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Deeply Christian and serving the common good?

A survey of Anglican cathedral provision for schools

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Abstract

The Church of England's vision for education is generous and seeks to allow the riches of Christian life to overflow throughout schools. The vision is captured by the strapline 'Deeply Christian, serving the common good'. The present study assesses the contribution made to service this vision by the 43 Anglican cathedrals within England and the Isle of Man.

Drawing on a careful analysis of information presented by the websites of these cathedrals, the study concluded that all 43 Anglican cathedrals dedicated considerable space on their websites to a regular programme of teaching and learning provision across the age range from early years foundation stage to sixth-form, relevant to a range of curriculum areas, and giving attention to pupils' personal development and wellbeing.

Keywords: cathedral studies, websites, schools, educational provision, educational resources

Introduction

The Church of England has a long and close concern for and engagement with the provision of education for the school-aged population. Alongside historic independent schools, like King's Ely (given its Royal Charter by King Henry VII in 1541 during the English Reformation), through the founding of the National Society in 1811, the Church of England served as the major pioneer of establishing schools for the poor (Burgess, 1958; Worsley, 2013), working alongside (and in competition with) the Royal Lancasterian Society that gave rise to the British and Foreign School Society in 1814 (Aldrich, 2013), and the Catholic Poor School Committee founded in 1847 (Marmion, 1984). Unlike the Roman Catholic Church and the Free Churches, as the Established Church, the Church of England regarded its role in the provision of schools as embracing the nation rather than as providing an alternative educational system for its members.

The original vision of the National Society was impacted by changes and developments in the wider national landscape of education provision, including the Education Act 1870 that made provision for establishing schools beyond the provision envisaged by collaboration with voluntary societies (Rich, 1970), and the Education Act 1902 that established greater parity between voluntary schools and board schools under the provision of local education authorities (Macan, 1903). Nonetheless, by the time of the Education Act 1944 the Church of England remained in a strong position, not only to help shape that Act but also to secure the influence of the Established Church over the wider educational provision for the nation (see Butler, 1971). On the one hand, the Education Act 1944 eased the financial burden on Churches incurred by the provision of schools by offering the choice between voluntary controlled status (with reduced control by the Church, but no ongoing financial liability) and voluntary aided status (with greater control by the Church and ongoing financial liability). While the Catholic Church rejected controlled status, many Anglican Dioceses

opted for controlled status (see Francis, 1986). On the other hand, while the Church of England lost control over religious education within the voluntary controlled schools, it received special status within the Standing Advisory Councils of Religious Education and in the machinery for determining the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education that each local education authority was mandated to compile and authorise. These syllabi determined religious education provision within all local authority provided schools, including church voluntary controlled schools (Dent, 1947).

By the mid-1960s when the debates regarding the place of church schools and the place of religious education within the state-maintained sector were increasingly vocal (see Francis, 1987), the rationale for the Church of England's continuing involvement was clarified by the Durham Report (1970), under the chairmanship of Bishop Ian Ramsey. With regard to church schools, this philosophically-refined report distinguished between two core aims for the Church of England, characterised the *general* aim of service for the nation and the *domestic* aim of service for the church. Within the social climate and religious landscape of the 1960s the Durham Report advocated emphasis on the general aim.

Since the Durham Report, the Church of England's commitment to education has been variously re-expressed in reports like *A future in partnership* (Waddington, 1984), *The way ahead* (Dearing, 2001), and *The church school of the future* (Chadwick, 2012). Emphases and language has shifted over the course of time, but throughout the Church of England has remained committed in speaking to and influencing the whole nation. The most recent report from the Church of England Education Office (2016) sets the scope of its intention with the inclusive title *Church of England vision for education*, and refines this vision by the subtitle, *Deeply Christian, serving the common good*. This is not a domestic report merely to shape church thinking, but a report designed to signal the Church's concern

for the nation. In his foreword to this report, the Revd Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer for the Church of England affirms:

We are clear that it is not just a vision for Church of England schools, but a Church of England vision for education. At a time when many are looking for a vision of education to enthuse and inspire them, this deeply Christian vision of education is one that is generous and that seeks to allow the riches of Christian life to overflow to those of other faiths or no faith, but who share the bigger vision of what we think education is for. (Church of England Education Office, 2016, p. 1)

The Church of England has two obvious mechanisms through which to enrich educational provision through schools in England, working both with church schools and with schools without a church foundation. The first mechanism is through the Church of England's national office as accessed via churchofengland.org. The second mechanism is through each of the 42 mainland dioceses that are required to maintain a Diocesan Board of Education, as illustrated, for example, by dioceseofyork.org.uk. There is, however, a third mechanism through which the Church of England is engaging *de facto* with schools, namely through Anglican cathedrals.

Cathedrals and education

Cathedrals in England hold a long history of wide engagement with education as centres of learning, stretching back to the years before the Reformation (see, for example, Lepine, 2002; Orme, 1981; Reeves, 2002). During the twentieth century, the two reports commissioned by the Church of England relating to Anglican cathedrals demonstrated a growing recognition of education as a significant part of the role and ministry of cathedrals. The Cathedrals' Commission Report (Church Assembly, 1927) explicitly referenced the contribution of cathedrals to religious learning. The Archbishops' Commission on Cathedrals (1994)

explicitly advocated that cathedrals should further enhance their work in ‘developing links with schools and in relating other areas of education to the Christian faith’ (p. 49).

