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Christian ethos secondary schools in England and Wales: A common voice or wide diversity?

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Abstract

This study argues that it is the collective worldview of the students which is crucial in reflecting and shaping the ethos of schools. In order to understand the potential distinctiveness of Christian ethos schools two analyses were undertaken. The collective worldview of 2,942 students attending ten Christian ethos schools was compared with the collective worldview of 13,861 students attending 71 schools without a religious character. Then the collective worldview of 194 students attending an Anglican school that prioritised the Church's 'domestic' function in education was compared with the collective worldview of 302 students attending an Anglican school that prioritised the Church's 'general' function in education. The major difference occurs not between Christian ethos schools and schools without a religious character, but between Anglican schools that voice their interpretation of the Church's mission in education differently.

Keywords: church schools, Christian ethos, student values, quantitative research.

Introduction

The Christian Churches have a long-established history of involvement within the state-maintained sector of education in England and Wales. The origin of state-maintained education in England Wales resided not in the initiative of the state but in the initiative of Churches through voluntary bodies like the National Society founded in 1811 and the British and Foreign Schools Society founded in 1814 (see Cruikshank, 1963; Murphy, 1971; Chadwick, 1997). When the Government first voted money for schools in 1833, these funds were channelled through the voluntary bodies. When the Government first established public machinery for building schools through the Education Act 1870, the idea was not to replace voluntary initiatives, but to supplement their uneven provision across the country (Rich, 1970). The major settlement of the Education Act 1944 consolidated the involvement of the Churches working in partnership with the state to provide education for the nation's children (Dent, 1947). Recent discussion of current perspectives on the Anglican Church's role within the state-maintained sector of schools is provided by Church of England (2012, 2014, 2016), Worsley (2013), and Astley (2014).

A major landmark in clarifying the philosophical and theological underpinning for the Anglican Church's continued involvement within the state-maintained system of education in England and Wales was provided by the *Durham Report* (1970). This report distinguished between two distinctive motivational bases for such continued involvement, styled as the Church's general function in education and as the Church's domestic function in education. The general function concerned the Church's desire to provide good quality education for all students. The domestic function concerned the Church's desire to make provision for the Christian education of students from churchgoing families. Francis (1990) characterised the general function as promoting a theology of service, and the domestic function as promoting a theology of nurture.

Christian ethos secondary schools within the Anglican tradition continue to honour the two distinctive motivations identified by the *Durham Report*. This difference is seen most clearly in the way in which admission policies vary from school to school. Christian ethos schools that privilege the domestic function tend also to give higher priority to children of churchgoing families. Christian ethos schools that privilege the general function tend to give higher priority to children living within a specific catchment area. Such differences in the admission policies may also be reflected in the ethos within the school.

The notion of school ethos is, however, a somewhat nebulous and elusive concept. In an earlier study concerned with Anglican secondary schools, Francis and Penny (2013) argued that one effective measure of school ethos may reside in the collective views of the students. They maintained that the values modelled by the students may be a more reliable measure of ethos than the policy statements of the governors or the aspirations of the headteacher. For example, a school ethos statement may claim that the school provides a safe environment for all students. If, however, a sizeable number of students were to report living under the fear of bullying, it is the account of the students rather than the school's ethos statement that really names the ethos of the school.

Francis and Penny (2013) argue that, although there is a great deal of point and value in debating, from theologically, sociologically and educationally informed perspectives, what Church of England schools should be, there may also be some advantage in empirical enquiry examining what is the case in practice. While such empirical enquiry cannot be employed to establish what church schools *should be* like, there may, nonetheless, be some interest (and advantage) in establishing what church schools actually are like. The present study belongs to this empirical genre.

Empirical studies concerned with what church schools are actually like can take a number of different forms. Research can focus on what is said about church schools in their

policy documents, in their brochures, or on their websites. Research can listen to what local clergy have to say about church schools, to the views of church school governors (Francis & Stone, 1995), to the views of those who teach in church schools (Francis, 1986a; Francis & Grindle, 2001), or to the views reflected in inspection reports (Lankshear, 1997; Brown, 1997). Since the 1970s Francis' research group has built up a small but potentially significant body of knowledge about students attending Anglican schools in England and Wales from the perspective of quantitative research.

One strand of research reported by Francis (1986b) administered a scale of attitude toward Christianity to all year-five and year-six students attending ten Church of England voluntary-aided primary schools and fifteen non-denominational state-maintained schools in East Anglia in 1974, 1978, and again in 1982. After using multiple regression analysis to control for the influence of sex, age, parental church attendance, social class and IQ on students' attitude toward Christianity, these data indicated that the Church of England schools exercised a small negative influence on their students' attitude toward Christianity. The direction of the school influence on students' attitude was consistent for all three samples taken in 1974, 1978, and 1982. Francis (1987) then replicated this earlier study among year-six students attending all Church of England voluntary-aided, Church of England voluntary-controlled, and non-denominational state-maintained schools in Gloucestershire. These data attributed neither positive nor negative influence to Church of England voluntary-aided schools, but demonstrated a significant negative influence exercised by Church of England voluntary-controlled schools.

