

Church of England Board of Education

Going for Growth

Transformation for children, young people and the Church

Section 1: Changing childhood?

1:1 *'The task of Christian nurture must be seen not only in domestic terms, as something taking place within the families and generations of the Church, but also within the larger context of the Church's universal mission to humanity.'*¹

1:2 Over a generation ago, the ground-breaking report 'The Child in the Church' urged the church to consider its engagement with children and young people in wider terms than simply those with whom it came into contact. In the intervening years, the numbers of children and young people in formal contact with the church has declined, but the Church's universal mission to humanity has not changed. We need to reconsider how we engage with and express God's love to this generation of children and young people, whoever and wherever they may be.

1:3 The world is changing – and with it, the experiences of childhood and adolescence. Since the Church of England's National Strategies for Young People and Children² were written, the focus on children and young people in the public arena has become more prominent. There is a concern for children and young people reflected both in Government agenda and in the media. Too often it unhelpfully polarises things, placing children and young people at one or other end of a spectrum from angel to demon.

1:4 The findings of the Good Childhood Inquiry³ have highlighted what children perceive as needed for a good childhood –relationships, environment and well-being are key. However, relationship breakdown, bullying and inequality of many kinds were indicated as challenges to the flourishing of children and young people in our country.

1:5 If the Church is to take seriously the larger context of its universal mission, it needs to note the cultural shifts and current background of life for children and young people, all the while remembering that they are human beings, made in the image of God.

*Although I'm not a Christian, I like a church that makes it all interesting. Girl, 15*⁴

1:6 What then, is the background for children and young people against which we are currently called to engage in the mission of God? Some broad brushstrokes include:

- Current Government agenda⁵, with its emphasis on agencies working together to improve outcomes for children and young people
- The findings from The Good Childhood Inquiry⁶, published in February 2009
- The 2009 Child Poverty Action Group briefing on child well-being in European countries in which the UK comes 24th out of 29⁷
- The UNICEF 2007 Report Card 7 which found the United Kingdom in the bottom third for 5 out of 6 indicators of children's well-being (and overall ranked lowest) against 21 industrialised nations⁸

¹ Unfinished Business: *The Child in the Church*, 1995 pub. CCBI

² Good News for Young People, 2002; Sharing the Good News with Children, 2003

³ A Good Childhood, pub. Penguin 2009

⁴ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

⁵ Every Child Matters: Change for Children, 2004; Aiming High for Young People, 2007

⁶ Hosted by The Children's Society, this is the first independent inquiry into what makes for a good childhood

⁷ Child Wellbeing and Poverty, CPAG, 2009

⁸ UNICEF, Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, *Innocenti Report Card 7*, 2007

- Changing demographics – there are now fewer under 16s than there are people of pensionable age – and the implications this has on social and economic policy⁹
- The publication of Toxic Childhood¹⁰ in 2006 raising concerns about factors adversely affecting children today
- Technological advances – 70% of 5 – 16 year olds have a mobile phone; over 80% of 7 – 16 year olds internet access at home¹¹
- Social networking and its implications for relationship and community¹²
- The economic downturn, with its implications not only for family life but also for the Church
- The diminishing focus on adolescence as a transition between childhood and adulthood
- Continuing anxieties about safeguarding issues
- Increased prevalence of gun and knife crime, and associated factors of freedom and safety¹³
- Diversity of family structures¹⁴
- Diversity of ethnicity and religion¹⁵
- Mental health issues¹⁶
- Increasing research into and understanding of the development of children and young people's faith and spirituality

1:7 In spite of what might seem like a gloomy picture, children and young people in the main are still loving, laughing, learning, growing and thriving.¹⁷ But the Church must not make the assumption that life is like this for all. The Church is called to work well with all children and young people, but the demands of the gospel always lead to a particular concern for the most vulnerable.

Don't assume you know what's best for us without our opinions. You don't. Maybe you know what would be best for you if you were a child, but you're not in our minds now, are you?¹⁸

1:8 The Church's mission must not only take account of the context in which it finds itself, but also listen to children and young people themselves and take seriously what it hears.

