

## Review of Children and Youth Work in the Diocese of Monmouth 2009

### Introduction

The Hope for Monmouth document sets the agenda for the renewal of the Diocese of Monmouth under Bishop Dominic's leadership. It outlined a development of a strategy for growth. Part of this process was a Mission Action Plan for the Diocese which highlighted certain target concerns. One area of challenge for the Diocese was providing a strategy for work with children and young people. A review was set up to consider the present work and to offer proposals for further improvement where necessary.

**The Hope for Monmouth vision** speaks of a church *'where young people and children are welcomed and nurtured and have opportunities of worshipping in their own culture'*.

This is a great challenge to the church because the rich diversity of society, in terms of its beliefs and attitudes, offer a perspective that is often bewildering and fragmented. It is also clear that the young are generally those who are most influenced and shaped by a society that is not at ease with itself. However, the church is not the first place that the young would visit to make sense of their journey of life. Christian communities have become increasingly irrelevant to the vast majority in society and their image as places for the middle-aged and the elderly are not attractive to those who are young and young in heart! Their preoccupation with declining numbers, building maintenance and financial burdens presents a picture of an organisation often struggling to find its identity and its place in local life. The young do not come alone. They are accompanied and also encouraged by their parents and peers. If the general view of the church is a negative one, then it is unlikely to be sought out as a place to nurture children. It is clear that Christian work with children and young people cannot be achieved in isolation. It is the whole church community and its standing in society that provides the basis for welcome and nurture and one of the hardest challenges that the church faces today is to believe in itself.

The church's vision has remained constant: to be a distinct community that is in relationship with God through Christ and lives to reveal the Kingdom of God in the world. It promotes the good news of salvation and offers a way of love that is transforming and life changing and brings humanity into union with God. The church recognises that it is a community - or as St Benedict described it - a school of love - given to accomplish the Lord's service. All of us, young and adult, are students or disciples of Christ and are called to work and pray - and play! - in God's loving presence. There is no distinctive theology for children or young people. Jesus in his ministry did not particularly address the young - or if he did it was not recorded. His teaching is directed to all and in this way he values all equally. His famous references to children ( Matthew 19.14 & Mark 10.15) are not sentimental public relations stunts but rather a call for all to be open to the invitation to enter the Kingdom of God in an attitude of trust and obedience. Indeed he reminds us that children are an important part of the community not only because they are an intrinsic element of community but they demonstrate to us the necessity of openness and willingness to grow.

The vision for the parishes can be an exciting and hopeful one for our work with children and young people:

**We are called to be a welcoming community** for all including children and young people. To offer a community of love and truth and faith which invites and encourages all to discover their life in God through prayer and service and recreation.

**We are called to a nurturing community** for all including children and young people where all are disciples of Christ and are open to his transforming love. To offer a community of education based on gospel values of love, justice and service to others. To be a place where all can learn from each other and respect the gifts and talents that are given to all regardless of age.

**We are called to be an accepting community** for all including children and young people where there is openness to different cultural expressions especially in worship and life style. To offer a community which is willing to provide a place which accepts that the communication of God - in word, music, art or silence - is personal as well as communal.

The challenge is for the church to be a place where children and young people can discover a way of life that will enable them to mature into adults that are Christ like.

To live a life that is fully open to the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of humanity and to realise that in a success driven world, brokenness and vulnerability are as important gifts as confidence and strength. That as brothers and sisters in Christ they are called to accept the gift of love as well as to give love and to seek the great joy and wealth that only God can bring. This journey of holiness - for it can be no other - is not individually achieved but can only be made with companions on the way.

The church's duty of care to children and young people can only be truly realised in community for Christianity at its heart is relational. For Anglicans, the Christianity community is normally parish based. It is therefore important for children and youth work to be anchored in parish life. This may be the typical parish congregation or it may be another type of community. It is evident that there needs to be flexibility in finding ways of being church that can be useful in promoting communities that are welcoming, nurturing and open.

## **Overview of service offered to Children and Youth in the Diocese**

An essential element of the review was to have an accurate picture of the present work in the Diocese specifically for children and young people.