Two further studies set out to compare students in Church of England and non-denominational state-maintained secondary schools. In the first study, Francis and Carter (1980) compared the attitude toward Christianity of year-eleven students attending Church of England voluntary-aided secondary schools and non-denominational state-maintained

secondary schools. These data provided no support for the notion that Church of England secondary schools exert either a positive or a negative influence on their students' attitude toward Christianity. In the second study, Francis and Jewell (1992) compared the attitude toward the church of year-ten students attending the four non-denominational secondary schools and the one Church of England voluntary-controlled secondary school serving the area around the same town. The data demonstrated that the Church of England school recruited a higher proportion of students from churchgoing homes and that churchgoing homes tended to represent the higher social classes. After taking into account the influence of sex, social class, and parental religiosity, path analysis indicated that the Church of England school exerted neither a positive nor a negative influence on its students' religious practice, belief, or attitude.

Lankshear (2005) compared the values profiles of six groups of students: Anglicans in Church of England schools and Anglicans in non-denominational state-maintained schools, non-affiliates in Church of England schools and non-affiliates in non-denominational state-maintained schools, and members of other Christian denominations in Church of England schools and members of other Christian denominations in non-denominational state-maintained schools. The data demonstrated that Anglicans attending Anglican schools recorded higher levels of personal dissatisfaction, higher levels of religious values, and comparable levels of moral values in comparison with Anglicans attending non-denominational schools. Non-affiliates attending Anglican schools recorded higher levels of personal dissatisfaction, lower levels of moral values, and comparable levels of religious values in comparison with non-affiliates attending non-denominational schools.

Drawing on John Fisher's model of spiritual health, Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) compared the levels of spiritual health recorded by 13- to 15-year-old students attending three different types of schools in England and Wales: state-maintained schools with no religious

character, Anglican schools within the state-maintained sector, and independent Christian schools. Fisher (2000, 2001, 2004) developed a relational model of spiritual health, according to which he conceived good spiritual health in terms of good relationships within four domains: the personal, the communal, the environmental, and the transcendental. Good spiritual health in the personal domain is reflected in good relationships with the self, in a good self-concept, and in a sense of personal meaning and purpose in life. Good spiritual health in the communal domain is reflected in good relationships with other people, and in secure standing among friends and among adults. Good spiritual health in the environmental domain is reflected in good relationships with the wider world, in a developed sense of global citizenship, and in commitment to sustainable development. Good spiritual health in the transcendent domain is reflected in good relationships with issues of ultimate concern, and with God. Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012) found that the spiritual health of young people attending Anglican schools within the state-maintained sector was indistinguishable from that of young people attending schools without a religious character within the state-maintained sector, apart from two markers within the transcendental domain. Young people attending Anglican schools were more likely to believe in God and were more likely to believe in life after death.

In order to generate insight into the ethos of Anglican secondary schools, Francis and Penny (2013) set the collective worldview of 3,124 students (13- to 15-years of age) attending 15 Anglican schools alongside the collective worldview of 4,929 students attending 25 schools with no religious character. The worldview of students was profiled across ten value domains defined as Christian beliefs, church and society, non-traditional beliefs, personal aims in life, personal wellbeing, attitudes toward school, attitudes toward sexual morality, attitudes toward substance use, attitudes toward right and wrong, and attitudes toward the environment. Two main conclusions are drawn from the data: that the collective

worldview of students attending Anglican secondary schools is not greatly different from the collective worldview of students attending schools with no religious character; and that the collective worldview of students attending Anglican schools generates an ethos consistent with a predominantly secular host culture.

Research question

The kind of studies reported by Francis and Carter (1980), Francis and Jewell (1992), Lankshear (2005), Francis, Penny, and Baker (2012), and Francis and Penny (2013) have all concentrated on looking at and comparing the collectivity of a number of Anglican schools and the collectivity of a number of schools without a religious character. In other words, these studies have been concerned to compare the profile of the overall contribution of the two sectors without giving due recognition to the wide diversity among Anglican secondary schools. The project conducted by Canterbury Christ Church University in collaboration with the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit into Christian ethos secondary schools provides an opportunity not only to compare the two sectors (Anglican secondary schools and schools without a religious character), but also to explore the diversity within the Anglican sector (see Casson, Cooling, & Francis, 2017).

