

# Annual Report to Diocesan Synod

2025

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)



# Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee

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## The Diocesan Board of Education Committee (DBE)

The Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee (DBE) 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 DBE Committee has a board comprising of 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. It has been supported in its work by four sub-committees with members drawn from the main board, individuals in leadership and governance from within schools and school groupings, the Local Authorities and churches. The sub-committees were as follows:

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

The DBE's triennium ended in 2025 with those serving as follows:



Top left to right: The Venerable Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes (Chair); Deborah Eveleigh (Vice-Chair); Alex Walmsley; Zoe Batten; The Right Reverend Moira Astin, the Suffragan Bishop of Crediton. Bottom left to right: Dan Morrow; Nicky Dunford; the Reverend Laura Selman; Anna Venables; Lorna Legg and the Reverend Scott Angell.

## Context

The DBE fulfils statutory responsibilities as set out in the DBE Measure 2021, the legislation that formalises the partnership between the Church of England and the State in the delivery of non-selective primary and secondary education.

Our work, underpinned by the DBE Measure, is to champion, support and appropriately challenge CofE schools and multi-school groupings, work with education system leaders (including the Department for Education, Local Authorities and the National Society for Education) to help shape the education landscape, and to contribute to the diocesan mission.

In the Diocese of Exeter, we have 134 Church of England (CofE) Schools, including five secondary schools, which range in size from 7 pupils to 1305 pupils (January 2025 census). The sustainability of very small schools is a concern, particularly in terms of leadership and school improvement capacity. 7 of our CofE schools have less than 30 pupils.

89% of our CofE schools have come together in formal partnerships (federations or academy trusts) where there is shared support and accountability through executive leadership and governance. Many of these groupings have a mix of CofE schools and community schools. 71% of our CofE schools are academies and 29% are maintained schools (with the Local Authority as the responsible body). 11% of our CofE schools are not currently in a formal partnership.

Underpinning all work of the DBE and its officers (the Education Team) is a drive to add value to schools as they seek to provide the best opportunities to enable the flourishing of all within their school community. We continue to ensure that the Christian Foundation of Church of England schools is protected, upheld and enhanced.



## DBE's Vision and Strategic Plan

**Nurture vision-inspired education,**

**Nourish personal and spiritual growth,**

**Enable connected communities**

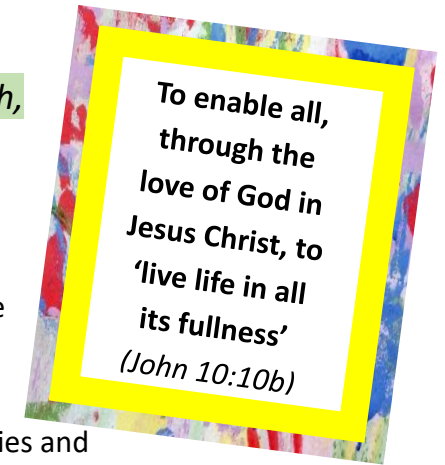
**that Flourish**

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*) informs, gives direction to, and drives our strategic priorities and actions. It is against these that the DBE monitors and evaluates the work of the Diocesan Education Team and considers how effectively the DBE is fulfilling its statutory duties under the DBE Measure (2021) and how well it is supporting the diocesan mission.


For the triennium 2023 – 2025, the DBE's Strategic Plan has had four strategic priorities 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.

A key aspect to progressing each of these areas is the Education Team's ability to work purposefully and effectively with other system leaders, from across the Education system and within the Church of England, locally, regionally and nationally. On the following pages is the DBE's self-evaluation, measured against agreed strategic plan objectives and key results, for the triennium January 2023 – December 2025.