1:9 *If, instead of trying to teach good news to children (and young people), the Church tries to become good news, it will need such fresh eyes to see itself. Such a church would need the confidence to deal with questions rather than always having to find the answers. It would be prepared to surrender its life and let its institutions be transformed. The sadness is that churches rarely have the confidence which enables them to face the questions theology may ask of them, especially in the devastating directness such questions may take on in the mouth of a child (or young person). Churches lack the humility to face the truth about the quality of their life and worship and to set about addressing the needs which are then identified. A church which welcomes children (and young people), accepts their gifts and ministries, meets their needs, advocates justice, seeks new life, challenges evil with love and truth, and continues to learn the values of the Kingdom by living them, is a Church which is good news not only for its members but for the world¹⁹.*

⁹ Social Trends, 2008

¹⁰ Toxic Childhood by Sue Palmer, pub. Orion Books 2006

¹¹ Childwise, 2009

¹² 30% of 5 – 16s have a blog; 62% 5 – 16s have a profile on a social networking site (such as Bebo, Facebook and MySpace), Childwise, 2009

¹³ 6% of 10 – 19s in the UK self-report as belonging to a gang (Antrobus 2009); 4% of 10 – 25s in the UK say they have carried a knife in the preceding 12 months (Fear and Fashion, 2009)

¹⁴ In 2006 65% of children lived in a married couple family; 1:4 dependant children lived in a lone parent family (ONS:2007 Focus on Families)

¹⁵ Almost 20% of under 16s are from minority ethnic groups (Platt, 2009)

¹⁶ In the UK, 1:10 under 16s are diagnosed with a clinically recognised mental health disorder (George, 2006)

¹⁷ The 2008 Tellus3 survey for Ofsted found that out of 150,000 10 – 15 year olds surveyed, 69% regarded themselves as happy, and 95% had one or more good friends

¹⁸ 16 year old girl, Good Childhood Inquiry Values evidence

¹⁹ Unfinished Business: *The Child in the Church*, 1995 pub. CCBI

Section 2: Can the Church make a difference?

What difference does church make to your life?

It makes you think more in life. What's going to happen after death and it makes me understand God and Jesus more. Boy, 15

Sense of community. More friends! Girl, 11

Church makes a difference to my life because I know God will anyways be with me. And that makes me feel secure. Girl, 9²⁰

2:1 In 1988, **Children in the Way**²¹ was published, exploring a model of children as fellow pilgrims alongside adults in the Church. It was followed in 1991 by **All God's Children?**²² which addressed the question of children and evangelism. In 1996, **Youth A Part**²³ offered a theology for youth work and ways of working spiritually, relationally and in partnership with young people. These reports, and others published since²⁴, have contributed much that still needs to be embraced by the Church. The challenges which they presented, though taken up in part, are still far from being universally implemented. The most recent figures for church attendance show that, on Sundays at least, the numbers of children and young people gathering with the church for worship is continuing to fall.²⁵

2.2 With its continuing commitment to the parochial system, the Church of England has every one of the 11 million children and young people in England as parishioners. Obviously not all have contact with the church, but the church's mission does not and should not exclude any of them. The tragedy is that we appear to be failing even those with whom we have already connected. The challenge is how to creatively offer children and young people encounters with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ.

What could be changed to make church better for you?

Non-weird it, non-strange it, non-little it. Boy, 11²⁶

In the parish setting

2:3 The Church's commitment to, encounter with and investment in children and young people continues to be bigger than any other single organisation. Opportunities exist both in a wide range of activities that are not primarily worship orientated (holiday clubs, youth groups, carer and toddler groups, uniformed organisations) and worship-based events (Sunday and mid-week). Most of these are led by volunteers, though a growing number of parishes are investing in employed children and youth specialists to develop the work.²⁷

All Saints Church in Bedford not only has its own singing groups for 4 – 15 year olds, but also supports a singing group for Muslim women and children.

(Church) gives me time to reflect and appreciate what I've got/think about others. Gives me time to give thanks. Boy, 14

²⁰ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

²¹ Children in the Way, NS/CHP 1988

²² All God's Children? NS/CHP 1991

²³ Youth A Part, CHP, 1996

²⁴ Good News for Young People (GS1481, 2002); Sharing the Good News with Children (GS 1515, 2003); Children in the Midst (GS Misc 781); Children Included (GS Misc 804); Equipping (2006)

²⁵ The most recent findings from National Church Statistics indicate that:

- In 2007, 219,000 under 16s attended a weekly worship-based service, with 148,000 attending a Sunday service
- In 2006, the total number of baptisms and thanksgivings for under 12s totalled 144,330

²⁶ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

²⁷ The most recent findings from National Church Statistics indicate that:

- In 2004, 120,100 under 6s attended non-worship church-based activities, with 27,200 adult volunteers working with them
- In 2003, 249,000 5-10 year olds attended non-worship church-based activities, with 67,000 adult volunteers leading them
- In 2002 12,600 11 – 15 year olds and 38,000 16-25 year olds took part in non-worship church-based activities, with 41,000 adult volunteers alongside them

*For me a good church is a place to welcome people of any race and it is doing the word of God getting people to know how it works. Girl, 17*²⁸

The school context

2:4 Most parishes have one or more schools within their boundaries²⁹. In 2001, Lord Dearing's report **The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium**³⁰ highlighted the potential for creative relationships being forged between parish church and school. The potential for developing relationship, whether with church or community schools, is enormous through chaplaincy, activity clubs, religious education, serving on governing bodies and visits to the church itself. The continuing requirement for an act of daily worship of a broadly Christian nature in every school offers further possibilities for parish and school engagement.