The aim of the present study, therefore, is to follow the same analytic model as proposed by Francis and Penny (2013) in order to address two research questions. The first research question was concerned to compare the collective worldview of students attending these ten Christian ethos secondary schools with the collective worldview of students attending schools without a religious character. The second research question was concerned to contrast two of the Anglican Christian ethos schools that held contrasting mission statements and contrasting admission policies. One of these two schools could be said to prioritise the domestic agenda as voiced by the *Durham Report* (1970), and the other school could be said to prioritise the general agenda.

Method

Procedure

The ten Christian ethos secondary schools were selected to participate in the project from among a wider range of schools on the basis of the account that they gave of their distinctive emphasis on spirituality. The ten Christian ethos secondary schools included eight Church of England schools, one joint Anglican-Catholic school, and one school operated by a Christian foundation. The 71 schools without a religious character were recruited as part of the wider Young People's Values project. Participating schools were asked to follow a standard procedure. The questionnaires were administered in normal class groups to all year-nine and year-ten students throughout the school. Students were asked not to write their name on the booklet and to complete the inventory without discussing it with their peers. Although students were given the choice not to participate very few declined to do so. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Participants

Thoroughly completed surveys were submitted by 13,861 students (6,344 males, 7,488 females, and 29 of undisclosed sex; 7,706 in year nine, 6,143 in year ten, and 12 not assigned to a year group) attending the 71 schools without a religious character and 2,942 students (1,381 males, 1,551 females, and 10 of undisclosed sex; 1,517 in year nine, 1,421 in year ten, and 4 not assigned to a year group) attending the ten Christian ethos schools. Within the ten Christian ethos schools, 194 students (87 males, 193 females, and 1 of undisclosed sex) were attending the school that represented most clearly the domestic agenda (DA) and 302 students (140 males, 161 females, and 1 of undisclosed sex) were attending the school that represented the general agenda (GA).

Instrument

The questionnaire contained 186 items arranged for responses on a five-point, Likert-type scale (Likert, 1932): agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly. These 186 items are designed to reflect a number of specific value domains. The nine value domains selected for discussion in the present paper are: religious beliefs, church and society, science and religion, non-traditional beliefs, sexual morality, substance use, social concerns, school, and personal wellbeing.

Analysis

The data were analysed by means of SPSS, employing chi square 2 x 2 contingency tables, combining the agree strongly and agree responses into one category, and the disagree strongly, disagree, and not certain responses into the second category. For significance testing the ten Christian ethos schools are compared with the 71 schools without a religious character, and the general agenda school is compared with the domestic agenda school.

Results

Religious beliefs

- insert table 1 about here -

Table 1 displays the six items concerned with religious beliefs. The first three items access belief in the three persons of the Holy Trinity. The next item accesses belief in life after death. The remaining two items explore the theology of religions.

The three items concerned with beliefs in the Holy Trinity demonstrate that there were significantly higher levels of belief in the three persons of the Holy Trinity among students attending Christian ethos schools than among students attending schools without a religious character. In Christian ethos schools 49% believed in God (compared with 26%), 46% believed in Jesus Christ (compared with 22%), and 41% believed in the Holy Spirit (compared with 17%). Significant variation, however, also came within the Anglican schools. In the domestic agenda school, 79% believed in God, compared with 23% in the general

agenda school, and similar differences emerged in respect of belief in Jesus (83% and 19%) and belief in the Holy Spirit (78% and 20%).

The data from schools without a religious character demonstrate that a higher proportion of young people believed in life after death (36%) than believed in God (26%). In the Christian ethos schools similar proportions of students believed in life after death (46%) as believed in God (49%). This may suggest a higher level of religious literacy among students in Christian ethos schools who were more consciously linking these two constructs. The trend in the general agenda school followed that in schools without a religious character. Here almost twice as many students believed in life after death (43%) as believed in God (23%). In the domestic agenda school, while 79% believed in God, the proportion who believed in life after death fell to 56%.

The item concerning truth in all religions was significantly more highly endorsed in Christian ethos schools (45%) than in schools without a religious character (31%); and was also significantly more highly endorsed in the domestic agenda school (51%) than in the general agenda school (33%). On the other hand, the exclusivist position that Christianity is the only true religion was significantly more highly endorsed in Christian ethos schools than in schools without a religious character (18% compared with 10%); and was also significantly more highly endorsed in the domestic agenda school than in the general agenda school (44% compared with 7%).

Church and society

- insert table 2 about here -

Table 2 displays the six items concerned with church and society. These items are concerned with three themes: the perceived relevance of religion for today; the place of religious rites of passage in today's society; and the place of religion in schools.

