80	75	79
Prayer is very important in my school	89	90	89
<i>Attitude toward school experience</i>			
In my school the rules are fair	84	80	82
In my school I can be myself	65	66	61
My school is a peaceful place	60	55	52
My school is a safe place	83	85	79
My school looks good	80	75	75
My school is a clean place	71	67	66
<i>Attitude toward school teachers</i>			
The teachers in my school care a lot for all the children	94	89	82
The teachers in my school care a lot for each other	84	86	82
The teachers in my school care a lot for the world around us	88	85	85
The teachers in my school care a lot about the school	92	92	86
When I do well in my school the teachers praise me	77	70	67
When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me	76	68	63
<i>Attitude toward relationships in school</i>			
My school teaches me to respect other people	92	93	92
My school teaches me to respect other people's things	92	90	91
My school teaches me to care for other people	93	94	95
At my school we value each other	79	79	81
In my school we care a lot for each other	88	89	86
Caring for others is very important in my school	95	95	94
<i>Attitude toward school and environment</i>			
My school teaches me to respect things that grow	87	84	85
My school teaches me to respect wonderful things	92	87	83
My school teaches me to care for the world around us	88	91	92
At my school we are proud of our school grounds	83	83	78
At my school we are proud of our school buildings	88	81	81
Keeping the school tidy is important in my school	86	86	87
<i>Attitude toward school worship</i>			
I enjoy being with the whole school	72	73	73
I enjoy visits from the vicar	61	52	48
Singing is important to me	65	60	59
Being quiet and still is important to me	50	48	45
Listening to the bible is important to me	50	48	44

2015/16 to 2016/17 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item, 'Prayer is very important in my school', before falling again in 2017/18, 89%, 90%, 89% respectively.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school experience*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the items, 'My school is a peaceful place': 60% for 2015/16, 55% for 2016/17, and 52% for 2017/18, and 'My school is a clean place', 71% for 2015/16, 67% for 2016/17, and 66% for 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from 2015/16 to 2016/17 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item, 'In my school I can be myself', before falling in again in 2017/18, 65%, 66%, 61% respectively, and for the item, 'My school is a safe place', 83%, 85%, 79% respectively.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school teachers*, the most significant fall in mean percentage from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the items: 'When I do well in my school the grown-ups praise me', 76% for 2015/16, 68% for 2016/17, and 63% for 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from 2015/16 to 2016/17 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item, 'The teachers in my school care a lot for each other', before falling in again in 2017/18, 84%, 86%, 82% respectively.

Within the scale of *attitude toward relationships in school*, the most significant fall in mean percentage from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the items, 'In my school we care a lot for each other': 88% for 2015/16, 89% for 2016/17, and 86% for 2017/18. However, from 2015/16 to 2016/17 there was a slight increase in the percentage endorsement before falling again in 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item 'My school teaches me to care for other people' 93%, 94%, 95% respectively, and 'At my school we value each other', 79%, 79%, 81% respectively.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school and environment*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the items, 'My school teaches me to respect wonderful things': 92% for 2015/16, 87% for 2016/17, and 83% for 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item 'My school teaches me to care for the world around us', 88%, 91%, 92%, respectively and the item, 'Keeping the school tidy is important in my school', 86%, 86%, 87% respectively.

Within the scale of *attitude toward school worship*, the most significant fall in percentage endorsement from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 related to the

items, 'I enjoy visits from the vicar': 61% for 2015/16, 52% for 2016/17, and 48% for 2017/18. The other items followed a similar pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18, however there was a slight deviation in the pattern from 2015/16 through to 2017/18 where the percentage endorsement increased slightly for the item 'I enjoy being with the whole school', 72%, 73%, 73% respectively.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study employed the Lankshear Student Voice Scales with 7- to 11-year-old pupils from five church schools in the Diocese of Truro. Analysing each of the tables from the results section in this study, the following conclusions can be inferred, thereby providing further evidence of the picture regarding ethos in schools.

Employing the Lankshear Student Voice Scales, table 8.1 checked if the data of the six scales (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school and environment, and school worship) from the 1091 sample of year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6 pupils operated in line with previous research findings with regard to the alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), the means and the standard deviations. In this study table 8.1 shows the alpha coefficients range between .71 and .81, and this is comparable to findings in Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles (2017), Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2018) and Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021) where year 4, year 5 and 6 pupils participated in the Lankshear Student Voice survey (though the alpha coefficients range was slightly narrower, from .75 and .80). Data of the six scales in this

study, therefore, do operate in line with previous findings, and support the reliability of the Lankshear Student Voice Scales.

Using the Lankshear Student Voice Scales, table 8.2 provided evidence of how pupils rate their school according to school-related attitudes scales (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school and environment, and school worship) looking at each of the items within each scale. The following conclusions may be drawn from table 8.2: nearly nine out of ten pupils rate positively the importance of worship and prayer in their school, teachers caring a lot about the school and children, the importance of caring for others and respecting other people is important, and acknowledging that their schools teach them to care for the world around them. These results are comparable to previous findings as reported by Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2018, 2021). In both of the earlier studies and also in this study, the scale of *attitude toward school worship* has a much lower percentage rating compared to the other scales (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, and school and environment). The data show what pupils see as important about their school, which provides evidence of a school's ethos. However, pupils in this study do not rate the following items in their school as highly: treating every child fairly (60%), is a peaceful place (55%), is a clean place (68%), where they can be themselves (64%), when they do well the grown-ups praise them (69%). This again is in line with the previous research findings Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021) in terms of lower percentage scores when compared to the percentage scores

of the other items: treating every child fairly (73%), is a peaceful place (67%), is a clean place (78%), where they can be themselves (70%), when they do well the grown-ups praise them (77%).

Data generated from the Lankshear Student Voice Scales in table 8.3 show that male and female pupils' experiences and impressions of school are different. Female pupils tend to have a more positive attitude than male pupils in the scales of school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school. This is consistent with Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2017) where findings indicate that girls hold a more positive attitude toward their school. The widest gap between female and male pupils is in their attitude toward school worship. With regard to this final area (school worship) this supports previous research by Francis and Wilcox (1998) where findings reported on females having a more positive attitude toward Christianity than males, and Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021) where female pupils tend to have a more positive attitude to specific religious visible features, and school worship. The only difference in this study compared to previous findings, is that female and male pupils have equal mean scores in their *attitude toward school and environment*. A more detailed expansion of this is recorded in table 8.4 which looks at the elements within each of the six scales.

Lankshear Student Voice Scales data in table 8.5 shows that year 3 pupils have more positive attitudes toward school than year 6 pupils across the six scales. This supports previous research by Kay and Francis (1996) and Francis (1989) in relation to Christianity, as age increases from 8 years old to 16 years

old attitude declines, and Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021) where attitude toward Christianity decreased as pupils progress through the primary school years. A more detailed expansion of this is recorded in table 8.6 which looks at the elements within each of the six scales in year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6. Though table 8.6 shows a decline in attitudes from year 3, year 5, and year 6, the percentages represented for year 4 pupils do not conform to the pattern.

Data from the Lankshear Student Voice Scales in table 8.7 show that pupils' mean attitude scores within five of the six scales of school character, school experience, school teachers, school and environment, and school worship decline significantly from 2015/16 to 2017/18 (apart from *attitude toward relationships in school*), thereby illustrating that attitudes are declining from one generation of pupils to the next. A more detailed expansion of table 8.7 is recorded in table 8.8 which looks at the items within each of the six scales and how attitude from one generation of pupils declines to the next across three consecutive academic years (2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18). This has not been investigated in previous research using the Lankshear Student Voice Scales.

This study provides information about five schools in Cornwall with regard to pupils' experiences and impressions (pupil voice) of school. In this study the following conclusions might be drawn. Employing the Lankshear Student Voice Scales provided a useful tool in the context of this study as it enables pupils' experiences and impressions

of school to be evidenced. By building on data from previous research studies (Church in Wales schools) comparisons can be made together with a picture of pupils' current attitudes: female pupils have a more positive attitude toward school than male pupils, as pupils journey up the school from year 3 to year 6 attitude toward school declines; and there is a decline in attitude toward school for the more recent year's data (2017/18) compared to previous year's data (2015/16). Using the Lankshear Student Voice Scales provided a snapshot of the five church schools belonging to the same Church of England Trust of schools. This tool was useful in providing useful quantitative pupil voice data for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) and Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) inspections.

However, there are limitations to this study. First, since this study was based on five schools, numbers of pupils were smaller than in previous studies (Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, 2021). Second, this study involved administering the questionnaire over just three consecutive academic years. In order to chart the change in attitude over time, there would have been advantages in conducting the research across over a period of more than three years. Third, there was no previous literature that had compared one generation to the next (year on year), using the Lankshear Student Voice Scales, so it was not possible to test whether the generation decline is consistent with previous studies.

In terms of directions for future research, it would be helpful to employ the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among pupils in community schools as well as church schools. It would also be helpful to look at how schools could use the

data to aid school development and how the data could contribute
evidence for school inspection purposes whether for SIAMS or Ofsted.

Chapter 9

Applying the Fisher model of spiritual health among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Abstract

John Fisher, while reviewing research carried out on spirituality, developed a number of spiritual health measures which could be used with specific aged pupils in school. In 2004 Fisher developed the Feeling Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL) which was developed with primary school (5- to 12-year-old) pupils on completion of a questionnaire. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the spiritual health of pupils by employing the spiritual health measure developed by Fisher, Feeling Good, Living Life (FGLL) among pupils from five voluntary aided church primary schools situated in the Diocese of Truro. Responses were analysed from 1091 pupils, of whom 572 were male pupils and 520 were female pupils, from four junior years (7- to 11-year-old pupils) over a three-year period. Findings from this quantitative study show: responses from female pupils are slightly more positive compared with responses from male pupils; and spiritual health responses decline with pupil age. Using the FGLL instrument provides a useful scale to provide data for church school inspections.

Introduction

Various studies have looked at spirituality and religion; differentiating between the two. These studies have looked at what is understood by the terms: spirituality and religion. These studies have also looked at people's engagement with spirituality and religion. Other terms which describe the spiritual element are spiritual development, spiritual wellbeing, and spiritual health.

Spirituality and religion

Examining spirituality and religion, a number of literatures look at what is understood by these terms. The understanding of spirituality and religion proposed by Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, et al. (2000) comes from looking at the Latin root for spirituality (*spiritus*), and the Latin root for religion (*religare*), concluding that spirituality is to search for meaning and purpose without affiliation to an establishment, whereas religion relates to an establishment where people are committed to beliefs, customs, and religious guidance. Heelas and Woodhead (2005) defines spirituality as relating to people's personal lives, compared to religion which involves the religious guidance of a transcendental being. Bryant, Choi, and Yasuno (2003) look at spirituality in the light of a person's relational experiences through personal, communal, worldly, and transcendental elements. Carey (2018) argues that "spirituality is a particular style of ethical life" (p.264), in that a person lives a morally righteous life, following a transcendently (worldly enlightened) transformed psyche; whereas religion, based on the major religions, encompasses communal "cult, spirituality, and doctrine" (p. 267).

Today, there appears to be a growing engagement in spirituality, and a lack of engagement in religion. This engagement, where people choose to regard themselves as spiritual rather than religious, is evidenced by Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, et al. (1997), Fuller (2001), Heelas and Woodhead (2005), and Overstreet (2010). Weaver, Pargament, Flannelly, and Oppenheimer (2006) have chronicled the development of spirituality, religion and faith from 1965 through to 2000, attributing a growing increase in

people's enthusiasm toward spirituality, and a decline in people's enthusiasm toward religion. Based on this evidence, people in today's society are more likely to refer to themselves as spiritual rather than religious. However, some would argue that both religion and spirituality go hand in hand and are closely related, as suggested by King (2009). Carey (2018) on the other hand puts forward the idea that people can be "spiritual, but not religious" (p. 268), separate from historical spiritual traditions.

Spiritual development in educational legislation

Spiritual development is the term used in schools with regard to the spiritual element. The following educational Acts refer to the need for spiritual development in the curriculum. The Education Act of 1944 (HMSO, 1944) states "it shall be the duty of the local education authority ... to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area" (p. 4). The Act also makes reference to developing "spiritual, moral, mental and physical development" in voluntary aided (VA) and voluntary controlled (VC) church schools. The Education Reform Act in 1988 (HMSO, 1988) reinforces this:

The curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirements ... if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which: (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and (b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (HMSO, 1988, p. 1)

Assessing spiritual development

Assessment is a means of identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas which could do with developing or improving within specific groups of people. Even though spiritual development is assessed and monitored in schools, this tends to be dependent on the interpretation of the school and the inspector, in spite of the fact that there may be guidelines for this. According to Fisher (2015a), education tends to rely on qualitative assessment approaches instead of quantitative assessment approaches. The benefits of using quantitative measures include finding out the viewpoints and experiences of an increased number of people. This leads to developing and improving actions.

