

## Church of England Education Office

# Do schools prepare young people for their future careers?

## APPG for Education Inquiry Call for Evidence

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Church of England has a long history of involvement in education and working with children and young people. Approximately one million children attend Church of England schools and we have a strong network of people who work with children, young people and practitioners in dioceses, parishes, and nationally. The Church also has a strategic role in developing and supporting chaplaincy in further and higher education settings.

### 2. Some Relevant Statistics

- 2.1 There are nearly 4,500 Church of England Primary schools (25% of all primary schools), and over 200 Church of England Secondary schools (6%). Over 700 Church of England schools have become academies (either sponsored or through conversion). Church of England dioceses recruit, train and support an estimated 22,500 governors.
- 2.2 Approximately 500 schools in the independent sector affiliate themselves to an Anglican identity, either through their foundation deed or in their day-to-day ethos.
- 2.3 Through chaplaincy there is an Anglican presence in the vast majority of England's HEIs (Higher Education Institutions). In addition, the twelve institutions that have an explicitly Anglican Foundation support the training of over 20% of all primary school teachers in the country. We are also involved in sixth form and further education chaplaincy.
- 2.4 There are just over 8,200 full time, paid Anglican clergy in dioceses and a further 1,500 in paid chaplaincy (primarily in hospitals, prisons, armed forces and education). There are a large and growing number of paid children and youth workers in parishes.
- 2.5 The Church of England is a major employer, and not only of clergy. In some cases the church may be one of the major employers in an area. Church of England schools and Anglican foundation universities are a part of this provision.

### 3. What should our schools be focusing on in order to prepare young people for the future?

- 3.1 Education must be broad, well-rounded and focused on preparing young people to fully participate in society. A broad education, combining skills and subject knowledge, fostering

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high aspiration and good character will support young people for their future lives as well as their future careers.

3.2 Schools that can articulate their vision for education as one where traits like wisdom, hope, community and dignity have a place will understand that profound and embedded values require outstanding academic performance, SEND provision, leadership, governance, teacher support, and other elements that will, in the long term, mean that their students are prepared for their future.

3.3 It is crucial that SEND provision is a part of the conversation around the future careers of young people. Being successful as an adult will not look the same for everyone and this should not be ignored. The futures of these young people must be of importance to schools and they must be adequately equipped to offer the specialist care needed in many circumstances.

3.4 Schools and colleges should have focussed and specific careers education but it needs to be a part of a broader vision of educating children and young people to realise their potential and fully participate in society.

#### 4. Should schools play a role in developing skills, or should subject knowledge be prioritised?

4.1 Skills and subject knowledge are not in competition with each other. They are both intrinsic elements of becoming the well-rounded adults who are of most value to employers and to society. In the same way that good character education contributes to good academic performance, developing skills and being given the tools to understand and grasp the future should inspire children in their pursuit of knowledge.

4.2 As such, there should be no need to prioritise one over the other. They should be seen as complementary elements in a broader commitment to providing an education that allows children and young people to flourish and prepares them for their adult life.

#### 5. Who should be responsible for ensuring that young people develop soft, financial and entrepreneurial skills?

5.1 Developing soft skills is a part of the provision of good character education. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility's *Character and Resilience Manifesto* pointed out that "these are the attributes that enable individuals to make the most of opportunities that present themselves, to stick with things when the going gets tough, to bounce back from adversity and to forge and maintain meaningful relationships."<sup>1</sup> It also cited research that "young people from less affluent backgrounds became less likely than their more fortunate peers to develop these skills"<sup>2</sup> The development of soft, financial and entrepreneurial skills are not only essential for employability they are also a way of ensuring social mobility. The APPG report also pointed out "a growing body of evidence suggests that so-called 'soft' skills may often be as closely associated with levels of educational attainment as IQ scores."<sup>3</sup> Again, this shows that skills, subject knowledge and character education are not competing forces but essential, complementary elements that help children and young people to flourish.

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<sup>1</sup> The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility with CentreForum and The Sutton Trust, *Character and Resilience Manifesto*, 2014, p.11. <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2014-appg-social-mobility.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 12, citing Pearce, Dixon, Reed and Margo, 'Freedom's Orphans: Raising Youth in a Changing World', IPPR, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

