



Church of Ireland
Board of Education (NI)

SPRING 2016

NEWSBRIEF

NEWS, UPDATES AND RESOURCES IN EDUCATION, SAFEGUARDING TRUST AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SECRETARY SPEAKS

Second edition of the Newsbrief for me and focussing on the three main areas of the Board of Education's work:

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

- Core Skills course running in Omagh in May/June for Sunday School leaders.
- Report from Miss Frances Boyd on her recent visit to a Children's Ministry Conference.

EDUCATION

- The Board of Education has been working on principles of education, so that we are clearly articulating our views on education and standing up for our Christian position in education. An outline of the principles is in the Newsbrief with the full document to be presented to Synod in May.

SAFEGUARDING

- An update on procedures for AccessNI.
- Progress of parish survey.

Thanks for all your help and support.

Dr Peter Hamill



SAFEGUARDING

ACCESSNI UPDATE

As you know, AccessNI applications are now completed, by the individual, online. Paper application forms are no longer accepted. The person requiring the check should:

- Go to www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni and register an account by creating a user ID and password.
- Once successfully logged in, a main menu page will appear on the screen 'Apply for Disclosure Certificates' **NB - it must be the ENHANCED option which is chosen.**
- Enter the PIN number - 918066 at Step 1 of the form completion.

- Enter the Parish name in the section which asks for 'Organisation Reference' - Page 1.
- Complete the remainder of the form and click on 'SUBMIT' to finish the online process.
- The 10 digit AccessNI reference number must be noted and recorded on the Validation Form.
- Sign the Validation Form before the incumbent sends it to the Board of Education.

The incumbent must complete the Validation Form, making sure that the applicant has signed it. The Board of Education is unable to complete the online process until the Validation

Form is received. If a Validation Form is not received within four weeks of the online AccessNI application being completed by the applicant, the online application will be rejected and the applicant will have to restart the application process.

Since November 2015, AccessNI are issuing only a single certificate, which is issued to the applicant. It is the responsibility of the incumbent to ensure that the applicant produces the AccessNI certificate before he/she takes up the position.

SAFEGUARDING PARISH SURVEY

At time of writing we have had 180 responses. A full report on the results will be published in the next Newsbrief in September.





HAND IN HAND CONFERENCE...

*EASTBOURNE
5 - 7 FEBRUARY,
2016*

This time last year, though I'd been actively involved in my local church for many years, and though I'd spent most of my working career in the realm of Religious Education, I was relatively unaware of exciting recent developments in the world of Children's Ministry.

A number of encounters and experiences in the past ten months have certainly changed my perceptions of this very important area. When Peter Hamill mentioned his wish that someone from each diocese be jointly funded by the Board of Education and by his/her own diocese to attend the Hand to Hand Conference in Eastbourne in February, I was initially unsure. What an excellent and informative experience it proved to be. A short report like this cannot do it justice but I'll quickly share a number of impressions.

It was a huge conference attended not just by people involved in Children's Ministry from right across the British Isles but from Denmark, from Thailand and from South Africa. Exhibitions showcased a remarkable range of currently available resources. Sessions of the highest calibre were addressed and led by experienced practitioners and thinkers in the area of children's

and family ministry. Key among these were the Bishop of Durham, the Rt.Revd. Paul Butler, who in two main sessions called 'Nurtured and Nurturing' explored the Bible Stories of Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos.

Terry Williams, a specialist in Children's Ministry for Scripture Union in Queensland, Australia in a third main session addressed the very serious issue of why so many young people drift away from the Church and suggested that there needs to be a national conversation around how this might possibly be reversed. A website to encourage and facilitate this was launched during the weekend at www.faithfullgeneration.com

Three Key Streams explored during the weekend through numerous seminars and workshops were The Holy Spirit, Family Ministry and Mission.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Children's Ministry addressed the issue with Heather Thompson, Powerpack Ministries, that in most children's work there has tended to be heavier emphasis on the Word (education) than there is on the Holy Spirit (experience and encounter). The Stream on Family Ministry in exploring how the landscape of work with families in

churches and communities is changing dramatically, focussed on four units from the Core Skills for Family Ministry Course.

The Mission Stream, meanwhile identified how faith can be shared through sport in our churches, schools and local communities - particularly in this Olympic Year. Mark Chester, founder of 'Who let the dads out?' examined the reasons why dads don't come to church and looked at the positive impact that working with dads and toddlers can have.

One of many 'stand out' experiences for me during the weekend had to be 'Celebrate Together: God's Power', a fun-filled time of worship and celebration led on Saturday evening by Bob Hartman, well known storyteller and author. It was such a privilege to observe Bob at work.

Could I say a huge 'thank you' to Peter and to the Bishop of Clogher for allowing me to attend Hand in Hand in Eastbourne this year. I would have no hesitation in returning and in encouraging everyone to go!

Frances Boyd

PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY IN EDUCATION - AN OVERVIEW

EQUALITY OF REGARD - Every person is created in the image of God, and has inestimable and equal value in God's sight. This is the theological basis for all other aspects of equality. As an outworking of this, every child and young person has the right to equality of regard throughout their education. Equality of regard recognises that every child or young person is a unique individual, deserving of equal parity of esteem and respect, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, community or religious background, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status or age. The principle focuses on the interests of the child. It recognises that finite resources together with political, societal, parental and educator preconceptions and expectations of education can address one inequality by unintentionally creating another and can mask unconscious value judgements that impact negatively on the educational experience of some children. Consequently, equality of regard impinges on educational decision making at every level and is inextricably linked with the Christian principles of compassion and impartiality.