The purpose of this study is to select one of the terms associated with the spiritual element, and look at a measure as a means to assessment. This study looks at more recent research on the term 'spiritual health', using a quantitative measure.

Spiritual health

The National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (1975) put forward four domains of spiritual wellbeing, understood as "the affirmation of life in relationship with god, self, community, and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness". Fisher (1999a), using this definition and teachers' responses, then redefined his meaning of spiritual health. Spiritual health according to Fisher is primarily concerned with people's health and wellbeing alongside other areas of health such as physical, mental, emotional, social and vocational. Spiritual health is also according to Fisher

vital to existence, which is portrayed in the way people live in relationship with the following spiritual wellbeing domains:

Personal domain – wherein one intra-relates with oneself with regards to meaning, purpose and values in life.

Communal domain – as expressed in the quality and depth of inter-personal relationships, between self and other, relating to morality, culture and religion.

Environmental domain – past care and nurture of the physical and biological, to a sense of awe and wonder; for some, the notion of unity with the environment.

Global domain – relationship of self with some-thing or some-One beyond the human level. (Fisher, 1999a, p. 31)

Developing a measure

Reviewing research into spirituality over a 40-year period, Fisher (2015b) shows that there have been more studies with adults compared to children. In particular, studies were carried out into the spiritual wellbeing and quality of life of the elderly, and the terminally ill. During the 1990s, and responding to the growing interest in spiritual development referenced in major Australian curriculum documents, Fisher (1999a) decided to look at spiritual health and wellbeing in relation to the curriculum. This resulted in Fisher developing a spiritual health measure.

Following results from teacher interviews and a survey, the subsequent measures were developed for use with pupils in schools. All the measures used

items from the four domains (self, communal, environmental, and transcendental or global) where each item was rated using a 5-point Likert scale. Fisher (1999b) developed a spiritual health and life orientation measure (SHALOM) with 850 secondary school pupils aged twelve to eighteen years. The results showed that it could be an effective measure; similarities and differences were noted across schools, year groups, and sex; and it could be used as a singular, or multi-dimensional instrument.

Fisher, Francis, and Johnson (2000) developed the Spiritual Health in Four Domains Index (SH4DI) with 311 teachers. The results showed that this index was adequate, the higher the scores the more positive a person's spiritual health. Looking at the pattern of scores across the four domains, Fisher argued that a particularly high score in one of the four domains could be used to identify types: Personalists (high score in the personal domain), Communalists (high score in the communal domain), Environmentalists (high score in the environmental domain), or Religionists (high score in the transcendental domain). The type Existentialist is applied to those with a higher score in self, communal and environmental but a low transcendental score. If scores are high in all four of the domains, then the type Globalist is given. This spiritual health index gives a more in-depth profile and also allows the researcher to distinguish a person according to type (personalists, communalists, environmentalists, religionists, existentialists, and globalist).

Gomez and Fisher (2003) developed a Preliminary Well-Being Questionnaire (SWBQ). This involved carrying out a study comprising 248

secondary school pupils. This was then followed with three studies of 537, 832, and 456 secondary school pupils respectively. The results from these SWBQ studies support Fisher (1998) and his initial spiritual wellbeing model. Applying an extensive view with regard to spiritual wellbeing using personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental or global wellbeing categories resulted in a questionnaire which was able to measure and to elicit spiritual life experiences.

Fisher (2004) developed the Feeling Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL) with 1080 primary pupils aged five to twelve years. The results concluded that FGLL is a simple instrument which is easy to administer to primary aged pupils, and that the data generated provides understanding and a vital path to strengthening pupils' spiritual wellbeing.

Fisher (2006) developed the Quality Of Life Influences Survey (QOLIS) involving 1002 secondary pupils, aged twelve to eighteen years. The results indicated pupils who lacked support with regard to relationships with self, friends (communal), home, church and school (environmental) and with God (transcendental). Fisher argued that by being able to identify areas in which spiritual health was poor could be useful in a pastoral care context.

Fisher (2010) examines the Feeling Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL) and the Quality Of Life Influences Survey (QOLIS) with a second set of studies among 372 primary pupils aged ten to twelve years, and the Spiritual Health and Life Orientation Measure (SHALOM) and Quality Of Life Influences Survey (QOLIS) among 1002 secondary pupils aged twelve to eighteen years, focusing

particularly on the transcendental element of the four domains. Fisher (2010) investigated how this transcendental element is an important factor in the self-sufficiency of pupils. His investigation concluded “The ‘importance of religion’ and direct ‘help from God’ were key factors, together with how well students ‘help themselves’” (p. 331), suggesting that school ethos, the influences of teachers, and pupils, differing religious associations all play a part in developing a pupil’s connection with God.

Fisher (2013) used the Well-Being Questionnaire 2 (SWBQ2) and the Spiritual Health and Life Orientation Measure (SHALOM) with 460 secondary pupils aged twelve to eighteen years. Both questionnaires applied a double-response method which correlated pupils’ lived responses with their ideals. Results from this study concluded that with both questionnaires SHALOM and SWBQ2 the greatest variance in spiritual wellbeing was explained by the transcendental or global domain among this age group.

Fisher (2015a) looks at three studies applying the Feel Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL) involving 1759 primary pupils aged five to twelve years. Results of the study concluded that the Feel Good Living Life measure is reliable, accessible and recommended for use among primary aged pupils, based on it being tested across a variety of school communities (state, catholic, independent, and Christian community). The study suggests the importance of keeping God in the survey due to the greatest variance with regard to the transcendental domain compared to the other domains of self, communal and environmental.

To summarise, building on his earlier work among adults, Fisher has developed several quantitative measures for use among primary and secondary school pupils. The emphasis of Fisher's work has, however, been concentrated among secondary school pupils. The present study, therefore, is well placed to contribute further original research within the less developed field among primary school pupils. Among Fisher's range of measure, the Feeling Good Living Life (FGLL) measure is the instrument most suitable for this younger age group.

Research question

The research question looks at what we can learn about the spiritual health of pupils within some church schools in the Diocese of Truro by applying the Fisher instrument of spiritual health (FGLL) for primary aged pupils, how the findings in these schools relate to the findings in other earlier studies, and how these data could provide useful evidence for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), a separate inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of a school as a church school.

Method

Procedure

Five Church of England schools in Cornwall, forming part of a multi-academy trust, were invited to administer the survey to all pupils in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 as part of a programme of evaluating each school's ethos. Before administering the survey, pupils were made aware that it was voluntary, anonymous and

confidential. From the five schools a total of 1076 pupil responses were received to the Fisher spiritual health survey over three years (2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018).

Participants

Of the 1076 pupil responses received over three years, 565 responses were from male pupils and 511 responses were from female pupils. Over the different year groups 313 responses were from year 3 pupils, 268 responses were from year 4 pupils, 261 responses were from year 5 pupils and 234 responses were from year 6 pupils.

Instrument

The survey employed the Fisher's instrument of spiritual health 16-item version of Feeling Good Living Life (FGLL) (Fisher, 2004) which comprises items evaluating affective responses within the four domains of relationship with self, relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale – agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), disagree strongly (1).

Data analysis

The data were analysed using the SPSS data analysis package using the frequency, reliability, factor and correlation routines.

Results

Table 9.1 examines data provided by all year groups over the three-year period of the administration of the Fisher's instrument of spiritual health 16-item version of Feeling Good Living Life (FGLL) in relation to the item rest of test correlations and factor loadings. This table looks at the correlation coefficients between each item and the total of the other 15 items in relation to the entire 16 items, and the alpha coefficient. In this table the alpha coefficient is .87 which supports the reliability of the Fisher instrument FGLL used in this study. The factor loadings show that all the items load strongly on the first unrotated factor proposed by principal component analysis.

Table 9.2 shows the overview of the whole sample by examining each of the 16 items within the four domains of relationship with self, relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God.

The items looking at relationship with self show that more than eight out of ten pupils believe they often laugh and smile (87%), and enjoy life (83%). Over seven out of ten pupils often believe people like them (76%), and people tell them they have done well (72%).

The items looking at relationship with family show that more than nine out of ten pupils often feel their family loves them (96%), they feel love for their family (93%), and they really belong to a family (92%). Over eight out of ten pupils often feel they spend time with their family (87%).

Table 9.1

Item rest of test correlations and factor loadings

	<i>R</i>	<i>f</i>
<i>Relationship with self</i>		
I often feel that people like me	.52	.62
People often tell me I have done well	.55	.64
I often enjoy life	.50	.61
I often laugh and smile	.44	.55
<i>Relationship with family</i>		
I often spend time with my family	.44	.55
I often feel that my family love me	.47	.60
I often feel love for my family	.47	.59
I often feel that I really belong to a family	.50	.63
<i>Relationship with nature</i>		
I often watch a sunrise or sunset	.52	.55
I often go for a walk in the park	.47	.51
I often spend time in a garden	.40	.46
I often look at the stars and the moon	.47	.51
<i>Relationship with God</i>		
I often talk with God	.62	.66
I often spend time thinking about God	.64	.67
I often feel that God is my friend	.61	.66
I often feel that God cares for me	.62	.67
Alpha coefficient/ % variance	.87	35%

The items looking at relationship with nature show about six out of ten pupils believe they often spend time in the garden (62%) and watch a sunrise or sunset (61%). Over four out of ten pupils believe they often look at the stars and the moon (43%). Just three out of ten pupils believe they often go for a walk in the park (31%).

Table 9.2

Overview of whole sample

	Yes %	? %	No %
<i>Relationship with self</i>			
I often feel that people like me	76	13	11
People often tell me I have done well	72	18	10
I often enjoy life	83	10	7
I often laugh and smile	87	7	6
<i>Relationship with family</i>			
I often spend time with my family	87	8	5
I often feel that my family love me	96	6	3
I often feel love for my family	93	6	2
I often feel that I really belong to a family	92	6	2
<i>Relationship with nature</i>			
I often watch a sunrise or sunset	61	17	22
I often go for a walk in the park	31	19	30
I often spend time in a garden	62	18	20
I often look at the stars and the moon	43	14	23
<i>Relationship with God</i>			
I often talk with God	37	23	40
I often spend time thinking about God	43	22	35
I often feel that God is my friend	52	21	27
I often feel that God cares for me	56	18	26

The items looking at relationship with God show that just over half of the pupils feel that God often cares for them (56%), and that God is their friend (52%). Just over four out of ten pupils believe they often spend time thinking about God (43%). Just under four out of ten pupils believe they often talk with God (37%).

Table 9.3 looks at the mean scale scores recorded on Fisher's instrument for spiritual health, the 16-item version of Feeling Good Living Life (FGLL), by three areas: by sex for males and females, by school year (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) and by year of survey (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18).

The first area's mean scores for males and females show that although girls have a slightly higher mean score (63.3) than boys (62.2) with regard to their attitude, based on the Fisher instrument FGLL, this difference does not reach statistical significance ($t = 1.68$).

Table 9.3

Means attitude scores by sex and school year, and year of survey

	N	Mean	SD	
<i>By sex</i>				
Male	565	62.2	11.6	
Female	511	63.3	11.1	$t = 1.68$
<i>By school year</i>				
Year 3	313	66.1	11.1	
Year 4	268	65.1	9.9	
Year 5	261	60.0	11.1	
Year 6	234	58.5	11.4	$F = 31.89^{***}$
<i>By year of survey</i>				
2015/16	321	63.5	11.2	
2016/17	383	62.3	11.4	
2017/18	372	62.4	11.3	$F = 1.13$

Note: $^{***} = p < .001$

The second area's mean scores for each school show that as pupils progress up the school, their attitude on the FGLL declines, (year 3 mean score of 66.1, year 4 mean score of 65.1, year 5 mean score of 60.0, year 6 mean score of 58.5). This difference is highly significant ($F = 31.89$).

The third area's mean scores for each year of the survey show a slight decrease in the mean scores over the three years (2015/2016 is 63.5, 2016/2017 is 62.3, 2017/2018 is 62.4). This difference cannot be regarded as significant ($F = 1.13$).

Table 9.4 shows the sex differences responses represented on the Fisher instrument FGLL.

