A light under a bushel? The engagement between clergy and schools in the missionary diocese of Wakefield.

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Background

At the dawn of the 21st Century, the relationship between education and religion assumed a high political profile. Commissioned by the Archbishops’ Council, *The Way Ahead* report (Church Schools Review Group 2001) recommended the establishment of 100 additional Church of England (C of E) secondary schools within seven to eight years – a recommendation warmly received by the authors of the government White Paper, *Schools Achieving Success* (DFES 2001 5:31).

Currently, there are around 4,690 C of E schools in England and Wales: 4500 (25%) primary schools; 190 (5.5%) secondary schools. In total, some 43,000 teachers educate around 773,000 (18.2%) primary pupils and 152,000 (4.7%) secondary pupils.

Historically, the Church of England has played a major role in education, especially for the local poor. When the National Society was founded in 1811,¹ it sought to establish a school in every parish throughout England and Wales. Forty years later, the census of 1851 found around 17,000 Church schools, a testimony in no small part to the drive of local clergy. In 1902, when Balfour introduced his Education Bill, he claimed that 71% of all schools were voluntary in status (Duncan 1986:68).

A defining moment came in 1944 when the new Education Act allowed for Church schools to become ‘Voluntary Controlled’ or ‘Voluntary Aided’.² In the event, the Church opted for many of its schools to retain a higher level of independence by accepting ‘Aided’ school status. During the last 20 years, far-reaching changes have impacted upon the school curriculum, school governance, staffing structures and corporate life (Education Reform Act 1988). More recent legislation (School Standards and Framework Act 1998; Education Act 2002) has addressed the issues of admissions, the religious character of schools and a change of status from ‘Controlled’ to ‘Aided’ school.

During the course of the 20th Century changes were also taking place to the pattern of religious observances. Fewer people seemed inclined to become religious, especially in Europe. A survey (Gallup 1999) of 50,000 people across 60 countries found that only 20% in Western Europe and 14% in Eastern Europe worship on a weekly basis. In Britain, this figure has been estimated at 8% (Brierley 1999) and is underscored by serious fears

¹ Under its original name – The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales. This was changed in 1934 to The National Society for promoting Religious Education in accordance with the Principles of the Church of England.

² The *Aided School* is currently supported by a voluntary body (for example, the Church of England) which contributes 10% of the building costs and 10% towards major repairs. The voluntary body also controls the governing body, ensuring that the school is organised and run according to its wishes. The *Controlled School* comes under the jurisdiction of the LEA and the voluntary body does not control the governing body. The school’s religious character is guaranteed by a deed of trust or a foundation document that may, for example, require the head teacher to be a practising Christian.
regarding the future volume of redundant churches if the disengagement from institutional religion continues apace (Field 2002). Yet although religious observance appears to be in decline, Grace Davie (1994) found that beliefs have not been discarded - leading her to identify a contemporary population 'believing without belonging'.

Paradoxically, as religious observance has attenuated interest in the spiritual has increased, producing a contemporary spirituality that has become dislocated from religion. Etymologically, 'spirituality' has its roots in 17th Century France, where it was used pejoratively to describe a form of contemplation practised by the Jeanne-Marie Guyon and the quietist movement (Wakefield 1993). Today’s ‘religion-free’ spirituality is frequently associated with the New Age movement and its related ecological and feminist philosophies. Dictionary definitions relate ‘spirituality’ to its root - 'spirit' - locating it within the non-physical aspects of humankind. Seen as a universal human attribute, spirituality has come to be regarded as in some way further ‘upstream’ than religion; less of a social construction, freer to access, more personally relevant. In this scenario, formal religion waxes and wanes against the backdrop of intuitive folk spirituality that intermittently emerges in the symbolisms and rituals formed around catastrophic events or personal tragedies (Percy 2000).

Alongside these changes is the growth of a multicultural, multifaith society which has come to encompass a broader range of religious beliefs. The 2001 census statistics show that in England and Wales, the religious landscape includes 1.5 million Muslims, around 552,000 Hindus, 330,000 Sikhs, 260,000 Jews and 144,000 Buddhists. Shown as a percentage of the total population, these figures appear quite small: Muslims 3%; Hindus 1.1%; Sikh 0.6%; Jews 0.5% and Buddhists 0.3%. Yet such figures do not express domiciliary locations. Muslims make up 36% of the population of Tower Hamlets and 11.1% of the population of Oldham; Hindus make up 19.6% of the population of Harrow and 14% of the population of Leicester; Jews make up 14.8% of the Borough of Barnet and 4.9% of Bury; and Sikhs make up 9.1% of the population of Slough.