In terms of the perceived relevance of religion for today, one in three students attending schools without a religious character saw the church as irrelevant to life today (32%) and two in five saw the Bible as irrelevant to life today (41%). Within Christian ethos schools, the proportions fell significantly to one in four who saw the church as irrelevant for life today (24%) and to one in three who saw the Bible as irrelevant to life today (31%). However, even greater variation took place within the Anglican sector. In the domestic agenda school just 10% of students regarded the church as irrelevant to life today, and the proportion rose significantly to 29% in the general agenda school. In the domestic agenda school just 15% of students regarded the Bible as irrelevant for life today, and the proportion rose significantly to 36% in the general agenda school.

In terms of the place of religious rites of passage, there was a significantly lower proportion of students who wanted to get married in church attending schools without a religious character (50%) in comparison with those attending Christian ethos schools (57%). Within the Anglican schools the variation was also significant. Within the domestic agenda school 69% of students wanted to get married in church, compared with 49% in the general agenda school. The item concerning baptism was a stronger discriminator among the different schools than the item concerning marriage. While 30% of students attending schools without a religious character wanted their children to be baptised, christened, or dedicated in church, the proportion rose significantly to 49% within Christian ethos schools. While 29% of students in the general agenda school wanted their children to be baptised, christened, or dedicated in church, the proportion rose significantly to 78% in the domestic agenda school.

In terms of the place of religion in school, half the students attending schools without a religious character agreed that religious education should be taught in school (48%). The proportion rose significantly to 62% within Christian ethos schools. The difference between students attending the general agenda school and the domestic agenda school was also

significant (40% and 80% respectively). Overall support for a daily religious assembly was much lower than support for religious education. Provision for a religious assembly every day was supported by 6% of students in schools without a religious character, but rose significantly to 10% in Christian ethos schools. In the general agenda school the proportion stood at 7% and rose significantly to 22% in the domestic agenda school.

Science and religion

- insert table 3 about here -

Table 3 displays the six items concerned with science and religion. The first two items access views on the origin of the universe. The second set of two items explore aspects of scientism. The third set of two items focus on the conflict between science and religion.

In terms of the origin of the universe, the first item concentrates on the biblical creation narrative. The belief that God made the world in six days of 24 hours was endorsed by a significantly higher proportion of students in Christian ethos schools than in schools without a religious character (23% compared with 10%). In the general agenda school the proportion was the same as that in schools without a religious character (10% and 10%). In the domestic agenda school endorsement of the belief that God made the world in six days of 24 hours was significantly higher, at 47%. On the other hand, acceptance of the general narrative of evolution was higher and with little difference between students attending schools without a religious character (50%), and students attending Christian ethos schools (48%). In the domestic agenda school the proportion of students endorsing the general narrative of evolution fell to 32%, significantly lower than in the general agenda school (49%).

In terms of scientism, the view that nothing should be believed unless it can be proved scientifically was endorsed by a quarter of the students attending schools without a religious character (26%) and by a significantly lower proportion of students attending Christian ethos

schools (21%). The proportion was significantly higher in the general agenda school (29%), compared with the domestic agenda school (17%). On the other hand, there were no significant differences in endorsement of the view that science will eventually give us complete control over the world. This view was endorsed by a quarter of the students attending schools without a religious character (27%) and by students attending Christian ethos schools (25%). The proportion was 27% in the general agenda school and 21% in the domestic agenda school.

In terms of the conflict between science and religion, the view that you cannot trust both science and religion was endorsed by similar proportions of students in schools without a religious character (24%), and in Christian ethos schools (25%). The view was endorsed by similar proportions of students in the general agenda school (24%) and in the domestic agenda school (20%). The pattern demonstrated by this item was replicated by the proportions of students who took the view that religion is mainly a force for bad in the world. This item was endorsed by 22% of students in schools without a religious character, 22% of students in Christian ethos schools, 23% of students in the general agenda school, and 18% of students within the domestic agenda school.

Non-traditional beliefs

- insert table 4 about here -

In the face of declining traditional religious belief, a number of recent studies point to the increase in alternative spiritualities and non-traditional beliefs (see Heelas & Woodhead, 2005). Table 4 displays the six items concerned with non-traditional beliefs, including belief in ghosts, horoscopes, contacting the spirits of the dead, fortune-tellers, tarot cards, and vampires.

Overall, there was a significantly higher level of endorsement of all six non-traditional beliefs among students attending schools without a religious character. Thus, 29%

of students in Christian ethos schools believed in ghosts, and the proportion rose significantly to 37% in schools without a religious foundation. The other five items followed a similar pattern: belief in horoscopes, 16% and 25%; belief in possibility of contacting the spirits of the dead, 22% and 24%; belief that fortune-tellers can tell the future, 10% and 14%; belief that tarot cards can tell the future, 7% and 10%; and belief in vampires, 10% and 13%.

