

Annual Report to Diocesan Synod



2024

Education

**DIOCESE
OF EXETER**

**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
IN DEVON**



*To enable all, through the love
of God in Jesus Christ, to 'live
life in all its fullness' (John 10:10b)*

Nurture **Nourish** **Flourish**



Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee

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The Diocesan Board of Education Committee

This Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee (EDBE) is a committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance. It is a statutory body responsible for Church of England schools and academies in the diocese. The composition of the DBE in 2024 was the Bishop; four members appointed by the Bishop; one member of the House of Clergy and one of the House of Laity, as elected by Diocesan Synod; and five co-opted members.



DBE members appointed by the Bishop, from left to right: The Venerable Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes (Chair); Sharon Marshall (Vice-Chair); Deborah Eveleigh; and The Right Reverend Jackie Searle, the Suffragan Bishop of Crediton.

There remained a vacancy for the DBE member elected by Diocesan Synod from the House of Clergy. Paul Stock (2nd from left below) was the member elected by Diocesan Synod from the House of Laity.

Co-opted DBE members below (3rd from left to right): Alex Walmsley, Foundation Director; Dan Morrow, CEO; Lorna Legg, Headteacher; Nicky Dunford, CEO; and the Reverend Laura Selman.



Context of the DBE Committee and Education Team's work

There are 134 Church of England (CofE) Schools in our diocese, including five secondary schools, which range in size from 8 pupils to 1308 pupils (January 2024 census). Common to all is a desire to fulfil the Church of England Vision for Education which is rooted in the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' and expressed through four basic elements: wisdom, hope, community and dignity. Each CofE school has its own vision underpinned by theology.

Many of our diocesan CofE schools are working in a multi-school grouping where there is shared support and accountability through the executive leadership and through governance. Currently there are fifteen academy trusts with Church Articles of Association (meaning they have/can have church schools), fourteen federations which contain maintained church schools, and fifteen Church of England schools remaining as stand-alone maintained schools. See Appendix 1 for an overview of schools and groupings.

The DBE's work is set in the context of the Diocesan Board of Education Measure (2021) statutory responsibilities, the ever-changing educational landscape and our diocesan priorities. Through its officers in the Education Team, and in partnership with schools and school groupings, we aim to nurture vision inspired education, nourish personal and spiritual development, and enable connected communities that flourish.

We are working across a wide geographical and socio-economic context. There are eighteen schools with less than fifty pupils, and a falling role across the primary phase. Devon is one of the poorest funded areas in the country for per pupil funding, and the '*South West had the lowest social mobility of any region in England*' (SWSMC Annual Report 2024). We do however have school leaders, including those in governance, with exceptional passion, drive, and commitment to lead change.

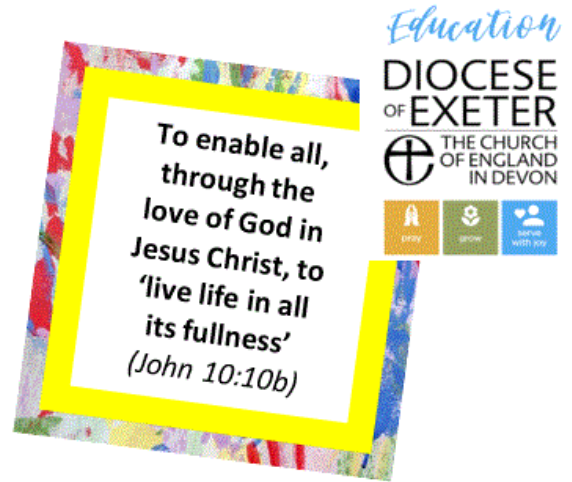
Diocesan Board of Education Committee's Strategic Plan Areas

The Diocesan Board of Education Committee has a 3-year Strategic Plan (see Appendix 2) which is informed and driven by the DBE's vision, 'To enable all, through the love of God in Jesus Christ, to 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10b).

Education

EXETER DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION

Nurture vision-inspired education,
Nourish personal and spiritual growth,
Enable connected communities that Flourish



The DBE's Strategic Plan (Appendix 2) has four Strategic Priorities for the DBE Committee and the diocesan Education Team, as follows:

- To ensure that the Diocese of Exeter has a successful diocesan family of schools.
- To respond pro-actively to the changing educational landscape in a way which strengthens school performance, capacity, and sustainability.
- To work effectively and demonstrate positive impact.
- To play our part in ensuring schools are a central part of the diocesan mission.

Each of these priorities is further broken down into key objectives and key results. Good strides forward have been made in key areas, as outlined below, however lack of team capacity and cross departmental strategic alignment has impacted progress.

Strategic Priority 1: To ensure that the Diocese of Exeter has a successful diocesan family of schools.

Our work is to ensure Church of England schools are **living out their Christian foundation and that Christian vision and Christian distinctiveness** are central to the work of the school. We do this in many ways including through providing a comprehensive training and network programme for schools and by providing bespoke (chargeable) training based on their context and needs.