The impact of this changing society became the focus of a General Synod discussion paper in 1984 and a Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups in 1985. The Parekh Report (Commission on the Future of Multiethnic Britain 2000) describes Britain as 'a community of communities' (2000:3) and calls for a wider recognition of religious and cultural identities (2000:242). The report challenges the symbolic connections between Englishness and the Anglican Church and public practices such as daily prayers at Westminster are considered to be unrepresentative of today’s multiethnic Britain (200:243).

These changing scenarios impact upon Church school education at the philosophical, theological and practical levels of engagement, prompting questions regarding the role and function of Church schools. These questions are particularly apt for schools serving multifaith catchment areas. Related questions also arise regarding the nature of school ministry and the training of ordinands and clergy to fulfil this ministry. Consequently, amid changes to society, religious observances, spiritual perceptions and educational practices, this study sought to discover the current engagement between ministers and schools in the lived experience of their individual ministries in the diocese of Wakefield.
Research methods

Wakefield diocese (population 1.08 million) covers an area of around 560 square miles in West and South Yorkshire. It comprises two Archdeaconries and 12 Deaneries which contain a total of 239 churches, 189 parishes and around 166 stipendiary clergy (Beach 2003). Thirteen Non-Stipendiary Ministers (NSMs) have been ordained since 1998; and 13 Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs) since 1999 (Penfold 2003).

Kirklees and Wakefield Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and parts of Barnsley, Calderdale and North Yorkshire LEAs fall within the diocese. In total, the diocese contains 100 Church primary schools and 3 Church secondary schools (45 Aided, 58 Controlled). In 2002, 1,229 teachers taught some 23,765 pupils in these schools.

The research objectives were:
1. To construct a diocesan profile of the engagement between clergy and schools.
2. To determine whether diocesan clergy consider that their pre- and post-ordination training provided adequate preparation for their role in schools.
3. To identify which school-related topics clergy would most like to see included in the Wakefield diocesan training programmes.

A descriptive survey using a self-complete postal questionnaire was devised to elicit perceptions of the whole population of diocesan clergy (n=213). Bishops, hospital chaplains and prison chaplains were excluded. In the absence of a validated instrument it was necessary to construct an appropriate questionnaire. As the questionnaire took shape, advice was sought from the Chair of the Board of Education, the Diocesan Dean of Ministry and other key personnel. Eventually, a pilot of the main survey was undertaken (n=10) and the questionnaire revised in the light of its performance in the field. At the end of this process, the questionnaire could be assumed to have attained a degree of validity and reliability.

Data were summarised in frequency tables and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Services (SPSS). Free text responses were encouraged and analysed using software designed for qualitative data - the Non-numeric Unstructured Data* Indexing, Sorting and Theorising (NUD*IST) package. A total of 195 questionnaires were returned by the cut-off date; a response rate of 92%.

Findings

Engagement with schools

Around 60% of clergy in this study were associated with Church schools. Among these ministers, 91% lead collective worship; 73% attend governors meetings; and 31% teach Religious Education (RE). Among the 40% of clergy associated with a community school, 67% lead collective worship; 39% attend governors’ meetings; and 24% teach RE (Table 1).
### Table 1 Ministers’ engagement with schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lead collective worship</th>
<th>Attend governors meetings</th>
<th>Teach RE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>97 (91%)</td>
<td>78 (73%)</td>
<td>33 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10 (9%)</td>
<td>29 (27%)</td>
<td>74 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107 (100%)</td>
<td>107 (100%)</td>
<td>107 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47 (67%)</td>
<td>27 (39%)</td>
<td>17 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23 (33%)</td>
<td>43 (61%)</td>
<td>53 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70 (100%)</td>
<td>70 (100%)</td>
<td>70 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forty four per cent of clergy are sole ministers in their parish; 56% are members of clergy teams. The group of sole ministers is more involved in school activities than the group of team members. Among the sole ministers: 85% lead collective worship (team members 77%); 71% attend Governors’ meetings (team members 50%); 30% teach RE (team members 26%); and 73% undertake other roles (team members 48%).

Amongst clergy in their first two years of ministry, 68% lead collective worship; 32% attend Governors’ meetings; and 18% teach RE. In years 3 and 4, 80% of ministers lead collective worship; 50% attend Governors’ meetings; and 20% teach RE. The highest engagement with schools is amongst ministers who have been ordained between 25 and 34 years. In this group, 89% lead collective worship, 84% attend Governors’ meetings and 37% teach RE.