In a recent study exploring the rationale for Anglican cathedrals, Francis, McKenna, and Jones (in press) advanced the argument that cathedrals could be positioned as ‘Episcopal Centres of Learning’. This argument was rooted in two strands of thought. The first strand concerns Anglican ecclesiology that sees the ministry of bishops as the key and distinctive feature of Church polity. The ministry of the bishop is shared with the people, deacons, and priests within the parishes, but remains crucial to maintaining unity across the diversity of location and to resourcing that shared provision. The second strand concerns the purpose of Anglican cathedrals as articulated by Hall (2014). Hall argues that cathedrals gain their distinctive ministry from the location of the bishop’s *cathedra*. By implication cathedrals are mandated to do what bishops are called to be. Hall argues that the distinctive character of bishops is shaped by the Anglican ordinal. By implication a key component of the episcopal vocation is that of educator or teacher.

Testing the extent to which positioning Anglican cathedrals as episcopal centres of learning could be validated by a close examination of what cathedrals said about themselves, Francis, McKenna, and Jones (in press) undertook a careful analysis of information presented by the websites of the 43 Anglican cathedrals within England and the Isle of Man. In framing this exercise, Francis, McKenna, and Jones explicitly excluded direct references to work with schools in order to focus intentionally on the wider conceptualisation of involvement with education. Their analysis demonstrated that, separate from work within schools, Anglican cathedrals were offering a wide range of educational provision that exemplified a theology of nurture (concerned with the formation of Christian disciples) and a wide range of educational provision that exemplified a theology of service (concerned with supporting and serving the wider community). In terms of a theology of nurture, they identified six categories of

activities characterised as: nurturing children and families, discipleship, growing in faith, exploring Christian faith, theological education, and clergy and parish education. In terms of a theology of service, they identified seven categories of activities characterised as: engaging children and families, reaching out online, visits and tours, further education and higher education, archives and heritage collections (including libraries), adult community learning programmes, and educational action.

Research question

Against this background the aim of the present study is to build on the initial work of Francis, McKenna, and Jones (in press) and to map the current activities relevant to schools offered by 43 Anglican cathedrals within England and the Isle of Man by undertaking a systematic search of their websites. Analysis of the content of websites is a small but growing field of research within the literatures concerning education and schools, and concerning cathedral studies (ap Siôn & Edwards, 2012; Bondi & Sezzi, 2021; Curtis, 2016; Edwards & ap Siôn, 2015; Francis, McKenna & Jones, in press; McKenna, Francis & Stewart, 2022; Wilkinson, 2019, 2021; Wilson & Carlson, 2016). Two studies by ap Siôn and Edwards (2012) and Edwards and ap Siôn (2015) sought to identify, through the medium of Church of England and Church in Wales cathedral websites, the breadth and type of education provision offered to young people accessing cathedrals. These two studies compared the provision made by cathedrals in fifteen urban and eight rural dioceses in relation to school-related education, faith-related education, visitor-related education, and music-related education. The present study, with its wider focus on the 43 Anglican cathedrals within the mainland dioceses of the Church of England and the Isle of Man, explores in-depth the range and breadth of educational provision made available for use by schools as recorded on the websites of these 43 cathedrals. In so doing it complements the earlier study reported by Francis, McKenna, and Jones (in press) concerning educational provision for adults, children, and families.

Method

Website pages selected for analysis were those that had a home page navigation heading using some combination of ‘Schools’, ‘Education’, ‘Learning’, or ‘Education and Learning’, evidenced across 34 of the cathedral websites. For those websites without a specific education or learning section other navigation headings were scanned and educational material suitable for schools but located within these other sections of the website was captured. Information was located and saved into a Word document. Data were collected throughout April 2022. This information consisted of: the website uniform resource locator (url) for each page where material was sited, a description of the educational activity provided, the type of activity (tour, trail, workshop, school outreach), the age the activity was suitable for (Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 to 4, and post-16), together with the capture of any linked or downloadable learning material or resources.

The study used content analysis of this written website data to explore the educational provision made to support teaching in schools. According to Robson (1993, p. 272), content analysis is used when exploring documents, ‘primarily the written document a book, newspaper, magazine, letter or whatever’. In the present study the ‘whatever’ was the websites of the 43 Anglican cathedrals. The analysis was done on a thematic basis (reading, re-reading, categorising, and grouping). The aim was to map the landscape in terms of the breadth and depth of educational experiences and resources being offered to schools. First, the range of educational content made available for schools by each individual cathedral was noted. Second, cutting and slicing the data allowed for similar educational activities to be grouped together. Further analysis then allowed for detailed exploration of the curriculum specific content contained within the activities and resources made available for schools (the different cross-curricular areas being addressed, the subject specific content covered, the suitability for specific age groups of pupils). Further reading then allowed for the diverse

ways in which cathedrals were engaging with schools to be grouped into themes, and then for some themes to be split into further sub-themes. Website information is not static, it can and does change frequently. The data presented illustrates the educational provision made by cathedrals for use by schools at a point in time when the research was carried out, during April 2022. It is possible that some cathedrals were engaging in educational provision for schools that was not recorded on their websites.

