

Responding to the announcement on academies in the Chancellor's Budget speech today, the Rev Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England, said: "As the provider of 4,700 schools and the largest provider of academies, the Church of England has built up a bank of expertise and a collaborative partnership between dioceses, the DfE and Regional Schools Commissioners.

"We will continue to build on this following today's announcement by the Chancellor and will take an active interest in the fine detail of the proposed legislation due to be published in tomorrow's White Paper. Our primary concern is ensuring children have the kind of education that enables them to flourish and we will work at national, diocesan and local level to ensure our schools are able to continue to offer the excellent education which parents so clearly want for their children.

"The aim of the academy programme is not to create homogenous institutions but to ensure talent and expertise are pooled and resources maximised to secure the best possible futures for our young people.

"We will continue to embrace the opportunities to do that, recognising the particular challenges that many smaller primary schools will face as they seek to develop such partnerships, especially in rural communities."

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