Table 9.4

Sex differences (yes responses)

	Male %	Female %
<i>Relationship with self</i>		
I often feel that people like me	77	75
People often tell me I have done well	72	72
I often enjoy life	84	83
I often laugh and smile	87	88
<i>Relationship with family</i>		
I often spend time with my family	87	86
I often feel that my family love me	92	89
I often feel love for my family	92	93
I often feel that I really belong to a family	93	92
<i>Relationship with nature</i>		
I often watch a sunrise or sunset	57	65
I often go for a walk in the park	46	56
I often spend time in a garden	58	66
I often look at the stars and the moon	60	66
<i>Relationship with God</i>		
I often talk with God	37	38
I often spend time thinking about God	43	43
I often feel that God is my friend	52	52
I often feel that God cares for me	56	57

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with self, there are only marginal differences between male and female. Males had slightly higher responses to two

out of four of the items: 84% of males believe they often enjoy life compared to 83% of females, and 77% of males believe people like them compared to 75% of females. Females had a slightly higher response to one out of the four items: 88% of females believe they often smile and laugh compared to 87% of males. However, both male and female responses were scored the same on believing people often tell them when they have done well (72%).

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with family, again there are only marginal differences. Male pupils had a slightly higher positive attitude than female pupils in three out of the four items: 93% of males often feel they belong to a family compared to 92% of females, 92% of males often feel that their family love them compared to 89% of females, and 87% of males feel they often spend time with their family compared to 86% of females. Female pupils had a slightly more positive attitude than male pupils in one out of four of the items: 93% of females often feel love for their family compared to 92% of males.

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with nature, female responses were higher in all of the four items: 66% of females believe they often look at the stars and the moon compared to 60% of males, 66% of females believe they often spend time in their garden compared to 58% of males, 65% of females believe they often watch a sunset or sunrise compared to 57% of males, and 56% of females believe they often go for a walk in the park compared to 46% of males.

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with God, female pupils had a slightly higher attitude than male pupils on two out of the four items: 57% of females often feel God cares for them compared to 56% of males, and 38% of females believe they often talk with God compared to 37% of males. However, both male and female responses were the same for the other two items: often feeling God cares for them (52%) and often spending time with God (43%).

Analysing the sex responses from each of the 16 items within each of the four domains, even though there are some differences these cannot be regarded as significant.

Table 9.5 shows the age group differences responses represented on the Fisher instrument FGLL. In terms of pupil responses to relationship with self, there were marginal differences from year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6 pupils. Year 3 pupils had slightly more positive responses than year six pupils. This pattern followed for three out of the four items. However, the responses in year 4 and year 5 appeared to fluctuate: 85% of pupils in year 3 believe they often enjoy life, 87% in year 4, 81% in year 5, and 81% in year 6; 80% of pupils in year 3 often feel people like them, 78% of pupils in year 4, 70% in year 5, and 74% in year 6; 73% of pupils in year 3 believe people often tell them when they have done well, 76% of pupils in year 4, 67% of pupils in year 5, and 71% of pupils in year 6. For one out of the four items year 6 pupils had a more positive response compared to year 3 pupils. Again the responses in years 4 and 5 appeared to

fluctuate: 84% of pupils in year 3 believe they often laugh and smile, 89% of pupils in year 4, 86% of pupils in year 5, and 91% of pupils in year 6.

Table 9.5

Age group differences (yes responses)

	Year 3 %	Year 4 %	Year 5 %	Year 6 %
<i>Relationship with self</i>				
I often feel that people like me	80	78	70	74
People often tell me I have done well	73	76	67	71
I often enjoy life	85	87	81	81
I often laugh and smile	84	89	86	91
<i>Relationship with family</i>				
I often spend time with my family	82	91	86	89
I often feel that my family love me	90	94	89	88
I often feel love for my family	91	95	93	92
I often feel that I really belong to a family	92	95	90	92
<i>Relationship with nature</i>				
I often watch a sunrise or sunset	68	62	60	52
I often go for a walk in the park	55	51	48	48
I often spend time in a garden	63	65	60	58
I often look at the stars and the moon	66	66	60	58
<i>Relationship with God</i>				
I often talk with God	55	47	26	16
I often spend time thinking about God	63	52	30	21
I often feel that God is my friend	71	63	37	30
I often feel that God cares for me	76	67	43	32

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with family, there were again only marginal differences from year 3, year 4, year 5, and year 6 pupils. There was no difference for one out of the four items for year 3 and year 6 pupils in their response to often feeling they really belong to a family, 92%, but there were differences in years 4 and 5, 95% and 90% respectively. However, for two out of the four items pupils in year 6 had

slightly more positive responses than pupils in year 3: 92% of pupils in year 6 often feel love for their family compared to 91% of year 3 pupils, but this fluctuated for pupils in year 4 and year 5, 95% and 93% respectively; 89% of pupils in year 6 believe they often spend time with their family compared to 82% of pupils in year 3, but again this fluctuated for pupils in year 4 and year 5, 91% and 86% respectively. In one of the four items pupils in year 3 had more positive responses than year 6 pupils: 90% of pupils in year 3 often feel their family love them compared to 88% of pupils in year 6, but this fluctuates for pupils in year 4 and year 5, 94% and 89% respectively.

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with nature, pupils in year 3 have more positive responses in all four of the items, and these positive responses decrease for pupils in year 4, pupils in year 5 and through to pupils in year 6: 68% of pupils in year 3 believe they often watch a sunrise or sunset, 62% of pupils in year 4, 60% of pupils in year 5, and 52% of pupils in year 6; 66% of pupils in year 3 and year 4 believe they often look at the stars and the moon, 60% of pupils in year 5, and 58% of pupils in year 6; 63% of pupils in year 3 believe they often spend time in a garden, 60% of pupils in year 5, and 58% of pupils in year 6. However, this pattern does not follow for pupils in year 4, where 65% of pupils believe they often spend time in a garden; 55% of pupils in year 3 believe they often go for a walk in the park, 51% of pupils in year 4, 48% of pupils in year 5 and 6.

In terms of pupil responses to relationship with God, positive responses followed the pattern, depreciating markedly from year 3 through to year 6 in all

four of the items: 76% of pupils in year 3 feel that God cares for them, 67% of pupils in year 4, 43% of pupils in year 5, and 32% in year 6; 71% of pupils in year 3 often feel God is their friend, 63% of pupils in year 4, 37% of pupils in year 5, and 30% of pupils in year 6; 63% of pupils in year 3 believe they spend time thinking about God, 52% in year 4, 30% in year 5, and 21% in year 6; 55% of pupils in year 3 believe they often talk with God, 47% of pupils in year 4, 26% of pupils in year 5, and 16% of pupils in year 6.

Table 9.6

Year of study differences (yes responses)

	2015/16 %	2016/17 %	2017/18 %
<i>Relationship with self</i>			
I often feel that people like me	77	75	73
People often tell me I have done well	74	71	71
I often enjoy life	82	81	88
I often laugh and smile	85	87	89
<i>Relationship with family</i>			
I often spend time with my family	83	86	90
I often feel that my family love me	89	90	91
I often feel love for my family	92	91	94
I often feel that I really belong to a family	92	91	94
<i>Relationship with nature</i>			
I often watch a sunrise or sunset	63	59	61
I often go for a walk in the park	52	49	51
I often spend time in a garden	61	58	66
I often look at the stars and the moon	63	64	61
<i>Relationship with God</i>			
I often talk with God	45	32	36
I often spend time thinking about God	50	41	39
I often feel that God is my friend	56	50	51
I often feel that God cares for me	60	55	55

Table 9.6 looks at difference in FGLL over the three school years in which this survey was completed (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18). The F ratio, in table 9.3, of 1.13 indicates that there is no significant difference in the overall attitude scores across the three years.

In terms of relationship with self, there is an increase in positive responses for one out of the four items over the three-year period (2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18): pupils believe they often laugh and smile, 85% in the year 2015/16, 87% in the year 2016/17, 89% in the year 2017/18. For two out four of the items there is a decline in positive responses: pupils often feel people like them, 77% in the year 2015/16, 75% in the year 2016/17, 73% in the year 2017/18; and people often tell them they have done well, 74% in the year 2015/16, 71% in the years 2016/17 and 2017/18. In one out of the four items there is fluctuation in the pattern over the three-year period, with a dip in the second year (2016/17), pupils believing they often enjoy life, 82%, 81%, and 88% respectively.

In terms of relationship with family, there is an increase in positive responses in two out of the four items over the three-year period, pupils believing they often spend time with their family, 83% in the year 2015/16, 86% in the year 2016/17, and 90% in year 2017/18; and pupils often feeling their family love them, 89% in the year 2015/16, 90% in the year 2016/17, 91% in the year 2017/18. In the other two out of the four items there is an increase in positive responses in year 2015/16 and 2017/18 which follows the trend, but in the year 2016/17 there is a dip in positive responses, pupils often feel love for their

family, and pupils often feel they really belong to a family, 92 % in the year 2015/16, a dip to 91% in the year 2016/17 and a slight increase to 94% in the year 2017/18.

In terms of relationship with nature, there are marginal differences and fluctuations over the three-year period. In three out of the four items, there is a slight decline in positive responses from the first year (2015/16) to the third year (2017/18), with a dip in positive responses in the second year (2016/17), these are for: pupils believe they often look at the stars and the moon, 63% in the year 2015/16, 64% in the year 2016/17, and 61% in the year 2017/18; pupils believe they often watch a sunrise or sunset, 63% in the year 2015/16, 59% in the year 2016/17, and 61% in the year 2017/18; pupils believe they often go for a walk in the park, 52% in the year 2015/16, 49% in the year 2016/17, and 51% in the year 2017/18. In one out of the four items, there is an increase in positive responses, for pupils believing they often spend time in their garden, from the first year (2015/16) to the third year (2017/18), with a depreciation in the second year (2016/17), 61%, 58% and 66% respectively.

In terms of relationship with God there is a decline in positive responses in all of the items over the three-year period: 60% of pupils in the year 2015/16 often feel God cares for them, 55% in the years 2016/17 and 2017/18; 56% of pupils in the year 2015/16 feel God is their friend, 50% in the year 2016/17, and 51% in the year 2017/18; 50% of pupils in the year 2015/16 believe they spend time thinking about God, 41% in the year 2016/17,

and 39% in the year 2017/18; 45% of pupils in the year 2015/16 believe they often talk with God, 32% in the year 2016/17, and 36% in the year 2017/18.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to look at what can be learned about the spiritual health of 7- to 11-year-old pupils within some church schools in the Diocese of Truro by applying the Fisher instrument for spiritual health (FGLL). Analysing table 9.1, and table 9.3 (where the statistical significance testing takes place) from the results section in this study, the following conclusions can be deduced, thereby providing further evidence regarding pupils' spiritual health.

In this study table 9.1 (item of rest of test correlations) shows an alpha coefficient of .87 and a percentage variance of 35%. This is in line with previous findings with regard to the alpha coefficient, as it exceeds .7 (Cronbach, 1951). This is comparable with similar results in Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2018) where the alpha coefficient for the scale of spiritual health is .87 with 9- to 11-year-old pupils, and the percentage variance is 36.1%. This supports the reliability of the Fisher instrument for spiritual health employed in the five schools.

In this study table 9.3 (mean scale scores by sex, school year, and year of survey) revealed the following three findings. For the first finding, concerning mean scores by sex, illustrates there are no significant sex differences with girls having a mean score of 63.3 and boys having a mean score of 62.2 with regard towards their relationship with self,

relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God, based on the Fisher instrument FGLL. Evidence to support no significant sex differences in mean scores between boys and girls can be found in the following research findings: Fisher (2000) in a study using the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) revealed no gender differences; Gomez and Fisher (2005) with regard to the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (SWBQ) revealed similar results for both boys and girls; Fisher (2007) with regard to teacher views found little differences by gender; Fisher (2010) using FGLL at primary level saw no gender differences ($t(320) = 1.23, p = .22$); However, Fisher (2015a) found that girls have a higher score than boys.

For the second finding, as pupils progress up the school spiritual health measured on the Fisher instrument FGLL declines (year 3 mean score of 66.1, year 4 mean score of 65.1, year 5 mean score of 60.0, year 6 mean score of 58.5). This difference is highly significant ($F = 31.89$). Similarly, Rymarz and Tuohy (2008) revealed that as pupils progress from primary to secondary school the primary pupils' relationship with God declined. Fisher (2010) also found that pupils' relationship with God declined from lower secondary school (12- to 14-year-old pupils) to upper secondary school (15- to 18-year-old pupils) in catholic schools ($t(462) = 4.07, p < .001$) and independent schools ($t(167) = 2.80, p < .01$).

For the third finding, exploring the three years in which the survey was completed, although the mean scores decreased slightly over the

three years (2015/2016 is 63.5, 2016/2017 is 62.3, 2017/2018 is 62.4) this decline was not statistically significant ($F = 1.13$).

To sum up, this study shows what is going on in five schools in Cornwall with regard to pupils' spiritual health when applying the Fisher instrument for spiritual health (FGLL). In this study the following conclusions might be drawn.