Results

Breadth of schools offer

All 43 Anglican cathedrals in England and the Isle of Man devoted considerable space on their websites to a regular programme of teaching and learning provision designed for schools, with the main focus on educational visits and tours and on themed workshops and activity-based learning sessions. As a minimum each website provided the title and a short description of the available activity, duration and cost. Further information on suitability for particular age ranges or key stages, local authority agreed syllabus or diocesan approved religious education links, cross-curricular content designed to meet national curriculum programmes of study, and opportunities to explore the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development aspects of education were also often provided. A number of cathedrals produced and uploaded marketing brochures and posters with all these links clearly made (Coventry, Exeter, Leicester, Lincoln, Norwich, Salisbury, Southwell, Winchester).

Across all cathedrals learning was delivered by experienced schools and family learning teams. The stated aims were to deliver ‘high-quality’, ‘engaging’, ‘memorable’, ‘creative’, innovative’, ‘exciting’, and ‘hands-on’ learning experiences for pupils in a ‘unique’, ‘iconic’, and ‘inspiring’ environment through a range of educational opportunities and practical sessions. At Blackburn, visits to the cathedral were designed to give pupils opportunities to, ‘explore the space’, ‘understand and interpret the space’, ‘experience the

space’, and ‘respond to the space’. While all cathedrals provided opportunities to deepen and further pupils’ understanding of aspects of religious education, especially the Christian faith, visits and workshops were also promoted to explore local history, to appreciate creative and visual arts, or to enhance the teaching of subjects such as literacy, science, maths, and geography. Provision was made for pupils of all ages, from the early years foundation stage through to A-level. In some cases, educational packages were clearly linked to examination criteria for older age pupils (Gloucester, Lichfield, Southwark). Some cathedrals explicitly mentioned the suitability of their education offer for pupils with special educational needs (Blackburn, Guildford, Lichfield, Liverpool, St Pauls, Southwark, Wells).

The thematic analysis of the content of the 43 websites identified seven themes that captured the breadth of the school offer, characterised as: tours and trails, themed experience and programmed days, educational workshops related to Christianity and cathedral, educational workshops related to other curriculum areas, self-guided digital resources, guided outreach, and teacher training and professional development. Each of these seven themes will be exemplified and discussed in turn.

Tours and trails

Most tours and trails focused on the cathedral as both a special place and a sacred space. The former was explored in terms of the historical significance of the building and the role it had played within Christianity, its architecture and interior art, and special people associated with the building. The latter was explored in terms of key features of the space as a living place of Christian worship, meanings associated with the signs and symbols of belonging to Christianity, festivals and special days, prayer, and pilgrimage.

Younger pupils were often offered sensory experiences. At Salisbury there was a ‘Using your senses’ tour and an ‘Animal trail’. For early years pupils Liverpool offered a ‘Special shapes’ trail around the cathedral spotting different shapes, before making a stained

glass window based on the shape of the building. The ‘Sense of place’ tour at Liverpool invited special educational needs pupils to ring a miniature bell, smell incense, taste a communion wafer, look for the Derby Mouse, and lie on the floor to admire the ceiling. At Lichfield age specific tours included ‘Special occasions and celebrations’ for key stage 1, ‘Signs and symbols’ for key stage 2, and ‘Prayer and pilgrimage’ for key stage 3. At Durham a ‘Stories of Saint Cuthbert’ tour gave pupils an understanding of who Cuthbert was and why the cathedral was built to house his remains.

At Southwark trails and tours for primary schools covered the topics: ‘God’s world’, ‘Exploring Christian symbols’, and ‘Pilgrimage’. Content for secondary schools provided opportunities for pupils to explore how the design of the cathedral and its furnishings contributed to prayer and worship and how they related to Christian beliefs, to find out about Holy Communion and its significance within the Church (exploration of different interpretations within and across Christian denominations was offered), and to encounter religious symbolism through exploring features of the cathedral. For pupils at key stages 4 and 5 a cathedral tour could be combined with a clergy ‘Hot seat’ giving pupils the opportunity to question a member of clergy on ethical, religious and theological issues, as well as current affairs. At Coventry an art-based tour gave pupils the opportunity to study the cathedral’s art and architecture, and to experience how such art enhanced the building’s atmosphere. History-based tours looked at the how the ‘Blitz’ of 1940 had affected the City of Coventry, or explored changes in the city from medieval times through to the 1960s. A tour on ‘Conflict, peace and reconciliation’ let pupils investigate how the past could be used to strive for forgiveness instead of conflict and reflected the cathedral’s position at the heart of global reconciliation initiatives. These links with the history curriculum were increasingly made in tours for older pupils. Salisbury offered several history tours for secondary schools:

‘Medieval realms’, ‘Medieval history’, ‘Reformation symbolism and architecture’, and a local history option for key stage 3, ‘The cathedral that moved’.

