

My name is Joy Tubbs – I have the amazing honour of being the Director of Education for the Diocese of Salisbury. We are based in Wilton, right next to the park and ride and are the Trustees of 194 church schools – 16 of them secondary schools between Royal Wootton Bassett and Lyme Regis, 2,000 square miles and 43,000 children and young people.

I begin by thanking you for inviting me to meet with you today, but more importantly for the connections you have and the work that you do to support children and young people across Dorset, in so many different contexts. It is lovely to see schools represented by school leaders, HTs and Governors – your work is treasured. It is something that cannot be said often enough.

So who is the Board of Education?

The Board of Education formed in 1830 – many of the schools pre-date its formation; the gift of education by local people of faith to the ‘poor of the parish’. Today that amazing legacy is cherished by us – we are working with determination and deep intention, to support the on-going development of church schools that are at the heart of and which serve their local communities and society’s common good. Church schools which value all of God’s children, those of faith and those of none. We have claimed our role as servant leaders in shaping and supporting the future of education across our diocese and indeed region.

Like most successful organisations, we are a complex body with a range of roles: appointing HTs; appointing foundation governors; supporting the development of church schools and their spiritual leadership – we are a group of just 18 staff and a Trust Board of 13. We are a charity.

Today I want to share with you a picture of our work through our

- vision for education

and through our

- commitment to community

I am going to illustrate this by talking about our work with community hubs and with multi academy trusts. I believe that these are two of the most vital and life giving pieces of work that we are engaged in and which are having impact for the good now, and will have impact for the good years from now.

Vision

The Archbishop of Canterbury has led a fresh articulation of the Church of England’s vision for education to meet the challenges and take the opportunities offered by the complex world our children are born into. Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision

of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements.

How do schools enable full human flourishing through the development of:

1. Wisdom - Not all who are wise are educated and not all who are educated are wise
2. Hope – how can we help children and young people develop strong mental health and well being; resilience that helps children and young people face the future when all seems impossible?
3. Community – how can we support the creation of the leaders of today and of tomorrow, building their sense of the worth of community, and their role within it?
4. Dignity – how do we enable children and young people to be champions of social justice?

With many schools reporting that they feel under increasing pressure to make artificial choices between academic rigour and the wellbeing of their pupils, we are unequivocal in our message that there is no such distinction – a good education must promote life in all its fullness.

Given this vision for education in service to the whole community, we see the present as a time of opportunity that is unlikely to recur in our lifetimes. There are unprecedented opportunities to renew, improve and interrelate existing schools and to found new ones.

I boldly proclaim: ‘education in service to the whole community’ How do we make that real?

Children and young people belong within multiple layers of community – brownies, swimming, clubs too numerous to mention, breakfast clubs, households – some that we would say are homes, other that are places of sorrow and fear; schools, for a few – the church, for too many, the streets.

We thus face the challenge of how we meet children and young people where they are – how we embrace their passions – such as the environment and social action. How do we empower, lead, enthuse and enable these children of today who can make such difference to life now? Our schools often are so good at this – and I thank you for it and the example by which you lead.

Our DBE is unusual nationally, we are also responsible for work with Children and Young People (CYP) in the church and this is leading us to need to get out of the silos of school and church and consider how we can develop connected communities with children and young people at their heart.

A key aspect of this work is the way in which we are helping to establish community hubs - in the first instance, drawing together people who do not yet know they are partners, with the potential to transform the lives of children and young people and thus shape the present and the future of a locality, region and potentially nation.

Community hub working provides a way for churches and schools in a local community to work in partnership to empower the community to transform itself and that the hub activities are an authentic expression of church and mission rooted in relationship and the living out of God's transforming presence, addressing barriers to human flourishing.

Each hub is being built on the existing strength of the relationship between the local church and school. Building on the foundation of this partnership and drawing in other key partners the intention is that it will enable the community to transform itself. The model will vary in each locality because the drive behind each hub will be the needs of the children and young people and the gaps they identify.

The DBE team is the facilitator, the enabler, we are providing significant adviser time in each location over a sustained period to enable the community to undertake this approach.

Community hubs are about living out God's transforming presence. They provide a model which can transform lives and enable journeys of discipleship.

In the town of Wimborne, the church schools have begun to host a series of community meetings which for the first time bring together a vast range of volunteer and professional groups; together they are making a promise to be the active advocates for the children and young people of their town – to listen to their needs and seek to find ways to meet them.

Another example of this is in Bridport where the community hub work has revealed that one of the youngsters' greatest concerns is not feeling safe in the town. This came as a shock to many adults who are now working with CYP to trial sustainable solutions – they are making solutions together. CYP are being empowered to lead.

In Shaftesbury, the community hub, only just begun, has addressed an immediate need of CYP from the town and villages feeling there is no-where to safely be together across the school holidays, building rural isolation – this has resulted in youngsters meeting regularly over the summer simply through the provision of a gazebo and some hot chocolate.