The **Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)** is one measure of the success of Church of England schools, alongside others accountability measures including

Ofsted inspection; school outcomes (in the widest sense); governance monitoring against school improvement plans; and pupil, parent/carer, staff voice. Whereas school leaders, including governance, should be scrutinising their school/school-groupings' success robustly and in depth through their own self-

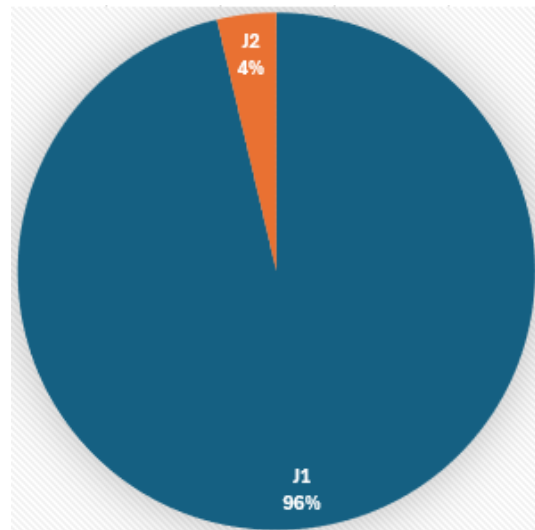
Strategic Priorities	Key Objectives
A successful diocesan family of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-improving system enables best practice to be shared and embedded across schools. • Strong leaders, including those in governance, are enabling schools to flourish, and evaluating their effectiveness. • In collaboration with system leaders, schools with vulnerabilities are both supported and held account for improvements. • Church schools have a clear Christian vision which drives strategy and upholds their Christian foundation.

evaluation, the diocesan Education Team consider this much more broadly. Deeper scrutiny, and the associated support and challenge come where assistance is requested, or a problem is suspected or identified.

Whilst not driven by the SIAMS inspection, the framework does provide a good benchmark against which to evaluate success as a Church of England School. SIAMS explores ways in which each school's theologically rooted Christian vision drives the work, and enables the school to live up to its foundation as a Church school.

Since 1st September 2023, the Inspection Framework see schools' outcome reported as the school is (J1)/ isn't (J2) upholding the Christian foundation alongside a thorough narrative highlighting the strengths of the school and any areas for development.

In 2024, 96% of CofE schools were assessed by independent SIAMS inspectors as upholding their Christian foundation (J1). SIAMS outcomes for the calendar year 2024 are summarised below:

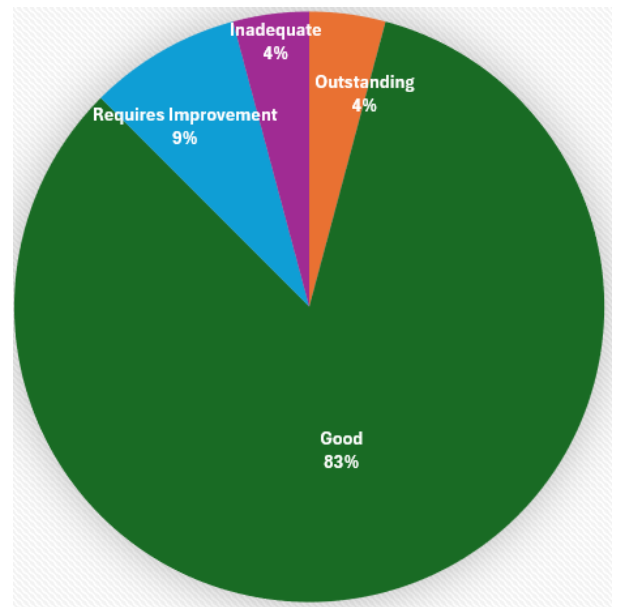


SIAMS Inspection Outcomes 2024:
Blue- J1: CofE school is upholding its Christian Foundation. Orange -J2: CofE school is not upholding its Christian Foundation sufficiently well.

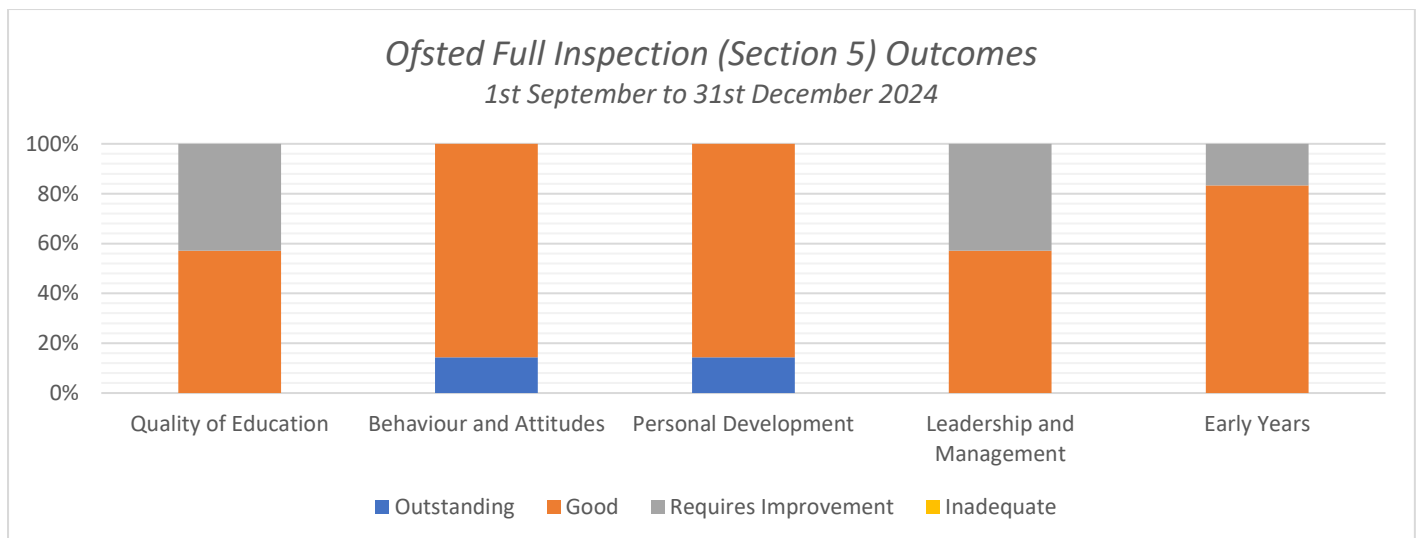
SCHOOL	TYPE	SCHOOL GROUPING	DATE OF SIAMS INSPECTION	SIAMS GRADE
Black Torrington	VC	Dartmoor MAT	Jan-24	J1
Lady Sewards	VA	First Federation	Jan-24	J1
Parracombe	VC	West Exmoor Federation	Jan-24	J1
Exbourne	VC	Dartmoor MAT	Feb-24	J1
High Bickington	VC	TEAM MAT	Feb-24	J1
Kingskerswell	VC	Stand-alone	Feb-24	J1
St Catherine's Heathfield	VA	United Schools Federation	Mar-24	J1
St Michael's, Exeter	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary MAT	Mar-24	J1
Newton Ferrers	VC	First Federation	Apr-24	J1
St Michael's, Kingsteignton	VC	United Schools Federation	Apr-24	J1
Collaton St Mary's	VA	The Academies for Character & Excellence	Apr-24	J1
Malborough with South Huish	VC	South Hams Federation	May-24	J1
Meavy	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary MAT	May-24	J1
St Peter's, Plymouth	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary MAT	May-24	J1
Salcombe	VC	First Federation	Jun-24	J2
The Beacon	VA	Stand-alone	Jul-24	J1
Goodleigh	VC	Goodleigh & Ilfracombe Federation	Sep-24	J1
St Cuthbert Mayne	VA	Stand-alone	Sep-24	J1
Berrynarbor	VC	West Berry Federation	Oct-24	J1
Bridgerule	VC	Dartmoor MAT	Oct-24	J1
Dartington	VC	Learning Academy Partnership	Oct-24	J1
Ilfracombe Academy	VC	Athena Learning Trust	Oct-24	J1
Aveton Gifford	VC	First Federation	Nov-24	J1
Blackpool	VC	First Federation	Nov-24	J1
St Edwards	VC	St Christopher's CE Primary MAT	Nov-24	J1
St Sidwell's	VA	St Christopher's CE Primary MAT	Nov-24	J1
Trinity	VA	The Academies for Character & Excellence	Nov-24	J1