The Fisher instrument for spiritual health (FGLL) worked as a useful tool in the context of this study to find out the spiritual health of pupils. The results from this study were able to be compared with previous studies: female pupils have slightly more (not statistically significant) positive mean scores than male pupils in the four domains of relationship with self, relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God; as pupils journey up the school from year 3 to year 6 pupils' responses in the four domains declines; and there is a marginal but not statistically significant decline in responses in the four domains over the three-year consecutive academic period.

Applying the Fisher instrument for spiritual health (FGLL) did provide a snapshot of five schools belonging to the same Church of England Trust of schools. The results provided useful in providing data for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

However, there are limitations to this study. In a cross-sectional study one cannot assume that the pupils would have been the same from one year to the

next and thus strictly comparable. Moreover, the numbers of pupils were smaller than in some of the previous studies employing the Fisher measure. This study involved carrying out the questionnaire over three consecutive academic years, maybe leaving a longer time frame between would have shown more differences.

In terms of directions for future research, from a church school perspective future, research could look at using the Fisher instrument for spiritual health (FGLL) to provide evidence for SIAMS inspections.

Chapter 10

Drawing the strands together

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise what has been discovered regarding the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican Church primary schools based on the findings from each of the six focussed research studies regarding the views of school: governors; prayer requests shaped by pupils; religious experience; attitude towards Christianity; appreciation of school ethos; and spiritual health. Reviewing each chapter will enable key findings to be drawn together. At the same time, attention will be drawn to the limitations with these studies along with suggestions for ways in which further work can build on these studies.

From an historical context the involvement of voluntary organisations in educating the nation's children was initially the only form of schooling available from 1811. In 1870 the state became involved by providing non-denominational places in the development of board schools. The 1944 Education Act was instrumental in securing the Church's continued involvement in the education system where voluntary schools could either become voluntary aided or voluntary controlled, the former resulting in the Church having more control over its schools. The state schools were run by the local education authority. In 1992 the National Society took responsibility for inspecting the Christian distinctiveness of its schools, and began the process that led to what is currently known as Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

Distinctiveness of Anglican Church primary schools

The introduction to this thesis identified that the core assumption underpinning SIAMS is that church schools are different, that church schools are distinctive. The assumption is that this distinctiveness is rooted in the school's Christian vision. The intention of the SIAMS inspectors is to examine the effectiveness of the school's Christian vision. This is made clear in the introduction to the current documentation by Dr Margaret James, National Director of SIAMS who writes as follows

SIAMS inspection retains its primary focus on the effectiveness and impact of the school's Christian vision... . School communities will be encouraged and enabled to share stories and narrative evidence of ways in which their Christian vision has enabled and continues to enable them to bring about flourishing in the lives of those whom they serve and with whom they work. (National Society, 2022, p. 3)

It is in this spirit of the way in which SIAMS conceptualises and speaks about distinctiveness and effectiveness that the title for and primary research question of the thesis has been framed. The SIAMS system is not concerned to assess distinctiveness in a comparative sense (for example by comparing with schools that are not church schools) but in a descriptive sense. What do church schools say about their distinctive nature? Then having established the nature of the distinctive claims made by church schools (arising from their Christian

vision), SIAMS focuses on the effectiveness of these claims in the sense of asking whether church schools display what they claim to display.

It is against this background that this thesis identified six specific themes discussed within the literature and relevant to the concerns of the SIAMS inspection system that could be shaped for empirical investigation. Drawing on van der Ven's notion of research-based reflective practice, these themes were selected to equip the author with a range of research skills that would enable her to function more effectively within her professional context as a research-based reflective practitioner. At the same time each of these six studies was conceived as making an original contribution to the research literature and preparing the way for a future publication. Now the purpose of this concluding chapter is to summarise the main findings from these six specific research studies, to focus the key conclusion and main contribution to knowledge, to acknowledge the limitations with the study, and to chart suggestions for further work.

How governors perceive their role within a church school

Summary

Chapter four looked at 'how governors perceive their role within a church school', and addressed the research question 'Do governors in church schools regard their role as impacted by the school's Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?' It did this by focussing on a cross-section of governors from one local church school governing body.

This new study consciously built on three previous studies that had looked at the role of governors across church schools in the dioceses of Oxford, London, and Chichester in the 1980s. These previous studies had suggested that the distinctiveness of church schools could be weakening in the future. This suggestion had been based on the following factors: only foundation governors were strongly committed to maintaining the Christian character of a church school; parent governors seemed not to value the school's ethos as highly; there were fewer appointments of committed Christians as governors; and as younger groups of governors were appointed, they tended not to be regular church attenders (Kay, Piper, & Gay, 1988; Gay, Kay, Newdick, & Perry, 1991; Stone, 1991). Drawing on the findings suggested by these previous studies, the new study described in chapter four set out to discover whether these conclusions were supported.

While the studies conducted in the 1980s has employed qualitative methods, the qualitative study, reported in chapter four, allowed for a more detailed focus into one governing body. By looking at a cross-section of governors (head teacher, head of school (staff governor), incumbent, another foundation governor and parent governor), this study determined how each saw their role within the school. The characteristics of each governor comprised: age, type of governor, religious affiliation, attendance at church, prior governor experience, length of present governance. Semi-structured interviews with each governor focussed on their views on key areas of church schools, staffing, church school compared to community school, worship, the role of the vicar, RE curriculum, and the role of a governor, and how church schools compared to

community schools. This gave an insight into how each governor viewed their role within one school governing body.

The main findings

Each governor (head teacher, head of school (staff governor), incumbent, another foundation governor and parent governor) viewed their role depending on the aspects of the school for which they believed they were responsible. On one hand, the head teacher, head of school (staff governor), and parent governor appeared to see their governor role as focusing on specific areas of work: for the head teacher what it meant leading a school, and for the head of school and parent governor it meant academic progress and pupil attainment. Both the foundation governor and the incumbent saw their role as broadly supportive of the school community.

Analysis of each of the key areas from the semi-structured interviews examined whether there was evidence from governors which showed them upholding the Christian distinctiveness of the school. In the key areas of church school, staffing, worship, the role of the vicar, RE curriculum, and the role of a governor, and church schools compared to community schools, all the governors gave evidence that included components which could provide SIAMS with evidence that what these church schools said they were doing in terms of Christian distinctiveness, they were putting into practice. However, it was the regular church attendees, the foundation governors, who emphasised the pastoral role they play in the school. This supports the findings of Kay, Piper, and Gay

(1988), Gay, Kay, Newdick, and Perry (1991), and Stone (1991) that foundation governors are more likely to maintain the Christian character of a church school.

Key conclusion

The key conclusion for this study is that the composition of the governing body remains important in defining the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican church primary schools, and that the foundation governors are particularly important in this regard.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations employing a qualitative method with a semi-structured interview approach. Although the study involved a cross-section of governors from one governing body, there was only one representative from each type of governor.

Suggestions for further work

An in-depth study such as this, though more time consuming than employing a survey or questionnaire, provided valuable evidence into the thinking of each governor represented. To provide more solid evidence it would be beneficial to draw on a much wider sample of governors across a variety of church schools in order to explore the effect of different levels of church attendance not only on the views of foundation governors, but also on the views of parent governors and staff governors. This would then provide stronger evidence against which to test whether the Christian character of a church school is being upheld by governors,

or whether there should be cause for concern regarding the future Christian distinctiveness of church schools.

Investigating pupils' religious experience through a labyrinth

Summary

Chapter five looked at 'investigating pupils' religious experience through a labyrinth' and addressed the research question, 'Do church schools provide creative opportunities for religious and spiritual experience, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?' It did this by exploring the experiences pupils encountered when taking part in a specific activity, an activity involving a labyrinth.

All schools since the 1944 Education Act have been required to promote the spiritual development of their pupils, and are now required to show evidence to support this during inspections: Ofsted and SIAMS (HMSO, 2002; the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, 2013; and more recently the Church of England Education Office, 2021). The intention of this chapter was to examine the way in which pupils encountered religious experiences, as conceptualised by Smart (1986), through engaging with a labyrinth. A labyrinth was chosen as the event in which pupils would take part because the literature describes the activity as both suitable for encountering experiences or phenomena which can be expressed in either religious or non-religious ways (Welch, 2010; Williams 2014; and Norton, 2014).

This new study consciously built on previous research, carried out by ap Siôn and Windsor (2012) and Francis and ap Siôn (2013), that had looked at Ninian Smart's seven dimensions of religion as a tool to record people's experiences where behaviours, beliefs, experiences, communal reactions and how the place plays an important part were observed. A reason for employing this approach was that Ninian Smart's seven dimensions of religion can be applied to encountering spiritual experience whether it is explicitly religious or secular. Drawing on previous research, the new study described in chapter five set out to discover if this phenomenological model could be applied to primary school pupils.

The study explored primary pupils' religious experience by analysing responses and observations to a series of activities based in the form of a labyrinth experience from one school. Data from focus groups involving a sample of pupils from the three classes across the school (4- to 6-year-old pupils, 6- to 9-year-old pupils, and 9- to 11-year-old pupils) looked at four of Ninian Smart's seven dimensions: ritual (what the pupils did), experiential (how the pupils felt), ethical (pupils' moral concerns), and material (structures and ritual objects). The other three dimensions (mythological, social and doctrinal) were evidenced from a participant observer's perspective. Both the focus groups and the participant observations gave insight into whether this specialised educational experience would facilitate something that could be described as religious experience for primary pupils.

The main findings

This study demonstrated that both the labyrinth experience and Smart's phenomenological approach were appropriate for finding out about pupils' religious experience. Three conclusions were deduced.

First, evidence was provided from a non-religious viewpoint, as well as from a study of religion approach. The following illustrated the non-religious context. The ethical dimension of the pupils' understanding of life were illustrated with responses such as:

“Temptation to eat/ not eat the apple”.

“Throwing away your bad feelings”.

The experiential and ethical dimensions of the pupils' meaningful relationships were illustrated with responses such as:

“Didn't like mean stuff because brothers and sisters can hurt you – bite you”.

“Praying helps people who might be hurting”.

“Happy because you were praying for people”.

The experiential dimension of the pupils' love and knowledge of the transcendence were illustrated with responses such as:

“Peaceful – felt as if no one else was around - just you and the music”.

“Relaxing and calm with the stone in your hand and the music”.

The labyrinth experience enabled pupils to focus and to have first-hand experience, resulting in a reaction. These were illustrated across three of the dimensions: ritual, experiential, and material. There was a ritual dimension while walking:

“Walking around and getting to the middle”.

“Going round and round the spirals on the floor”.

Also, the experiential dimension was involved:

“Thoughtful”

“Inner peace”

There was the material (sound) dimension, as well:

“It’s really quiet when you listen to the music, and you can concentrate on the patterns, you can just look down at the floor you don’t have to look anywhere else”

“Just you and the music”.

Second, four of the dimensions dominated and could be evidenced via the focus groups: the ritual, experiential, ethical, and material. The other three dimensions of mythological, social, and doctrinal could only be evidenced using participatory observations.

Third, Ninian Smart’s seven dimensions of religion could be used to provide evidence of spiritual development for school inspections such as required by SIAMS. Progression across the age ranges showed that the younger pupils

provided more concrete evidence compared to older pupils, whose responses started to become more abstract.

Key conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is that church schools can be effective in offering educational experiences appropriate for promoting the spiritual development of their pupils in a way that embraces both religious and non-religious interpretation.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations as this involved employing a qualitative method using focus groups comprising six pupils from each of the three age ranges. This small number of pupils might not fulfil the criterion of being a representative sample with relation to pupils' age, gender, and background. This qualitative approach relied on the interpretation of the researcher, and this might skew the findings.

Suggestions for further work

This study provided evidence with regard to the religious experience of pupils based on an educational activity that involved a labyrinth experience. Three aspects of this study combined to provide an original piece of research: the educational activity of a labyrinth experience, the analytic framework offered by Smart's conceptualisation of religious experiences, and focus groups as a research method. This approach can now be commended and replicated among a larger cohort of pupils in order to generate a more substantial body of data.

Applying the ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer

Summary

Chapter six looked at ‘applying ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer among primary school pupils’, and addressed the research question, ‘Do church schools provide creative opportunities for pupils to engage with prayer as a core component of the school’s Christian vision, as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?’ Prayer requests written by primary school pupils were analysed.

This new study consciously built on previous research conducted by Tania ap Siôn, who developed a prayer framework applying it across twelve prayer studies (see, for example, ap Siôn 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2017). The framework was called the ap Siôn Analytical Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP). This framework consisted of three elements: prayer intention, prayer reference and prayer objective. Prayer intention recorded the types of prayers written by the prayer-creator: health and illness, death, growth (affective), work, relationships, disaster and conflict, sport, travel, housing, open intention, and general. Prayer reference recorded for whom the prayer-creator was offering the prayer: themselves, family and friends, pets, and world. Prayer objective recorded the effects of the prayers expected by the prayer-creator: primary control or secondary control. The framework was developed so that the same method could be applied to different studies and then comparisons could be made across a variety of contexts. Although this framework had been applied across twelve

other studies, no previous study had been conducted among primary school pupils.