**Strategic Priority 1: The Diocese of Exeter has a successful diocesan family of schools**

<p><b>Key Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A self-improving system enables best practice to be shared and embedded across schools.</li> <li>• Strong leaders, including those in governance, are enabling schools to flourish, and evaluating their effectiveness.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>																							
<p><b>Progress Headlines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is generosity in the system with leaders supporting the spread of good practice and the wider education landscape, for example through involvement in governance and influence of local authority policy.</li> <li>• Management Partnerships (MP) are successfully being used as a mechanism for formalising support for vulnerable schools/groupings as leaders, including those involved in governance seek to support system-wide improvements. Monitoring takes place through regular joint MP meetings, with both parties' governance, diocesan involvement as appropriate the LA.</li> <li>• Exeter Flourishing Partnership has proved very successful with attendees evaluating the training highly and our partner support visits (PSV) evidencing that in the vast majority of settings, learning has been implemented and the impact is positive.</li> <li>• During this triennium, SIAMS inspections moved away from single word judgements. As of 1st December 2025, 99% of CofE Schools were <i>'living up to their Christian Foundation'</i>, with one found not to be and one yet to be inspected (out of 134).</li> <li>• During this triennium the Ofsted Inspection Framework and grading changed. Up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025, 88% of schools were judged as having good or better overall effectiveness, or as good or better in all areas (when single word judgements were removed).</li> <li>• The DBE's Standards and Ethos Group (SEG) monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of officers' work to support the most vulnerable schools. During 2025, it has developed practice to hear from Academy Trusts about how their vision is enabling all pupils, and particularly the most disadvantaged pupils to flourish.</li> <li>• The new Locally Agreed syllabus for RE was launched in summer 2024 with a shift to <a href="#">religion and worldviews</a>. Understanding Christianity remains a key resource and the RE Statement of Entitlement continues to stipulate 5-10% of curriculum time in CofE schools should be given to RE. SIAMS has identified strengths in RE and a widespread need to further develop understanding of Christianity as a global world faith.</li> <li>• At KS4 (2025) the % English &amp; Maths (Grade 4+) in Exeter diocese CofE schools reached 69% which is significantly above national (64%). At Grade 5+ this was 48% compared to 44% nationally. This is a significant improvement from the 2019 picture where our CofE secondary schools achieved 34% compared to nationally 43.2%.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1512 790 2150 1181"> <p><b>Ofsted outcomes to end of 2024/25 Academic Year</b></p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Ofsted Outcomes Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Good or better (overall and/or in all areas)</td> <td>88%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Requires Improvement (overall and/or in one or more areas)</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inadequate (overall and/or in one or more area)</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <div data-bbox="1153 1197 2150 1476"> <p><b>% English &amp; Maths (Grade 5+) ✓</b></p> <p><b>48%</b></p> <p>FFT Rank</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>English &amp; Maths Performance Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Your organisation (%)</th> <th>National Average (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>~42%</td> <td>~48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>~42%</td> <td>~44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024</td> <td>~47%</td> <td>~45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2025</td> <td>48%</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In line with the national average (44%)</p> </div>	Category	Percentage	Good or better (overall and/or in all areas)	88%	Requires Improvement (overall and/or in one or more areas)	10%	Inadequate (overall and/or in one or more area)	2%	Year	Your organisation (%)	National Average (%)	2022	~42%	~48%	2023	~42%	~44%	2024	~47%	~45%	2025	48%	44%
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- At KS2 (2025), RWM combined outcomes for CofE diocesan schools were 59% compared to national of 62%. Both nationally and locally, these are not at pre-Covid levels (n - 65%).
- Data for KS4 shows the percentage of FSM6 attaining a Grade 4 in Maths and English has risen from 40 to 46% over this triennium, however the gap to 'other' students has increased.
- Data at KS2 shows the percentage of Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (45%) is in line with national disadvantaged pupils and greater than CofE schools nationally and within the southwest. Whilst this is an improvement from 39% in 2023, it is significantly lower than for 'other' pupils.
- At KS2 pupils on SEN support or with EHCPs achieving the expected standard+ in Maths, Reading and Writing increased from 14 to 27% and 6 to 7% respectively. At KS4, the percentage achieving a grade 4 in English and Maths increased for those receiving SEN support from 23 to 31% but decreased from 21 to 0% for those with an EHCP.
- The DBE's Resources and Assets Group (RAG) make decisions about VA school condition allocation (SCA) funding and monitor progress where there are concerns significant about safety. Both schools identified at the outset of the triennium as having significant risk (addressed through management actions), have been successful (through diocesan bidding) in securing funding for phase 1 of the schools rebuilding programme.

Inclusivity (vulnerable groups)				
	Exeter	SW CofE	All CofE	All National
Percentage of key stage 2 disadvantaged pupils:	23.67	→ ↑	→ ↓	→ ↓
Percentage of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths:	45.46	→ ↑	→ ↑	→ ↔
Difference between school percentage of disadvantaged pupils and national percentage of other pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths :	-21.54	→ ↑	→ ↑	→ ↔

**Review of planned key results**

- 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 to Religious Education 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.



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

### Key Objectives

- 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.