*J1 – the school is living up to its Christian Foundation.

Our work with leaders to ensure clarity around ‘vision, provision and impact’ has synergy with Ofsted’s focus on ‘intent, implementation and impact’. In addition to regularly attending SIAMS feedback, the Education Team are also frequently asked by **Ofsted** to speak with their inspectors, and usually attend Ofsted inspection feedback. This provides further insight into schools and school groupings and enables us to show our support of schools and our appreciation of the work of staff and governance teams. In 2024, thirty-five of our Church of England Schools were inspected by Ofsted. Twenty-four were inspected during the period from 1st January to 31st August and the outcomes are shown opposite. In September 2024, the Ofsted Inspection Framework shifted away from publishing one-word judgements, yet retained judgements in key areas. All four schools who received a monitoring inspection in Autumn Term 2024 (section 8) were found to have taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection (Good). The outcomes of the seven who achieved a full inspection during Autumn 2024 (section 5), are shown below:



Ofsted Inspection Outcomes
1st January – 31st August 2024:
 Orange – Outstanding, Green – Good, Blue – Requires Improvement, Magenta - Inadequate.



In 2024, there was a new **Locally Agreed RE Syllabus** launched within each of the three Local Authorities with whom we work: Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. This syllabus has been developed in close consultation with teachers and school leaders. We, as a DBE, also recommend it for Church schools as it is fully compatible with Understanding Christianity and the RE Statement of Entitlement for CofE schools. It is a development of the last syllabus, with significant extensions in line with current thinking and practice. Crucial changes include:

- adapting to a new Religion and Worldviews approach to RE
- integrating Ofsted’s 3 forms of knowledge (substantive, ‘ways of knowing’ and personal knowledge)
- more systematic coverage of non-religious worldviews
- offering additional alternative primary units on anti-racism, caring for the earth and multi-disciplinary RE and using more local examples
- including more detail on assessment techniques
- providing more materials to support teachers with developing subject knowledge

The diocese continues to offer Understanding Christianity training and bespoke support for schools.

In January 2024, we were midway through a pilot programme of church school flourishing with all southwest dioceses. Following evaluation, a curriculum change, and a shift in emphasis to that of collaborative partnerships, Exeter launched **Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP)** in September 2024.

Exeter Flourishing Partnership

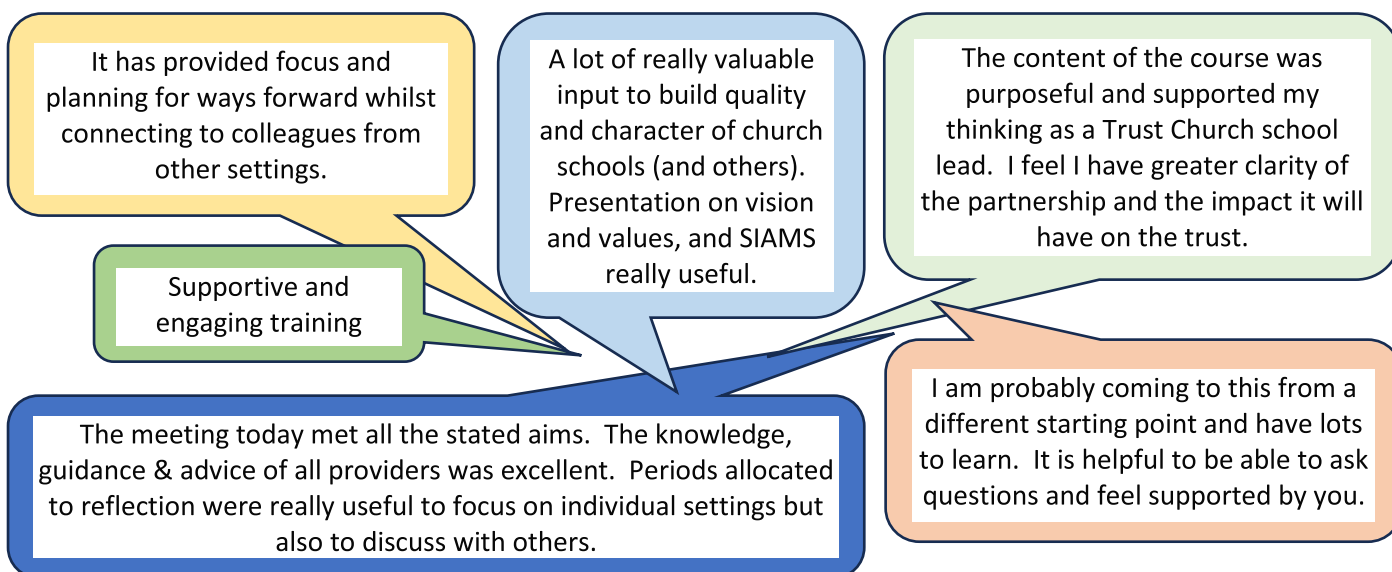
The Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP), inspired by our vision, demonstrates a shared commitment to flourishing church schools across the Diocese of Exeter. It is intended to be a deep, collaborative and beneficial relationship and nourishing partnership between the Diocesan Education Team, the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee (EDBE) and academy trusts/federations. EFP provides rich, meaningful and formative opportunities for engagement to enrich church school distinctiveness.