The first aim of the new study described in chapter six was to explore whether the apSAFIP framework would be viable with primary aged pupils. It also looked at the location of the praying and if this impacted on the prayers written. Prayers, over a period of ten months from one school, were collected from both infant (4- to 7-year-old) pupils, and junior (7- to 11-year-old) pupils, and were analysed using the framework. The findings were then compared with the previous studies employing the framework.

The main findings

This study demonstrated that the prayers written by primary school pupils could be categorised according to the apSAFIP prayer framework's three elements of prayer intention, prayer reference, and prayer objective. The fact that primary pupils' prayers could be grouped according to the framework demonstrated that the framework was viable when applied to primary aged pupils.

Chapter six also examined whether the context and location played a role in the types of prayers written by the pupils. Several factors appeared to influence the types of prayers generated: the fact that the school was a church school and that there are regular opportunities through the school day when prayers are observed; the environment which gave pupils the opportunity to write prayers; specific times and events such as the Christian year, charity work, and the time

the prayers were written; and the purpose of the prayers, including the opportunity to share their prayers.

In line with previous studies employing this framework, pupils generated prayers according to the prayer intention categories of health/illness, death, open intention, general, growth, relationships, disaster/conflict, work, housing, travel, sport, miscellaneous. With regard to prayer reference (themselves; family and friends; pets; and world) results from this study could be compared to previous studies. The infant prayer requests were similar to results from earlier studies where the majority of prayers written were for other people. In the case of the junior prayer requests, prayers written referred to global issues. Also, in line with earlier studies, the prayer objective related to primary control, both for the infant pupil and junior pupil prayer requests. These findings supported the growing literature that the apSAFIP framework functions as an effective tool for researching prayer.

Key conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is that church schools can offer effective contexts in which primary school pupils learn to pray, and that different contexts can promote different prayer characteristics.

Limitations of the study

While the study has successfully demonstrated that the apSAFIP framework provides an effective tool for researching prayer among primary school pupils, the scope of the study has been limited by the number of pupils involved and the

number of prayers generated for analysis. Prayers were analysed from only one school. The number of prayers analysed were few: 78 prayers from infant pupils, and 274 prayers from junior pupils.

Suggestions for further work

This study showed that the framework was workable with primary aged pupils. There have been a number of studies in other contexts, but only one study employing the apSAFIP framework with primary school pupils. Further work could look at replicating the present study among a larger number pupils which would increase the number of prayers written. It would also be useful to look at prayer requests from other schools. Increasing pupil numbers and the number of schools involved would build up the literature among a younger generation of people and add to the current literature covering other age groups.

Applying the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Summary

Chapter seven looked at ‘applying the Francis Scale of attitude toward Christianity among 7- to 11-year-old pupils’ and addressed the research question, ‘Are church school communities within which the school’s Christian vision is reflected in a positive attitude toward Christianity?’

This new study consciously builds on a research tradition initiated by Leslie Francis in the 1970s. Francis developed an instrument to assess the attitudinal

aspect of religion. This instrument was focussed on Christianity (Francis, 1978a, 1978b) and has subsequently become known as the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC). This instrument comprised 24 items, within 5 areas of Christian belief: God, Jesus, Bible, church, and prayer. It made use of a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was tried and tested across a variety of different languages and extended to other religious traditions. Numerous studies applying the instrument have been carried out with different aged groups: pupils from both primary and secondary phases of education, as well as adults. Since this framework had been used across a number of other studies, it formed the basis for this new study.

Drawing on previous research, the new study described in chapter seven applied the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (FSAC) to a group of primary aged pupils from five schools within a multi-academy trust of schools. It looked at these pupils' attitudes toward Christianity by applying the instrument and observed how the results compared with previous studies. Pupils from years 3, 4, 5, and 6 participated in the study over a three-year period. The thesis being tested in this chapter was that church schools are communities within which pupils display a positive attitude toward Christianity.

The main findings

By comparing the findings from this study with earlier studies the following results emerged. With regard to the reliability of the scale, the findings in this study were very similar to those from previous studies; with an alpha coefficient

of .97, this was within the range of alpha coefficients of .95 to .97 reported by Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2017). In this study the findings suggest girls have a more positive attitude toward Christianity compared to boys, which is in line with findings from previous research (Francis and Wilcox, 1998). The results also suggested that as pupils progress from one school year to the next there is a decline in their attitude toward Christianity, this is in line with previous studies by Kay and Francis (1996) and Francis (1989). Looking at the results over the three years, there was only a marginal decline in attitude toward Christianity from the previous years.

Key conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is that, overall, there is a very positive attitude toward Christianity among the younger pupils within church primary schools, but there is progressive deterioration in attitude toward Christianity as pupils progress through the school.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations to this study. Although the questionnaires were administered over three consecutive years and had the same year groups (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) participating, the pupils may not have had precisely the same characteristics as the pupils who had taken part in the previous year. As in all cross-sectional studies it cannot be assumed that the groups across different years are strictly comparable. Also, the number of pupil responses involved in this study were fewer compared to earlier studies. This study had 1091 pupil responses over three years, compared with Francis' foundation studies that were

conducted in 1978, when 2388 pupil responses were recorded, and in 1982, when 2295 pupil responses were recorded (Francis, 1986b). Also this study was concentrated within a short (three-year) period. A wider timeframe between the administering of the questionnaires might have resulted in further change over time with regard to pupils' attitude toward Christianity. Francis noted more diverse findings when carrying out the questionnaire with primary aged pupils in 1974, 1978, and 1982 (Francis, 1986b).

Suggestions for further work

This study provided evidence of how pupils viewed Christianity by looking at their attitude toward Christianity through the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity. Further work could look at how this evidence can be useful for SIAMS inspections in relations to church schools, to explore whether what schools are saying their distinctive nature is happening in practice.

Applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Summary

Chapter eight looked at 'applying the Lankshear Student Voice Scales among 7- to 11-year-old pupils' and addressed the research question, 'Are church schools communities in which the pupils recognise the characteristics promoted by the SIAMS inspection system as reflecting the church school ethos?'

Several studies have examined what schools believe a school ethos should be (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, and Smith, 1979; Allder, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995). Other studies have illustrated the lived experience of a school's ethos based on the opinions of stakeholders, which also included the viewpoints of pupils themselves. The latter studies were generally small scale, involved the designing and implementation of an instrument which was used to aid the evaluation a school's ethos (Smith, 1998; Rudduck & Flutter, 1998; Donnelly, 2000). It was not until later that pupils' voice was looked at as a means to evaluate the ethos of a school through reviewing pupils' attitude toward school. Reviewing these studies showed problems in defining and measuring school ethos.

This new study consciously built on research conducted by David Lankshear among pupils attending church schools in Wales. In 2013 the Church in Wales supported the development of a Student Voice Project. The aim of that project was to implement a method which could be used to learn about the distinctiveness of church schools with specific reference to section 50 inspections. The focus looked at the components of a church school's ethos and school worship.

Three projects running from 2013 to 2017, involved administering a questionnaire designed by David Lankshear and called the Lankshear Student Voice Scales. This questionnaire comprised six scales which looked at the pupils' attitude toward six areas identified by the SIAMS inspection criteria as relevant to assessing school ethos: attitude toward school character, attitude toward school

experience, attitude toward school teachers, attitude toward relationships in school, attitude toward school and environment, and attitude toward school worship. The first five scales comprised six items and the final scale (attitude toward school worship) comprised five items. It made use of a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was used with pupils in year 5 and year 6 within the primary school sector. These projects were well documented within the following studies by Lankshear, Francis and Eccles (2017), Francis, Lankshear, & Eccles, (2018), and Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles (2021), and the studies showed that the questionnaire was tried and tested. The results from the questionnaire could then be used as evidence to support school inspections. Since the questionnaire has been used across a number of other studies, it formed the basis for a new study.

Drawing on previous research, the new study described in chapter eight applied the Lankshear Student Voice Scales (LSVS) to a group of primary aged pupils from five schools within a multi-academy trust of schools. It looked at what was learned about the ethos of schools by applying this instrument and how the results compared with previous studies. Pupils from years 3, 4, 5, and 6 participated in the study over a three-year period.

The main findings

By comparing the findings from this study with earlier studies the following results emerged. The reliability of the scales appeared close to that of previous studies. First, the data from the six scales (school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school and environment, and school

worship) were considered reliable due to the similarities of the alpha coefficient, the means and the standard deviations. This study had alpha coefficients ranging between .71 and .81, compared to previous studies which had alpha coefficients ranging between .75 and .80 (Lankshear, Francis, and Eccles, 2017; Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles, 2018; Francis, Lankshear, and Eccles, 2021). Second, of the six scales, pupil attitudes with regard to school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school and environment were viewed more favourably than pupils' attitude toward school worship. Third, female pupils had a more positive attitude in the scales of school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school and school worship compared to male pupils. Fourth, as pupils progressed through the school their attitude toward school declined. Fifth, attitudes toward school declined slightly across the three years in which the surveys were administered.

Key conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is that the Lankshear Student Voice Scales, developed originally for use in church primary schools in Wales, worked well within these church primary schools in England. The Lankshear Student Voice Scales provided a well-textured account of the pupils' assessment of the ethos of church schools across the six areas: school character, school experience, school teachers, relationships in school, school environment, and school worship.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations to this study. The numbers of pupils involved were considerably smaller than in the previous studies conducted in Wales.

Administering the questionnaire yearly over three consecutive years produced only marginal, if any changes of attitude. A more extended period of time between administering the questionnaires may have shown greater changes in attitudes.

Suggestions for further work

This study provided evidence of pupils' attitudes toward different aspects of church schools through the six scales within the Lankshear Student Voice Scales. Further work could look at how schools use the data for school development purposes, and how the data could be used as a means to provide evidence for SIAMS inspections in church schools.

Applying the Fisher's model of spiritual health among 7- to 11-year-old pupils

Summary

Chapter nine looked at 'applying the Fisher model of spiritual wellbeing among 7- to 11-year-old pupils' and addressed the research question, 'Are church school communities in which pupils experience a good level of spiritual wellbeing as implied by the SIAMS inspection system?'

There have been a number of studies which have examined spirituality and religion within primary schools. With regard to the education agenda the term 'spiritual development' within the school curriculum has been considered a requirement since the Education Act of 1944 (HMSO, 1944). Spiritual

development is assessed through school inspections such as Ofsted, and SIAMS for church schools. Monitoring and inspection of spiritual development has relied on the experience and interpretation of an individual inspector or group of inspectors. Within the education system, according to Fisher (2015a), there is a reliance on the use of qualitative methods for evaluation. To make use of quantitative methods would enable a more rapid collection and a greater number of viewpoints and experiences from people to be identified.

This new study consciously built on a research tradition initiated by John Fisher. In 1998, drawing on the work of the National Coalition on Aging (1975), Fisher conceptualised spiritual wellbeing through four domains: concerning relationship with self, community, environment and transcendence. Fisher used this understanding to redefine spiritual wellbeing for research among pupils. To begin with, the instrument developed by Fisher to measure spiritual wellbeing (later termed spiritual health) applied to pupils in secondary schools. Fisher (2004) later developed an instrument which applied to pupils in primary schools. This instrument was the Feeling Good, Living Life Instrument (FGLL). It was this instrument which was employed in this chapter. This instrument was in the form of a questionnaire which comprised 16 items to evaluate affective responses within the four domains of relationship with self, relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God. It made use of a 5-point Likert scale. This instrument was used across three studies. The instrument was regarded as reliable and appropriate due to it having been tried and tested with different types of schools: state, independent, and Christian. Since this

instrument has been used across a number of other studies, it formed the basis for this new study.

Drawing on previous research, the new study described in chapter nine applied Fisher's instrument Feeling Good, Living Life (FGLL) to groups of primary aged pupils from five schools within a multi-academy trust of schools. It looked at pupils' spiritual health from these schools by applying the instrument and observed how the results compared with previous studies. Pupils from years 3, 4, 5, and 6 participated in the study over a three-year period.

The main findings

By comparing the findings from this study with earlier studies the following results emerged. With regard to the reliability of the survey, the findings in this study were in-line with previous studies based on the alpha coefficient exceeding .7 (Cronbach, 1951), this was comparable with similar results in Francis, Fisher, Lankshear, and Eccles (2018) where the alpha coefficient for the scale of spiritual health was .87. It was this instrument which was employed in this chapter, since it had been adopted by Francis, Lankshear and Eccles (2018) for the study in Wales on which the current work builds.