### Progress Headlines

- The DBE's Multi-School Grouping Policy and Guidance has been updated and strengthened around what constitutes a strong partnership and an Academisation Policy written and adopted. The DBE Committee has stood strongly by the principle of continuing with majority articles to ensure preservation of the proportionality of Foundation governance and maximum protection of Christian Foundations.
- The DBE's School Organisation and Governance Group (SOGG) oversee officers work around any 'significant change', including schools' conversion to academy status or changes in age-range or PAN, and consider necessary consents. All schools are expected to undertake robust due diligence when investigating partnerships options.
- 89% of schools are now in a formal partnership (2023 81%). The number of groupings has decreased from 35 to 27 as groupings have come together, with successful groupings often growing. The size of multi-school groupings varies - we have six 2 school federations through to one having 10 schools, and Academy Trusts ranging in size from 4 up to 36 schools.

	SATS (+MATs with 1 school)	Active MATs	Stand-alone maintained CE	Federations	Average size of multi-school
January 2023	2	17	24	18	6.5
December 2025	0	14	15	13	10.4

- All schools moving into partnership have preserved (at least) their proportionality of foundation governance thus ensured the greatest protection of their Christian foundation. EDEN member representatives all have an Anglican faith however Foundation Directors and local foundation governance are appointed based on skills and a commitment to upholding the Christian foundation of CofE schools.
- The Education Team is working much more with multi-school grouping central teams. Exeter Flourishing Partnership is reaching all Academy Trusts and 1 large federation thus ensuring Christian Distinctiveness is embedded and enhanced across the groupings and their Church schools. EFP can also provide opportunities for career progression with leads identified for the partnership as a whole, for governance, for recruitment and retention, and for Collective Worship and Religion and Worldviews. Training has been evaluated highly.
- Significantly more joint diocesan working has enhanced provision for schools, plus increased the capacity and impact of the team's work (e.g. GFSLP and PCSF/EFP).

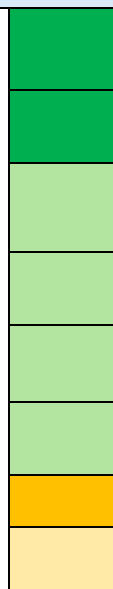
- There is strong connectivity with the DfE Regions group and Academy Trusts. Over the triennium, collaboration with Local Authorities has varied significantly with their restructuring/changes in staffing. A pattern with Devon is now in place for a termly strategic meeting and a termly operational meeting. In Devon there are 36 maintained schools, in Torquay there is 1 and in Plymouth there are 2.
- Our CofE Primary Schools are over 13% below their 'full' capacity.
- There are 7 CofE schools with less than 30 pupils, including 3 with less than 10 on role. Discussions about sustainability and any actions around the future of very small schools take place with the school groupings, the LA and the DfE's Regions Group. A Small Schools' Guidance note has been developed.
- The number and nature of SEND needs has increased significantly, with Local Authority support and fulfilment of their statutory responsibilities proving challenging. Schools, particularly multi-school groupings are developing their provision.
- Many schools anecdotally report they are struggling with behaviours.
- EDIJ is embedded into the work of the Education Team – it features in all training. A peer-to-peer support network focusses on addressing curriculum, culture, recruitment, inclusion, governance. Attendance represents 66 Exeter Diocese CofE schools, 39 Devon Community schools and 18 schools outside of our diocese.
- N.B.: With a change of government, there has been a deficit in policy which has impacted and slowed the pace of school organisational changes. A national consultation on SEND is currently underway. The publication of the Schools Whitepaper may be further delayed.

	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>SW CofE</b>	<b>All CofE</b>	<b>All National</b>
<u>Capacity when full (average PAN):</u>	225.34 →	↓	↓	↓
<u>Number on Roll (average):</u>	199.11 →	↓	↓	↓
<u>Capacity difference (average number):</u>	-26.23 →	↑	↓	↑
<u>Capacity difference (average percentage):</u>	-13.27 →	↑	↓	↓

	<b>Exeter</b>	<b>SW CofE</b>	<b>All CofE</b>	<b>All National</b>
<u>Parents of children with SEND say their school gives them the support needed:</u>	36.55 →	↔	↑	↓
<u>Parents feel that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved:</u>	86.85 →	↓	↓	↑

**Review of planned key results**

- 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.
- 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).