EFP develops four (or five) EFP strategic lead roles (individuals identified by the academy trust/federation), who will be trained and supported by the Diocesan Education Team to take-on the following lead roles as they work in partnership across their trust/federation:

- Lead for Exeter Flourishing Partnership
- Religion and Worldviews Lead and a Collective Worship Lead (these could be combined)
- Collective Worship Lead
- Recruitment and Induction Lead
- Governance Lead

Feedback from EFP to date has been very positive, and includes the following comments:



EFP is part of our work to empower leaders within multi-school groupings with knowledge, understanding and tools to ensure they are effective in upholding the Christian vision and distinctiveness of their Church schools. It underpins our work to support a self-improving system where strengths are shared and built upon across the education system.

Strategic Priority 2: Responding pro-actively to the changing educational landscape strengthens school performance, capacity, and sustainability

Strategic Priorities	Key Objectives
Responding to the Educational Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are coming together in strong formal partnerships groupings. • Church schools’ foundation and distinctiveness are protected and enhanced through reconstitution / conversion processes and subsequent structures and responsibilities of leadership, including governance. • Collaborations across the education system (e.g., RD, MATs & LAs) and diocesan systems harnesses expertise and supports increased impact and capacity to strengthen our church schools and wider diocesan family of schools. • School groupings are coming together formally to strengthen the educational landscape across Devon, particularly in the most deprived areas of the diocese and for the disadvantaged. • Development and support of school / school grouping leaders is supporting the retention and recruitment of leaders.

The Educational landscape is ever-changing. Policy has changed under the new government and there are things yet to be clarified. It is clear however that the intention for all schools to move to academy status has been removed, as has much of the additional funding previously directed to academy trusts.

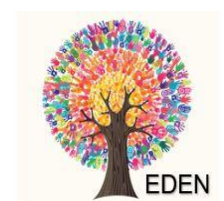
The DBE’s Policy recommends schools consider joining a strong multi-school grouping (federation or academy trust), hence this shift in government policy aligns with our current practice.

During 2024, one school became an academy following a Direct Academy Order from the Department for Education, and nine maintained school governance teams choose to convert their schools to become an academy and join an academy trust. One maintained school joined other maintained schools within an established federation.

A significant part of our work this year has been with academy trusts and larger federations who have capacity to provide support for schools/academies with vulnerabilities. Considerable support is given across school organisations through Management Partnerships and inevitably, when the value is realised, many of these progress to formal partnerships. This year three multi-academy trusts with Church schools in our diocese transferred all their schools into other academy trusts serving within our diocese, and one federation converted its schools and joined an academy trust. For all moves of schools into different structures, the proportionality of foundation governance of the responsible board has been maintained to preserve the Christian foundation.

Increasingly the Education Team’s work is with leaders of multi-school groupings as well as individual school leaders, as illustrated, for example, through the Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP). In addition, the Education Team holds biennial conversations with each academy trust and with larger federations so an accurate understanding is gained and our partnership re-emphasised.

We aim to work closely with responsible governance boards across both the maintained school and academy sectors. The Exeter Diocesan Board of Education and officers in the Education Team also work closely with EDEN Directors (Exeter Diocesan Education Network). EDEN is a corporate Member of all Academy Trusts with Church Articles of Association working with church schools in this diocese. This means that EDEN is part the governance structure in 15 academy trusts.



Our work involves being a voice and champion for Church schools. Working as a system-leader, we collaborate with Academy Trusts, Local Authorities, The Department for Education (regionally and nationally) and with the National Society (Church of England Education).



Strategic Priority 3: The DBE Committee and Education Team are working effectively and can demonstrate positive impact

The Education Team’s priorities are aligned to the Diocesan and DBE vision, the DBE strategic plan and those things which are pressing in our work with schools, trusts, federations and the wider diocese.

The impact of the work of the Education Team, and the effectiveness of the Board, is monitored and evaluated with the help of four DBE sub-committees. These are the:

- Resources and Assets Group (RAG)
- Standards and Ethos Group (SEG)
- Growing Faith Opportunities Group (GFG)
- School Organisation and Governance Group (SOGG)

Strategic Priorities	Key Objectives
<p>DBE Committee and Team Effectiveness</p> <p><i>(N.B. where DBE is referenced, this means the DBE committee)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new EDBE committee is monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of diocesan educational work. • The roles and responsibilities of the Education Team are closely aligned to the vision and priorities of the DBE and there is shared accountability across the team. • There is a clear strategy as to how we work with schools and the wider system to effect positive change. • Effective and accurate school / school grouping data and intelligence informs priorities and monitoring of impact.