Overall, the domestic agenda school demonstrated a lower level of endorsement of non-traditional beliefs, compared with the general agenda school. Four of these differences reached statistical significance. In the domestic agenda school 15% of students believed in ghosts, compared with 43%; 11% of students believed it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead, compared with 26%; 6% of students believed that fortune-tellers can tell the future, compared with 16%; 2% of students believed that tarot cards can tell the future, compared with 8%. On the other hand, two of the differences did not reach statistical significance. In the domestic agenda school 11% of students believed in their horoscope and so did 17% in the general agenda school. In the domestic agenda school 6% of students believed in vampires and so did 11% in the general agenda school.

Sexual morality

- insert table 5 about here -

Table 5 displays the six items concerning sexual morality. These items include sex before marriage, sex under the legal age, homosexuality, pornography, abortion, and divorce.

In respect of four of these six issues, students attending Christian ethos schools recorded a significantly more conservative attitude than students in schools without a religious character. Thus, 16% of students in Christian ethos schools agreed that it is wrong to have sex before you are married, compared with 9%; 46% agreed that it is wrong to have sex under the legal age, compared with 31%; 46% agreed that pornography is wrong, compared with 33%; and 38% agreed that abortion is wrong compared with 30%. Students

attending Christian ethos schools took a similar view on divorce as students attending schools without a religious character: 17% and 16% respectively took the view that divorce is wrong. Students attending Christian ethos schools took a significantly more accepting view of homosexuality than students attending schools without a religious character: 16% and 18% respectively took the view that homosexuality is wrong.

Overall students attending the domestic agenda school reported a significantly more conservative position on all six issues compared with students attending the general agenda school. Thus, 31% of students in the domestic agenda schools agreed that it is wrong to have sex before you are married, compared with 8% in the general agenda school. In terms of agreeing that it is wrong to have sex under the legal age, the proportions were 55% and 46%; agreeing that homosexuality is wrong the proportions were 23% and 15%; agreeing that pornography is wrong the proportions were 68% and 43%; agreeing that abortion is wrong the proportions were 55% and 46%; and agreeing that divorce is wrong the proportions were 33% and 16%.

Substance use

- insert table 6 about here -

Table 6 displays the six items concerned with attitudes towards substance use. These items cover many issues frequently included in surveys: alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, and tobacco.

The data presented in table 6 demonstrate that these six statements were ranked in the same order by students attending Christian ethos schools and students attending schools without a religious character, with those in Christian ethos schools taking a significantly more conservative view. Heroin took number one position, rated as wrong by 75% of students in schools without a religious character and by 79% of students in Christian ethos schools. In second place came ecstasy, rated as wrong by 63% and 66% of the students. In third place

cannabis was rated wrong by 60% and 63% of the students. In fourth place smoking cigarettes was rated as wrong by 52% and 60% of the students. In fifth place getting drunk was rated as wrong by 20% and 29% of the students. In sixth place drinking alcohol is rated as wrong by 14% and 20% of the students.

There were significant differences in respect of attitudes toward substance use between students attending the general agenda school and students attending the domestic agenda school on three of the six issues surveyed. Thus, 79% of domestic agenda students agreed that it is wrong to use ecstasy, compared with 67% of general agenda students; 72% of domestic agenda students agreed that it is wrong to smoke cigarettes, compared with 51% of general agenda students; and 38% of domestic agenda students agreed that it is wrong to get drunk, compared with 29% of general agenda students. On the other hand, there were no significant differences in responses of students from these two schools in respect of the other three items related to substance use. Thus, 80% of domestic agenda students and 83% of general agenda students agreed that it is wrong to use heroin; 70% of domestic agenda students and 65% of general agenda students agreed that it is wrong to use cannabis; and 26% of domestic agenda students and 22% of general agenda students agreed that it is wrong to drink alcohol.

Social concerns

- insert table 7 about here -

Table 7 displays the six items concerned with social concerns. The first three items access environmental issues. The second set of three items turn attention to concerns related to the developing world, to terrorism, and to nuclear war.

The three items concerned with environmental issues all display a significantly higher level of concern recorded by students in Christian ethos schools. Thus, 50% of students in schools without a religious character were concerned about the risk of pollution to the

environment, and the proportion rose to 57% in the Christian ethos schools. In respect of concern about animals and plants becoming extinct, the proportions were 55% and 59% respectively. In respect of concern about using too much of the earth's resources, the proportions were 52% and 57% respectively.

Two of the three items concerned with environmental issues received significantly higher levels of endorsement in the domestic agenda school than in the general agenda school. This was the case for concern about the risk of pollution to the environment (57% and 45%), and for concern about using too much of the earth's resources (61% and 44%). There was no significant difference between levels of endorsement in the domestic agenda school (54%) and in the general agenda school (54%) regarding concern about animals and plants becoming extinct.