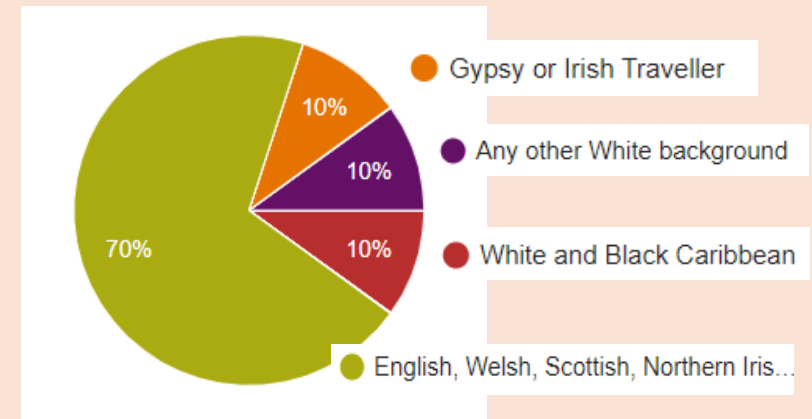
**Strategic Priority 3: The DBE Committee and Education Team are working effectively and can demonstrate positive impact**

**Key Objectives**

- 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.

**Progress Headlines**

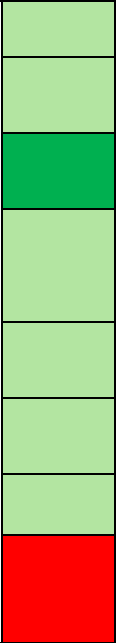
- A skilled and diverse Board has been in place for most of the triennium however we have carried the Synod elected House of Clergy vacancy for most of this period.
- Racial diversity on the Board at the triennium midpoint is shown opposite.
- A vision and strategy are in place and informs and provides direction for the work of the DBE Committee and the Education Team.
- The DBE evaluate effectiveness of themselves and the team by monitoring progress against strategic plan priorities and key results, which includes external audit development points. The sub-committees also play a part in monitoring the work of officers and in overseeing impact.
- The Education Team has 'reshaped' to meet the needs of the changing landscape and has clear job descriptions, appraisal cycle and 121s.
- Retention of new team members has been challenging with 3 out of 6 recruited to advisory roles taking early retirement or returning to teaching/headship. This has caused significant workload pressure for team members with vacancies carried. The team currently is at full capacity and appears stable. The DBE Exec monitor this area.
- Capacity of the team, particularly with administrative functions is stretched.
- Working methods have been reviewed. There is more offered centrally for schools but less individual school contact. With more schools working in groupings, much work is undertaken with central teams meaning our work has a wider reach and often a greater impact.
- Exeter Flourishing Partnership training has been very well received. The associated partner support visits (PSV) have enabled us to support, monitor and evaluate effectiveness of implementation, and provide additional support/training as required.
- Opportunities for further developing individuals are being provided through involvement in DBE Committees, SACRE, LTLRE, governance, management partnerships and Growing Faith involvement.



The content of the course was purposeful and supported my thinking as a Trust Church school lead. I feel I have greater clarity of the partnership and the impact it will have on the trust.

The meeting today met all the stated aims. The knowledge, guidance & advice of all providers was excellent. Periods allocated to reflection were really useful to focus on individual settings but also to discuss with others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Management Information System is not in place. Information about schools is largely held in spreadsheets and an old (soon to be unsupported) Access database. SharePoint (migration starting Dec 2025) and a content Management system (CMS) are to be implemented in 2026.</li> <li>• Subscription to UK Education’s, ‘Celebrate and Challenge Project: How are we Flourishing?’ is enabling the scrutiny of a range of data across primary schools. Through the company’s partnership with SW dioceses, development work is anticipated to provide new analysis of SIAMS outcomes against the Inspection Questions (IQs) and also comparative outcomes data for academies and maintained schools.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review of planned key results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A knowledgeable, committed, skilled and diverse DBE is appointed.</li> <li>• The DBE evaluate their own and the Educational Team’s effectiveness against the vision and strategy and hold each other to account.</li> <li>• Team structure, job descriptions and recruitment are shaped by the DBE vision and strategy, the educational landscape and DBE Measure (2021).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The team quality assures leaders in multi-school groupings to ensure they are developing and enhancing the flourishing of church schools.</li> <li>• Building the knowledge and leadership of others supports planning for succession within the Education Team (and school groupings).</li> <li>• Planned and timely impact is at the heart of all work, and links explicitly to the team’s targets and appraisals.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>



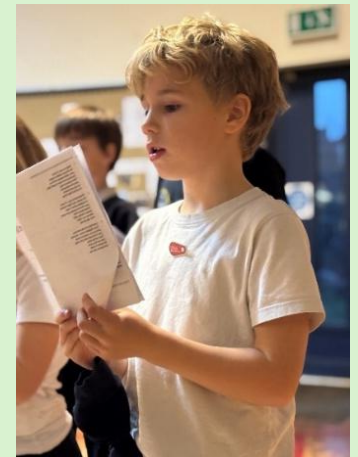
**Strategic Priority 4: The DBE Committee plays its part in ensuring schools are a central part of the diocesan mission**

**Key Objectives**

- 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.
- 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.
- Promoting evidence-informed practice in strengthening relations between church, schools and households.