As part of the opportunity to explore key features of a Christian place of worship, at Liverpool there was the option to compare both of Liverpool’s cathedrals (the Anglican Cathedral and the Roman Catholic Cathedral). A small number of cathedrals (Blackburn, Gloucester, Norwich) were active in the promotion of community cohesion and interfaith education with the offer to help facilitate a joint visit with a place of worship belonging to another faith. At Blackburn, ‘whatever the age of your pupils we can help you to maximise your time in Blackburn by planning a joint study visit to both the cathedral and to a local mosque’. Gloucester offered the choice of combining a visit to the cathedral with a visit to either a local mosque or local synagogue. At Lincoln the offer was for an onsite ‘multi-faith debate and tour’ where key stages 3 and 4 pupils were invited to take part in ‘lively debate on some challenging and contemporary issues of religion with local faith and secular leaders’.

While all cathedrals offered a range of tours and trails, many were also willing to work with schools to develop activity-based tours and trails that could be tailored to match a school’s scheme of work across a variety of subject areas. Gloucester offered ‘25 carefully designed tours’, but also offered to ‘work closely with schools to design and deliver bespoke visits to suit individual needs’. Guided and self-guided tours were sometimes supplemented with trail sheets or workbooks (Birmingham, Rochester, St Albans). At Birmingham there was a ‘Listening for sounds in the cathedral’ trail sheet. At Rochester there were both short and long versions of ‘Be a cathedral detective’ and ‘Be a cathedral investigator’, together with age specific booklets, ‘In God’s house’ for key stage 2 and ‘Art and architecture’, ‘Signs and symbols’, and ‘Time travellers’ for key stage 3.

Themed experience and programmed days

Several cathedrals offered annual themed experience or programmed days throughout the year that combined a tour, crafts, activities and storytelling (Bristol, Carlisle, Ely, Exeter, Liverpool, Norwich, Peterborough, Portsmouth, St Pauls, Salisbury, Southwark, Southwell, Wells). Often these were linked to the liturgical year or to the educational journey of pupils.

Southwark held experience days for key stage 1 and key stage 2 including: 'Journey to the manger', 'Experience Easter', 'Experience Pentecost', and 'Experience Harvest'. At Salisbury sessions for 'Advent and Christmas' and for 'Easter' were available to all pupils, or there were the options of a 'Materials day' suitable for key stage 1 and a 'Cathedral stories - gothic tales day' suitable for key stage 2. For pupils in years 4 and 5, Wells offered 'Mental health and wellbeing days' exploring wellbeing, mindfulness and emotional resilience via a carousel of three activities. Specifically for year 6 pupils who were coming to the end of their primary school journey, Southwell offered a 'Year 6 festival' where pupils were invited to consider what it might take to 'Make a difference' in the world. A similar visit was offered at Bristol where a themed 'Moving on' day was provided for pupils making the transition to secondary school. With a focus on 'Sustainability' the aim was to promote a better understanding of the environment and green issues within the church context. For secondary school pupils, Wells hosted 'Reformation days' providing the opportunity for pupils to find out about how the Reformation directly impacted on the life of the cathedral, giving them the chance to look for clues in the fabric of the building and in the archived documents.

A few cathedrals promoted multi-school events encouraging pupils to work alongside peers from other schools (Bradford, Lichfield, Southwell, Wells). According to Lichfield such days were 'an opportunity for young people to come together from a number of schools to debate, discuss and deliberate on matters of importance'. At Bradford, 'The Linking Network' schools' programme offered workshops in the cathedral on identity, heritage and belonging through exploration of four key questions: Who am I? Who are we? Where do we

live? How do we all live together? The cathedral space was viewed as a 'neutral venue' for both primary and secondary school linking, a 'space for children who would not normally meet to get to know each other, to talk, listen, think, play and learn, through interaction and shared tasks'. Bradford also aspired to host an annual sixth-form conference with a focus on 'current issues of faith in a diverse and ever-changing society'. At Wells large multi-school events for key stages 1 and 2 were linked to topical themes (Remembrance, Fairtrade and the Environment). For key stages 3, 4, and 5 events included a GCSE religious studies conference and a Black Lives Matter virtual conference. At Lichfield, 'The 3D Forum' aimed to provide enrichment events for sixth-form and gifted and talented key stage 4 pupils. The website maintained that these events were not 'religious studies' events but rather placed emphasis on 'enrichment and engagement in cross-curricular study designed to complement examination subjects'. Two or three events were held each academic year and previous events included: 'Could you forgive someone who committed a crime against you?' (with Staffordshire police, magistrates, victim of crime, and reformed offender), and a '3D Plus European referendum debate' (with Tristram Hunt and Michael Fabricant).

In a unique initiative Coventry is the home of ICONS (International Cross of Nails Schools), a network of primary and secondary schools from around the world that have recognised the opportunity for introducing principles of peace, forgiveness, conflict transformation and reconciliation into their school communities. The network consists of 18 international, 18 Secondary, 25 Primary, and 11 All-through schools. ICONS embrace the three themes: healing the wounds of history, living with difference and celebrating diversity, and building a culture of peace. These three themes are worked out differently in each participating school, depending on the school's context. For some schools this includes use of restorative practices, lessons on peace-building and reconciliation, use of art and picture

books to develop skills such as empathy and forgiveness, and pupil-driven projects to build bridges with the local community.

