

Ministry and Mission with Children, Young People and the Board of Education

National and local governments are continuing to work towards a more cohesive approach to children's services. The *Every Child Matters* agenda and other initiatives have meant that schools are expected to play a central role in the whole range of children and young people's services across the wider community; the Kent Children's Trust has begun to draw together all children's services, working locally through 23 Local Children's Services Partnerships.

For a while we have felt that our structures have lagged behind the changes that are taking place nationally and in the county, and so we have been seeking to discover the best way to support our engagement with children and young people in a strategic and efficient manner. The Church of England National Board of Education also recently produced a strategy document *Going for Growth* which outlines the way our work with children and young people needs to develop into the future and clearly encourages churches and schools to work collaboratively in this area.

This new children's services model is proving to be successful and we have decided that Canterbury Diocese's work with and for children needs to be brought together in a similarly creative way. Bringing the work together under the Board of Education will enable us to be more strategic in our use of resources and ensure that we are efficient and effective in all that we do to support the mission and ministry of the diocese with children and young people. In partnership with our work with schools, we will seek to:

- work with deaneries, providing advice and support as they develop deanery mission plans, ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of their planning so that in every area there is attractive local provision of Christian character for families, children and young people
- give space and listen to the voices of children and young people, actively seeking their knowledge and insight at both local and diocesan levels and taking these implications seriously.
- offer training of the highest quality, working in collaboration with the Board of Ministry and Training, particularly in relation to the development of ALM modules for those working with children and young people in parishes and schools.
- develop, sustain, and monitor the effectiveness of resources available to parishes and mission communities including the development of networks for those working with children and young people and appropriate electronic support through discussion groups and web based material.
- provide central events, especially with the encouragement of smaller parishes in mind.

- invest time and energy in further strengthening partnerships e.g. parish/school, ecumenical networks, Centre for Youth Ministry, Children's Society, Youth for Christ, Scripture Union etc.
- invest in working with the Local Authority, ensuring full engagement with Local Children's Services Partnerships and the Kent Children's Trust.
- seek opportunities to serve the wider community and to play our part in developing environments in which good childhood can thrive.

This all represents a major development in the work of the Diocesan Board of Education, and in recognition of such a significant change we would like to think of an appropriate new name for the board which will more clearly communicate the new broader approach to our work with Children and Young People.

One suggestion that has already been made is:

The Board of Education: Serving Children, Young People, Families and Schools

We would welcome other suggestions and ideas that you can think of which capture the essence of what we are seeking to achieve. Please send suggestions in to me by the 11th December (ngenders@diocant.org)

Whatever we call ourselves, we can assure you that we will be doing everything we can to support and encourage the diocese as we continue to develop this all important area of our mission and ministry.

We look forward to working with you as we serve our children, young people, families and schools.

Nigel Genders
Director of Education