**Progress Headlines**

- A Growing Faith Opportunities Group (GFG) of the DBE Committee was formed for this triennium. This supported and held to account the Education Team for their work in this area and was attended by M&M colleagues. There has been no joint strategy and little joint operational working between M&M and the Education Team.
- There are some new excellent pockets of work undertaken at parish level with schools to deepen relationships and promote CYP and families’ spiritual engagement. Examples include the development and embedding of the pupil chaplains at Torre Church of England Academy, the Choir Church partnership at St Michael’s Church of England Primary Academy and Forest Church Worship at St Martin’s, Cranbrook.
- The introduction of a Governance Reaffirmation and Thanks event in the Bishop’s palace gardens, school governance (and student) inclusion in the Company of St Boniface and support for the Be a Governor relaunch speaks to senior colleagues increasing focus on schools’ work being part of the ministry of the church in education.
- Pause for Thought spiritual moments are now available on our website and regularly signposted. Termly Time to Recharge sessions are offered to all involved in governance, staff and volunteers in schools.
- Through the Education Team’s drive for inclusion, young people have been given a voice and leadership opportunities, for example by speaking into the DBE Committee meetings, Diocesan Synod as part of the Education Team’s reporting, research interviews and at the LLM conference.
- Statistical Growth (based on baseline 2021 figures) show that the ‘all age average weekly school attendance’, baptisms and confirmations have all increased overall, however the reality is 2021 figures were low due to the impact of the pandemic, and 2022 figures are the highest with declining numbers in each of these areas in both 2023 and 2024.



**All age average weekly school service attendance**

Ref. no.	Diocese/area	2021	2024
15	Exeter	1,800	3,400

**Baptisms and thanksgivings**

Ref. no.	Diocese/area	2021	2024
15	Exeter	1,080	1,120

**Confirmations**

Ref. no.	Diocese/area	2021	2024
15	Exeter	120	161

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with CYP is now explicitly named as a missional priority for the diocese and localised work with schools included as part of the diocese’s application to the CofE’s Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB).</li> <li>• The Education Team have led on Exeter’s inclusion in a 2025 regional pilot of the Growing Faith Strategic Leaders Programme with other southwest dioceses, with participants having demonstratable impact of the engagement and partnership working with schools, churches, CYP and their families. The Education Team have also led training for curates and LLMs and clergy.</li> <li>• Two successful Growing Faith Learning Hub applications were supported by the Education Team and commence in 2026 (only 11 awarded nationally) and one school research project based around Faith and Music has received national Growing Faith Foundation support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Review of planned key results</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A joint CYP &amp; families’ strategy spans the work of M&amp;M and Education teams and is monitored / evaluated by a new DBE joint sub-committee.</li> <li>• Example of good church/school and household working are visible and used to support development in other geographical areas.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Double number of churches leading worship once a month or more in sch.</li> <li>• New ways of working to increase school, CYP&amp;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).</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Child (and Adult) Average School Service Attendance increases by 50% year on year from 2023 (measured from 2021 baseline of 1400).</li> <li>• Baptisms numbers stabilise and then grow by 10% (from 2021 baseline of 1060) by the end of 2025. Confirmation numbers increase.</li> <li>• New leaders, young and otherwise, are being developed and supported to become spiritual and faith leaders.</li> </ul>

Not measurable

## Social Media

Please consider following us on social media.

- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/ExeterDioceseEducationTeam/>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/edcofedevon/>



## Highlights from 2025

**Listening and Responding to our Children and Young People:** The DBE and its officers continue to create opportunities to listen to children and young people's thoughts, opinions and hopes. A particular highlight was when students from St Cuthbert Mayne joint Anglican and Roman Catholic Secondary school joined the LLM Conference, leading morning worship and joining table discussions about how churches, schools and families can work together to build connectivity, enable CYP to explore their own faith or worldview, feel welcome, and have a voice and purpose within the church community. Read the full story [here](#).