- 5.2 For the teaching of these skills to be successful they need to be embedded in the culture of the school and not be seen as irrelevant additions that do not have any obvious connection to the lives of the students. There is also a great deal of scope for profound and embedded links between employers, schools, and colleges so that young people can have their ambitions challenged and expanded by an awareness of the opportunities and possibilities available to them.
- 5.3 The Lifesavers programme is a collaborative partnership between the Church of England and Young Enterprise. It supports the delivery of values-based financial education within primary schools. It allows learning in the classroom to be put into practice through engagement with a school savings club as well as encouraging the participation of parents and the wider community. One of the key outcomes of the programme is that the financial education it provides is “fully embedded” in the participating schools.
- 5.4 Responsibility for soft skills belongs to all those engaged in education provision but the links between them must be strong and thorough. We know that children need information and advice at a much earlier age than is generally supposed. Aspiration is set from a very young age. A Head Teacher in a Church of England Primary school told us, “We start the attitude and when they are with us – we talk to them in year five and year six and say that they have the skills to go on to university and do a degree ... and it’s about working with our high school colleagues to keep those aspirations high.” Strong links between education providers are vital for maintaining aspiration throughout a student’s schooling.
6. Do education providers have the resources to prepare young people for the workforce?
- 6.1 The Schools National Funding Formula will redistribute funding rather than provide additional funding so this will mean losers as well as winners. The impact of inflation, higher employer National Insurance and pension contributions means that education providers could very well find it difficult to resource careers provision in the best way possible for their students’ futures.
- 6.2 Research by The Key has shown that SEND funding is a particular concern for schools and that these children are not getting the support they need to flourish.<sup>4</sup> Cuts in funding for high-needs provision means that specialist colleges have more difficulty resourcing their work and some face going out of business. Again, this is a crucial part of providing for young people’s future careers because they will have very different needs and must be supported if they are going to flourish.
- 6.3 It is unclear as yet whether the Careers and Enterprise Company will be able to provide the level of support needed by schools and there needs to be greater clarity around its objectives and outcomes.
- 6.4 In considering our preparation of young people for their future careers it is crucial that the scale and importance of FE and sixth form colleges is kept in mind. Some 773,000 16-18 year olds choose to study in colleges (compared with 442,000 in school sixth forms).
- 6.5 The evidence we have to date is that the availability and quality of careers education about vocational education in general and apprenticeships in particular is insufficiently consistent across schools and colleges. With the changes taking place in vocational education and the radical increase in apprenticeships, it is a key moment to work to create this consistency across the sector. Where there is availability and quality of careers education in vocational education and apprenticeships the effects are transformative for student choice and career

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-36425290>

outcomes. Examples of such good practice can be seen in a number of further education institutions, among them Derby College, North Warwickshire and Hinckley College, and the Bromley College group.

6.6 The merger of the Bromley, Bexley and Greenwich colleges, however, is a sign that further education institutions are having to act strategically to ensure that their vocational provision continues to serve their communities, especially as the Area Review process unfolds.

## 7. What examples are there of schools and colleges preparing young people well for the workforce?

7.1 In the newly publishing, *Schools for Human Flourishing*, Catherine May, the Head teacher of St Saviour's and St Olave's School (SSSO) in Southwark, contributes a chapter on the transformative power of cultural, aspirational, pastoral and professional capital in school education. SSSO is a comprehensive school for girls in one of the most economically deprived areas of the UK and has high rates of teenage pregnancy, knife crime and gang culture.

Against this backdrop, one might expect to find students with poor attendance, a lack of aspiration, low attainment and significant numbers of leavers being NEET (not in education, employment or training).

However, SSSO is a high aspiration, high achieving community which regularly sees students' progress to Russell Group universities and prestigious apprenticeships. We have not had a NEET student for many years.<sup>5</sup>

7.2 Themes of raising aspiration early, ensuring that children are able to pursue the career that is right for them, and broadening children's cultural opportunities come up again and again in Church of England schools. Catherine May goes on to outline the achievements of pupils at her school.

Successes have included the girl who was the only one of her six siblings to complete compulsory education without being permanently excluded, the girl who turned down a Russell Group university offer to take up an apprenticeship at PWC, and the girl now studying at Cambridge whose journey to this country during her young years was traumatic. There are countless other examples. This transformative journey is facilitated by our investment in cultural capital, along with aspirational, pastoral and professional capital.<sup>6</sup>

7.3 The joint-winner of the 2016 Department of Education Pupil Premium Awards, Northern Saints CofE Primary School, Sunderland has an explicit message of aspiration for their pupils. "We want children to have high aspirations for their futures. So building on our heritage we spend a significant amount of time encouraging children to think about what they want to do when they are older. We then plan out with them how they might achieve this. We aim to ensure that all our children finish their schooling with enough interests and opportunities to make choices to go to any University or College, work in local business or internationally. Aspiration is a key to educational success." This is embedded in the culture of the school, linking into everything from their behaviour and uniform policies to their Cultural Ambassadors programme.

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<sup>5</sup> Chambers, P. (ed.), *Schools for Human Flourishing*, The National Society (Church of England and Church in Wales) for the Promotion of Education, SSAT (The Schools Network) Ltd and The Woodard Corporation, 2016, p. 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

## 8. To help the APPG create a practical set of approaches and recommendations, we recommend:

- The Statutory Guidance published in March 2015, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools*, already outlines many of these points and should be accompanied by the resources and support that schools and colleges need to implement them.<sup>7</sup>
- Unpaid internships should be more strictly regulated, so that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are not priced out of these opportunities. Internships can provide benefits for both businesses and interns when it is done with forethought and investment. They should inspire young people and give them insight and encouragement for their future career development.
- Links between employers, schools, and colleges should be profound and embedded in the culture of the school. If skills are 'bolted on' and not intrinsically connected to their lives and futures they will have little value. It is important to remember that 40% of the workforce are non-graduates. Recent research by the Resolution Foundation found that non-graduates who had relatively highly-paid occupations were more able to access qualifications that closely matched the industry in which they worked and had greater access to training than those who ended up in low paying occupations and showed the lowest social mobility.
- Challenging and inspiring children and young people about their opportunities must begin early. A narrow focus on 16-18 year olds ignores evidence that children form their views at a much earlier age than previously supposed. We must raise aspiration early and follow that up with excellent FE and HE options.
- Information should be realistic and transparent so that young people understand career development, salary levels, etc. and do not find their vocation by trial and error.

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<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools*, 2015.

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