Following a year's research into how to engage with the youth agenda, Portsmouth Deanery set up a Breakfast Club and mentoring scheme in a church secondary school, reaching out to 11 – 18 year olds.

Fairford Deanery in Gloucester Diocese employs a church/schools worker across 8 rural schools and churches. As well as facilitating after-school clubs and holiday clubs, she supports all-age worship in the local churches and provides a link between schools and churches of all denominations.

Working with Bedfordshire's SACRE and leaders from the local Mosque and Gurdwara, All Saints Church Bedford has developed a Faith Tour for local schools, which includes pre and post visit materials for teachers.

Every community

2:5 Contact Centres, Sure Start Projects, Children's Centres and Extended Schools provisions hold potential for the church to engage with children, young people and families through activities, breakfast and homework clubs, parenting support and sports activities. Some church communities are forging partnerships with local councils in the building and running of Children's Centres, thus placing themselves truly at the heart of the early years community³¹

The RISE Project in Chippenham grew out of St Paul's Church and models itself on the parable of the Good Shepherd. In partnership with Faithworks it offers children's, schools and community work including under 5s groups, family befriending and extra-curricular schools work. Local Authority funding helped to pay for a purpose-built building from which the project operates.

2.6 Fresh Expressions, with its intention of engaging with people who are not yet members of the church, offers creative possibilities for offering the gospel to children, young people and families in new ways which are contextually sensitive³².

2.7 A willingness to work ecumenically with other churches, particularly in rural areas, can and does increase the potential for ministry with, among and by children and young people, particularly when resources and volunteers are scarce in individual churches.

²⁸ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

²⁹ In 2007:

- There were 4441 Church of England Primary schools (25.6% of the total number in England) educating 767,320 pupils (18.7% of the total population of that age group)
- There were 205 Church of England Secondary schools (6% of the total number) educating 175,310 pupils (5.3% of the secondary age population)

³⁰ The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium, pub. CHP, 2001

³¹ The Springfield Children's Centre based at St Christopher's Church, Birmingham is a partnership between the Project Management Committee, St Christopher's PCC and Birmingham City Council
http://www.springfieldproject.org.uk/index.php?page_id=59

³² The Fresh Expressions directory lists over 244 Fresh Expressions which are primarily for under 5s, children, youth congregations or school situations. Messy Church, a Fresh Expression which originated in an Anglican Church in Portsmouth Diocese particularly attracting families, lists over 65 venues in its directory
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East Norwich Youth Project is an ecumenical project involving 9 local churches, offering children, young people and families a range of outreach and social support projects as diverse as DJ workshops, Street Pastors, Cookies (a Youth Café), Dance Off (dance club for 4 – 7s) and a Safer Neighbourhood Panel.

Each summer, the Play Van Project in Norwich Diocese takes a converted caravan to a selection of villages. It offers a meeting and activity point for parents and young children who are often in rural areas which have a lack of public transport.

Further and Higher Education

2:8 A church presence in chaplaincy work in Higher Education has been long established, providing spiritual care for students alongside chaplains of other faiths. This is a challenging ministry in the context of mission, in the face of continuing change and increasing student numbers, with all the pressures on people, finance and structures that these bring³³.

2.9 Chaplaincy in Further Education is a growing ministry³⁴, usually in the form of ecumenical, and increasingly, multi-faith teams. But it is far from established as 'normal' provision, and there is much for the church to do to promote involvement in this important work, meeting the needs of young people 16-19 and the increasing numbers of adults in Further Education institutions. *Pushing Further: from Strategy into Action*³⁵ identifies the continuing need for Church involvement in Further Education.

2.10 Opportunities also exist for the Church to work in partnership with local FE colleges in community-based learning initiatives, due to the development of College/Faith Community Partnerships.