The Education Team capacity has been extremely lean for much of 2024 with an Adviser vacancy from January through to September. The DBE is conscious that even when a full team, the demands on team members are significant. A robust information management system or learning platform is not yet in place. Administrative systems and processes, and in particular the clerking of the DBE and sub-committees, are time intensive. However, despite capacity challenges, the focus of the team on ensuring its statutory responsibilities under the DBE Measure 2021 are fulfilled is clear as is the on-going drive to add value to and effectively serve our schools, communities and the Diocesan Board of Finance.

We particularly thank those who volunteer to serve on the DBE and its sub-committees and those who voluntary support the work of the team. There is great generosity in the system which offers valuable support, scrutiny and constructive challenge.

A very practical example of where the DBE have challenged the Education Team is around its response to the Lament to Action report (April 2021) and work in the area of equity, diversity and inclusion more



Peer-to-peer EDIJ network participants with Lorraine Prince, the Head of Networks for the Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership

widely. As a result, significant strides have been taken forward in equity, diversity, inclusion and justice (EDIJ) work and it has become embedded into much of what we do. During 2024, following previous work to diversify the DBE membership, the team analysed student and staff ethnic origin data; held a Peace Feast attended by staff and governance representatives from 76 Church of England schools and 88 Community Schools from both the primary and secondary phases ([see video and news story here](#)); set up a [webpage](#) with resources and links; and secured funding for and launched a three-year peer-to-peer EDIJ Network, supported by the National Society. Education Team members have also worked with a Southwest diocesan group with EDIJ consultant Linbert Spencer OBE.

Strategic Priority 4: The DBE Committee plays its part in ensuring schools are a central part of the diocesan mission

The DBE’s Growing Faith Opportunities Group (GFG) has helped bring an increased awareness within diocesan structures of the work of the Education Team in supporting the diocesan mission. GFG is served by officers of the Mission and Ministry and Education teams, and within its membership has clergy (including the Bishop of Plymouth), school leaders, and a chaplain.

During 2024, there has been increased cross departmental liaison around training provided for clergy and lay people, with the Education team contributing to Mission Sheds and clergy training. The Education Team have promoted the importance of the Growing Faith Strategic Leaders Course, secured external funding and recruited participants, and have been a partner with other Southwest dioceses in setting up a regional pilot.

Strategic Priorities	Key Objectives
Schools are a central part of the diocesan mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy is evident in the strategic and operational work in Mission and Ministry and Education. • Encourage and challenge the diocesan central team, schools and worshipping communities to look afresh at how to deepen relationships and promote CYP and families’ spiritual engagement. • The diocesan central team promote and encourage work with schools as an expression of Christian ministry, for example a call to teaching, governance or other volunteering roles. • Evidence-informed practice is strengthening relations between church, schools and households, and examples of good practice are shared.

GFG have received small-scale local research and used, along with nationally available research to inform thinking and the team’s work. The Board of Education continue to promote the voices and participation of children and young people, as demonstrated, for example, through young people’s contributions to DBE meetings, the Bishop of Exeter’s Enthronement Service and the Bishop’s Growing Faith study morning.

The Education Team continue to support schools in working intentionally with church communities, and examples of favourable feedback from schools about their church/school partnership follows:

The following text is contained within various speech bubbles:

- Green bubble:** We would like to commend the church wardens who worked tirelessly to maintain links with the school and accommodate our needs whilst without an incumbent
- Blue bubble:** We are fortunate to have a very clear understanding of our hopes for the school and the community with a vibrant church representative and foundation governor. All involved are enthusiastic and have high energy levels to succeed.
- Orange bubble:** The links have grown in the last 2 years, and we really appreciate and enjoy the work we do together.
- Purple bubble:** The willingness and enthusiasm and joint intent for the church and school is very high.
- Yellow bubble:** Our previous and current vicar are wonderful - very child and family friendly - approachable and proactive.
- Yellow bubble:** Our current vicar is also a real blessing - she has been there to celebrate and support us at key times and has actively engaged with us throughout the year. We feel very lucky.
- Yellow bubble:** Revs. have been wonderful and brought our community together. Quietly and gently things have changed for the better since they arrived. In addition to the obvious church community relationships - there has been a ripple effect. Our village feels more friendly, inclusive and loving again now.
- Orange bubble:** Food parcels, pray with people, finding financial support and home-maker support, providing safe spaces, i.e. the church for meetings, welcoming new to the area families to the church and wider community. I regularly ask vulnerable families if they'd like support from our clergy and church team and people often welcome this support.

Mission Statistics published in 2024 for the Diocese of Exeter shown minimal drop-off/change in school service attendance between 2019 and 2023, and a good increase in attendance to return to 2019 levels between 2022 to 2023.

	Estimated change, 2019 to 2023	Estimated change, 2022 to 2023
Worshipping Community	-9.5%	2.6%
Adult average weekly attendance (October)	-19.2%	4.6%
Child average weekly attendance (October)	-23.9%	5.7%
Adult average Sunday attendance (October)	-19.7%	3.1%
Child average Sunday attendance (October)	-23.0%	3.6%
School service attendance (October)	-0.7%	11.1%
Adult Usual Sunday attendance	-15.3%	4.3%
Child Usual Sunday attendance	-18.7%	6.4%

There are many examples of good practice from our team and from within our schools. We share this in [Flourish](#) (the Education Team’s newsletter), Roots and Shoots, or social media. Examples appertaining to the DBE Strategic priority 4 include:



A call to governance as an expression of Christian ministry

Christina and Marilyn from the Education Team promoted governance at the County Show alongside a Cheeky Panda! Cheeky Pandas is a Christian ministry that creates cartoons for children, worship songs, and free resources for families, churches and schools.