The three items concerned with the developing world, terrorism, and nuclear war all displayed significantly higher levels of concern recorded by students in Christian ethos schools. Thus, 62% of students in schools without a religious character were concerned about the poverty of the developing world, and the proportion rose to 73% in the Christian ethos schools. In respect of concern about the risk of terrorism, the proportions were 55% and 61% respectively. In respect of concern about the risk of nuclear war the proportions were 42% and 46% respectively.

Two of the three items received significantly higher levels of endorsement in the domestic agenda school than in the general agenda school. This was the case for concern about the poverty of the developing world (80% and 51%), and concern about the risk of terrorism (66% and 52%). There was no significant difference between levels of endorsement in the domestic agenda school (46%) and in the general agenda school (39%) regarding concern about the risk of nuclear war.

School

- insert table 8 about here -

Table 8 presents the six items concerned with school-related attitudes and experiences. The first two items assess overall attitude toward school, and the other four items concern school-related anxieties.

The first item revealed no significant difference in terms of overall happiness in school. Thus, the proportions of students who agreed that they are happy in their school stood at 69% in schools without a religious character, 69% in Christian ethos schools, and 68% in both the general agenda school and the domestic agenda school.

The second item, however, revealed a less negative attitude toward school in the Christian ethos sector. While 52% of students in schools without a religious character said that school is boring, the proportion fell significantly to 43% in Christian ethos schools. The view that school is boring was endorsed by 31% of students in the domestic agenda school and 39% of students in the general agenda school (a difference that did not reach statistical significance).

School-related anxieties were significantly higher among students in Christian ethos schools. Thus, in Christian ethos schools 69% often worried about their school work, compared with 57% in schools without a religious character; 85% were worried about exams at school, compared with 75%; 22% were worried about being bullied at school, compared with 20%; and 19% were worried about being attacked by pupils from other schools, compared with 16%.

Students in the domestic agenda school showed a significantly higher level of worry about school work compared with students in the general agenda school. Thus, 74% of students in the domestic agenda school often worried about their school work, compared with 62% of students in the general agenda school. The other five items in this section on school found no significant differences between the responses of students in the domestic agenda

school and in the general agenda school. For example, 17% in the domestic agenda school and 25% in the general agenda school were worried about being bullied at school; 22% in the domestic agenda school and 17% in the general agenda school were worried about being attacked by pupils from other schools.

Personal wellbeing

- insert table 9 about here -

Table 9 displays the six items concerned with personal wellbeing. The first two items concern positive aspects of wellbeing, while the other four items concern negative aspects of wellbeing.

These items on personal wellbeing offer a mixed story about the comparative experiences of students in Christian ethos schools and students in schools without a religious character. On the one hand, students in Christian ethos schools showed a significantly higher sense of purpose in life (71% compared with 67%). On the other hand, students in Christian ethos schools were significantly less likely to find life really worth living (68% compared with 70%) and significantly more likely to feel that they are not worth much as a person (22% compared with 20%). Although statistically significant the differences between the two groups of students on these three items are not great. Moreover, on the other three items in this section there were no significant differences found between the responses of the two groups of students. Thus, 25% of both groups reported that they have sometimes considered hurting themselves; 20% of one group and 21% of the other group reported that they have sometimes considered taking their own life; and 33% of one group and 34% of the other group reported that they often feel depressed.

The students attending the domestic agenda schools recorded significantly higher than the students attending the domestic agenda schools on the two items concerned with positive aspects of wellbeing. Thus, 82% of students in the domestic agenda school feel their life has a

sense of purpose, compared with 66% of students in the general agenda school; and 76% of students in the domestic agenda school find life really worth living, compared with 67% of students in the general agenda school. On the other hand, the four items concerned with negative aspects of wellbeing recorded no significant differences between the two groups of students in the domestic agenda school and in the general agenda school. Thus, 36% of both groups often feel depressed; 21% of one group and 26% of the other group feel they are not worth much as a person; 25% of one group and 24% of the other group have sometimes considered deliberately hurting themselves; 19% of one group and 21% of the other group have sometimes considered taking their own life.

Conclusion

This study set out to address two clearly formulated research questions, drawing on quantitative data generated by ten Christian ethos secondary schools participating in the project conducted by Canterbury Christ Church University and Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, set alongside quantitative data generated by 71 schools without a religious character participating in the Young People's Values project shaped by the St Mary's Centre. Both projects employed the same core research instrument, from which the present analyses, nine groups of items, were extracted in order to profile the following themes: religious beliefs, church and society, science and religion, non-traditional beliefs, sexual morality, substance use, social concerns, school, and personal wellbeing.

The first research question replicated the analyses conducted by Francis and Penny (2013), who argued that a crucial factor in shaping the ethos of schools may be construed as the collective worldview of the students. The present study employed different schools and different groups of items, in order to compare the collective worldviews of students attending these ten Christian ethos secondary schools with the collective worldview of students attending 71 schools without a religious character. The data demonstrated that there were

recognisable differences between the collective worldviews of the two groups of students. Within the Christian ethos schools there was a higher level of religious belief: for example, 49% of students believed in God, compared with 26% in schools without a religious character. Within Christian ethos schools there was some greater recognition of the social role of religion: for example, 49% of students were looking for their children to be baptised, christened or dedicated in church, compared with 30% in schools without a religious character.

Within Christian ethos schools there was a more conservative attitude toward some areas of sexual morality: for example, 46% of students took the view that it is wrong to have sex under the legal age, compared with 31% in schools without a religious character. However, this difference did not extend to all areas of sexual morality. Within Christian ethos schools there was a more conservative attitude toward alcohol and tobacco: for example, 29% of students took the view that it is wrong to get drunk, compared with 20% of students in schools without a religious character. Within Christian ethos schools there was a higher level of social concern in some areas: for example, 73% of students were concerned about the poverty of the developing world, compared with 62% in schools without a religious character. Within Christian ethos schools there was a higher level of school-related anxiety: for example, 69% of students were often worried about their school work, compared with 57% in schools without a religious character. However, the difference did not extend to all areas of school-related attitudes.

On the other hand, the data also demonstrated that there were areas in which little difference emerged between the collective worldviews of the two groups of students. Within both groups of students there were similar views on some aspects of the debate between science and religion: for example, in Christian ethos schools 25% of students took the view that they could not trust both science and religion, and so did 24% of students in schools

without a religious character. Within both groups of students there were similar levels of negative personal wellbeing: for example, within Christian ethos schools 21% of students had sometimes considered taking their own life, and so had 20% of students in schools without a religious character.

The answer to the first research question is to confirm that there are some differences between the worldviews of students in Christian ethos secondary schools and the worldviews of students in schools without a religious character, but that these differences may pervade all areas that may be relevant to shaping school ethos.

The second research question questioned whether it was sensible to treat Christian ethos secondary schools as a single category. This second research question was grounded in the distinction made by the *Durham Report* (1970) between two contrasting missions of Anglican church schools within England and Wales, described by that report as the domestic agenda (serving the needs of the Church) and the general agenda (serving the needs of the nation). While Church of England secondary schools continue to hold these two contrasting missions in tension, there are clear tendencies for individual schools to weight these two missions differently. Those emphasising the general agenda tend to prioritise serving the local neighbourhood while those emphasising the domestic agenda tend to prioritise serving the wider Anglican community. These differences of emphases are reflected in the admissions policies.

The second research question was operationalised by selecting from among the ten Christian ethos schools one school exemplifying the general agenda and one school exemplifying the domestic agenda. When the collective worldviews of students attending these two schools were set side by side, the differences often emerged as much greater than the differences between the ten Christian ethos schools considered together and the 71 schools without a religious character. This is the case in the following areas.

Religious beliefs. The proportions of students who believed in God varied from 26% in schools without a religious character to 49% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions of students varied from 23% in the general agenda school to 79% in the domestic agenda school.

Church and society. The proportions of students who wanted their children to be baptised, christened, or dedicated in church varied from 30% in schools without a religious character to 49% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions of students varied from 29% in the general agenda school to 78% in the domestic agenda school.

Science and religion. The proportions of students who believed that nothing should be believed unless it can be proved scientifically varied from 26% in schools without a religious character to 21% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions of students varied from 29% in the general agenda school to 17% in the domestic agenda school.

Non-traditional beliefs. The proportions of students who believed that it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead varied from 24% in schools without a religious character to 22% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions of students varied from 26% in the general agenda school to 11% in the domestic agenda school.

Sexual morality. The proportions of students who believed it is wrong to have sex before you are married varied from 9% in schools without a religious character to 16% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportion of students varied from 8% in the general agenda school to 31% in the domestic agenda school.

Substance use. The proportions of students who believed it is wrong to smoke cigarettes varied from 52% in schools without a religious character to 60% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions of students varied from 51% in the general agenda school to 72% in the domestic agenda school.

Social concerns. The proportions of students who were concerned about the poverty of the developing world varied from 62% in schools without a religious character to 73% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions varied from 51% in the general agenda school to 80% in the domestic agenda school.

School. The proportions of students who often worried about their school work varied from 57% in schools without a religious character to 69% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools a similar range emerged between the general agenda school (62%) and the domestic agenda school (74%).

Personal wellbeing. The proportions of students who felt their life had a sense of purpose varied from 67% in schools without a religious character to 71% in Christian ethos schools. Within Anglican schools the proportions varied from 66% in the general agenda school to 82% in the domestic agenda school.