Beyond church walls

2:11 Many Anglican-based organisations connect with children and young people beyond church walls, including:

- Church Army – one of its five areas of work focus in the training of evangelists is Children and Young People.
- Soul Survivor – with its Anglican roots, Soul Survivor connects with young people through its events and resources to enable them to engage with Jesus³⁶.
- Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade – with a history dating back to 1860, the Brigade seeks to extend the Kingdom of God through fun, faith and fellowship, encouraging faithful membership of the Church of England³⁷.
- CMS (Church Mission Society) – CMS Youth is working to engage children and young people with issues of justice and mission.
- The Children's Society – with its focus on runaways, those in trouble with the law, disabled children, refugees, young carers and traveller children, the Children's Society's mission is to model the values of the re-ordered world of the Kingdom of God (love, justice and forgiveness) particularly with children and young people who are vulnerable and on the edges of society.
- The Mothers' Union – through its focus on family life, the Mothers' Union is working with parents, children and young people in a variety of settings, including Contact Centres, prisons, hospitals and in parenting support groups
- The Girls' Friendly Society in England and Wales (GFS Platform) – as well as its parish based branch work with girls aged 7+, GFS Platform community programmes work with young women up to the age of 25 who may be socially excluded from areas of mainstream society

2:12 There is also wide-spread Anglican participation with ecumenical partners (particularly in covenant with the Methodist Church and in Fresh Expressions) and with cross-denominational bodies such as Scripture Union, Youth for Christ, Urban Saints, Frontier Youth Trust, the YMCA, Ambassadors for

³³ **Implementing Aiming Higher**, the Church of England's Higher Education Strategy was launched in 2005

³⁴ There are about 410 Further Education colleges in the UK, approximately half of which have chaplaincy provision

³⁵ **Pushing Further: from Strategy into Action**, GS1628, 2006

³⁶ In 2007, Soul Survivor reached over 28,000 people

³⁷ In 2006, there were about 200 CLCGB Companies and formations mainly in England, led by about 800 volunteers, reaching about 5,000 5 – 21 year olds

Sport etc. In some places, it is only because of these partnerships that children's and youth provision continues.

Beyond the local context

2:13 Over many years, the Education Division of the Archbishops' Council has cultivated relationships with government officials in both the Department for Schools, Children and Families and in the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, allowing the voice of the church to be heard in the formation of government policy.

2:14 The work of the Mission and Public Affairs Division has helped to develop theological understanding and shape policy on families. Through this Division, the Church of England has committed itself to the End Child Poverty Campaign and is active in its work.

2:15 The presence of senior bishops in the House of Lords has enabled the Church's voice to be heard on issues concerning education, children and families.

2:16 Far from being removed from the lives of children and young people today, the Church of England in its many guises is engaged with children and young people across a broad spectrum of places, circumstances and activities. The spiritual hunger in children and young people has not disappeared, and yet we are continuing to lose them from our churches. Much good work and ministry has happened – and continues to happen – in all areas, but a lack of cohesive thinking prevents it from being as effective as it might be. The challenge is to change this disconnect between potential and action.

2:17 The Church of England has the potential not only to influence children and young people's lives for good, but to speak out and act against injustices. To act on this, it needs to speak clearly about why the Church should care about the lives of children in the first place. This requires a theological understanding which brings the invisibility of children and young people to prominence and which recognises that their lives may not fit into neat compartments or categories. There is overlap and untidiness in the reality of their day to day living which may sit uneasily with our structures and plans.

Section 3: Towards a theological understanding

3:1 The Church's engagement with children and young people isn't driven simply by social concern, but by a desire to engage with God's mission here on earth. This requires us to articulate a clear theological understanding to underpin our actions and on which to establish guiding principles for our work.

Made in the image of God

3:2 Christianity teaches that all human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1.26-27). This means that all people whether they are four months, six, fifteen or ninety years old, are complete human beings. Our problem, as human beings, is that we are clear from our experience that we are born as infants and then grow and develop gradually into adulthood. But this perspective, which drives so much of our education, law, social behaviour, parenting and relationships towards children and young people, distracts us from a fundamental truth about human existence, which is that God does not view us exclusively in this way and does not judge us on how old, wise or developed or 'finished' we are.