Alongside these core activities, other roles feature prominently. Thirty seven respondents indicated that they provide pastoral support to schools; 35 mentioned activities with pupils (clubs, teaching, sports teams); 30 reported church and school links (special services/ visits to church); 29 mentioned roles associated with the governing body (Chair of governors, appointing staff), and 18 undertook roles in the general life of the school (supporting functions, Parent Teacher Association).

Free text responses show an awareness of the opportunities offered by schools:

*Going to school and having school in church means meeting 250 children and about 40 - 60 parents at one go. This is a great opportunity.*

*Church schools are centrally important to success of existing system of parochial ministry in the C of E. Clergy likely to have far more influence on community via this route than church programmes. Must have priority.*

Ministers expressed concerns, however, about a lack of skills, the constraints of time and unrealistic expectations, in some cases compounded by a climate of suspicion and hostility:

*Many clergy feel unskilled at knowing how to build bridges – particularly with high school students.*
There needs to be a realistic understanding of the amount of time clergy can actually give to this area of ministry - particularly as parish resources become more stretched.

Again and again I have encountered suspicion when making contact with schools. The suspicion is that clergy will have no regard to the multi-cultural approach of today's RE and that clergy will be unprofessional.

We have to overcome great hostility towards Christian approaches of any sort by a large section of the governing body.

Training for ministry

Pre-ordination training. Just 69 (35%) respondents indicated that their pre-ordination training included a school-based element. A breakdown of these 69 responses shows that 8 (57%) trained under the Wakefield Ministry Scheme; 53 (41%) trained at Theological College; and 8 (21%) undertook a Regional Ordination Course (Table 2).

Table 2 Pre-ordination training programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-related element in pre-ordination training</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theological College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>(59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Ordination Course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield Ministry Scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Amongst these 69 respondents, only 16 (31%) who trained at Theological College, and 4 (50%) who undertook the Wakefield Ministry Scheme felt adequately prepared for their role in schools. No-one undertaking a Regional Ordination Course felt adequately prepared.

Respondents considered the following topics would have been helpful inclusions in pre-ordination training: the nature of schools ministry; developing relationships with schools, and the role of the school governor. One respondent wrote:

What would be helpful pre-ordination is some chance to consider theological and missiological issues around church school
Post-ordination training. Of the 195 respondents, 81 (42%) undertook post-ordination training (POT) outside of the Wakefield diocese. All other respondents undertook the Wakefield POT scheme in total or in part. Among the group who undertook the Wakefield POT just 28 (33%) reported a school-related element, of which 12 (43%) considered they were adequately prepared for their role in schools.

Text responses suggest that some LEAs provide helpful training, particularly for school governors. Yet respondents also look to the diocese for high quality training, particularly concerning the nature of school ministry and Church school distinctiveness. The following are typical responses:

This is a vital part of parish ministry: it is no longer enough, I think, to 'learn on the job'. A re-appraisal of initial or ongoing training in this area is sorely needed.

I would like to see the diocese providing quality training relating to church schools, particularly. Specifically, I would value ideas around communion in school. Perhaps also for whole governing body on distinctiveness of Church schools, especially for non-foundation governors

The future: Wakefield training schemes

Ninety two per cent of clergy consider that the education element should be increased in both POT and CME programmes. From a pre-selected list of items: 144 (82%) respondents expressed a preference for the inclusion of collective worship in POT and CME training schemes; 119 (68%) for Church schools in a multifaith society; and 116 (66%) for developing a spiritual ethos. Least favoured was the item regarding the Dearing Report (Table 3).

Table 3 Topics for inclusion in Wakefield POT and CME schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church schools in a multifaith society</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting school leadership</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearing implications</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Act 2002</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School governance</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School and church</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing partnerships</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral support</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church school distinctiveness</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a spiritual ethos</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching RE</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective worship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A minister wrote as follows:
I am aware from personal experience that this is an area of mission that can be richly rewarding and so help and information need to be important elements of ministerial education and training.

Discussion

The response rate of 92% is remarkable and indicative of the high level of interest in this aspect of ministry. There is a general awareness of the range of opportunities offered by Church schools and the comment that ‘Church schools are centrally important to the success of parochial ministry’ reflects the theme of The Way Ahead – ‘that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church’s mission to the nation’ (2001:2).