The answer to the second research question is to affirm that there are indeed greater differences in collective student worldviews within the Christian ethos sector of secondary schools than between Christian ethos schools and schools without a religious character. This finding offers empirical grounds on which to challenge the simplistic notion of treating Christian ethos secondary schools as a single category.

By way of conclusion, two limitations with the present study need to be acknowledged and suggestions offered for developing this research agenda into the future. First, the present study set out to profile and to compare the collective worldview of students both between Christian ethos schools and schools without a religious character and between a Church of England school prioritising the domestic agenda and a Church of England school prioritising the general agenda. The simple descriptive use of statistics employed in this study offers an appropriate method by which to address the specific research questions formulated.

Nonetheless there could be real value in re-visiting the present data employing other statistical techniques to address variously formulated research questions.

Second, the present study extended previous research by examining the distinctive profile of the collective worldview of students attending Anglican schools that prioritised differently the two contrasting missions of Anglican church schools described by the *Durham Report* (1970) as the general agenda and as the domestic agenda. By selecting one school representative of each approach the present study has drawn attention to the clear connection between the approach taken by the school and the collective worldview of the students. This finding, however, is based on a case-study approach contrasting two individual schools. The intriguing nature of the findings demonstrate the value of a more extensive study including a larger sample of Anglican schools illustrating these two distinctive perspectives.

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Table 1

Religious beliefs

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I believe in God	26	49***	79	23***
I believe in Jesus Christ	22	46***	83	19***
I believe in the Holy Spirit	17	41***	78	20***
I believe in life after death	36	46***	56	43**
I think Christianity is the only true religion	10	18***	44	7***
I believe that there is truth in all religions	31	45***	51	33***

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 2

Church and society

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
The church seems irrelevant to life today	32	24***	10	29***
The bible seems irrelevant to life today	41	31***	15	36***
I want to get married in church	50	57***	69	49***
I want my children to be baptised/christened/dedicated in church	30	49***	78	29***
Religious education should be taught in school	48	62**	80	40***
Schools should hold a religious assembly every day	6	10***	22	7***

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 3

Science and religion

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I believe that God made the world in six days of 24 hours	10	23***	47	10***
I believe in evolution creating everything over millions of years	50	48*	32	49***
Nothing should be believed unless it can be proved scientifically	26	21***	17	29**
Science will eventually give us complete control over the world	27	25	21	27
I cannot trust both science and religion	24	25	20	24
Religion is mainly a force for bad in the world today	22	22	18	23

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 4

Non-traditional beliefs

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I believe in ghosts	37	29***	15	43***
I believe in my horoscope	25	16***	11	17
I believe it is possible to contact the spirits of the dead	24	22**	11	26***
I believe that fortune-tellers can tell the future	14	10***	6	16***
I believe that tarot cards can tell the future	10	7***	2	8**
I believe in vampires	13	10***	6	11

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 5

Sexual morality

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
It is wrong to have sex before you are married	9	16***	31	8***
It is wrong to have sex under the legal age (16)	31	46***	55	46*
Homosexuality is wrong	18	16**	23	15*
Pornography is wrong	33	46***	68	43***
Abortion is wrong	30	38***	55	46*
Divorce is wrong	16	17	33	16***

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 6

Substance use

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
It is wrong to use heroin	75	79***	80	83
It is wrong to use ecstasy	63	66***	79	67**
It is wrong to use cannabis (hash/pot)	60	63***	70	65
It is wrong to smoke cigarettes	52	60***	72	51***
It is wrong to get drunk	20	29***	38	29*
It is wrong to drink alcohol	14	20***	26	22

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 7

Social concerns

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I am concerned about the risk of pollution to the environment	50	57***	57	45*
I am concerned about animals and plants becoming extinct	55	59***	54	54
I am concerned we use too much of the earth's resources	52	57***	61	44***
I am concerned about the poverty of the developing world e.g. Africa	62	73***	80	51***
I am concerned about the risk of terrorism	55	61***	66	52**
I am concerned about the risk of nuclear war	42	46***	46	39

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 8

School

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I am happy in my school	69	69	68	68
School is boring	52	43***	31	39
I often worry about my school work	57	69***	74	62**
I am worried about my exams at school	75	85***	87	82
I am worried about being bullied at school	20	22**	17	25
I am worried about being attacked by pupils from other schools	16	19***	22	17

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character

Table 9

Personal wellbeing

	Other %	CE %	DA %	GA %
I feel my life has a sense of purpose	67	71**	82	66***
I find life really worth living	70	68*	76	67*
I often feel depressed	33	34	36	36
I feel I am not worth much as a person	20	22**	21	26
I have sometimes considered deliberately hurting myself	25	25	25	24
I have sometimes considered taking my own life	20	21	19	21

Note: GA, the general agenda school

DA, the domestic agenda school

CE, ten Christian ethos schools

Other, 71 schools without a religious character