Governance – Serving the people of Devon with joy

The Education Team and DBE hosted an event in the Bishop’s Palace garden to recognise and thank all those who ‘*serve the people of Devon with joy*’ in their governance roles. Foundation governance impacts 134 Church of England schools and also approximately 100 community schools. Collectively our governance reach and influence are wide and impact tens of thousands of children and young people, plus staff, families and wider communities

The announcement of Bishop Mike’s appointment

The Right Revd Dr Mike Harrison’s appointment as 72nd Bishop of Exeter was announced whilst he was visiting St Martin’s Church of England Primary School in Cranbrook. As Suffragan Bishop of Dunwich in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Bishop Mike was also the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education there.



Choir Church - Developing Musical Excellence and Building Relationships

A choir initiative which encourages children and young people to learn and develop musical skills has been flourishing throughout its first year of launching in a primary school in Devon. St Michael’s Church of England Primary Academy in Exeter began a Choir Church scheme in January 2024, in partnership with the Team Rector of Heavitree and St Mary Steps. Read the full story [here](#).

Headteachers Commissioning Services

This year we have seen a good number of commissioning services held in local churches for new headteachers. These services show the commitment of church communities to walk alongside new headteachers as they seek to uphold the Christian foundation of their Church of England School. It is a very positive start for a new leader and clearly demonstrates the important of the relationship between the church, school and families.



Cross of Nails Award - Peace and Reconciliation

In 1940 salvaged nails which were found in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral's bombing were formed into a cross. The nails represent the wounds and destruction of the war, and the cross formation signifies forgiveness and healing after conflict. Having taken positive action to promote peace and reconciliation, Farway Church of England School were awarded the International [Cross of Nails](#) Award at an afternoon of celebration attended by children, staff, families and the church and local community. Read the Farway story [here](#).

Plans for 2025

In line with the Diocesan Priorities and the DBE's 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan, the Diocesan Board of Education Committee and its officers in the Education Team will focus on the following in 2025:

- Fill vacancies on the DBE with skilled and knowledgeable individuals who can support the DBE's work.
- Continued year 1 roll-out of Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP) and further develop the associated partnership support visits. Evaluate success of EFP, recruit and commence with a second cohort.
- Launch a new 'Be a Governor' campaign with the view of recruiting more volunteers to serve on the governance boards of schools, federations and academy trusts.
- Work with academy trusts to strengthen the understanding and effectiveness of local governance.
- Support schools / school groupings to reflect on whether their organisational structures are effective in supporting the improvement of their organisation, and support any exploration and change.
- Review the DBE's Multi-School Grouping Policy and Guidance considering new government direction and local context.
- With governance, consider how small schools can be preserved as a sustainable part of the system, delivering a good quality of education.
- Strengthen resources and provide training for Christianity as a Global faith.
- Work with Local Authority SACREs (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) and LTLRE (Learn Teach Lead Religious Education) to promote the value of RE, particularly in secondary schools.
- Continue to champion equity, diversity, inclusion and justice work, providing support to others.
- Help give children and young people a voice to influence and shape the Church of England in Devon.
- Support and appropriately challenge our schools to 'make Jesus known'.
- Encourage schools to develop a shared understanding and intentionality with their church/mission community about how they can work together and in support of each other and of their children, young people and families.
- Develop opportunities and pathways for school staff and those involved in governance to explore their own spirituality and faith.
- Strengthen the Education team so knowledge and expertise are held more widely.
- Evaluate work during this triennium and prepare for the new triennium, including evaluating existing strategic plan and writing a new one, and revisiting the membership of the DBE.

Our Thanks

Our thanks go to all those who work tirelessly in and for our diocesan family of schools. The professionalism, dedication, love and care given by many is impressive and makes a tangible and significant difference to the lives of many. We thank school leaders, teachers, support staff, governance individuals and volunteers for their service.

Members of the Exeter DBE Committee and its sub-committees seek to ensure our diocesan vision for education is lived out in a way which reflects the good news of Christ, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. The DBE Committee as a whole is grateful for the skilled contributions of individual members to this work. We also appreciate greatly the support of wider diocesan colleagues.

Above all, the DBE Committee gives thanks for the inspiring work of our diocesan Education team, led with great skill and dedication by Sue Lockwood, our Diocesan Director of Education. Significant aspects of its work are undertaken quietly behind the scenes, supporting leadership and governance in our diocesan family of schools, federations and academy trusts in ways which directly impact the learning and life chances of thousands of children and young people across Devon. Equally and more visibly, the team's contribution has been central to the continued shaping and implementation of the DBE's strategic priorities as reflected in the above report.

By the grace of God, our service to children and young people in Devon through the provision of education continues to be more closely integrated with the wider mission of the church in our diocese, as we seek to live out the Church of England's national vision for church schools as 'deeply Christian, serving the common good' and as places where people of all ages can be encouraged toward the threshold of Christian faith. We pray that this work may continue to prosper in the next season.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer, Chair
on behalf of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee*

APPENDIX 1

Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee (EDBE) School / Academies Overview Information

(1st January 2025)



There are 134 Church of England schools within the Diocese of Exeter. These are 122 primaries, 3 infant, 3 junior and 5 secondary schools.

70% of CofE schools in the Diocese of Exeter are academies and 30% are maintained schools. Overall, 89% of schools are in a formal partnership with 11% remaining as stand-alone schools.