According to Dearing, this mission would seek to develop a more embracing partnership between the school, the incumbent and the worshipping community, characterised by a shift on the part of the school towards the heart of parish life (2001:3). In the Wakefield diocese, movement in this direction would represent a significant initiative, providing further scope for partnership and communication. The point should not be overlooked that in this diocese some 23,765 pupils attend Church schools daily, whereas in 2001 the average attendance at Sunday worship fell to 16,600 – just 70% of the pupil attendance figure (Harden 2002:3). Seen in this light, opportunities for partnership should not be under-estimated.

Operationally, reports of hostility towards Christianity and suspicions that clergy will have no regard to multicultural approaches point to deep-seated misgivings on the part of some governors and educationists. After the publication of the Dearing Report, such misgivings were reflected in the comments of politicians such as Barry Sheerman,3 union leaders such as David Hart,4 and education correspondents such as William Stewart.5 For a diocese such as Wakefield which incorporates communities from the ethnic minorities, caution and sensitivity are of the essence.

In 2001, the events of 9/11, the altercation at Holy Cross Primary School (Belfast) and the summer of disharmony in Bradford brought issues surrounding faith and Church schools into sharper focus. William Stewart (2001:14) writes, ‘only weeks after The Way Ahead was published, the political climate was transformed. A summer of race riots turned existing local concerns about the possible divisive impact of new faith schools on multi-racial cities like Bradford into a full blown national controversy’. In the aftermath, a MORI poll conducted for The Times Educational Supplement reported that ‘nearly twice as many people oppose plans to expand state faith schooling as support it.’ Significantly, the Archbishop of Canterbury called for popular Church schools to take pupils of other faiths and none (Dean 2002:1).

In these settings, local clergy undertake their ministry to schools. Eighty-three (44%) clergy are sole ministers in their parish. These sole ministers are around 50% more involved with schools through attendance at governors’ meetings and the exercising of other school-based roles than the group of clergy who are team members. The question

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3 Chair of the Commons all-party Education Select Committee.
4 General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers.
5 Yorkshire Post Education Correspondent.
arises as to whether future responses to calls for support and training should pay particular attention to the needs of this group.

In the day-to-day business of the diocese, clergy have an interest in the development of support systems and networks, in the dissemination of information, the role of the school governor and collective worship. Yet underpinning the ‘service needs’ of clergy is a more fundamental issue: that of generic training for ministry in schools. The finding that only 35% of respondents undertook any school-related pre-ordination training – and that it was mostly inadequate - is a strong indictment of current schemes. In effect, these data reinforce the national concerns put to the Dearing Committee by the Church of England Board of Education and the National Society:

It would be quite wrong for the Board and the Society not to reflect in its submission of evidence the frustration that is felt in both diocesan and national Board of Education teams about the lack of priority given to training ordinands and inexperienced clergy in relation to Church schools and work with young people and children in general. (Church Schools Review Group 2001:57).

By asking the Church to recognise a major training need of clergy, the Dearing Report has placed the issue on the national agenda. In view of the state of such training and the proposals for large-scale changes embodied in the Hind Report (Working Party of the Archbishops Council 2002), the opportunity now arises for the matter to be addressed in some depth. It is an opportunity which the Church would be ill advised to miss.

Since only 33% of diocesan clergy undertook school-related training in the Wakefield POT scheme, questions also arise regarding post-ordination training. Some innovations have been incorporated into the Board of Education’s development plan but in the light of these findings, there is scope for further development. The fact that 92% of clergy wish to see an increase in the school-based element of both POT and CME suggests that the current initiatives do not go far enough.

Seventeen years ago Graham Leonard wrote, ‘the need is now evident for the development of an even deeper and more far-reaching philosophy of Christian education, for that is what the present situation demands’ (1986:16). In many respects, this need remains unfulfilled. Evidence is growing, however, of an increasing body of opinion which suggests that a new kairos has begun; a unique, defining time in the contemporary climate of social, political and spiritual change. It provides a context for new thinking, creative innovations, courageous action and renewed hope. Freed from the limitations of earthbound time, kairos is characterised by special circumstances (Mt 16:3; Lk 12:56) which provide momentous opportunities (Gal 6:10; Acts 24:24), to focus upon appropriate action (Tit 1:3; 1Tim 6:15), and ultimate destiny (Mt 26:18). In this milieu, decisions taken in a different domain assume an eschatological significance with regard to the continuing narrative of God’s relationship with humankind. The prompts, therefore to re-assert the place of the young in the Kingdom of God and the life of the Church is timely.