**Flourishing: Annual School Leaders' Gathering:** Feedback was extremely positive from the 2025 annual gathering of school leaders where over 100 leaders from our diocesan family came together to focus on building a stronger experience for all within our communities, with particular focus on religious and worldviews education and Christian spirituality.

**Governance Reaffirmation & Thanks:** All involved in Governance were invited to join the Education Team and senior clergy as we thanked them for their service to our diocesan family of schools - together they make a remarkable difference. The informal sessions were held in the Bishop's Palace Garden. You can [hear from some of our governors here](#).



**Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS):** In 2025 there were 24 SIAMS inspections in our diocese. All inspected schools were found to be living up to their foundation as a Church school.

**Courageous Advocacy:** Many schools create the culture and opportunities for young people to follow their passions and make a difference in the world through their actions and their courageous advocacy. For example, at Landscope CofE Primary School, pupils' work in tackling global poverty is recognised by Christian Aid who have presented them with a silver award as part of the Global Neighbours Scheme. Read the full story [here](#). St Peter's CofE Secondary students penned letters to the Exeter MP advocating for better mental health support. Read the story [here](#).



**Exeter Flourishing Partnership (EFP):** The success of Exeter Flourishing Partnership continues. By providing focussed training and partner support visits, EFP has led to an increased focus and deepening of Christian Distinctiveness across many of our multi-school groupings, whilst also supporting an increased focus on vision and values for all schools. The partnership work of EFP has been highlighted as good practice in a number of schools' SIAMS inspections this year as well as being recognised nationally.



**Growing Faith (GF):** The Education Team are delighted to have supported two successful applications to the Growing Faith Foundation for Growing Faith Learning Hubs. Galmpton CofE Primary School in partnership with Churston Ferrers Parish and Sidbury Parish Church in partnership with Sidbury CofE Primary School are to act as strong developmental communities of practice from which other leaders, both regionally and nationally can learn.

## Plans for 2026

As we enter the new triennium, 2026 – 2028, the newly nominated, elected and co-opted membership of the DBE will revisit the DBE vision and shape a strategic plan which will have synergy with the wider diocesan priorities, will address the priorities arising in the current Education landscape and take into account needs of our Church of England schools and groupings.

Within the DBE's new Strategic Plan, the following are likely areas of focus:

- Induction and effectiveness of the new DBE and sub-committees.
- Further develop and embed effective leadership and governance in schools and multi-school groupings, with a particular emphasis on upholding, monitoring and evaluating the impact of Christian vision.
- Respond to the publication of the Government's Whitepaper and consider the implications for our Education Team's work.
- Work with SW dioceses and the National Society for Education to develop joint approaches to maximise efficiencies across diocesan teams and to enhance the opportunities available to school leadership and governance.
- Sustainability of small schools, with a focus on leadership capacity and quality of provision for pupils.
- Sharing best practise and promoting collaboration, with a particular focus on providing high-quality education, particularly for the most disadvantaged pupils.
- Promote inclusion of all as an outworking of Christian vision and values.
- Lead the development of the Religious Education curriculum to strengthen teaching and leading of Christianity as a Global World Faith.
- Support the development of identified Growing Faith hubs as communities for shared learning, locally, regionally and nationally.
- Establish partnerships between local churches and schools to create new FLOURISH worshipping communities to nurture Christian faith.
- Support planning and implementation of Pray, Grow, Serve 2035.

## 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.

We have been blessed in many talented and committed members of the Diocesan Board of Education Committee, and its subcommittees, throughout the 2023-2025 triennium. The DBE have overseen the diocesan response to significant changes in the education landscape, and developments and improvements in our service of our diocesan family of schools. Through the monitoring and evaluation of the DBE, the Education Team has re-shaped to better respond to the ever-changing landscape and to more fully consider the mission of the diocese alongside its statutory functions through the DBE Measure (2021).

In particular, the DBE Committee is grateful to Sue Lockwood, our Diocesan Director of Education, and our gifted diocesan education team for their immensely hard and diligent work in ensuring that our church schools are offering the best possible education for children and young people in Devon, in a context of Christian worship and practice according to the principles of the Church of England. Equally, within the diocese as a whole our education team have been leaders in developing the Growing Faith vision in which schools, churches and families mutually shape opportunities for children and young people to encounter Christian faith as a possibility for themselves and to grow in faith and discipleship. As the DBE Committee's triennium comes to an end and a new one begins, we pray God's blessing on this continuing work.

*The Ven. Douglas Dettmer, Chair*

*on behalf of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee*