

In response to the report published yesterday by the Westminster Faith Debates, by Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead, The Church of England's Chief Education Officer, Revd Nigel Genders, said: "Church of England Schools provide education for the whole community. This includes those of other faiths and those of no faith, as well as Christian families. Around one million pupils attend our schools every day, each receiving a high-quality education, and our approach to education remains extremely popular.

"The report from the Westminster Faith Debates continues an important conversation about religion and belief in schools, and the type of education we want for our children.

"The report recognises that in today's world there is an increasing need for religious literacy. While the recommendations will need to be read in the light of the publication of the Commission on Religious Education's report, expected in the autumn, we welcome the recognition of the importance of religious education in schools.

"The report raises the question of collective worship. Collective worship provides a vital opportunity for children to pause and reflect on the big questions of life and develop spiritually, and we are pleased to see a significant ground-shift in this revised report away from any call to abolish it, which would be to the detriment of children's wellbeing.

"We have consistently argued that the issue of school admissions is complex in a system where parental choice is valued. There is an apparent contradiction in the Clarke/Woodhead report which promotes the right of parents to choose an education that is consistent with their faith, but suggests that schools move away from any faith criteria in admissions processes to enable this. This seems a difficult square to circle and so the reason for calling for Church Schools to remove all faith criteria is not clear."

# Notes for editors

## Background documents

- [Church of England RE Commission submission:](#)
- [Rev Nigel Genders – What is the point of RE?](#)
- [Church of England RE Statement of Entitlement \(2016\)](#)

The Church of England's vision for education is deeply Christian, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. In line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, our vision is for the common good of the whole community. [More](#)

## Types of Church of England School

- 4,644 Church of England schools and 200 church schools in Wales. Church schools are supported by their local Diocesan Board of Education.
- around 2,000 Voluntary Controlled schools, of which all but 20 are primary schools.
- around 1,700 Voluntary Aided schools, mainly primary schools, with 53 secondary schools and four All-Through schools.
- 250 'sponsored' Church of England academies, 42 of which are secondary academies.
- 656 'converter' Church of England academies, 88 of which are secondary academies.
- 14 open free schools, which are newly opened academies.

## Facts about Church Schools

- Approximately 1 million children attend Church of England schools.
- About 15 million people alive today went to a Church of England school.
- A quarter of primary schools and over 200 secondary schools are Church of England.
- With 250 sponsored and over 656 converter academies, the Church is the biggest sponsor of academies in England.
- Over 500 independent schools declare themselves to be Church of England in ethos.
- Across the country, Church of England clergy dedicate a million hours every year to working with children and young people in schools, often providing holiday and after-school activities.

There are 22,500 Foundation Governors in Church schools recruited, trained and supported by dioceses.

- Each diocese runs a Diocesan Board of Education supporting Church schools, which represents an annual investment of over £15 million.

[More information on Church Schools.](#)

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