This groundswell has occurred across disciplines. Responding to A Time to Heal, the report of the Working Party of the House of Bishops (established to review the ministry of healing) Burrswood Christian Centre for Healthcare and Ministry hosted a series of seminars in 2001. With a clear aim to support Christian commitment within health care and ‘progress the vision as the Holy Spirit has led’ there was an explicit theme running through all discussions and documentation; ‘this is kairos time. God’s timing.’ (Personal communication Prue Dufour - 9 Aug 2001).
Conclusions

Virtually every minister included in this study is associated with a school. Core roles relate to collective worship, school governance and – to a lesser extent – teaching RE. Clergy undertake a wide variety of additional roles which involve chaplaincy, pastoral support, teaching, advocacy and community links. Overall, ministers in the Wakefield diocese have a general, though variable, relationship with schools at the spiritual, managerial and community levels of engagement.

The relationship between Church and school is considered to be a key feature of the parochial system and a rich area of mission. In the context of falling church attendances, schools offer diverse opportunities for contact with large numbers of people in a distinctively Christian context. Parochial contacts with schools provide valuable opportunities to promote Christian values, raise an awareness of Church, and for ministers to become known to their (non-churchgoing) parishioners.

The finding that only 35% of the sample had any school-related pre-ordination training – and that only 33% of clergy who undertook the Wakefield POT scheme had school-related inputs - is a telling indictment of training for ministry. This is compounded by the fact that in this study, around two thirds of clergy began their school ministry in the first two years after ordination.

Although commitment to schools is high, clergy do have concerns: about feeling unskilled; about uncertainty as to how to approach young people; about the constraints of time; and high, unrealistic expectations. These present particular difficulties for some of the 44% of clergy undertaking sole ministries and for ministers with multiple schools in their parish. On occasions, these difficulties are exacerbated by a climate of suspicion and hostility on the part of some schools.

The data presented here show an unequivocal desire on the part of clergy for a more extensive programme of school-related training both pre and post ordination. Desired topics include: the nature of school ministry; Church school distinctiveness; school governance; collective worship; and Church schools in a multifaith society.

Recommendations

1. In the contemporary context of strain and change, we urge the diocese to consider the opportunities brought about by a new kairos and to respond optimistically in a spirit of faith and prayerful resolve. An unambiguous articulation of the Christian philosophy of education and of the Church’s overall relationship to its schools would prove helpful when considering these opportunities. Alongside this new articulation, we recommend a strategy of proactive support for ministers driven by the needs expressed in this survey.

2. In the Wakefield diocese, parish profiles pay variable attention to schools. Yet if schools are to be at the heart of the Church’s mission, it is inconceivable that this dimension of ministry should be overlooked. We recommend a more consistent approach to the construction of parish profiles and the routine inclusion of a section on schools when information is prepared for prospective appointees.
3. A need exists for a fresh understanding of what Church school education means within the missionary vision of the Wakefield diocese. This meaning should be communicated to new clergy taking up posts in the diocese alongside information regarding the nature and availability of support. We recommend an input from the education department into the induction programme for clergy and other appropriate staff.

4. The Board of Education has recently adopted a wide-ranging development plan. This plan incorporates support for head teachers, the promotion of partnerships within the five LEAs, RE training through a franchise with York St John, and policy advice for Church schools in the diocese. A key section is aimed at fostering links between clergy, the parish, the school and the community. The plan was devised, however, before this study was undertaken and we recommend that it be revised in the light of new information gained from this research.

5. There is a particular need for a package of support for clergy. This support should impact upon clergy at their point of need. Items might include: an overview of Church school education; recent legislation, policy documents and procedures; statistical information, issues around admission; support networks; resources for RE and worship; forums for discussion; a telephone help-line and opportunities for training.

6. Evidence suggests that pre- and post-ordination training courses have inadequately prepared clergy for their role in school. This should be redressed. We recommend the inclusion of school-based elements in all pre- and post-ordination training schemes provided by the Wakefield diocese. These elements should include philosophical, methodological and technical aspects of the clergy role and be designed to encourage a thoughtful confidence in the broad area of school ministry.

Based on the findings of this survey, the commitment of clergy to schools within the diocese of Wakefield is incontrovertible. Yet their voices call for leadership: for an unambiguous articulation of the Church’s relationship with its schools; for strategic planning; proactive support; and acknowledgement of grass roots ministry. The diocese has a timely opportunity to respond to this call, to stimulate and lead the debate, to break new ground and subsequently, to make its ‘missionary’ focus translate more fully into reality. And undoubtedly, such activity would also have the effect of progressing a key recommendation of the Dearing Report - that ‘Church and school should work together to bring life, colour, vigour and rigour to the gospel’ (2001:56).

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