EQUALITY OF PROVISION - IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS - No child should be disadvantaged because of the school he or she attends. It is essential therefore that every school should be a good school. However, defining what makes a school "good" and measuring the effectiveness of the educational experience offered presents complex challenges. Examination results alone are not sufficient. Whilst there is a need to develop more sophisticated, robust and meaningful measures this process must be based on and encourage constant self-evaluation at teacher and school level. Christian reflective practices have much to offer in this respect, involving the heart as well as the head; they are creative, healing and strengthening.

EQUALITY OF PROVISION - RESOURCE ALLOCATION - The church can have an important role in helping to address inequalities in resource allocation in terms of direct funding, classroom size and the quality of the educational environment and availability

of equipment. One way of addressing inequalities of resource allocation is by continuing to support and encourage co-operation between schools. Shared education and jointly managed schools not only flow from the Christian duty of reconciliation but also offer practical benefits for children as well as a strong moral example.

EQUALITY OF PROVISION - QUALITY TEACHING - Regardless of the school environment, the single most influential factor in determining a child's educational experience is the teaching that he or she receives. Quality of provision requires well trained, dedicated teachers who are themselves practitioners of lifelong learning. All children should benefit from teachers who nurture learning not only through the application of their pedagogical skills but through their expertise in the subject being taught and their passion for it. Whilst this holds for all subjects and levels of education, there is a particular urgency with regard to the teaching of Religious Education in an increasingly secular society. Quality teaching, underpinned by equality of regard, demands that all teachers recognise that the pastoral care of the children in their charge is an essential and integral part of their role. The compassion of Christ must move from concept to experience if it is to be truly learned.

EQUALITY OF PROVISION - QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP - The effectiveness of any school rests not only with the quality of teaching but also on the quality of leadership exercised within the school. Good governance and leadership is essential and central to this is the ethos established in the school. A school's ethos permeates all aspects of school life and as such the church has an important and direct role to play in ensuring, as far as possible, that children experience the benefits of a Christian ethos or an ethos consistent with Christian principles. Significant numbers of school governors are nominated by the church. These volunteers should be encouraged to see their service as part of the church's mission in the world. It is incumbent on the Church to ensure that the school governors that they have nominated are adequately trained and supported.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY - One of the major arguments against academic selection is that it reduces equality of opportunity particularly for children from economically deprived backgrounds. However, it could be argued that real inequality of opportunity does not arise from whether a child attends a selective or a non-selective school, but from the fact that educational policy still equates success within the confines of academic achievement. If there is to be true equality of opportunity all subjects and skills need to be respected and the same rigorous standards applied to vocational and skills based disciplines as to academic subjects. Different skills and abilities should not be equated with lesser skills and abilities. The church has an important role to play in changing perceptions and pressing for improved standards and opportunities in vocational and skills' based subjects after all our Lord may have taught but he also trained as a carpenter.

CO-OPERATION AND PROGRESSION - Education does not exist in a vacuum and whilst focused on the needs of the child, quality education depends upon the co-operation and involvement of many stakeholders including the churches, parents, employers and government. Unfortunately a diversity of stakeholders can lead to a multiplicity of expectations. The church should be diligent in seeking to influence policy development and should insist on properly resourced implementation of any educational initiatives to ensure consistency of application and robust evaluation to measure effectiveness. In addition one of the major contributing factors to educational underachievement is a lack of a sense of purpose flowing from an insufficiency of progression routes into meaningful employment. The church needs to use its influence in society to encourage the development of vocational training and employment opportunities. Jeremiah's injunction to pray for the prosperity of the city still holds if all our young people are to be properly motivated to reach their full potential and to engage in lifelong learning for the benefit of all.

Rev Amanda Adams

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING

CORE SKILLS CHILDREN'S MINISTRY COURSE

COURSE

This course is for all those working as leaders in Children's Ministry such as Sunday School and Bible Clubs. The course will help you to reflect on your ministry and give you new skills in working with children. There will also be an opportunity to look at resources available for children's ministry.

Programme and training materials based on 'Core Skills for Children's Ministry', printed by Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF). <http://www.brfonline.org.uk/9780857461186/>

WHERE

St Columba Parish Church, Omagh.

WHEN

7 May

Tutor - Tammi Peak (Children's Leader, Movilla Parish).
Subjects - Programme Planning, Pastoral Awareness.

21 May

Tutor - Jill Hamilton (Children's Officer, Connor Diocese).
Subjects - Special needs, Working as a team.

4 June

Tutor - Peter Hamill (Board of Education).
Subjects - Child Development, The Bible and prayer.

COST

£45. Please make cheques payable to Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Group.

TIME

10.30am (coffee available from 10.00am) to 3.00pm (lunch included).

CERTIFICATE

Participants who attend all three sessions will receive a Church of Ireland Theological Institute Certificate in Children's Ministry. Certificate is

based on attendance only and no further work is required.

To apply or get more info please contact Claire Geoghegan on:

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