

Board of Education Report

Seconded – The Revd Catherine Simpson

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Archbishop, members of General Synod, it is a great privilege to be given the opportunity to second this report. It is only right to start by paying tribute to the dedication, tenacity and determination shown by all of our schools who have continued to provide high quality education for the pupils in their care throughout these unprecedented and challenging times. They successfully navigated the challenges of online learning, including Google Classroom and other platforms that have only recently been invented, working from home, whilst remaining open for the children of key workers alongside managing life within ‘bubbles’.

The pandemic has greatly impacted all of our lives and schools have been no exception. The Board of Education (Northern Ireland) wishes to commend the resilience, during these exceptional times, of all staff, pupils and parents/guardians. The Board thanks all principals, teachers, non-teaching staff, and governors for their determination to keep learning going both in school and at home throughout this extraordinary year.

The Board continues to have representatives at all levels of education and we continue to make a case for the influence of the Christian faith on education. There is a greater move in society to call for minimising the Christian influence and indeed there are many who wish to remove the influence of Churches from schools.

The Board is working tirelessly to combat this and asks for your support in protecting the Christian ethos of Controlled Schools within Northern Ireland and in so doing ensuring quality education for all.

This year, the Board continued progressing with Jointly Managed Church Schools. We had intended to bring a motion to Synod this year but due to the pandemic we are not yet in a position to do so.

The Board encourages parishes to support their local schools in new and creative ways. We have provided funding to parishes for this purpose and hope to give out further funds to improve connectivity

between parishes and local schools; and in so doing to create opportunities of mission and ministry within our own congregations.

Members of General Synod, you will be aware that as Anglicans we aim towards living out the Five Marks of Mission, the common commitment to and understanding of God's holistic and integral mission. The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ.

In 2021 and beyond, let us not be negligent, but rather use our time to prayerfully encourage, identify and raise up Transferor Governors willing to uphold and protect the Christian ethos of Controlled Schools within Northern Ireland and in so doing ensure that we have an education system that meets the needs of the young people in our care.

I second this report.