There were no differences with regard to boys and girls in respect of relationship with self, relationship with family, relationship with nature, and relationship with God, thereby matching the findings from previous studies. This is in agreement with previous studies which reported no gender differences (Fisher, 2000; Gomez and Fisher, 2005). In this study as pupils progressed

through the school their spiritual health appeared to decline. This is comparable to previous studies where pupils' relationship with God declines as they increase in age (Rymarz and Tuohy, 2008; Fisher, 2010).

Key conclusion

The key conclusion from this study is that the Fisher measure of spiritual health, developed originally in Australia, worked well within these church primary schools in England. The instrument provided a theoretically coherent account of the spiritual health of the pupils. This could provide evidence for SIAMS inspections to show whether church schools display what they claim to display regarding their distinctive nature.

Limitations of the study

There were limitations to this study. Even though the questionnaires were administered over three consecutive years and had the same year groups (years 3, 4, 5, and 6) participating, the pupils may not have had precisely the same characteristics as the pupils who had taken part in the previous year. As well, a wider timeframe between the administering of the questionnaires might have resulted in change over time with regard to pupils' spiritual health.

Suggestions for further work

This study provided evidence of the spiritual health of pupils by employing the Fisher instrument FGLL. Further work could look at applying this instrument (FGLL) over a wider timeframe to map the spiritual health of pupils over time. This would provide evidence for SIAMS inspections in relations to church

schools, showing that what church schools say they do actually happen in practice.

Making an original contribution to knowledge

The introduction to this thesis defined two main aims. The first aim was established in my personal and professional context as a reflective practitioner working within church primary schools in a multi-academy trust in the Diocese of Truro. My aim was to demonstrate that from this context it was possible to shape a series of discrete but inter-related educational research studies that had direct relevance to my personal and professional practice and development, as well as direct relevance to the enhancement of educational practice within my school. The second aim was established in the literatures on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools. My aim was to shape a series of discrete but inter-related educational research studies within my own school in a way that could make an original contribution to the developing literatures on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools. Based on the six studies reported in this thesis the following three claims can be made.

The first claim examines the impact on the personal and professional development of me as teacher, reflective practitioner, and researcher, and on the schools within the multi-academy trust. Educational practice and pupil experience was enhanced within the schools by serious engagement with educational research of this nature. Intellectual engagement with issues concerning the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools were raised in conversations with the governors, in conversation with the staff, and in wider conversations with the

Diocese. The project has shown that investing in staff development in this way is of benefit to the individual teacher, to the schools, and to the wider Church.

The second conclusion examines the wide variety of research questions and research methods that can enhance insight into the distinctiveness and effectiveness of church schools. The three projects described in chapters four, five, and six, provide just three examples of the wider contribution to the literatures relevant to church school studies: research on school governors, research on spiritual experience, and research on prayer.

The third conclusion examines the recognition of a method for evaluating the ethos of church schools within England. The three projects described in chapters seven, eight, and nine all draw on the Student Voice Project that was designed by David Lankshear for enhancing school improvement and for bringing the student voice into conversation with the SIAMS inspection processes. The Student Voice Project comprised three components, the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (chapter seven), the Lankshear Student Voice Scale (chapter eight), and the Fisher model concerning the four domains of spiritual health (chapter nine). This is the first study to have tested the Student Voice Project within church schools in England. The study has found the project to be useful and helpful in the case of church primary schools in England. On this basis the Student Voice Project can now be commended for wider use within the Church of England.

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Appendix A

Ethical approval for the labyrinth experience

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPHIL/PhD, EdD)



Student number: u1490757

Student name: Felicity Henschley

PhD EdD MA by research

Project title: The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican Church primary schools, developing a series of inter-related and focussed research based papers employing evidence from the Diocese of Truro.

This is for a specific empirical study concerned with the pupil responses to a labyrinth experience (a labyrinth is a particular kind of pilgrimage walk).

THE AMMENDMENTS GIVEN BY PROFESSOR G LINDSAY ON 26.05.15 ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN RED IN THE TEXT.

Supervisor: The Revd, Canon Professor Leslie Francis

Funding body (if relevant):

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

This empirical study is set within the context of a joint project led by a Church of England Academy in Cornwall and its local church, with which one school in the Academy works closely. All pupils in the school will be offered the educational opportunity of 'walking a labyrinth' in the local church and reflecting on their experiences afterwards. From this wider group, pupils will be randomly chosen to form three focus groups, containing both boys and girls and comprising 4 to 5 pupils. The focus groups will reflect the three-class structure of the school: 4 – 6 years, 6 – 9 years and 9 – 11 years.

The focus groups will explore the participants' reported experiences of the labyrinth walk (with reference to experience during the walk itself as well as post-walk reflection). This phenomenological approach will explore broad areas/dimensions such as the physical practice/ ritual, emotional / feeling, cognitive / thinking, for example.

Participants

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

The participants in the research are pupils, randomly selected, aged between 4 years old and 11 years old. They will form three focus groups, containing both boys and girls and comprising 4 to 5 pupils. The focus groups will reflect the three-class structure of the school: 4 – 6 years, 6 – 9 years and 9 – 11 years.

Parents will be asked for their consent for their child's participation in the research via a letter. In the letter the purpose of the research will be briefly outlined, the anonymity of participants protected, and the right to remove their child from the research project at any time. The child/ren will also be asked if they are willing to take part in the focus groups and know that they are free to remove themselves from the group at any time.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

The participants' rights and dignity will be respected in the following ways:

1. The pupils will be anonymous. All written and recorded material will contain only basic information about the pupils (age group and sex).
2. All notes and recordings related to the pupils' responses will be **maintained until the degree has been awarded, then they will be destroyed.**

The transcriptions will refer only to age group and sex as well as pseudonyms to protect their identity. All records will be destroyed on completion of the research (**once the degree has been awarded**).

3. Cultural and religious values will be respected as the pupils will be invited to take part in the activity and subsequent focus groups. The focus groups will explore areas related to spirituality broadly conceived which are equally open and relevant to all religious traditions and worldviews.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

Confidentiality will be assured in the following ways:

1. All notes and recordings related to the pupils' responses will be destroyed immediately after transcription. The transcriptions will refer only to age group and sex as well as pseudonyms to protect their identity. All records will be destroyed **once the degree has been awarded.**
2. All data records will be stored in password access files.
3. The thesis, reports for the school and **peer-reviewed** publications will all comply with the anonymity outlined above. No individual pupils will be identifiable in the text of any such publications.
4. On completion of the research all notes and recordings made will be destroyed. Recordings will be destroyed immediately after transcription (**once the degree has been awarded**).

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

Consent from the participants: Pupils will be asked if they would like to take part in the focus groups. They will be made aware that they can leave the focus group at any time.

From others: Letters will be sent to the parents asking for their permission for their child to take part in the focus group. In the letter the purpose of the research will be briefly outlined, the anonymity of participants protected, and the right to remove their child from the research project at any time.

If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

Prior consent will be asked from the parents of the pupils involved. Children, as minors and vulnerable participants, need their parent's/ guardians' consent.

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

Children will be told the purpose of the research undertaken by myself and will be asked if they would like to take part in the focus groups. They will be asked at the end of the focus group session if they are happy for their comments to be included in the research.

I am a teacher in the Academy and I have conducted other empirical research projects in the Academy before for other postgraduate programmes. **It will be made clear to the parents that I am a doctoral student at Warwick University.**

Competence

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

I will be using a proven research method – focus groups – which I have researched beforehand to identify its appropriateness for this context. I have also conducted other postgraduate research projects for other university programmes using both focus groups and other qualitative research methods, and therefore, have identified the exploratory focus group method as appropriate for this very new area of study.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

The participants' safety and well-being will be safeguarded as I am a teacher in the school. As an employee of the school where the interviews are taking place I **already have had the relevant CRB check.**

The name of my university supervisor (Professor Leslie J Francis) will be given to the school and parents to contact if they want to know more about the research or have any concerns about it. **In addition the name and contact details of one of the directors of the Academy (The Revd, Canon David Elkington) will also be given. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding in school has been provided full details of the project and these links will be continuous throughout the project.**

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy.)

No

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I do not anticipate any ethical dilemmas arising from this research. As with all discussions involving spiritual aspects of education, personal issues may arise. However, as an experienced classroom teacher, I am capable of dealing with any unexpected sensitive issues appropriately during the focus group sessions.

In terms of making notes of and writing up the research, any sensitive areas will be discussed with my supervisors about how or whether material should be included, and in the unlikely case of having such material it will be appropriately anonymised and referred to in an appropriately generalised way.

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I shall be the only one interpreting the evidence, **only myself and my supervisors will have access to the material.**

It will be publically available only in restricted formats, such as the thesis, peer-reviewed academic publications, and official general reports for school management.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

If sensitive issues emerge within the focus group or a participant becomes upset the focus group will be stopped, and appropriate counselling will be given. As an experienced teacher, I am well placed to recognise when this would be needed.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

I will ensure the integrity of the research by following carefully established research methods in a professional way, which is balanced, objective and also respectful to the diverse beliefs and values of the participants.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?



Any potential future reports or publications will be discussed with the research supervisor. Depending on the contributions made by the researcher and supervisor these will be submitted either as co-authored publications or as sole authored publications.

Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

Signed:	
Student: <i>A. Hinchley</i>	Date: <i>1.06.15</i>
Supervisor: <i>A. P. James</i>	Date: <i>2.06.15</i>

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

Office use only	
Action taken:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved with modification or conditions – see below
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below
Name:	<i>G. Girdsop</i>
Signature:	<i>[Signature]</i>
Date:	<i>8/6/15</i>
Stamped:	 
Notes of Action:	

Appendix B

Ethical approval for the pupil prayer requests

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPhil/PhD, EdD)



Student number: u1490757

Student name: Felicity Henschley

PhD EdD MA by research

Project title: The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican Church primary schools, developing a series of inter-related and focussed research based papers employing evidence from the Diocese of Truro.

This is for a specific empirical study concerned with the pupil responses to a labyrinth experience (a labyrinth is a particular kind of pilgrimage walk).

Supervisor: The Revd, Canon Professor Leslie Francis

Funding body (if relevant):

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

This empirical prayer study is set in the context of one Church of England primary school in Cornwall. Both infant and junior pupils were given the opportunity to write prayer requests and place them on a prayer tree.

Participants

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

The participants in the research are pupils aged between 4 years old and 11 years old. Prayers are to be anonymously written.

Parents will be asked for their consent for their child's participation in the research via a letter. In the letter the purpose of the research will be briefly outlined, the anonymity of participants protected, and the right to remove their child from the research project at any time. The child/ren will also be asked if they are willing to write prayers and have them placed on the prayer tree in the communal area of the school.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

The participants' rights and dignity will be respected in the following ways:

1. The pupils will be anonymous. The pupils will not have their name attached to their prayers. The only basic information about the pupils will be the age group (infant or junior).
2. All pupils' prayer requests will be maintained until the degree has been awarded, then they will be destroyed.
3. Cultural and religious values will be respected as the pupils will be invited to take part in writing prayer requests.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

Confidentiality will be assured in the following ways:

1. All pupil prayer requests and records will be destroyed once the degree has been awarded.
2. All data records will be stored in password access files.
3. The thesis, reports for the school and peer-reviewed publications will all comply with the anonymity outlined above. No individual pupils will be identifiable in the text of any such publications.
4. On completion of the research all notes and recordings made will be destroyed. Records will be destroyed immediately once the degree has been awarded.

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

Consent from the participants: Pupils will be invited and given the opportunity to write prayer requests. Children will be able to withdraw their participation.

From others: Letters will be sent to the parents asking for their permission for their child's prayer requests to take part in the study. In the letter the purpose of the research will be briefly outlined, the anonymity of participants protected, and the right to remove their child from the research project at any time.

If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

Prior consent will be asked from the parents of the pupils involved. Children, as minors and vulnerable participants, need their parent's/ guardians' consent.

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

I am a teacher at the school and I have conducted other empirical research projects in the school before for other postgraduate programmes. It will be made clear to the parents that I am a doctoral student at Warwick University.

Competence

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

I will be using a proven research method – the ap Siôn Analytic Framework for Intercessory Prayer (apSAFIP) – which I have researched beforehand to identify its appropriateness for this context. My study will be able to make comparisons with the proven research method.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

The participants' safety and well-being will be safeguarded as I am a teacher in the school. As an employee of the school where the prayer requests are taking place I already have had the relevant CRB check.

The name of my university supervisor (Professor Leslie J Francis) will be given to the school and parents to contact if they want to know more about the research or have any concerns about it. In addition the name and contact details of one of the directors of the Academy (The Revd, Canon David Elkington) will also be given. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding in school has been provided full details of the project and these links will be continuous throughout the project.