Maintained Schools within the Diocese of Exeter

Total number of Maintained Church of England School	40
Total Maintained VA schools	17
Total Maintained VC schools	23
Total number of CofE Maintained schools in Federations	25
Total number of VA Maintained schools in Federations	10
Total number of VC Maintained schools in Federations	15
Community schools in Federations with C of E schools	28
Total number of stand-alone CofE Maintained schools	15
Standalone Maintained VA schools	7
Standalone Maintained VC schools	8

See Appendix 1 for details of Federation size and groupings

NB.: Berrynarbor VC school has consent to convert to academy

Academies within the Diocese of Exeter

Exeter Diocese Church of England Academies in Multi-Academy Trusts	94
Church of England Academies in Single Academy Trusts	0
Devon Community Schools in MATs with church articles	100
MATs with Church School Articles (excluding those waiting to be dissolved)	15
Trusts with Majority Church School Articles	9
Trusts with Minority Church School Articles	6
Trusts with Equity Church School Articles	0

See Appendix 2 for details of Academy Trust size and spread.

N.B.: Blackdown Education Partnership have permission for Majority Articles from SOGG and Education South West for Minority Articles. Dartmoor MAT have permissions to move to majority articles.

Appendix 1 continued: Federation Overview

Federations	Federations of two schools	Federations of three schools	Federations of four or more schools	Total
Number of Federations	7	3	4	14
VA schools in Federations				10
VC schools in Federations				15
Community schools in Federations with Foundation Governance				28

Federation	VA schools	VC schools	Community	Total	Notes
Cedar Tree	2	0	0	2	
Culm Valley Federation	0	2	1	3	
Devon Moors Federation	0	1	7	8	
Exe Valley and Moorsway Federation	0	4	6	10	MP with South Hams
Federation of Tiverton	1	0	2	3	
Fort Federation	1	1	0	2	
Goodleigh / Ilfracombe	0	1	1	2	
Halberton / Uplowman	0	1	1	2	
Otter Valley Federation	2	0	0	2	
South Hams Federation	0	1	3	4	MP with Exe Valley & Moorsway Federation
Three Rivers Federation	0	1	1	2	
United Schools Federation	3	1	4	8	
West Berry Federation	0	1	1	2	Consent to convert and join Ventrus MAT
West Exmoor Federation	1	1	1	3	
TOTAL	10	15	28	53	

N.B.: MP = Management Partnership

Appendix 1 continued: Academy Trust Overview

MAT	Church academies	Other Diocese Church academies	Community schools - Diocese of Exeter	Community schools not our diocese	Notes
ACE (Ma)	9	4	2	2	
Acorn (Ma)					In process of being dissolved
Alumnis (Ma)	6		3		
An Daras (Min)	1	1	1	8	
Athena (Min)	1		2	6	
Blackdown <i>(Majority Articles request and agreed by EDBE – awaiting DfE approval)</i>			4	8	
Chulmleigh (Ma)			4		
Dartmoor (Min)	6	0	13		Majority articles requested and approved by SOGG
Education South West <i>(Minority Articles request and agreed by EDBE – awaiting DfE approval)</i>			14		Management Partnership with St Cuthbert Mayne
First Federation (Ma)	12	5	10	2	
Ivy (Min)	1		7		
LAP(SW) (Ma)	11	2	4	1	
LINK (Ma)	13		10		
St Christopher's Pri (Ma)	17		4		
St Christopher's Sec (Ma)					In process of being dissolved
Tarka (Min)			8		Agreement to transfer into Ventrus
TEAM (Ma)	3		5		MP with Swimbridge
Ted Wragg (Min)	2		15		
Ventrus (Maj)	12		12		Agreement for Tarka to transfer into Ventrus
TOTAL	94	12	100 (+18)	19 (+8)	

APPENDIX 2: The Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee’s Strategic Plan: January 2023 – December 2025

Purpose	Vision	To enable all, through the love of God in Jesus Christ, to ‘live life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10b)			
	Mission	Nurture vision-inspired education; Nourish personal and spiritual growth; Enable connected communities that flourish			
Strategic Priorities and Key Objectives	Strategic Priorities for the ED BE Committee	The Diocese of Exeter has a successful diocesan family of schools	Responding pro-actively to the changing educational landscape strengthens school performance, capacity, and sustainability	The DBE Committee and Education Team are working effectively and can demonstrate positive impact	The DBE Committee plays its part in ensuring schools are a central part of the diocesan mission
	Key Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self-improving system enables best practice to be shared and embedded across schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are coming together in strong formal partnerships groupings – federations or multi-academy trusts (MATs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new ED BE committee is monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of diocesan educational work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synergy is evident in the strategic and operational work in Mission and Ministry and Education.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong leaders, including those in governance, are enabling schools to flourish, and evaluating their effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church schools’ foundation and distinctiveness are protected and enhanced through reconstitution / conversion processes and subsequent structures and responsibilities of leadership, including governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roles and responsibilities of the Education Team are closely aligned to the vision and priorities of the DBE and there is shared accountability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and challenge the diocesan central team, schools and worshipping communities to look afresh at how to deepen relationships and promote CYP and families’ spiritual engagement.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with system leaders, schools with vulnerabilities are both supported and held account for improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborations across the education system (e.g., RD, MATs & LAs) and diocesan systems harnesses expertise and supports increased impact and capacity to strengthen our church schools and wider diocesan family of schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clear strategy as to how we work with schools and the wider system to effect positive change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work alongside senior colleagues to ensure the diocese promotes the call to teaching, the role of governance and volunteering in schools as part of the ministry of the church in education.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church schools have a clear Christian vision which drives strategy and upholds their Christian foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and support of school / grouping leaders is supporting the retention and recruitment of leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and accurate school / grouping data and intelligence informs priorities and monitoring of impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting evidence-informed practice in strengthening relations between church, schools and households.

	Strategic Priorities	Key Objectives	Action	Key Results
Strategic Priorities, Key Objectives and Key Results	A successful diocesan family of schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-improving system enables best practice to be shared and embedded across schools. • Strong leaders, including those in governance, are enabling schools to flourish, and evaluating their effectiveness. • In collaboration with system leaders, schools with vulnerabilities are both supported and held account for improvements. • Church schools have a clear Christian vision which drives strategy and upholds their Christian foundation. 	See termly plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church schools / groupings demonstrate increasing strength against diocesan flight path measures* (vision, CW, RE, spirituality, leadership etc) • The disadvantage gap has narrowed against the national disadvantage gap and the Exeter Diocese church schools' non-disadvantaged group. • Aggregated KS2 % expected level RWM and aggregated KS4 % English / Maths Grade 5+ results will be back to pre-Covid levels and progress is at least in line with national. • The quality of students learning experience in Religious Education is good and pupils/students have opportunities to develop their own worldview. There is an all through approach with seamless progression at the Y6/Y7 transition point. • Schools are living up to their Christian Foundation, and where they are not this is addressed promptly. • Ofsted good or better inspection outcomes are at least 90% for our church schools, with plans in place for those who are not yet good being monitored by Governance to ensure schools are improving. • Schools with vulnerabilities are supported by those schools/groupings with improvement capacity and strength, and impact is monitored. • Church school buildings are safe and fit for purpose so that children are educated in a suitable learning environment.
	Responding to the Educational Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are coming together in strong formal partnerships groupings. • Church schools' foundation and distinctiveness are protected and enhanced through reconstitution / conversion processes and subsequent structures and responsibilities of leadership, including governance. • Collaborations across the education system (e.g., RD, MATs & LAs) and diocesan systems harnesses expertise and supports increased impact and capacity to strengthen our church schools and wider diocesan family of schools. 	See termly plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear definition as to what constitutes a strong grouping for church schools, with all schools conducting due diligence regarding whether to move into a strong formal partnership. • The proportion of foundation governance on the responsible Board is preserved when schools enter partnerships, and the interests of site trustees are protected through legal documents and the CSA. • The expectations of school groupings in upholding the Christian distinctiveness of church schools are made explicit and monitored, for example around the leadership of recruitment, RE and CW. • The Education Team is collaborating on school place planning (school closure, PANs, new church schools); to support vulnerable schools' improvement; in levelling up CYP opportunities and outcomes, and in enhancing church school Christian distinctiveness.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School groupings are coming together formally to strengthen the educational landscape across Devon, particularly in the most deprived areas of the diocese and for the disadvantaged. • Development and support of school / school grouping leaders is supporting the retention and recruitment of leaders. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School groupings are of a size and nature to influence the system and make positive changes for students/pupils, (particularly the most disadvantaged and SEND), with the strongest groupings growing. • Training and support of leaders / aspirant leaders (including those in governance) is effective and impacts positively on leadership practices. • Succession planning is considered for all leaders. • School leaders, including those involved in governance are promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
DBE Committee and Team Effectiveness	<p><i>(N.B. where DBE is referenced, this means the DBE committee)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new EDBE committee is monitoring and ensuring the effectiveness of diocesan educational work. • The roles and responsibilities of the Education Team are closely aligned to the vision and priorities of the DBE and there is shared accountability across the team. • There is a clear strategy as to how we work with schools and the wider system to effect positive change. • Effective and accurate school / school grouping data and intelligence informs priorities and monitoring of impact. 	See termly plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledgeable, committed, skilled and diverse DBE is appointed. • The DBE evaluate their own and the Education Team’s effectiveness against the vision and strategy, and hold each other to account. • Team structure, job descriptions and recruitment are shaped by the DBE vision and strategy, the educational landscape and DBE Measure (2021). • The team trains and empowers leaders within multi-school groupings to develop flourishing schools, with a vision that underpins strategy; strong leadership and school improvement models, including for RE; strong governance; robust recruitment and staff development; inspiring Collective Worship and well-developed church/school links. • The team quality assures leaders in multi-school groupings to ensure they are developing and enhancing the flourishing of church schools. • Building the knowledge and leadership of others supports planning for succession within the Education Team (and school groupings). • Planned and timely impact is at the heart of all work, and links explicitly to the team’s targets and appraisals. • A Management Information System (MIS) draws together accurate school information in a coherent, comprehensive and interrogatable way, giving improved oversight of work with schools and enabling it to be prioritised and targeted increasingly effectively.
Schools are a central part of the diocesan mission		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy is evident in the strategic and operational work in Mission and Ministry and Education. • Encourage and challenge the diocesan central team, schools and worshipping communities to look afresh at how to 	See termly plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint CYP & families’ strategy spans the work of M & M and Education teams and is monitored / evaluated by a new DBE joint sub-committee. • Example of good church/school and household working are visible and used to support development in other geographical areas. • School staff and those involved in governance take up opportunities to develop their own spirituality, theological knowledge and faith through supported and funded study days or programmes.

		<p>deepen relationships and promote CYP and families' spiritual engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diocesan central team promote and encourage work with schools as an expression of Christian ministry, for example a call to teaching, governance or other volunteering roles. • Evidence-informed practice is strengthening relations between church, schools and households, and examples of good practice are shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double number of churches leading worship once a month or more in sch. • New ways of working to increase school, CYP&F and church teams engagement are agreed, promoted and evaluated by the central team, e.g. Renew cafes, Begin Well, chaplaincy, prayer spaces, social justice). • The development of new ways of 'being and doing church' are bridging gaps between church, schools and households, with 10 new expressions of church in schools established and thriving. • Child (and Adult) Average School Service Attendance increases by 50% year on year from 2023 (measured from 2021 baseline of 1400). • Baptisms numbers stabilise and then grow by 10% (from 2021 baseline of 1060) by the end of 2025. Confirmation numbers increase. • New leaders, young and otherwise, are being developed and supported to become spiritual and faith leaders.
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