Educational workshops related to Christianity and cathedral

At the majority of cathedrals, the trails and tours for early years through to key stage 5 could be combined with the provision of workshops so that schools could extend and enhance their visit through a variety of fun and engaging activities. At every cathedral there were workshops with links to the religious education curriculum and these were often related to Christianity and to the cathedral space.

Workshops for early years pupils at Coventry included opportunity to: explore the creation story through shape, space and patterns both inside and outside the cathedral, learn about baptism by exploring the baptistery window and cathedral font through the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (by Eric Carle), reflect on the importance of forgiveness, conflict, peace and reconciliation through exploring the story *God's Dream* (by Archbishop Desmond Tutu), discover what Christians believe about marriage through acting out a wedding, explore the bible story, The Lost Sheep, and discover animals in the cathedral, or take a closer look at Lent and Easter and at Advent and Christmas. At Southwark workshops for early years through to key stage 2 included: stained glass window making (linked to the God's world tour), candle and candle holder making (linked to the Exploring Christian symbols tour), and clay tile making (linked to the Pilgrimage tour). At Carlisle a 'Worship and wonder' workshop let key stage 2 pupils discover how the cathedral has played an important role in worship and belief for nearly 900 years, explore the key features and objects used in worship, learn how the cathedral is seen as a sacred space for the Christian community, and 'have the chance to ask a Canon about their role in the cathedral through a question and answer activity'. Another key stage 2 workshop, 'Creative cathedral', allowed pupils to 'become an art explorer and discover the different styles of art and design found in the cathedral and the

skills and techniques behind them, understand their religious and cultural significance and begin to think critically and make personal responses to art'. Inspired by the building pupils were then able to create their own artwork to take back to school. At Gloucester activities for key stages 1 and 2 included the topics: 'Why does Easter matter to Christians? Why does Christmas matter to Christians? What makes some places special to believers? Who was St Andrew and what did he do? Celebrations (Easter, Christmas and Harvest), and Belonging'. Topics previously offered at Guildford included: 'Baptism', 'Symbols of the Christian faith', 'Colours of the church year', 'Features of a church/cathedral', 'Worship, and Christian festivals'.

Most cathedrals noted that the material and activities offered to younger pupils could also be adapted for older age groups, although it was frequently common for cathedrals to offer to tailor sessions specifically to the curriculum or to examinations for the secondary school age group. At this age religious education themes were often combined with a historical connection. At Chester workshops offered at key stages 3 and 4 included: 'Remembrance and memorial', 'Anselm's ontological argument', 'Eucharist', 'Rites of passage', and 'Crime and punishment in the consistory court'. At key stages 3 and 4 Lincoln offered workshops covering: 'Medieval church and state', and 'Reformation and civil war'. At Norwich workshops for this age range included: 'Cathedral then and now', 'Explore worship and belief', 'Christianity and Islam', 'Explore monasticism', 'Bread, wine and ritual, and 'Philosophy and ethics'. At Rochester workshops included: 'Poor man's bible', 'The monastic experience', 'The pilgrim trail', 'The Reformation trail', 'English law, Travel and tourism', and 'Exploring cathedral collections'.

Educational workshops related to other curriculum areas

Many cathedrals also provided learning workshops and activities that covered other areas of the curriculum. In many cases cathedrals offered a broad range of cross-curricular

experiences that could be adapted to suit the needs of all-age pupils (Birmingham, Blackburn, Bradford, Canterbury, Carlisle, Chester, Coventry, Gloucester, Guildford, Hereford, Leicester, Lincoln, Liverpool, Norwich, Peterborough, St Albans, Rochester, Salisbury, Worcester).

After provision for religious education, the next most frequently offered workshops were those supporting the history curriculum (Canterbury, Coventry, Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Norwich, St Albans, Southwark, Worcester). At Canterbury the focus was on the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings with opportunity for primary age pupils to find out how Canterbury Cathedral was founded by Saint Augustine. Pupils could explore the cathedral in costume, finding out about life in Anglo-Saxon Canterbury up to the siege of Canterbury and the kidnapping and murder of Archbishop Alphege at the hands of the Vikings. Workshops offered at Ely, adaptable for pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 4, focused on the Saxons and Normans and included: 'The founding of Ely Cathedral' (A day exploring the story of St Etheldreda and the founding of the original monastery in Ely), 'The Saxons of Ely Cathedral' (exploring the stories of the famous Saxons associated with Ely Cathedral and finding out more about Saxon life), 'The Normans' (exploring the story of Hereward the Wake and finding out about how the cathedral was built), 'Monastic day' (discovering what life was like for a medieval monk), 'Medieval day' (spending the day as a medieval pilgrim, discovering more about faith, food and pilgrimage in the medieval era), and 'Reformation day' (spending the day as a Tudor exploring the causes and impact of the reformation). At St Albans provision to support the history curriculum included topics on: 'Alban and the Romans', 'Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Invaders and Settlers', and 'Pilgrimage and the dissolution of the monasteries'. Art and craft activities to accompany these workshops included: Roman mosaics, Saxon food, Tudor music and dance, Tudor food, medieval clay tile making, illuminated lettering, brass rubbing, and Victorian classroom and Victorian

pastimes. At Coventry history workshops provided opportunity to take a closer look at life during the Second World War using identity cards, ration books and Henry Moore's air-raid drawings.

Combining music, history, religious education, and art, Birmingham offered 'Music for primary schools' that could be linked to topics on the Victorians, Tudors, or the natural world. Led by members of the Cathedral's music department the sessions were designed to 'celebrate the role of music at the cathedral and inspire a joy of singing while exploring these specific curriculum areas using original source material and real objects'. At Canterbury a 'How did they build that?' workshop for key stages 1 and 2 was described as a 'very hands-on art and design experience', looking at the variety of different materials used to build, as well as shapes and features of the cathedral (e.g. columns, arches and stained glass windows). Pupils could find out about the different styles of architecture in the building and discover the range of stained glass in the building, as well as the stories and meaning behind the stone and glass. Exeter also offered sessions with a focus on 'Art in the cathedral' designed for key stage 1 to key stage 4.

Surrounded by woodlands and riverbanks Durham was able to offer a range of visits covering geography, history, art, and science. An adventure in the Cathedral's outdoor space with pupils using a compass and drawing a map with landmark features contributed to geography. Learning about two mills beside the river and how people lived and worked in the past contributed to history. With opportunity to explore colour, patterns and textures in the outdoor environment and with use of their senses to listen and draw woodland sounds pupils had the chance to engage in environmental art. Learning about plants, seed dispersal, life cycles, animals, habitats and food chains through environmental games and activities contributed to science.

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption caused to schooling, Bradford developed wellbeing workshops for schools. These sessions were to focus on the thoughts and feelings generated by pupils' experiences of the pandemic with a physical journey around four stations set out in different areas of the cathedral and dealing with: 'Worries and burdens', 'Sadness, loss and remembrance', 'Strengths and thankfulness', 'Hope and moving forward'. Also recognising concern for pupil wellbeing, a 'Positive mental health tour' for pupils in key stages 3 and 4 was offered by Exeter, and at Coventry the 'Conflict reconciliation and peace' workshop was designed to allow pupils to explore these three concepts and their relationship to individuals, to community, and to the world.

Self-guided Digital Resources

Some cathedrals provided digital access to a range of free resources, videos, and lesson plans that could be accessed or shared on an interactive whiteboard to help support learning in school (Birmingham, Bradford, Canterbury, Coventry, Ely, Lichfield, St Pauls, Newcastle, St Edmundsbury). Such resources were suitable for a range of key stages although there were noticeably more materials for primary schools than for secondary schools. Most cathedrals offered some form of self-guided virtual tour of their building. At Chichester there was an online cathedral plan that allowed pupils to move round the cathedral site with key features highlighted and explained. At Peel, Isle of Man, the virtual tour included the cathedral and its gardens, and exhibitions. Collaboration between the cathedrals of Bradford, Ripon and Wakefield provided 'Virtual youth pilgrimages' for both primary and secondary age pupils. As pupils moved through the virtual cathedral they could see photos of some of the clergy and key areas within the cathedral marked by icons which when clicked revealed further information.

At Hereford virtual resources consisted of six short films for key stage 2 pupils that told the story of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to the resurrection on Easter Sunday. At St

Pauls a learning library for schools comprised films and activities. Examples included: 'Learning from the Great Fire of London', 'Faith the cat' (an audiobook story of hope and resilience), and 'David's story', a second world war evacuation worksheet. At Birmingham resources were available as part of 'The Faith Encounters Programme' to enhance a school visit or support a virtual visit for children between the ages of 8 and 13. Pupils were encouraged to 'be curious and reflective by focusing on the imagery, heritage and culture present in the cathedral'. Downloadable resources included a cathedral guide, a cathedral quiz, and YouTube videos on themes including: 'An introduction to the cathedral', 'The Christian faith', and 'The cathedral and its community'. A resource for younger pupils explored the question, 'Why do we have candles in a cathedral?' Lichfield had a very extensive suite of downloadable resource packs all with stated curriculum aims and links to the agreed syllabus for Staffordshire. Key stage 1 material included: 'Features of a Christian church', and 'Signs and symbols'. Key stage 2 material included: 'Signs and symbols', and 'Seasonal resources' (for Christingle, Holocaust Memorial Day, Mothering Sunday). At Ely downloadable resources for key stages 1 and 2 included 'Christingle' lesson plans, and a YouTube video telling the stories of 'Edyth and Byrtha', two Saxon refugees at the time of the Norman invasion, to highlight the dangers that refugees face on their journeys. A key stage 2 scheme of work on social justice allowed pupils to explore Christian attitudes to issues of social justice, modern slavery and human rights and for key stage 3 there were lesson plans and activities on modern slavery.

Guided Outreach

The Covid-19 pandemic and the disruption made to in-person school visits to cathedrals may have led to some cathedrals developing their existing outreach work to schools. This may be a form of provision that will continue to grow in instances when visits to the cathedral are not possible, or where schools are unable to undertake the travel. Such outreach took a number of

forms with cathedrals offering supported virtual lessons, in-school delivery including music teaching, and provision of loan boxes.