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy.)

As a teacher within the school I already have the necessary DBS check.

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I do not anticipate any ethical dilemmas arising from this research.

In terms of making notes of and writing up the research, any sensitive areas will be discussed with my supervisors about how or whether material should be included, and in

the unlikely case of having such material it will be appropriately anonymised and referred to in an appropriately generalised way.

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I shall be the only one interpreting the evidence, only myself and my supervisors will have access to the material.

It will be publically available only in restricted formats, such as the thesis, peer-reviewed academic publications, and official general reports for school management.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

If sensitive issues emerge within writing the prayer requests focus then the writing of the prayers will be stopped, and appropriate counselling will be given. As an experienced teacher, I am well placed to recognise when this would be needed.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

I will ensure the integrity of the research by following carefully established research methods in a professional way, which is balanced, objective and also respectful to the diverse beliefs and values of the participants.

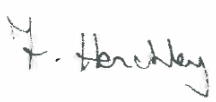

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?




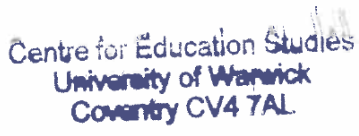
Any potential future reports or publications will be discussed with the research supervisor. Depending on the contributions made by the researcher and supervisor these will be submitted either as co-authored publications or as sole authored publications.

Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

Signed:	
Student: 	Date: 9.8.18
Supervisor: 	Date: 9.8.18

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

Office use only	
Action taken:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved with modification or conditions – see below
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below
Name:	Michael Wyness
Signature:	
Date:	12/2/2019
Stamped:	
Notes of Action:	

Appendix C

Ethical approval for the Primary Pupil Survey Questionnaire

Application for Ethical Approval for Research Degrees

(MA by research, MPhil/PhD, EdD)



Student number: u1490757

Student name: Felicity Henschley

PhD EdD MA by research

Project title: The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anglican Church primary schools, developing a series of inter-related and focussed research based papers employing evidence from the Diocese of Truro.

This is for a specific quantitative study concerned with the Primary Schools Attitude Survey.

Supervisor: The Revd, Canon Professor Leslie Francis

Funding body (if relevant):

Please ensure you have read the Guidance for the Ethical Conduct of Research available in the handbook.

Methodology

Please outline the methodology, e.g. observation, individual interviews, focus groups, group testing etc.

This Primary Schools Attitude Survey is set within a Church of England Multi-Trust Academy comprising five schools in Cornwall. All pupils from 4 year groups: Year 3, 4, 5, and 6 will take part in the survey through completing the Primary Schools Attitude Survey questionnaire devised by the St Mary's Centre, Wales. The results will be analysed using the SPSS coding criteria formulated by the St Mary's Centre, Wales.

Participants

Please specify all participants in the research including ages of children and young people where appropriate. Also specify if any participants are vulnerable e.g. children; as a result of learning disability.

The participants in the research are all junior aged pupils, from the five schools belonging to a multi-academy trust, between 7 years old and 11 years old.

The schools will be using the Primary Schools Attitude Survey initially as an aid in providing an overview of the schools within the Multi-Academy Trust. In the first year the survey would act as a bench mark to find out where the schools are at present. The survey would then be administered on a yearly cycle.

Respect for participants' rights and dignity

How will the fundamental rights and dignity of participants be respected, e.g. confidentiality, respect of cultural and religious values?

The participants' rights and dignity will be respected in the following ways:

1. The pupils will be anonymous. All material will contain only basic information about the pupils (year group, sex, size of school).
2. All questionnaires related to the pupils' responses will be maintained until the degree has been awarded, then they will be destroyed.
3. Cultural and religious values will be respected as the pupils will have the opportunity, by taking part in the Primary Schools Attitude Survey questionnaire, to provide the 'pupil voice' which will be used by the schools/ academy to support future school development planning and initiatives.

Privacy and confidentiality

How will confidentiality be assured? Please address all aspects of research including protection of data records, thesis, reports/papers that might arise from the study.

Confidentiality will be assured in the following ways:

1. The pupils' questionnaires will refer only to year group, sex and size of school to protect their identity. All questionnaires and records will be destroyed once the degree has been awarded.
2. All data records will be stored in password access files.
3. The thesis, reports for the school and peer-reviewed publications will all comply with the anonymity outlined above. No individual pupils will be identifiable in the text of any such publications.
4. On completion of the research all notes and recordings made will be destroyed once the degree has been awarded.

Consent

How will prior informed consent be obtained from the following?

Consent from the participants: Pupils will be presented with the questionnaire as a means for the schools to become more informed about their attitudes.

From others: The headteachers will be sent a letter asking for permission for their schools to take part in the Primary Schools Attitude Survey by all junior children (children in years 3, 4, 5, and 6). In the letter the purpose of the research will be briefly outlined.

If prior informed consent is not to be obtained, give reason:

The headteachers will have given their consent for the pupils to take part in the Primary Schools Attitude Survey therefore permission from the parents will not be sort. It will then be up to the discretion of the class teacher and his/ her knowledge of the children when administering the questionnaire as well as the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

Will participants be explicitly informed of the student's status?

Pupils will be presented with the questionnaire as a means for the schools to become more informed about their attitudes.

Competence

How will you ensure that all methods used are undertaken with the necessary competence?

I will be using a proven research method – SPSS coding – which I have researched beforehand to identify its appropriateness for this context, since it has been trialled in all church in Wales schools. This method is appropriate for this area of study.

Protection of participants

How will participants' safety and well-being be safeguarded?

The participants' safety and well-being will be safeguarded as the class teachers in each of schools will administer the survey and all have had the relevant CRB checks.

The name of my university supervisor (Professor Leslie J Francis) will be given to the school to contact if they want to know more about the research or have any concerns about it. In addition the name and contact details of one of the directors of the Academy (The Revd, Canon David Elkington) will also be given. The members of staff responsible for safeguarding in school has been provided full details of the project and these links will be continuous throughout the project.

Child protection

Will a CRB check be needed? Yes No (If yes, please attach a copy.)

No

Addressing dilemmas

Even well planned research can produce ethical dilemmas. How will you address any ethical dilemmas that may arise in your research?

I do not anticipate any ethical dilemmas arising from this research. The Primary Schools Attitude Survey questionnaire will be administered by the class teachers and know their children/ class, as well as the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The headteachers will have given their consent and will have discussed any issues prior to the questionnaire being administered.

In terms of making notes of and writing up the research, any sensitive areas will be discussed with my supervisors about how or whether material should be included, and in

the unlikely case of having such material it will be appropriately anonymised and referred to in an appropriately generalised way.

Misuse of research

How will you seek to ensure that the research and the evidence resulting from it are not misused?

I shall be the only one interpreting the evidence, only myself and my supervisor will have access to the material.

It will be publically available only in restricted formats, such as the thesis, peer-reviewed academic publications, and official general reports for school management.

Support for research participants

What action is proposed if sensitive issues are raised or a participant becomes upset?

If sensitive issues emerge then the class teacher and SENCO know their children and would be able to give stop the questionnaire and give appropriate counselling. These people will be well placed to recognise when this would be needed.

Integrity

How will you ensure that your research and its reporting are honest, fair and respectful to others?

I will ensure the integrity of the research by following carefully established research methods in a professional way, which is balanced, objective and also respectful to the diverse beliefs and values of the participants.

What agreement has been made for the attribution of authorship by yourself and your supervisor(s) of any reports or publications?

Any potential future reports or publications will be discussed with the research supervisor. Depending on the contributions made by the researcher and supervisor these will be submitted either as co-authored publications or as sole authored publications.

Other issues

Please specify other issues not discussed above, if any, and how you will address them.

Signed:		
Student:	<i>J. Herchley</i>	Date: <i>19/10/2015</i>
Supervisor:	<i>Leslie J. Turner</i>	Date: 19/10/2015

Please submit this form to the Research Office (Andy Brierley, room WE133)

Office use only	
Action taken:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved with modification or conditions – see below
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below
Name: <i>Michael Hammond</i>	
Signature: <i>Michael Hammond</i>	
Date: <i>29/10/2015</i>	
Stamped:	
Notes of Action:	

Appendix D

Governor interview transcriptInterview areas/ questions

Age - 21 -30, 31 -40, 41 – 50, 51 - 60, 61 – 70, 71 – 80....

Religious affiliation **Methodist/ C of E**

Attends church **Irregularly**

What kind of church **C of E/ Methodist**

Type of governor **Ann (Head)**

A church school

What do you think is the purpose of a church school?

It depends on what the trust deed of the church school states and they actually vary so for e.g there's quite a big difference between the trust deed of St. Sebastian and St. Jude School, St. Sebastian the trust deed states that I think on the lines of it's a school for the village and it's not really referring to the development of Christianity or anything to do with being a c of e, here at St. Jude that's different because within the trust deed it definitely states something about that the school is linked very much to the church and it is for the good if you like of the c of e so it's quite different and I think those trust deeds and how people feel about schools are sort of change them and change how people feel about them, in our case our two schools are different because of that.

Should a church school be different from a community school?

Yes it should because it needs to be clearly shown it is a church school so from its outward signs anyone really walking in should be able to see it is a church school, you would expect all the normal things that take place in a community school you would still expect people to be courteous and have respect and so on and probably have values but within a church school you would definitely expect the children and parents and staff to adhere to Christian values and there to be obvious signs that you are a c of e or if it were a catholic school for example outward signs of that so as you walk through the school you would definitely be quite clear that the school was a church school.

- In what ways?

Staffing

What are your views on whether there should be or should not be some committed Christian staff in the school?

That's quite a hard one I think it depends on the level of the appointment, certainly for headships and deputy head level I think there has to be something in an advert to say that you would expect either someone to be a committed Christian or at least agree to abide by the ethos and Christian values and mission statement within the school. I think it depends a bit on the staffing you have if you come into schools and have a complete range of people you can often find you can have people with completely varying views and completely different levels of religiousness, however by working in a church school they would have to adhere to the rules and regulations expected of delivering RE, cw and so on and you would expect that from every member of staff actually whatever they felt about things because by choosing to work in a c of e school they are choosing and obviously prepared to do those.

- If the staff are not Christians should they be expected to support the Christian ethos of the school?

Yes because they shouldn't have taken a job in a c of e school

- In what ways?

Church school/ community school

In what ways should a church school be different from a community school?

Probably like the links between the school and the church would be quite paramount and with visitors children's understanding of the church year, understanding the key reasons behind some of the key festivals, the key times within the church year and the children having a good knowledge of what it means and whenever or if they choose to go into the church they are not surprised by all the different parts of church services that they sort of understand that so the link with the church is probably one of the main differences I also think the use of the Bible and values that link into the bible and the way people would be expected to treat each other it takes on a slightly different level in a church school than in a community school so you would expect everybody to behave, you would expect everybody to be courteous but within a church school you can link some of these things into basically how Christmas things should happen and how people should be and act with one another and that link can quite often be made. other difference would definitely be signs and symbols round the school and things like the children's understanding of cw and how they would be expected to join in with cw tends to be very different in a community school where everything tends to be based far more around morals and so on than Christian values.

What should be distinctively Christian about/ for a church school?

The amount of RE that would be taught, I think that in a community school it still needs to be taught but in a church school that should be given slightly higher status and therefore higher amount of curriculum time though whether that stays with the changes of curriculum I'm not sure. Probably the celebratory type of things as well, I know every school will celebrate Christmas and harvest whether they Easter I'm not sure so as a church school we would be celebrating along with the community and parents all the different main festivals.

What should be distinctively Anglican for a church school?

If it is a c of e school then definitely the whole issue of following the Anglican year, following the liturgy in the same way that would happen for weekly services so there's a definitely link between church and school and then come back round to the whole thing that the children understand what Anglican services are actually about and if they go into different churches they may see slightly different things but it's all basically going within a similar format.

How should a church school be different from a community school?

- What should be in the mission statement?

Everybody helped to write it – it is very good our mission statement. Short, sharp, snappy.

- What values should be emphasised?

The values we have are fine I far prefer the values known by everybody than having lots and lots of them which sort of ends up a slight watering down, it would be very different in a community school, it would probably have some of the similar values but they wouldn't be thought of in the same way that we think of our values, it's not treated like that it's very much along moralistic things and being right and wrong and yes becoming a good human and a good adult eventually but in community schools there would be no emphasis of the values coming from the bible coming from the teachings of Christ it's a very different situation.

- What physical signs should there be that this is a church school?

We could still do with more artefacts and things that the children can have and can use I think the difficulty with having too much.

Engraved in the doors, we've got crosses we've got clear values, it may need updating somewhat at the moment, I think there are plenty of signs and symbols round the school because otherwise we can have too much, we need to remember for some people they are not coming here because it is a church school, they are coming here because it is a village school, I think we've got it about right.

- What place should there be for the Eucharist?

That's a hard one because I think a lot of the parents feel a bit different about that, the Eucharist if it's treated at it's at the level we would expect as an adult I think it has very very significant meaning and it's quite difficult to relate that to the children and for them obviously the majority of them have not been confirmed then not making their choices about their own personally religion, their religious affiliation, it can be a difficult one. Definitely an opportunity for the Eucharist but definitely not an expectation that everyone has to take part in it because I think for some people they just would not want their children to do that, fine to go up for blessings and so on but that's not necessarily the Eucharist we are referring to so I think there's a place for it but I would be wary about the amount of times that was offered as a service for the children.

- What connections should there be between the school and the church?

Loads but both ways, and sometimes it hasn't felt like that, sometimes it's felt like the school was always having to do everything and sort all things out and then there's an expectation from the church that we will just then do something for them whereas sometimes we've been left without for a long time and so as far as I'm concerned it's definitely needing to work both ways if we want the support from the church and the church community for things in the same way that they demand it back of us whether it be using the stage or the number of children or coming along to services or whatever it might be, though I'm for everybody doing as much as they can to keep the church and the church school thriving but it does need to be a 2 way process.

- Liturgical year?

Worship

How do you see the role of collective worship in a church school?

Differently than what it would be in a community school where it should be based around Christianity, the use of Bible stories, Psalms, songs, whatever as the main part of the cw preferably with singing involved, prayers and where possibly the typical parts of an Anglican service to be replicated to give that slight element of being in our classroom but it's like being in the church or in the hall and again it depends how parents are at what level as to how children respond in cw and I think for some children and some parents the children are here because it is a village school I don't think they are particularly interested in what we do in cw but really it's our job the children get to see what things could be like within a church and to understand the way the c of e actually works.

Do you think collective worship is different than in a community school?

RE curriculum

How do you see the role of RE in a church school?

RE is a difficult one in that, RE has an important as it does in any school and whilst the majority of time needs to be given over to Christianity I also think it's at the heart of a church school for multiculturalism to really to be given as much attention and I think it's even more so, even more important in a village in the middle of

Cornwall where children just do not see people of different races, different cultures, different religions and I would want children to learn through RE very much how other people are and the close links between all the religions how certain aspects whether you are a Sikh, a Muslim, or a Hindu or a Methodist whoever there are central values that run through every religion irrespective of all the wars that go on and trying to get some children see that is, that's really a vital part of the role of a church school, not to be seen to be indoctrinating but seen to present all views so that children are given enough information so as they grow up if they have not already made up their minds about religion or how they feel about things they are given enough information and experiences to make that decision.

How is RE different in a church school when compared to a community school?

It probably is not that much different again it would just be the amount of time being expected to be covered for Christianity and for also in the curriculum there would be a far greater emphasis on special festivals, and an expected extra allocation of time to these things and that would be part of the RE curriculum.

How do you see the role of a vicar in a church school?

It would be nice to think that they could be regarded as another permanent member of staff and in the past there have been times when that is nearly been possible that people pop in, they're known, they're seen, they're known by the parents, they're known by the children but I think as time has moved on and their jobs are very very different their lives are very different I don't think they can offer as much time as they would like to and for as what we would like to see, so ultimately anything they're in their position to offer the school is obviously accepted with open arms I think. I would have quite liked far more, I would like them to be in far more to get to know the people very well to start to get to know the names of the children, who's who and so on rather than just be the children seeing them just in church, I don't think they're seen as an intricate part of the school, they're seen as an intricate part of the church and I would far rather seen they are an intricate part of the school so that the church and the school do have that link but I understand time wise that is very difficult to do

The role of a governor

How involved should a governor be a church school?

Whether it is a church school or community school it doesn't make any difference. Governors should be involved in understanding in what they need to do. In a church school then more governors coming along to specific services in the church.

How do you see your contribution as a governor to this church school?

Being the head is a very different role that the other governors. At the meetings I give lots of information, answering questions on the leadership of the school. Other governors can take up an issue with me over other things.

Would you like to make additional or different contributions?

I am the one who instigated extra meetings/ trainings after listening to people and their needs and understandings. I see we need extra time/ training for the governors to be happy with progress and improvement.

Has anyone explained to you the role of Governors?

It was about being in a church school yes and because of the nature of the governors I've never been expected to be a foundation governor so that role has in the past been left to individuals to discuss with each other and to when vacancies have arisen there's always been lots of information about what about being a foundation governor actually means but in my case that's not been part of it.

So when you came to St. Sebastian was it explained?

It was about being the head of a church school yes and that was all part of the information and that was all linked into the interview process as well but not as such about being a governor of a church school.

Do you feel you have a clear understanding of your role in regards to RE and cw in school?

Why?

Currently I'm not working in the RE syllabus so it would be unfair to say what is necessary in RE. I have overall knowledge than a good working knowledge.

How informed or aware do you feel about what happens in school? (about CW or whatever).

As the head I am informed about everything, sometimes I have too much information.

Appendix E

Group focus transcript

Year group – 5 and 6

Age – 9- to 11-year-old pupils

Children – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Write to say something about the labyrinth yesterday, words, sentences a starter activity

inner peace, peaceful, quiet, silent, calm – very quiet not really wanting to say anything

relaxing,

whispers

don't know what else to do.

Circle one one's you've done

One child said, 'I've not done anything'

Teacher reassured this was ok

Look at piece of paper so we can always look back at it.

Got another piece of paper out

Look at it a bit more in depth – area you are going to have a bit of the paper to write words or sentences

1) On your piece of paper what is the think you remember the most

Time for children to write, helped each other with spellings

Child 4 - **You have thoughts you don't normally have**

Utter silence

Writing for 2.22 minutes then they were to share their ideas and explain to the others.

Child 4 – **I wrote having thoughts you don't normally have – cos you think about things basically which you don't normally have – there's utter silence and you have time to think because you have a clear mind and you can think of anything you want.**

Other people can always agree if they want or come in with their own thoughts.

Who would like to go next?

utter silence so I had to focus in on what someone had written

Why have you written? – 'the feeling of the labyrinth was very weird' – can you explain weird? –

It made me feel really weird it did, it's like when you lie down and feel really tired, like falling asleep and I felt like that. I felt that someone was holding the rock

Someone was holding the rock in your hand and it wasn't you?

It felt like someone else

Child 4 – **It was as if you were hypnotised and walking round in a circle**

It felt cool – Charlie

What do you mean by cool?

He couldn't explain 'cool'

Child 2 – **when you're walking round the labyrinth I thought the music in the background made you concentrate on the spirals on the floor, you just kept going round and round and round.**

Did you like having the music in the background?

yea It blocked out other noise

When you walked round the labyrinth it felt really tiring because the music was in the background. It felt calming, relaxing

Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Good thing

Why is it a good thing?

Because you can have thoughts, it was loud you couldn't think about what you have just been doing...

It makes you think of other things.

Did you think people were watching you?

Yea

Who did you think was watching you?

I don't know

Did you think the people in the groups were watching you?

Yea

Other people, people you can't see

2. Write how you felt, elaborate how you felt?

Do you think you've already done that?

Self-conscious - Child 2

Can't really explain it – Child 6

The utter silence with the music playing you just felt relaxed, you were able to think of things and you just felt calm – Child 4

3. What thing did you enjoyed the most?

I enjoyed seeing the other people when you passed them on the labyrinth

Different people have enjoyed different things the most, you can share what you've enjoyed the most and why

Child 6 – I enjoyed the reflections the most because it's like you can write down things that you would not normally write down like feelings and stuff. I liked it because I had like 5 minutes peace.

The labyrinth because it felt relaxing and really calm and when we held the stone in our hand and the music in the background relaxing

people agree then people could say they agree

yea I liked the labyrinth

Child 1 – I enjoyed the labyrinth the most because you could hear yourself think, like it's really quiet when you listen to the music, and you can concentrate on the patterns, you can just look down at the floor you don't have to look anywhere else

Child 2 – I enjoyed chucking the burdens away

So why was that, why did you enjoy chucking the burdens away?

It gave you self – assurance, it just felt good to let it go

What did people think about Meggie's comment?

It was great fun just throwing them in the bin

Child 2 – you can do it mentally but you can do it physically as well

Child 4 – at least you're chucking your bad feelings away not your good ones

Child 4 – My favourite part was when I went the labyrinth and heading towards someone and at the very last second when you bump into them you turn a corner and go in the opposite direction

Child 5 – My favourite was the labyrinth because it was very spiritual and calming

What do you mean by spiritual?

I don't know

Where did you hear the word spiritual before?

Your mum may have said it

4. Which did you least enjoy? if there was a least you enjoyed

You mean the one you didn't enjoy the most?

Child 6 – what you want to be when you are older

I like that

T – different people liked different things

Child 4 – I liked that because it made you dream of things you could be and made you think

I don't know what was my least

Child 4 - I didn't like it at the font because we could see all the apples and we were holding them and we could smell them and we could eat them – no, just holding them it's just like a temptation

Child 5 – the tree of hope because it wasn't that interesting

Which part in reflections didn't you like because there were 3 things you could do

Looking on the map because I didn't put anything on there because

Why didn't you put anything on?

People had already put up on there and there was no more space to put on up on there.

I didn't really like the tree of hope –

I didn't like the reflections – I just did happiness

Can we go round and say what we least enjoyed?

Child 4 – I least enjoyed at the font when we were looking at the apples and holding the apples but we weren't allowed to eat them, it was a bit of a temptation

What do you think of Child 4's comment?

Child 5 - It's a bit like in the desert

Girls what do you think of the boys' comment?

Girls – I wasn't that tempted, I was pretty tempted to eat it

Child 2 – I don't know how it was to have anything to do with spiritual to be honest

I don't get why apples

Child 4 - It is a burden to carry around

Child 5 – My least favourite was the tree of hope

Child 6 – writing down what you wanted to be when you are older. It was really hard because I don't know

Who agrees with Child 6?

It felt a bit intrusive, someone else might not agree with you, they might think so but they don't agree with you

Who didn't mind putting things on the tree?

Child 1 – because you're actually doing something

Child 1 – my least favourite was the prayers because you just sat there

Child 1 – I actually like doing something than sitting there and praying

Does anyone want to come back on what Child 1 has said?

Child 2 – you should be able to pray in your own time, it shouldn't be a forced thing

Child 4 – I think that with Child 6's and Child 5's the tree of hope that I disagree because it make you dream about what , you want to be, it make you think about what you want to be when you are older

Child 3 – The reflections because when you stick on the stickers on, I didn't have anything to do and it was a bit worrying because I didn't stick anything on I didn't write anything on there because it was full up

Anyone want to agree with Child 3 or...

Child 1 – it should be places you've been and stuff, relatives and stuff, not many people have relatives in different countries

Child 2 – I didn't like writing one word on a foot because I think it's useless to write one word, one word isn't going to change the world you need the world to change
Anyone want to say about what Child 2 has said?

Child 6 – you need the whole world to change

Child 2 – then many people have different beliefs and religions and they don't want to change, which you shouldn't force people.

Child 5 – you shouldn't force people to do anything unless it's...

Child 4 – If we were trying to make them believe in our religion we would just have to stop and think like if they came over to us and tried ...

5. Which part would you like to do again?

All - Labyrinth, girls - maybe on my own though so no one else there, on your own maybe quite dark, you're more like self-reliant, without other people coming in, it would be better to do it on your own with no one else there, it would feel more special, more calm, it should be a minute in between not 30 seconds, it would be better if it had a few turns where you have a choice to go

What's the purpose of a labyrinth though? About choices

A labyrinth you have to follow the path

Would you like to have the opportunity to walk the labyrinth again?

I would like if the person is in the middle then you go

With no one there, then you'd have to wire up the music

With other people you think you're going to crash into them

6. Write just one word that could describe the labyrinth

Child 4 - peaceful – when you're walking round it you feel you are at peace and nothing
peaceful

Child 2 - enhancing – enhance your emotions, you can find your faults in life and you could correct them

Child 5 - special – because it felt special when you were walking round it

Anyone what to elaborate on what Child 5 has said?

Child 2 - the labyrinth has chosen you and you're walking round

Child 4 - It makes you happy that you've followed the path to the very end

Child 2 – you know where to go you can just follow it

Child 6 – It is peaceful because no one can change what you think when you're there no one's around you and you're listening to the music and it's basically you and the music

Child 3 - calm – with music in the background it's really calm, you close your eyes and you're in your own labyrinth

Child 1 – I've done calm because when you listen to the music in the background you can just listen to that and block everything that's bad out

Stations good idea – you had other things to do as well

Festive time it draws you off what you're doing, you're thinking more about Christmas