

The largest single provider of schools and academies in England has today launched a bold and ambitious vision for education at General Synod.

The Church of England educates 1 million pupils in 4700 schools and has plans to open another 125 schools in the next five years. Speaking at Synod, the lead Bishop for education, Stephen Conway, Bishop of Ely, said the vision will equip the Church in the current wider education framework: 'With the opportunity to shape and enhance our provision and to influence the debate about what education is for; to open new schools and develop existing schools; and to provide radically new approaches to how we function as a movement for education and train teachers and leaders to share that vision.'

The Vision was developed by a theological reference group, chaired by Professor David Ford, Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus at Cambridge University following widespread consultation.

The Church of England Vision for Education embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. It offers a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate the vision: wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

The Rev Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England said: 'The need to set out our stall in an increasingly fragmented educational scene and where wellbeing of young people is of national concern is clear. Through this vision pupils, parents, new and existing schools and teachers will know how aspiring we are for them and how we will best support them in future years.'

The vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole community and its environment, whether national, regional or local.

The new Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership which opens in the Autumn will be underpinned by this vision and will provide networks, training and research to equip leaders to continue play a vital role in education in this new phase of the Church of England's involvement in education.

General Synod overwhelmingly welcomed the report following a debate in which Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed his support, describing the vision as 'immensely exciting' and 'outward looking'.

Notes

The vision document can be found here https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2532968/gs_2039_-_church_of_england_vision_for_education.pdf

Audio from the session will be available here: <https://soundcloud.com/the-church-of-england>

The Church of England started the provision of mass education for all 200 years ago, 50 years prior to state involvement.

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