Virtual lessons

The largest category of guided remote learning was the offer to provide supported virtual tours and workshops (Coventry, Durham, Hereford, Lincoln, St Pauls, Peterborough, St Albans, Wakefield, Rochester, Worcester). At Durham the virtual tour was available via Zoom conferencing. Hereford offered a virtual ‘Mappa Mundi’ workshop suitable for any age group. It consisted of a talk and question and answer session led by the Head of Schools and Family Learning, with suggestions for follow-up activities and resources supplied. At Lincoln digital learning included a themed PowerPoint tour and live question and answer session with three key stage 1 and key stage 2 themes to choose from: ‘Lincoln, a cathedral city’, ‘Christian signs and symbols’, and ‘Time detectives’ (using artefacts found in recent archaeological digs around the cathedral to look at historical evidence. Why was the cathedral built? Why was it built opposite Lincoln Castle? What evidence is there about war and kings and treasures that were lost?). Rochester, Wakefield, and Worcester were able to offer supported virtual visits and workshops selected from any of the themes usually provided during ‘physical’ visits to the cathedral. At Worcester this might include, a video tour of the cathedral, informative videos about specific aspects, live question and answer sessions with cathedral guides, virtual workshops, and downloadable resources. Remote workshops offered by Wakefield included: ‘Signs and symbols’, ‘Stories in light’, ‘Stone and wood’, ‘The Christmas journey’, ‘The Easter story’, ‘Poppies and peace’, ‘For all the saints’, and ‘Making music’.

Coventry and Wakefield offered to present virtually at school assemblies. At Coventry the assembly offered was focused on the Coventry ‘Blitz’, while at Wakefield there were several themes on offer including: ‘Christian festivals’, ‘Bible stories’, and ‘Symbols’.

In 2021, combining online learning with its multi-school offer, Ely held a ‘School’s day online’ where pupils were able to explore across five or six sessions the experiences of refugees and the reasons why such people were vulnerable to becoming victims of modern slavery.

In-school delivery

Several cathedrals offered to send cathedral staff to visit schools to provide a variety of activities and workshops to whole classes or year groups (Canterbury, Coventry, Durham, Ely, Hereford, Norwich, Peterborough, Rochester, Wakefield). At Rochester, alongside the offer to tailor-make workshops to be delivered in school, there was the offer to ‘Do cathedral in your hall’ (this involved reconstructing the cathedral with any furniture and props to hand). Other workshops included, ‘Great expectations’ exploring the Medway link with Charles Dickens, and Christmas and Easter workshops. Peterborough had four ‘Cathedral roadshow’ activities to choose from: ‘Tudors (monks and manuscripts)’, ‘Symbols of faith’, ‘Your Mother Church’, and ‘Local history’. At Coventry suggestions for in-school visits included: running a community day on the theme of forgiveness, providing help with a class or school art project, or running a citizenship workshop on conflict resolution and bridge building. At Norwich the in-school options included: ‘The labyrinth journey’ (a canvas labyrinth brought to the school hall), ‘meet Edith Cavell’ (First World War heroine), ‘explore Christian worship, prayer and monastic life’, and ‘Dance across the world’ (Hindu dance reflections, Chinese dance, traditional English dancing).

Music provision

A longstanding tradition for some cathedrals to provide outreach to local schools in the form of music education was evident (Birmingham, Durham, Peel, Liverpool, Wakefield). Each term music staff from Durham worked with up to eight schools performing to and singing with complete year groups. After each visit they continued to work with the participating

schools to help prepare pupils for a 'Music outreach celebration' service held at the cathedral. The programme also worked with the teachers from each school helping them 'to develop choral leadership skills' allowing singing 'to continue to flourish beyond the celebration service'. In a similar initiative at Liverpool the 'Schools singing programme' works with 12 primary schools each term. The cathedral music team delivers singing workshops each week in school culminating with a concert performance at the cathedral featuring all schools. An important part of Peel Cathedral's role in serving the Isle of Man is 'to make music accessible to the wider community'. Music staff spend time each week at two schools on the Island. They also engage with the Island's schools via massed singing events, most recently hosting a workshop on 'Manx music and movement'. At Wakefield music staff from within the Cathedral were available to visit schools to teach best singing practice, share information about cathedral choirs and cathedral music, and lead singing lessons for classes to enjoy.

Loan resource boxes

Some cathedrals offered objects and materials to local schools and community groups to encourage observational and evaluation skills and create dialogue and questioning among pupils (Canterbury, Carlisle, Durham, Guildford). According to Carlisle, loan boxes 'help bring the cathedral's 900-year history to life in the classroom ... support the national curriculum, deepen pupil's understanding and stimulate discussions through active learning'. Schools were able to choose between two loan boxes, the 'Eucharist loan box' and the 'Creative cathedral loan box'. At Durham the resource boxes were created to support local schools when taking part in virtual Zoom tours. Themed objects and books, as well as dressing-up costumes were provided so that pupils could get hands on with history as they followed the tour digitally. Guildford drew attention to the large variety of non-book resources that it housed and which were available for schools to borrow to support their work with pupils and for teaching about the Christian faith, including collective worship in schools.

