



## The Diocesan Boards of Education of Durham and Newcastle



### Working Together to support Schools and Parishes

#### Statement of Purpose

Church of England Boards of Education fulfil a number of statutory functions in relation to church schools and church educational endowments. Our aim is to ensure that outstanding education is provided in our church schools, and to foster high quality engagement with young people and adults in schools and parishes across the dioceses.

Church Schools have a high and positive profile in the world of education at national and local level. The Church of England Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good was published in Autumn 2016. <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2532839/2016-church-of-england-vision-for-education-web-final.pdf>

It sets out a vision which is not simply for Church schools but, it recognises the Church of England's involvement in education over many centuries, and seeks to promote educational excellence everywhere, for everyone. 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, the vision for education can still be expressed and promoted as one of human flourishing that can inspire what the school is and does. The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. It embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. It offers a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate the vision for education: Wisdom; Hope; Community and Dignity.

This brings with it the responsibilities of ensuring that Church of England schools continue to be both distinctive and inclusive providers of outstanding education at the heart of local communities. The increasing emphasis on a diversity of 'providers' of education through maintained schools means that the Church is being called to greater accountability for the use of public funds in providing education of high standard, in buildings that are well maintained, and in accordance with key national policy objectives. The success of the dioceses in responding to the aspiration of the national church for an increased engagement with secondary schools (including academies) has led to a big increase in provision in both our dioceses, changing the profile of support that is needed. In addition to this, the drive to promote 'community cohesion' is leading to increasing opportunities for the Church to engage positively with non-Church schools.

Parishes are looking for new ways to engage with children and young people. Churches and schools exist to serve the areas in which they are placed, and working together can contribute to the building of strong and vibrant communities. Church schools are an invaluable resource for the whole diocese, bringing opportunities and insights from the world of education and enriching the wider mission and ministry of the church.

Broadly the same issues and challenges face both dioceses. Board officers have been working for some time on a number of initiatives including the administration of the Statutory Inspection of Church Schools requirements; a joint Further Education task group working with colleges to explore the faiths, beliefs, values and community cohesion agenda; provision of support materials and training for RE and Collective Worship; and work with curates in their initial training programme.





This work has enabled us to share expertise, build capacity and make more effective use of our resources.

Since 2010 the Durham and Newcastle dioceses have agreed that education joint working should be consolidated as a positive response to the demands of the Government's agenda for school reform. This has allowed the already excellent work that was being done to develop further by increasing the combined capacity of both Boards to respond to the challenges facing all providers of education and offering a service for schools that can be more sharply focussed. Most importantly the Boards now have access to the expertise they need to better support not only their church schools in the provision of outstanding education, but also parishes in engaging with this vital part of the mission activity of the church.

