

This paper, which is written to accompany a presentation by the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) at Synod provides a broad-brush, strategic update to Synod on the work of the DBE and Education Team.

The paper and presentation gives information on the education landscape within which our Church of England schools work and progress towards the strategic commitments of the DBE. Through the strategic commitments, the DBE Measure (a statutory function of the DBF) is delivered.

Our schools and the partnerships we have with MATs.

Of our 44 schools, 38 are academies and are part of 'mixed MATs' (multi-academy trusts with both community and CofE schools within them). 2 are 'standalone academies' operating independently with its own governance structures and not part of a wider school grouping. 6 schools are Local Authority (LA) maintained schools. Within the next 18 months, it is anticipated that all but 2 schools will be academies.

Having our schools part of larger school groupings means that, through direct connections through governance structures (through the roles of local, trustee and member governance) we connect with nearly 200 of the 291 schools across the Duchy.

The DBE Measure

The Measure is a piece of legislation that makes clear the partnership working between the C of E and state in the delivery of education through Church Schools in dioceses. The Measure sets out the structure and responsibilities of DBEs and how the work of the DBE partners with other educational bodies and organisations.

In our Diocese, the DBE is unincorporated and therefore operates as a committee of the Board of Finance with the delivery of the Measure delegated to the DBE. The main functions of the DBE Measure are:

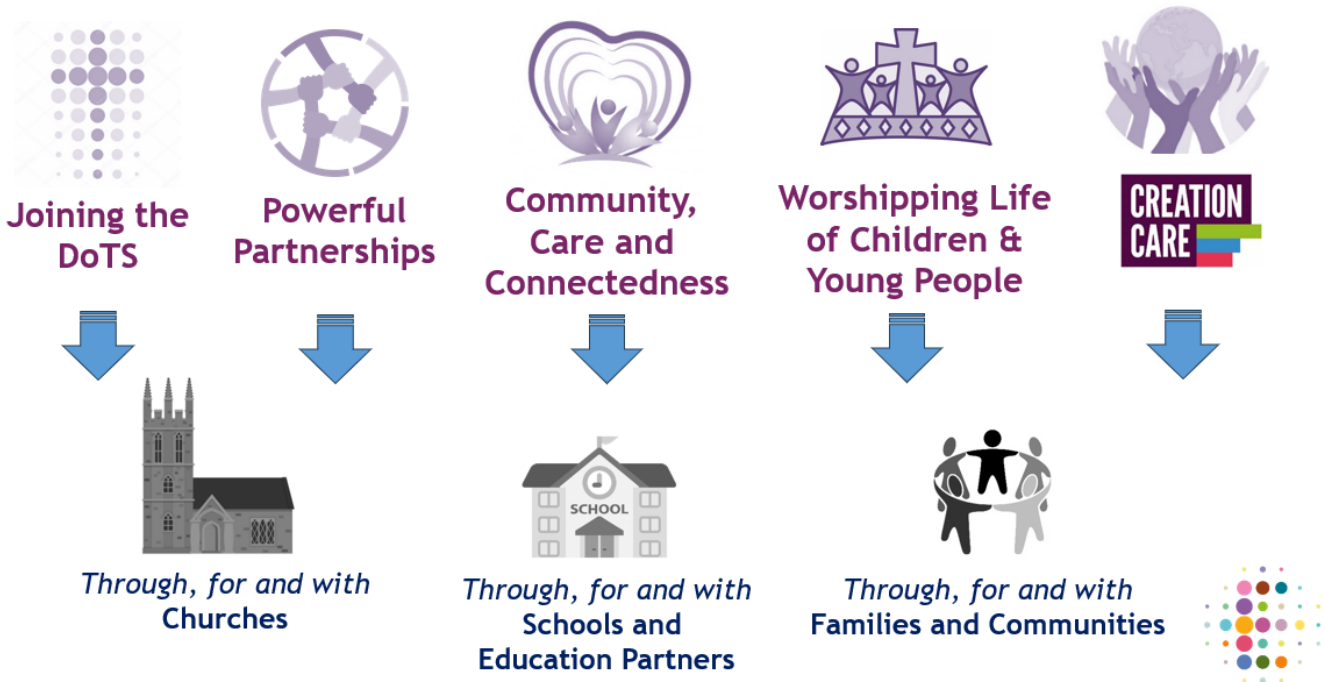
- 1.Promotion of Education:** DBEs are responsible for promoting education within the diocese that aligns with the faith and practice of the Church of England.
- 2.Religious Education and Worship:** They promote religious education and worship in schools within the diocese.
- 3.Support for Church Schools:** DBEs support the establishment and maintenance of church schools.
- 4.Cooperation:** They foster cooperation between the DBE and other educational bodies and stakeholders.
- 5.Advice and Consent:** DBEs provide advice on matters affecting church schools and must be consulted on certain decisions, such as capital works.
- 6.Safeguarding:** They have responsibilities related to safeguarding within church schools.

Our Strategic Commitments

The DBE Measure is delivered, primarily, through our Strategic Commitments. The Strategic Commitments of the DBE are informed, supported and reinforced by the aims, work and policy of partners including the Department for Education (DfE), National Society and local councils.

The work of the DBE in the current triennium seeks to build on the same five commitments set out when Lee Moscato took up the post of DDE. Now, we are digging deeper into these, focusing on how each these look through, with and for our strategic partners – churches, education organisations and schools, community and families.

Our Strategic Commitments - 2025 - 2028



An overview of some notable work and successes

This section presents notable work and points to celebrate within each of the strands of the DBE's Strategic Commitments. There are more points under each strand of the Strategic Commitments however, for this academic year, the DBE have focused their work on initial or key actions within each to both focus our work and ensure that 'first steps' are embedded.

Powerful Partnerships:

- The Flourishing Schools Programme is now embedded across all of the multi-academy trusts (MATs) we work with. This is the key mechanism and support package to deliver the DBE Measure with and for church schools and MATs. Our partnerships with MATs enable us to connect with schools beyond the family of church schools and can be a valuable way for churches to make connections with schools.
- Partnership working with education partners is very important and this has led to some exciting work including sharing the Local Authority's Parental Engagement Framework (a tool for schools to help shape and develop the ways they engage with families and their community) with the Department for Education. Also, this is seeing joint training with Exeter Diocese to support schools and avoid duplication for those MATs that cross diocesan borders. Working in partnership has also led to joint conferences which prevents duplication of time but also

allows us to share our work and messages with a larger audience.

Our partnerships can support churches link with other organisations when considering 'community hub' approaches.

- Partnering with schools and trusts has opened doors. For example, others have heard about Flourish and want to know how they could be involved in this in their schools. Similarly, we have developed a partnership with a secondary school focusing on hearing young people's voices; a key aim for the diocese.

Joining the DoTS (*Diocese of Truro Schools*):

- As the landscape of schools across Cornwall saw more and more schools academised, we worked intentionally to ensure that whilst schools joined larger groupings, we wanted to keep schools connected and sharing.
Connections we enabled and encouraged include Five Islands linking with the national network of C of E secondary schools, cross MAT working in areas of school improvement and 'back office' support and sharing of best practice across our schools and partners.
- Supporting the wider diocese and drawing on expertise in our schools, school-based colleagues are contributing to training, working with colleagues in teams including our safeguarding team and supporting us in events and worship.
For churches, we can support connecting school-based colleagues who could help with local training, running events etc.
- We are recognised for expertise and experience in a range of areas including our academised landscape, working with schools on AI strategies and how small schools are successful and sustainable. This has led to the DDE being seconded for ten days over the coming two terms to support the national team with aspects of their work.

Community, Care and Connectedness:

- Following on from training delivered by colleagues in Cornwall Council, building on the use of the Lundy Model of Participation to support schools authentically hear young people's voice. Work includes developing the roles of School Councils and a new project with Transformation Cornwall to enable secondary schools to create podcasts to share young people's voice.
- Through partnerships and enabling training and resourcing, working with schools and MATs in their work regarding trauma informed practice, community support offers, mental health support and creating community hubs. Work in this area also includes sharing the work of Cornwall Council colleagues and the use of the Parental Engagement Framework that supports schools in engaging stakeholders intentionally and authentically.
- Early planning has started, linking with the Open Schools Network and TPAT (Truro and Penwith Academy Trust) to develop an approach to support those pupils who are not engaging in education, employment or training (NEETs) through extended placement opportunities and bespoke learning provision.

Creation Care:

- Available for 'many', we have a growing suite of resources available to support both schools and churches. Resources include activities for schools and signposting to funding and support. We are particularly proud of the work of Clare Green in creating complete 'workshop' packages for churches to engage with schools in Creation Care as well as festivals.

- Supported by our Cut Carbon Officer, Tom, over 80% of our schools have completed action plans detailing their work to cut carbon in schools and across MATs. Through partnering with Cornwall Council, Primary and Secondary Heads groups and Exeter Diocese, an increasing number of non-CofE schools are also being supported.
- A Manifesto for Creation Care has been created by young people from across the diocese. Young people are supported to present this with leaders across the region including Bishops, MPs and councillors which not only focuses on our mission to cherish creation but also develops leadership and communication skills.

Worshipping Life of Young People, Schools and Communities:

- We continue to add to and review our worship offer for schools including the resources online for festivals and our ever-popular online collective worship. These online worships, led by DDE and clergy, sees nearly 4000 young people come together online to worship together. Other parts of our offer for schools includes prayer resources, signposting and increased sharing of best practice and ideas.
- Our Flourish Worshipping Communities are embedding well and a recent visit from the national team as part of the evaluation was really successful with each location sharing how increasing numbers of young people are engaging and each location either leading or planning community worship events.
We have secured a third year of tapered funding and are exploring accessing funds from the national church to grow this work further. We have been approached by several schools wanting to know more. As part of our Growing Younger vision, we will engage with schools where deaneries have plans and resource that can link up with interested schools.
- We continue to engage with the national Growing Faith team and this includes supporting leaders through 'Growing Faith Strategic Leaders Training' and the Growing Faith Learning Hubs. We have a Learning Hub in Duloe which is focusing on developing a way in which a school-based resource used to teach Christianity in Religious Education could be used in churches.

The DBE Strategic Commitments document is available [online here](#).

Religious Education in Schools

Within this final part of this update to Synod, I want to focus on Religious Education (one of the core parts of the DBE Measure).

A key part of our work is to support schools in navigating the current and potential changes that lie ahead in the RE space. To ensure that we remain connected into the RE world, we link into SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for RE) here in Cornwall, the National Association for Teachers of RE (NATRE), the national RE network and South West Advisors for RE network (SWARE) and local groups including Learn, Teach Lead RE (LTLRE).

From September, a new Statement of Entitlement (SoE) for RE comes into force and this sets out the expectations for high-quality religious education in Church of England schools, ensuring pupils receive a rich understanding of Christianity alongside other worldviews.

Church schools' RE provision is monitored closely by the education team and this is then validated through inspection – Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

The SoE sets out what each stakeholder can expect from RE in a school. Key parts within it, which we monitor closely, include expected curriculum coverage, opportunities for learners in secondary provision, training and resourcing and the quality of leadership of RE. It checks that RE is a high-**profile** subject in a church school, that its continued development and impact is a **priority** and that there is quality **provision** in place.

A key part of the provision aspect is the expectation that **the Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus** is followed. The syllabus sets out a programme of study, the legal requirements, end of key stage expectations, assessment guidance and a recommended teaching approach that helps pupils learn through 'ways of knowing'. Ways of knowing include providing opportunities for students to explore data, make comparisons, lead interviews, visit places of worship, make conclusions and debate.

Supporting schools in meeting the expectations of the local syllabus is also a key part of the Education Team's work and this is facilitated through our school-based leaders who can support schools to embed this from the view point of a class teacher, school leader or MAT leader.

A resource that underpins how schools teach Christianity in schools, as expected within the syllabus, is **Understanding Christianity**. This is produced by RE Today who also write the Cornwall RE Syllabus which means there is a clear alignment of approach.

Training is provided to schools and trusts in how to use this resource and an exciting piece of work, through a Growing Faith Learning Hub, is exploring how we share this resource with churches to link familiar learning and exploration of bible stories with 'The Big Frieze' (a resource that is integral to the Understanding Christianity curriculum).

I would like to thank all those who make our work possible. Particular thanks to our Education Team and the Diocesan Board of Education who steer, encourage and monitor our work.

Lee Moscato
Diocesan Director of Education
May 2026