3:3 We assume that children are in a state of becoming somehow 'fully human', but God does not. Christ's incarnation as a baby was fully human. Certainly we grow, as Jesus himself grew (Luke 2.52) but what this means is that the gifts and potentials which God endows in each one of us at conception are revealed to others as we are nurtured. This is something which we can easily miss. Jesus' own parents (Luke 2. 41-51) are worried and distressed when Jesus goes missing. They cannot understand his explanation when they find him back in the Temple learning and listening and deepening his knowledge and wisdom in the scriptures. He is after all *only* a child. Yet those same scriptures tell us that God's call comes to people of all ages and that call to respond to him is both complete and valid. God calls the child Samuel (1 Samuel 3.1-19) and the young Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1.4-8). Both are entrusted with God's news. Jesus finds children worthy of blessing (Mark 10.16) and worthy of healing (Mark 5.41). And the outward and visible action of welcoming children is seen and taught as the welcome of Christ himself (Mark 9:36, 37).

3:4 Held in tension with this is the belief that we are called to be transformed and grow into God's likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18). This paradox of becoming what we already are is reflected in the human search for identity and in the prayer of St Augustine, 'Lord, thou hast made us for thyself; and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.'

3:5 Part of the church's task is to model and teach what this means for all Christians on their journey of faith. Crucially, it involves accompanying children and young people of all faiths and none, in their search for self and identity, recognising that this search will not always result in following the Christian way.

Guiding principle 1: The absolute value of each child and young person

3:6 Our understanding of humankind being made in the image of God leads us to acknowledge that each child and young person, whoever/whatever/wherever s/he may be, is precious and valued in God's sight. We are privileged to accompany them on their search for truth and to support them through the transitions of life. Our work for, with and among children and young people should reflect this in all contexts, and should not be limited to those within the church.

(Church) inspires me. Knowing I'm loved by God. Also him looking over me and those I love. Boy, 13³⁸

3:7 We are impelled to recognise and make visible those who often remain invisible through ethnic and cultural diversity, disability and poverty and to celebrate the contributions which they bring.

3:8 We have a responsibility to safeguard the vulnerable, whilst offering the freedom needed for growth and development.

Called to be in relationship with God, each other and with the created order

3:9 Throughout Scripture, God calls people, both individuals and communities, into relationship with God (Ezekiel 36:26-28; Acts 2:39) and with each other (Acts 2:46, 47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14). Christianity teaches that relationship is seen in the mystery of the Trinity – one God in three persons, a relationship held together by love – and this is what we are called to in our relationships with God and each other.

3:10 Moreover, Genesis 1:26 teaches that God has ordained us to be in relationship with the created order. The care of the earth was given into the hands of humankind, as stewards for its flourishing.

3:11 But the paradise of Genesis 1 and 2, with love and harmony between God and humankind, was lost in Genesis 3, creating relationships of fear, shame and mistrust. Love is not gone, nor is it only to be seen in people of faith, but in society and in ourselves we see damaged relationships which do not always offer what humankind needs to flourish. Extravagant use of the earth's resources has brought us to place of climate change which places creation in a fragile state.

3:12 The Christian doctrine of the redemptive power of the cross offers the hope of forgiveness, welcome, restoration and new beginnings (Romans 8:1; 1 John 2:1, 2). Having received and experienced these ourselves, we are called to live them out in our relationships with others, not least with those who are marginalised by society. Irrespective of their response, children and young people should see and experience love, welcome, hope, forgiveness and the possibility of new beginnings whenever they encounter the Church. Equally, the Church is in need of children and young people as ministers who offer a fresh understanding and experience of such relationships to older generations.

Guiding Principle 2: The importance of relationship

3:13 Springing from and reflecting our theological understanding, every encounter with children and young people should offer the possibility of a relational encounter with God and others. These encounters should be open and honest, offering quality and depth and reflecting our own relationship with God and each other, whilst recognising the freedom of the individual to choose whether or not to engage with them. They will often be messy, and require determination and commitment in establishing them.

³⁸ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008
02/06/2009

*(A good church is) the people, meeting new people and making friends. Girl, 11
For a good church I think it needs to be able to get people to feel welcome and to get people together. Girl, 11
(It) makes you feel part of the community. Boy, 10³⁹*

Active citizens of the Kingdom of God on earth

3:14 Christianity teaches that we are not created simply to exist, but to be stewards of creation (Genesis 1:26 – 31) and active in living out, proclaiming and establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth (Micah 6:8; Matthew 28:18 – 20; Luke 9:1 – 2). This is a high calling which places on us challenges and responsibilities, not only to care for the earth and to use its resources wisely, but to hold to and live out the Kingdom values of justice, peace and mercy. It's a calling which we often fail, and to which we need to be recalled by fellow Christians.

3:15 The calling is to all who follow Christ. Often it is the voices of children and young people which speak out most loudly against injustice and the destruction of our planet. Their voices need to be heard, and the wisdom they impart heeded (Job 32:6 – 10; 1 Timothy 4:12). For this to happen, we must recognise that age per se is not the sole determinate in engaging with God's purposes and be open to a new order that does not conform to the world's expectations (Romans 12:2). More radically, we must commit ourselves to listen to the voices of younger generations and the challenging messages they may bring to light.

Guiding Principle 3: The establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth

3:16 We are called to work towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth and our engagement with children and young people must reflect the values of the Kingdom. We must have the willingness to critique the values we hold, and the confidence to make changes.

3.17 It should challenge us to care for the environment, living responsibly rather than plundering the earth's resources with no thought for future generations. In this, we need to listen and respond to the voices of children and young people who are so keenly aware of creation's fragility.

(A good church) contains things I can relate to in modern life and current affairs like global warming. Girl, 14⁴⁰

3:18 It should call us to work with and equip children and young people to challenge oppression and injustice, and where children and young people are victims of oppression and injustice with no voice that is heard, to act as their advocates.

3:19 These three strands of theological understanding and guiding principles do not stand apart from each other, nor are they in a hierarchy of importance. They are dynamic and interdependent.

Section 4: Marking Mission

*Children's Ministries should be about forming people who love God and follow Jesus. One way to keep this and coming generations outwardly focused is to provide a missional context in the church and, more specifically, in those programs and opportunities directed toward children. Faith communities desiring to form children who participate in God's kingdom work will be faith communities who care more about works of peace and justice, who care more about "doing what people who follow Jesus do" than about attracting large numbers through glitzy programs and providing a "holy huddle" for those who are on the inside. When children see an ethos of mission modelled for them by parents, church leaders, and other significant adults they can be transformed to live in the way of Jesus as they begin to understand their responsibilities to the world and other people God created in the holy image.
~ Ivy Beckwith⁴¹*

4:1 In 2008, the Lambeth Conference reaffirmed its understanding that God's mission, in which the Church through Christ has been called to participate, is holistic, both in terms of concern for all human

³⁹ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

⁴⁰ From the **My Church** Postcards findings, 2008

⁴¹ Author of *Post-Modern Children's Ministry*, pub. Zondervan 2004
02/06/2009

beings and the totality of a human person (body, mind & spirit), and also in its concern for the totality of God's creation. This understanding is expressed in the Five Marks of Mission⁴²:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

4:2 Although sometimes treated as separate strands, these Marks are holistic and inter-penetrating. They blend and weave together, offering a guide to help churches live out a mission lifestyle in their local contexts, a lifestyle which requires radical re-thinking of accepted norms.

4.3 This missional context provides touchstones for the Church's ministry to, with and by children and young people. It challenges us to explore how each Mark is worked out not only towards children and young people but by them.

4:4 Combined with the guiding principles, these challenges will be contextualised and prioritised differently at National, Diocesan and parish level, but are likely to incorporate consideration of the following:

To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

4:5 Proclamation of the Gospel is what Christians are called to do in word and action⁴³. To do so requires us to have a clear understanding of what the good news is (our value and worth as beings created in the image of God, called to be in relationship with God through Jesus Christ and with each other, active in establishing the Kingdom of God on earth) and confidence to share this faith with others.

4:6 This raises issues for the Church which include:

- How and where children and young people hear the Christian story
- Respecting the integrity of family background in the proclamation
- Empowering and training Christians of all ages to be confident in their faith and their ability to share it with others
- Proclamation without indoctrination or coercion
- Recognition that proclamation will differ according to context – parish, school, community, culture
- Adults actively listening and responding to the good news proclaimed by children and young people
- Recognising that children and young people are their own agents in forming their belief base – and considering the building blocks that will enable this to happen

The Education Division is committed to enabling every child and young person to have a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ.

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers

4:7 A primary strand of the mission of the Church is concerned with education and learning, requiring us to consider what Christian education is offered to children and young people in church and in school, and how its provision reflects the principles in section 3. It calls us to look at how children and young people learn, and their capacity to offer models of discipleship, nurture others in faith, offer new insights and challenge and change those around them.

4:8 This raises issues for the Church which include:

- The place of outreach and evangelism and the ethical issues surrounding this
- Preparation for and follow up to baptism which offers a richer understanding of the outworking of the public promises made

⁴² The Five Marks of Mission were first developed by the Anglican Consultative Council between 1984 and 1990, and adopted by the Lambeth Conference in 1988.

⁴³ 'Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.' Attributed to St Francis of Assisi
02/06/2009

- The importance of Christian formation and discipleship and the roles of mentoring and teaching
- The place of children and young people in worship, both as participants and as initiators
- The equipping and training of clergy and laity to nurture faith
- The encouragement and equipping of families to share faith in the home
- Exploring the role of godparents in the care and nurture of faith

The Education Division is committed to providing professional support and development for those called to work with children and young people in the name of the Church, so that they might strive for the highest qualities in their practice and personal life.

To respond to human need by loving service

4:9 Recognising the value of human personhood, the importance of relationship and the Kingdom imperatives of love, justice and mercy, this strand of mission calls us to look at how we offer unconditional loving service to those who struggle with poverty and disadvantage. Children and young people need to be engaged in service of this kind for its own sake, and not for gain – but we have a task to equip adults to receive such service.

4:10 This raises issues for the Church which include:

- Identifying what and where need is
- Raising the imperative to respond
- Willingness to be generous in sharing resources
- Fostering Christian values of love, self-worth, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, blessing
- Children and young people as initiators of response as well as participants
- Reclaiming the concept of making a positive contribution as being more than simply economic

The Education Division is committed to recognising and enabling the capacity of children and young people to be agents of change and transformation in the church and in the world.

To seek to transform unjust structures of society

4:11 Closely allied to the previous mark of mission, this strand presumes that the Church will be involved in the struggle for justice and the creation of a better, fairer and more equal society and world for future generations. The society which is presently in formation carries a great deal of potential for injustice and inequality as individualisation and globalisation continue to shape human relations. Children and young people often know more about this through experiences of bullying, racism, discrimination, neglect and cruelty. Establishment of the Kingdom of God embodies values which run counter-cultural to society's norm and have the potential to transform it.

4:12 This raises issues for the Church which include:

- Understanding how society works, and how even small actions have the potential to contribute to change and transformation
- Challenging the Church to radically rethink how we live and move as the body of Christ so that all can participate and to be willing to remove the structures which contribute to injustice for children and young people
- The need to work closely with partners such as the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) in order to stay vigilant regarding thinking and practice which lead to discrimination and deny children and young people a full place within the Church
- Churches being committed to the most vulnerable
- Affirming children and young people in taking stands which reflect their faith and beliefs rather than conforming to peer pressure
- Enabling children and young people to instigate and participate in identifying and challenging injustice
- Engaging with mission agencies and charities in their campaigns
- Advocacy on behalf of children and young people who, because of oppression and injustice, have no voice

The Education Division is committed to fostering Christian values leading to the transformation of church and community, and to the implementation of the Church's Safeguarding policies at every level of church life

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

4:13 Our call to be stewards of God's creation is one which is often close to the hearts of children and young people and about which they feel passionate and determined. They are inheriting a world damaged and spoiled by this and previous generations and need help not only to understand what has been done, but how they can act to change the consequences of human action. The Church needs a clear creation theology and kingdom theology for children and young people so that they can articulate how their faith leads to action and transformation.

4:14 Moreover, the Church needs to learn from these children and young people, whose language and values are formed by a deep love for and desire to protect, the creation.

4:15 This raises issues for the Church which include:

- Our own willingness to change in order to safeguard creation for future generations, putting call and belief into action
- The importance of self-sacrifice for the greater good
- Stewardship of the earth locally and globally
- Willingness to take seriously the concerns of this generation for their future on this planet
- Committing as communities to implement change
- Exploring the place of simple living in the face of peer and media pressure

The Education Division is committed to working alongside children and young people as stewards of God's creation.

Section 5: Committed to Action

'(There is a) challenge to religious communities of all kinds as to their willingness to give the care and nurture of children the priority it deserves', The Rt Revd Dr Rowan Williams ⁴⁴

5:1 Theology and the five marks of mission call the Church at all levels not only to consider its ministry to and with children and young people, but how it is imaging Good News for them. In this light, the National Church, each Diocese and every parish will recognise issues and priorities which need to be addressed. The face to face ministry with, among and by children and young people in local contexts needs to be challenged, extended, supported and resourced so that the Church is effective in *being* Good News as well as teaching Good News.

5.2 The Education Division, having considered these areas and listened to the evidence received through the consultations, is committed to action which supports, resources and increases the capacity of ministry with, amongst and by children and young people. It has formulated the following commitments to guide its work and practice, and through which priorities will be established on which it needs to act. In all of these, the need to consult with, listen to, take note of, work alongside and act on the voices of children and young people is an imperative.