### **Present Diocesan Structure 2008-9**

#### **The Diocesan Council for Education**

*The aims of the Diocesan Council for Education is to promote within the Diocese the policy of the Church in Wales in regard to all aspects of education, both voluntary and statutory.*

The service for children and young people are divided into two distinct areas:

Statutory education provision

Voluntary education provision.

The management of service is through the Diocesan Council for Education, which is chaired by the Bishop. The secretary, Canon Keith Denison, who is Director of Education, has a pivotal role in the Council and has oversight of most of its provision. Other members of the Council are either Key Officers or representative clerical and lay members.

#### **Statutory education provision**

The Council provides a Diocesan service to statutory education through from primary, secondary, tertiary education and further education.

The most influential area in Diocesan life in terms of education is primary schools. There are presently 18 Church in Wales Schools. There are 10 Aided Schools and 8 Voluntary controlled schools. There is as yet no formal or statutory links with secondary education in the state sector.

The management of the Diocese's relationship with the schools are through the

Director of Education, (Canon Keith Denison)  
Schools and Children's Officer up to August 2008  
Schools Officer September 2008 onwards (Mrs Susan James)  
Bishop's Visitors to Schools

This provision is supported by a subcommittee -the Schools Committee which comprises of The Director, the Schools Officer and Head teachers and Foundation Governors of Church Schools.

In addition, the two private Haberdashers Schools in Monmouth have two Anglican Chaplains who maintain a good link with the Diocese. There is presently an initiative to have a team of lay chaplains at Hartridge School in Newport. Other informal chaplaincy arrangements in schools are widespread and our ecumenical partners have also been involved in similar projects and detached youth work services.

There is a Higher Education Chaplaincy led by Revd Andrew Morton and this covers mainly the Coleg Gwent provision.

A recent development has been a part time Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wales, Newport. The Chaplain, the Revd Mark Soady also has a Chaplain's assistant.

### **Voluntary Education provision**

The Council provides a Diocesan service to parishes through two officers:

Schools and Children's Officer covering children at primary school age ( 5-11) *up to August 2008*  
The Officer is supported by a subcommittee Children's Committee

Youth Officer (Mrs Pam Richards) covering young people (11-25)

The officer is supported by a subcommittee Youth Committee.

### **Additional Provision**

The Council also has an audio- visual resources committee which encouraged media resourcing for education by various projects.

### **Other Children and Young People's Work**

The Diocese also has a youth project with the Revd Justin Groves in the parish of St Paul's Newport and on the estate of Ringland in the parish of St Teilo's Newport.

The project at St Pauls is part of a mission enterprise to provide a city centre ministry. The pioneer ministry at St Pauls has attracted a variety of age groups but particularly teenagers and young adults.

An exciting development is a young person's Christian community based at St Teilo's Vicarage called the Lab House. It is beginning to make good contacts with the young people of Ringland and the establishment of a lay chaplaincy team at Hartridge School augurs well.

### **The impact**

The specific service offered to children and young people in the Diocese has been formally directed by the Council for Education and its sub committees. It offers an extensive support for promoting the church's care for children and young people in their wider education. The avenues for this support have been directed primarily through schools and parishes.

On the matter of schools, there is a good network for communication and consultation though the work of the Director of Education, the Schools Officer and the Bishop's Visitors. The Schools Committee, with Diocesan Officers, with Head Teachers and the Foundation governors offer a wide range of guidance and pastoral insight. Anecdotal evidence suggest that there is a good and positive relationship between the Church ( as represented by the Council and its officers ) and Church Schools and non church schools and staff.

It is obviously harder to gauge the situation in parishes and so a comprehensive questionnaire was sent out to all parish groups in April 2009 asking for a detailed account of children and youth work. (A copy of the questionnaire can be found attached at the end of the review ).

## Questionnaire 2009

The questionnaire was completed by 48 parishes groups out of 72 in total in the Diocese which represents 66% of the available data.

Although some notable parish groups were not included, the questionnaire represents a fairly accurate picture of the current involvement with children and young people.

Here are some helpful indicators:

### Attendance on a Normal Sunday

On average the number of children ( up to 11) attending church on a normal Sunday:

None	10%
up to 5	38%
5-10	38%
10-15	6%
15-20	2%
20-25	2%
25	2%
53	2%

The majority of churches have either up to 5 children or up to 10 children attending worship.

On average the number of young people ( up to 25) attending church on a normal Sunday:

None	18%
up to 5	61%
5-10	14%
10-15	7%

The majority of churches have up to 5 young people attending church on a normal Sunday

### All Age Worship

35 parishes ( 73%) have an all age service at some time.

74% of parishes have a monthly all age service

2% of parishes have a weekly all age service

24% of parishes have an all age service at other times

The average attendance of an all age service is

Children		Young People		Adults	
0-5	13%	0-5	48%	0-5	
5-10	37%	5-10	36%	5-10	3%
10-15	18%	10-15	10%	10-15	3%
15-20	15%	15-20	3%	15-20	11%
20-25	5%	20-25	3%	20-25	8%
25-30		25-30		25-30	8%
30-35	3%	30-35		30-35	3%
35-40	3%	35-40		35-40	5%
40+	3%	40+		40-50	47%
50+	3%	50+		50+	11%

### Children's Groups on a Sunday including Sunday School

24 parishes (50%) have a group meeting for children on a Sunday

48% of those groups are split into age groups

Crèche	30 children
3-5 years	83 children
6-8 years	95 children
9-11 years	72 children

Total children 280 children

52% of those groups are in all age group

Total children 233 children

The parishes indicate that the number of children attending Sunday services and groups has

increased: 49%

stayed the same: 29%

decreased: 22%

### **Youth Groups**

14 parishes ( 29%) have a youth group

38% of those groups are split into age groups

Less than 160 young people attend church youth groups

The parishes indicate that number of young people attending Sunday services and groups has

increased: 52%

stayed the same: 26%

decreased: 22%

### **Under 5's**

12 parishes (25%) have services aimed at pre-school children

13 parishes (27%) have toddle groups planned and delivered by church members

### **Primary School Links**

43 parishes ( 90%) have primary schools within the parish

11 parishes ( 23%) within that group have Church in Wales primary school within the parish

40 parishes ( 83%) have schools visiting churches for acts of worship

93% of clergy who have primary schools in their parish take collective worship in school on a regular basis

78% of clergy are on the Governing Body of their local primary school

## Secondary School Links

19 parishes (39%) have secondary schools within the parish

7 parishes (14%) have secondary schools visiting the church for acts of worship

44% of clergy who have a secondary school in their parish take collective worship in school on a regular basis

23% of clergy who have a secondary school in their parish are on the Governing Body of that school

Although the number of secondary schools are less than half of the number of primary schools in parishes it is interesting to note that:

In total only 18% of clergy of the parish sample visit secondary schools for acts of worship

In total only 10% clergy of the parish sample are on the Governing Body of a secondary school

## Training and Resourcing for Children and Youth

47 parishes (98%) have confirmation classes

13 parishes (27%) have other activities for confirmation candidates as well as classes

34 parishes (71%) offer training (either in-house or Diocesan led) for leaders

23 parishes (48%) have had children or young people attend Diocesan led events

44 parishes (92%) would be interested in accessing a children/ youth Diocesan website.

Parishes were invited to add comments about children and youth work.

When asked about what resources they **were lacking** the following comments were representative:

Need more children!

Leaders who are prepared to be involved

Adult leaders

Committed parents

Ideas for cafe church, messy church and disco church

Trips for children and places and spaces for children

Christian Youth Worker

Full time Youth worker

Specialist Deanery Youth Worker

Guidance on non- Sunday school groups and how to resource them

change of mindset of congregation towards children

IT Equipment including power point

When asked about what **initiatives** had been taken the following comments were representative:

Drama Group  
Parent and Toddler Group  
Parenting course  
Knitting project  
Ecological Projects  
Deanery Youth event  
Deanery Youth Forum  
Music Group  
Ecumenical Youth church  
congregation sharing the mid week Eucharist with the young people.

### **Reflection on the Questionnaire for parishes**

The Questionnaire confirms anecdotal evidence in the Diocese.

The number of children and young people involved in the worshipping life of the church are small. The majority of parishes have less than 10 children and less than 5 young people worshipping regularly on a Sunday.

The All Age services are better attended and seem attractive to a wider range of children and young people:

50% of the parishes have a number of children ranging from 0-10 and 18% have up to 15 children.

50% of the parishes have a number of young people up to 5 in total and 36% have up to 10 young people.

The place of the Sunday school or group for children is still present in half of our parishes though the total figures suggest low attendance.

Youth Groups are only present in almost a third of our parishes ( 29%) but again the numbers attending are low.

The good news is that 50% of parishes reveal an increase in the number of children and young people , with 78% of parishes either noting an increase or status quo. Only 22 % of parishes remarked on a decrease in attendance.

It is clear that the vast majority of parishes (90%) have good links with the local primary schools and that the clergy regularly take school assemblies and that most clergy ( 78%) are members of the Governing Body of the school.

As anticipated the links with secondary schools are not so strong. Less than 40% of parishes have a secondary school in their boundaries yet many of those are not able to encourage the schools to use the churches for worship. Also, less than half of the clergy ( 44%) who have secondary schools in their pastoral care regularly take assemblies.

What patterns can be suggested by this questionnaire?

The figures suggest that although the parish clergy have excellent relationships with primary schools, it appears that church communities have only a small link with children and young people outside the formal links of school life. Even so, it is also evident that the clergy do not on the whole have strong links with secondary school and the culture which is prevalent there.

There is clearly a challenge in the parishes to relate to children and young people and make contact with them and welcome them into the Christian community.

If the vision of the church is to be a welcoming and nurturing community open to children and young people then our aim must be to look closely at our parish life and seek to live lives of discipleship that would encourage and attract parents, children and young people to follow the way. This is an essential part of the mission of the church.

## **Possible aims and objectives of work with children and young people**

### **Aims**

The overview of the services of the Diocese with regard to children and young people suggest a mixed picture.

The historical links with formal education continue to bear fruit and although it requires a great deal of work the role of the Director of Education and the Schools Officer ensures that the Diocese has a creative and useful link with statutory education. The relationship with church schools and non church schools is good and there is every confidence that it will continue. Parish clergy play a significant part in the life of many schools and offer spiritual and pastoral support and teaching.

**First Aim** therefore is

*To continue the Diocesan strategy in promoting the policy and values of the Church in Wales with regard to statutory education*

The work of parish communities reveal a more diffident perspective. At one level the Youth Advisor has promoted some creative and successful projects which have encouraged young people and children to come together across the Diocese. The YES events have grown from strength to strength and have become part of Diocesan life. Also the Spiritual Journey project has been well received and acclaimed. Yet there is still much to be done. Many clergy and congregations struggle valiantly with small numbers of children and young people to include them in the life of the worshipping community. The popularity of the All Age Service has borne some success but it is not always clear how children and young people are integrated into the wider life of the Christian community. For the vast majority of children and young people their communities are situated in three areas: home school and social network ( including web based groups). The challenge is to help them make the transition into another community as well - the church.

**Second Aim** is

*To encourage parishes to look at ways of being a Christian community that would attract, nurture and support children and young people.*

### **Objectives**

The Diocesan Council for Education has in the past directed and managed all aspects of the service offered to children and young people. In a sense it has evolved on the lines that the Christian education of children and youth can be seen in its broadest context and this is to be welcomed. The past endeavours of the Director and his team are to be commended.

However the current state of contacts with children and young people apart from formal education requires a more focussed approach that may encourage a more missionary minded strategy in parish life. Clergy need to be supported in a more direct way in terms of local parish initiatives and training. Also the relative small numbers of children and young people actively involved in parishes may require more Deanery or parish group initiatives as well as Diocesan led events and programmes.

The first aim of Diocesan strategy in *promoting the policy and values of the Church in Wales with regard to statutory education* would hopefully be served by a more streamlined Council for Education which would primarily be served by the Director of Education, the Schools Officer and the Bishop's Visitors. Educational Chaplains would also be part of the Council.

The Second aim of *encouraging parishes to look at ways of being a Christian community that would attract, nurture and support children and young people* would hopefully be served by a Committee for Children and Young People. This Committee would offer a strategy for work with parishes and be served by a Children's Advisor and a Youth Advisor. There would be only one committee to focus projects work and it would have responsibility for the age range 0-25 with regard to the voluntary Christian education and nurture. It is also expected that the committee would be an enabling forum for other youth projects and youth workers attached or working in the Diocese. It is important that there is good and coherent communication with all those working in this area.

## **Structure**

### **Diocesan Council for Education**

Bishop and Council Members

The Bishop chairs the Council

The Director of Education acts as secretary and promotes through his work the policies of the Council

The Schools Officer liaises directly with the schools and parishes and is line managed by the Director

The Bishop's Visitors support and guide church schools in Diocesan policy

The Chaplains offer pastoral support in further education and report to the Council

### **Specific Roles of Officers**

#### **Director of Education ( Full Time) Revd Canon Keith Denison**

The main roles -

- To represent the Diocese in relation to statutory education with Welsh Assembly Government and Local Education Authorities
- To exercise parallel roles and responsibilities with LEA Directors of Education
- To advise Head teachers and Governing Bodies of C/W schools over appointments of teaching staff, leadership teams, school fabric issues, disciplinary matters, pupil admissions and appeals, etc.
- To act as secretary to the Diocesan Council for Education
- To represent the Diocese in relation to Provincial structures for educational matters
- To ensure due appointments of Foundation Governors for Church Schools
- To appoint Diocesan representatives on SACREs and Agreed Syllabus Conferences in five LEAs
- To serve as statutory member on Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Schools Fora, and Schools Admissions Fora

in 4 Local Education Authorities

- To liaise with Diocesan Schools Officer on curriculum matters and esp. RE
- To conduct Acts of Collective Worship in a range of schools

## **Diocesan Schools Officer ( Part Time) Mrs Susan James**

The main roles -

- To support Church Schools through inspection and advice
- To liaise with Church School Heads
- To arrange Cathedral School Days
- To link with other School Officers in the Province

## **Diocesan Children and Youth Committee**

Nominated Chair and members of Children and Young People Team

The Children's Advisor promotes and encourages children's work in the parishes by working at Diocesan, Deanery and parish levels with clergy and laity. The Advisor reports to the Committee and is line managed by the Archdeacon of Monmouth

The Youth Advisor promotes and encourages young peoples' work in the parishes by working at Diocesan, Deanery and parish levels with clergy and laity. The Advisor reports to the Committee and is line managed by the Archdeacon of Monmouth.

Other Youth projects and Youth workers also report to the committee. They are either line managed by their parish priest or by the Archdeacon of Monmouth who holds the Diocesan portfolio for children and youth work.

## **Specific Roles of Officers**

### **Diocesan Children's Advisor ( Full Time) To be appointed**

Strategic role as part of Children and Young People Team:

#### *Purpose*

- To encourage, develop and support initiatives with children at parish level with clergy and licensed ministers and with interested and engaged lay people
- to co-ordinate initiatives at a diocesan level in collaboration with the Youth Advisor and others involved in young people's outreach, reporting to the Diocesan Children and Youth Committee
- To be prepared to take and follow through exemplar initiatives in selected areas of the Diocese

#### *Relevant activities*

- To offer training *in situ* and being alongside clergy and lay leaders
- To manage resources
- To carry out exemplar work in selected parishes and demonstrate workable models of nurture
- To advocate real integration of children and young people into the Christian community
- To work within the missionary context of the Diocese

- To bridge the gap with communities, cultures and relevant organisations in terms of children
- To offer creative, practical and theologically orthodox approach to liturgy

### **Youth Advisor ( Full Time) Mrs Pam Richards**

Strategic role as part of Children and Young People Team:

- To develop & inspire youth provision in the diocese for those aged 11-25 years.
- To supervise, train and build up the volunteer youth workers.
- To assess the ethical, moral and spiritual needs of young people.
- To be an advocate for young people; to mentor and befriend.
- To develop strong teams of volunteers for diocesan events.
- To coordinate and manage projects with teams of volunteers.
- To connect with outside bodies, government agencies and other denominations.
- To develop and deliver training to youth leaders in association with UWIC & St. Michael's Theological College.
- To develop and deliver resources for use in the diocese and beyond.
- To take responsibility for the planning, delivery and coordination of young people's liturgies.
- To identify and pursue sources of funding for projects.
- To develop projects with adequate business plans and to manage the relevant budgets.
- To advise the sector on issues of Child Protection, Health and Safety and Risk assessments.
- to co-ordinate initiatives at a diocesan level in collaboration with the Children's Advisor and others involved in young people's outreach, reporting to the Diocesan Children and Youth Committee
- To undertake appropriate, ongoing and continuing professional development.
- To coordinate, build up and support Youth officers/chaplains in the Province.
- To represent Wales on the Youth Executive of the Archbishop's Council of the Church of England.

Current projects:

Youth Eucharist Services Confirmation material Spiritual resourcing including *Spiritual Journey*  
Mission Based Activities including Residential events

Future projects...

To raise monies to refurbish and equip a Youth Centre & Retreat House  
To develop & manage a sustainable project - the Retreat Centre for young people.  
To monitor and manage gap year students in the project.

## **Other Youth projects**

### **The Lab Project**

The Lab is a community of students and young adults from across Newport, supported in partnership by the Diocese of Monmouth and Newport Methodist Circuit.

The vision is to be a community of people who love God and one another, and who are committed to following Jesus to the margins of life and society.

The Lab relies on the Diocese of Monmouth – as well as Newport Methodist Circuit – for core funding, in addition to small private donations from young adults within their community and those who support them.

As the Lab's community work develops, they are also becoming reliant on grants from other charitable funds. Recently the Lab has been awarded a major grant from the Archbishop of Wales Fund for Children for a schools work project.

### **Aims**

1. *To engage young people in mission, serving local communities.*
2. *To develop and sustain the community of young adults.*
3. *To encourage and develop young leaders.*

### **People**

#### **Core Team**

- James Henley – Student Pastor and Alway Project Leader
- Stephanie Keates – Administrator
- Dan Caulfield – UWN Chaplaincy Assistant
- Jack Caulfield – Community Schools Work
- Matt Way – Community School Work
- Katherine Murphy – St Paul's Pastoral Assistant
- Stef Roberts – Part-time Volunteer

#### **Pastoral/Oversight Team**

- Justin Groves – Priest-in-Charge
- Louise Gough – Methodist Link Minister

### **Areas of Work**

#### **The Young Adult Community**

##### **Foodface**

Foodface is a weekly meal which forms the hub of The Lab's student/young adult community. It provides an opportunity for young adults to build relationships, growing the community ethos which forms a backbone for all our work. Foodface is attended by young adults with a strong faith background, those who are just beginning to develop in their faith and those who have no faith at all.

##### **Sunday Evening Gathering**

The Lab meets in Alway each week for a time of informal worship. This provides a chance to experiment with new forms of worship and for bible teaching and discussion. Currently, they are studying the life of Jesus through the book of John.

## **The Alway Project**

### **About the Project**

Over summer 2008, The Lab began work in the Alway estate on the edge of Newport, moving five young adults into the first Lab House to invest time into the local community and build relationships with local young people.

- Alway has been identified as one of the most deprived areas in Wales.
- According to the 2001 census, nearly 50% of the population of Alway and the surrounding area is under the age of 25.
- 41% of people aged 16-74 have no formal qualifications.

*The vision is to grow a community of young adults released to undertake mission and ministry in Alway. The Team believe that this kind of residential community could have a long term effect on the community of Alway – from fulfilling real, physical needs through to the emotional and spiritual needs of the community and local young people.*

### **Accommodation**

#### **St Teilo's Vicarage**

The Church in Wales has provided The Lab with the St Teilo's Vicarage in Alway to be the first Lab House.

#### **Sullivan Circle**

Since September, the Diocese of Monmouth has also provided funds to rent a second Lab house a short walk away from St Teilo's Vicarage.

### **Detached Youth Work**

The core team engage in detached work on the Alway estate, primarily around the football courts, seeking to build purposeful relationships with local young people. This happens for between 1-2 hours each Saturday.

### **Primary Schools Work**

In order to build relationships with local organisations, the Lab core team has delivered assemblies and RE lessons in Alway Primary School – these have been sporadic, rather than happening regularly throughout the year. The aim is to use this relationship to develop an extra-curricular afterschool club, whilst continuing work within the school.

### **Hartridge Schools Work Project**

From September 2009, two community schools workers from amongst The Lab's gap year volunteers will engage in relationship-based detached work on the Hartridge High School campus, as well as conducting group work and work with the Religious Studies department.

The volunteers spend lunchtimes on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays on the school campus, observing and looking to begin developing relationships with young people there. Recently, along with other Lab volunteers, we conducted our first set of RE lessons with four different year 7 groups on the theme: "Why is faith important?" We are in the process of developing lessons to slot into the curriculum for Year 8 (Christianity and the Church) and Year 9 (Sex and Relationships).

### **Bishpool Children and Youth Work**

The Lab partners with Bishpool Methodist Church in running their Children's and Youth Clubs on a Friday night. These are attended by around 30-35 children and young people across two clubs.

## Recommendations

There is great potential in the Diocese to build upon its work with children and young people particularly in nurturing them in the life of the Christian community.

The Diocesan Council for Education has proved an important platform for offering a service for children and young people in terms of statutory and voluntary educational provision. Much of this work has evolved over a considerable period of time and allows a foundation for furthering the good relations already achieved with schools and other educational establishments.

The development of chaplaincy work in Higher Education through the Diocese including the appointment of a Chaplain at the University of Wales is an exciting part of the Council's objectives and has been underpinned by the ongoing work of the Director.

This review has highlighted that the area of main concern is assisting parishes in being welcoming, nurturing and open communities for children and young people.

It therefore recommends a more focussed strategy in achieving this work by separating the statutory and voluntary educational services into two bodies:

1. Diocesan Council for Education to cover all statutory educational provision
2. Diocesan Committee for Children and Youth for all voluntary educational provision

The Diocesan Council for Education would continue to develop its present work with regard to statutory education. The Diocesan Committee for Children and Youth would offer a more missionary focussed approach with regard to building upon and creating the links between the various communities and organisations involved with the nurture of children and young people and giving confidence to parishes to become communities which are accessible and supportive to young disciples of the church.

The strategy will necessarily involve close co-operation between the members of the Children and Young People Team in coordinating a plan that could eventually lead to increased membership of young disciples grounded in the life of Christ.

The strategy would be delivered by two full time officers working within the age range 0-25 each with specific project work. The Children and Youth Advisers would be supported by the committee and line managed by the Archdeacon of Monmouth.

The project work would include:

Training and resourcing for clergy, licensed leaders and laity.

ICME work where appropriate

Parish based models of group work

Diocesan led events and services

Communication throughout the Diocese including web based material

Resources for children and young people's spiritual and ethical education

In addition to these types of projects the Diocesan Committee for Children and Youth will also liaise and act as a forum for other project work including the present Lab Project in Newport.

It is envisaged that the Committee would therefore offer a creative range of services to be used by parishes and that the Advisors would work alongside and in parish communities.

There is a realisation that much networking will be needed to encourage the small scattered numbers of young people in the Diocese and more research needs to be done in seeking the potential of Deanery or inter-parish group provision.

The funding for the Committee and its advisors would be met by a budget agreed by the Diocesan Board of Finance.

## **Conclusion**

It is hoped that the recommendations put forward would provide a structure that may enthuse parishes to consider their vital role in the life of children and young people in the Diocese. We all thrive in communities that support and nourish us and this especially applies to the young. Our parishes can provide a home for everyone seeking the Christian way. We also recognise that in a richly diverse society it is also advantageous that some may need to enter into discipleship through alternative ways of being church and we commend the pioneer ministry projects that are present in the Diocese. There is no one way that is necessarily better than another. But all should be community based for is not only humane but also God given. Christianity has succeeded because it offers flexibility in terms of culture and style but always remains grounded in the passionate love of an incarnate God who seeks to be with his children. We as the people of God, living in communion with each other, are called to welcome, support and nurture children and young people into the love and grace of God.

The Venerable Richard Pain

Archdeacon of Monmouth

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