There are now 5 community hubs established across the diocese, they are in their infancy, each has a locally agreed set of community actions that address the interests and needs of CYP as articulated by them – school, church and community partners committing to work with CYP to understand what will make a difference for them and seek, with them to address those needs.

The challenges are numerous, and in order to grasp and meet them, we hope that local communities will enter into the community hub vision, devoting attention, time, energy, funding and leadership to realizing it in their areas.

Community matters.

Another way in which the DBE can see communities being strengthened is through their belonging to Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). Indeed MATs are taking a keen role in the Community Hub work.

The contribution of multi academy trusts in this diocese

The SDBE has witnessed over the last three years, how belonging within a multi academy trust is enabling education provision to flourish. Flourishing is especially seen in:

- the progression of a school's unique character;
 - the interdependence of MAT schools and their sense of belonging within a community;
 - the creativity that supports the professional development of staff;
 - the quality and timeliness of school improvement support and of accountability processes;
 - the quality of governance, including foundation governance at all MAT tiers;
 - the quality of leadership, teaching and learning;
 - the provision of core services such as finance and human resources which releases energy into school leadership;
 - the improvement towards financial stability;
 - the use of buildings;
 - the way in which 'great' schools are further thriving,
 - and crucially, in the way the Christian character of schools is being intentionally developed.
- These are hallmarks of multi academy trusts in our diocese.

The Board of Education has worked tirelessly to support the development of the Multi Academy Trust landscape – there are now 22 MATs with over 50% of church schools within them.

Why does this matter? – across the town and in the villages there are wonderful Church and LA maintained schools. All however, when they have finished telling you of the amazing children and of their achievements will tell you of the pressures of school life – not least financial. Of the rolling and relentless change.

A small school in this country is one that has 210 pupils or less – across this diocese 75% of the schools are less than 210; 25% are less than 100. The national forecast is that within 5 years, 70% of schools less than 210 will not be sustainable. This is not just a rural issue.

In a regional public forum two weeks ago the Regional Schools Commissioner, Hannah Woodhouse noted that there are 5 priority areas across the whole of the South West – one of them is Dorset where despite a rise in outcomes children are still not effectively served – particularly in Mathematics.

The DBE is working with its schools to help them determine how they can break through the barriers which for too long have been holding them back – finding new ways through multi academy trusts to protect and progress education for our youngsters. It is not a problem

that can be solved by the school in isolation – it needs an informed public; an engaged community, supporting mature decision making that can help us shape the future.

Visionary leadership has enabled the establishment of Trusts within Dorset which now contain Church secondary and primary schools and previously LA maintained schools. These Trusts are vitally addressing the under achievement of many schools but vitally they are lifting hopes and aspirations, acting as advocates for children – developing them as confident learners and as leaders. The formation of such Trusts is enabling collaboration across towns and between towns and villages where before there was outright competition; enabling equality of access where there were previously barriers; enabling achievement where there was previously abject failure; enabling financial stability where there was vulnerability.

The SDBE is committed to encouraging **all** schools to belong within a multi academy trust; sharing the school's strengths and experience and leading the on-going formation of education culture in our diocese. We believe that MATs can make an amazing community contribution, securing the long term future of our small church schools and the further flourishing of great schools whatever their size.

The Education Department of the Church of England has worked with the government to ensure key principles and a legal framework for the conversion of church schools to academy status. This legal framework is proving to be highly effective in protecting the Anglican foundation and the day by day flourishing of church schools in this diocese.

The DBE has its own MAT, it began to support schools that had failed and were being failed by the Las; by Christmas DSAT will be a Trust of 17 schools, and it is now set to grow further as interest across the diocese grows – it is going from strength to strength and will be one of the largest and most successful MATs in the SW.

The DBE entered a national tender to win the right to open the first new church school for 15 years. It opened in September at the heart of a new community in Salisbury and is flourishing as a DSAT school.

Talking with you today is important to me:

Because education is transgenerational, and its effects, for better or for worse, often only become clear over decades, it is especially important to take account of long-term perspectives. In practice this means that the policies and pressures of democratic cycles, which inevitably tend to focus attention onto shorter-term priorities, need to be held in balance with the needs of organisations such as your own, with a longer-term commitment to education.

People such as yourselves with a deep concern for the flourishing of civil society, organisations such as charitable educational foundations, universities, hospitals, civil service, law, health, business, finance, industry, agriculture, sport, media, and more, corporate bodies of many sorts, and religious communities. All of you have educational commitments, and in order to flourish, need good quality education.

Bishop Karen has asked recently – where is the heart of the diocese and what is our place within this heart?

She is helping us to understand that the heart of the diocese is its people – all generations and thus the communities which they create.

The place of the church and of the DBE is not within the organisational headquarters in Salisbury, it is within communities.

I wanted so very much to be here because it speaks to me of your interest in the flourishing of civil society and the role of children and young people within this – it is by working together for the common good that we can empower children and young people for the good of today as well as tomorrow – shaping thus the future of this county, country and its precious children.

So today, at this breakfast meeting my question to you,

right where you are,

how can we build community – how can we work together for the common good?

What can we get up to together?