- 5.3 We call upon the Church, through Diocese and parish, to work towards every child and young person having a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ. The Education Division commits to partner in this through:
- Working with Diocesan and ecumenical colleagues, in the development of materials to enable local churches to listen to, learn from and act upon children's and young people's experiences of encountering the Christian faith

⁴⁴ In the Afterword of *A Good Childhood*, pub. Penguin 2009
02/06/2009

- Enabling every church to become a child and young person friendly church through the collation and dissemination of good practice examples, and working in collaboration with Dioceses to establish a national 'kite-mark' for parishes
- Developing a framework for proclaiming, growing and learning in the Christian faith, including:
 - Loved into Knowing, Loved into Being
 - National guidance on Religious Education in Church schools and Academies
 - Resourcing School Worship in collaboration with the Liturgical Commission
 - Creating a Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) curriculum for Further Education Colleges
- Producing electronic resources to showcase and promote inspirational and culturally relevant youth worship, and develop capacity in dioceses and parishes to deliver this.

5.4 We call upon the Church, through Diocese and parish, to provide professional support and development for those called to work with children and young people in the name of the Church, so that they might strive for the highest qualities in their practice and personal life. The Education Division commits to partner in this through:

- National Advisers developing and delivering bespoke training, induction and continuing professional development for diocesan officers including Directors of Education, Children's and Youth Officers, Higher and Further Education chaplains, Schools and RE officers
- Providing professional support to bishops in the appointment of staff including Directors of Education, Children's and Youth Officers, Higher and Further Education chaplains, Schools and RE officers, alongside the provision of documentation, selection procedures and interview support
- Providing guidance and support for dioceses in meeting statutory demands in both voluntary and statutory environments, including national Workforce Development requirements
- Focusing and generating relevant professional knowledge exchange via web sites, bulletins, residentials, conferences, research and reading groups
- Offer guidance and advice on accessing funding streams, including the Youth Evangelism Fund, the Children's Fund and national and local government streams
- Developing a template for clergy and Reader training in the theology, theory and practice of children's and youth ministry

5.5 We call upon the Church, through Diocese and parish to recognise and enable the capacity of children and young people to be agents of change and transformation in the church and in the world. The Education Division commits to partner in this through:

- The National Advisers working in partnership with The Children's Society to deliver a programme supporting parishes' exploration of their ministry with children and young people in the light of the findings of the Good Childhood Inquiry
- Advocating, with partners such as the Church Army and the Children's Society, that the church's resources are channelled towards those in most need to enable continuing ministry with children and young people in areas of deprivation and poverty
- The National Advisers combining national and diocesan resources to promote the agency of children and young people and support of local initiatives to engage parishes with children, young people and community leaders in delivering solutions
- In partnership with existing practitioners, developing sustainable opportunities for children and young people to be involved in service activities (Gap year projects, links with partner Dioceses, local social need programmes, mission agency partnerships, church exchange programmes)
- Developing opportunities for young people to explore their Christian calling, vocation and service
- The National Advisers working in collaboration with national partners such as the Methodist Church, The Children's Society and Participation Works to design and deliver toolkits and resources to support active engagement of children and young people at every level of their church, school and community life

- 5.6 We call upon the Church, through Diocese and parish to foster Christian values leading to the transformation of church and community, and to the implementation of the Church's Safeguarding policies at every level of church life. The Education Division commits to partner in this through:
- National Advisers engaging with government and other national stakeholders to promote and develop Christian understanding of the fullness of life for all children and young people, including the entitlement to spiritual and moral development, in both formal education and informal situations
 - Developing a toolkit to extend the reach of the Christian Values for Schools project into a broader range of settings
 - Upholding the Church's Safeguarding policies and practice in all settings where children and young people are found
 - Modelling Christian values and participation within the work and life of the Education Division

- 5.7 We call upon the Church, through Diocese and parish to work alongside children and young people as stewards of God's creation. The Education Division commits to partner in this through:
- Actively listening to and acting upon the concerns of children and young people regarding the use of the earth's resources
 - Collating and disseminating materials and resources to enable children and young people to initiate action as stewards of creation
 - As a Division, signing up to the Shrinking the Footprint initiative
 - Encouraging schools and churches to sign up to the Shrinking the Footprint initiative
 - Promoting the construction and maintenance of school and church buildings to the highest ecological and sustainable standards

5.8 These commitments are neither exclusive nor definitive. They speak to and build on each other and offer an agenda upon which not only the Education Division, but Dioceses, parishes and church groups can act. Lived within a missional context, they reflect how each Mark might be worked in actions towards children and young people and activity by them. It is in doing this, that the Church can indeed become good news for children and young people.