Teacher training and professional development

While workshop lesson plans and teacher preparation notes for visits were provided by many of the cathedrals, two cathedrals, Liverpool and Norwich drew attention to provision they offered in terms of teacher training or in-service training for teachers. At Liverpool it was stated that the education team also offered sessions for teachers and trainee teachers based around the cathedral's education programme, with a request to get in touch for more details on how sessions could be tailored to meet school and staff needs. At Norwich in-service workshops and wellbeing sessions for school staff were offered. Help and advice could be provided on improving resources for Christianity, religious education, and history teaching, or looking at how cross-curricular topics might be combined using the cathedral. A day of reflection, relaxation, and wellbeing for staff was offered via use of a labyrinth, a session that could be delivered either at the cathedral or in the school setting.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to explore the extent to which the 43 Anglican cathedrals in England and the Isle of Man were making a significant contribution to realising the Church of England's vision for education. The vision set out by the Church of England Education Office (2016) was characterised as *Deeply Christian, serving the common good*, and clearly expressed as not just a vision for Church of England schools, but a Church of England vision for education across the whole sector, a vision 'that is generous and that seeks to allow the riches of Christian life to overflow to those of other faiths or no faith'. Alongside the two obvious mechanisms through which this vision could be realised (the national Education Office, and the Diocesan Boards of Education), there was reason to imagine that Anglican cathedrals may be a third prominent provider in this field. The Archbishop's Commission on Cathedrals (1994) had explicitly advocated that cathedrals should enhance their work in 'developing links with schools'. Recent conceptual and empirical work on the nature and

purpose of Anglican cathedrals had also profiled the rationale for engagement with education more broadly (Francis, McKenna, & Jones, in press; McKenna, Francis, & Stewart, 2022). However, apart from two relatively small studies (ap Siôn & Edwards, 2012; Edwards & ap Siôn, 2015) there remained a lack of evidence regarding the extent to which Anglican cathedrals were actively engaged in offering provision for schools that may be characterised as deeply Christian and serving the common good.

From a close examination and analysis of the 43 websites of the cathedrals in the mainland dioceses of the Church of England and of the Isle of Man, the present study is able to draw three main conclusions. The first conclusion affirms that provision for schools is high on the agenda for every cathedral, that the provision is generally well signposted on the website and professionally delivered. The range of provision captured by the analysis identified seven themes that characterised the breadth of the school offer: tours and trails, themed experiences and programmed days, educational workshops related to Christianity and cathedral, educational workshops related to other curriculum areas, self-guided digital resources, guided outreach (including virtual lessons, in-school delivery, music provision, and loan resource boxes), and teacher training and professional development. In a time when education faces financial stringency, Anglican cathedrals appear to be making a significant contribution to a vision for education that is ‘generous’ and inclusive.

The second conclusion affirms that cathedral provision for schools is ‘deeply Christian’. It is deeply Christian, not in a sectarian sense, but in the sense of presence, hospitality, and welcome that the Established Church is able to extend to all. In a recent study, drawing on Edward Bailey’s notion of implicit religion (Bailey, 1997, 1998), McKenna, Francis, and Stewart (2022) argued that within cathedrals the boundaries between the sacred and the secular are softened and that the threshold between the two is low. In another recent study, drawing on the power of cathedral metaphors, Muskett (2019) argued

for the vibrancy of the term ‘sacred space and common ground’ as characterising the distinctive privilege of cathedrals within the religious marketplace. In a time of general decline in church attendance and the growing fragility of parish churches (Francis, Village, & Lawson, 2021a, 2021b) Anglican cathedrals appear to be magnets that draw young people and beacons of hope for the future (to exploit two more of Muskett’s well chosen metaphors).

The third conclusion affirms that cathedral provision for schools is ‘serving the common good’. The emphasis of the main provision is on engaging the pupils, on offering an educational experience that captures the imagination and stimulates reflection, and on dealing with issues that both challenge and enrich the individual. It is clear from several websites that the implicit concern with human flourishing and personal development goes one step further to make explicit offerings in wellbeing and mental health. In a time when children’s wellbeing in Britain is reported to be at a low ebb (Children’s Society, 2021), Anglican cathedrals appear to be alert to and actively engaged in providing resources to address this issue.

If indeed Anglican cathedrals are well positioned to deliver on the Church of England’s vision for education as deeply Christian and serving the common good, there may be benefit in groups of cathedrals working collaboratively to refine and to enhance this provision; there may be value in the national Church and Diocesan Boards of Education working more collaboratively with cathedrals; there may be value in charities concerned with education and the advancement of religion exploring new ways of working alongside cathedrals.

The limitation with the present study is that it is vulnerable to all the constraints of basing research on websites. On the one hand, it could be the case that some cathedrals over promote their provision for schools on the website and the reality may be less attractive. On the other hand, it could be the case that some cathedrals are so actively engaged in delivering

their provision for schools that they undersell themselves on their website. Further research is clearly needed to explore these possibilities, but such research is expensive and hardly likely to be funded. Meanwhile, it may be wise to act on the evidence already assembled.

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